

Passion - the Key to Education
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In this essay, the SGI president praises all teachers for the noble work that they do. 'Education is a process of stimulating and awakening people at the core of their being, thereby enabling them to unlock and develop the power within to create happiness,' he writes. 'The source of that stimulation is the passionate dedication of teachers to their students' welfare.'

Truancy, bullying, juvenile delinquency, suicide — I am deeply pained by these cries for help from our embattled school children. At the same time, I am just as deeply moved by the struggles and problems faced by the teachers of our academic division.

Certainly, many children have serious problems, but when we look to the root of these problems, we cannot help but trace them back to the home and society.

There are surely times when teachers wonder what they can do, in their limited role, to help these children. But precisely because our present situation is so dark and complex, the mission of the academic division member is very important.



In every age, the greatest factor in a child's educational environment is the teacher. We all know the story of Helen Keller. Having lost her sight and hearing in infancy and being unable to speak, Helen Keller's life was utterly transformed when she met her teacher, Anne Sullivan.

The moment that Helen first made the connection that things in the world around her had names has been immortalized: Ms. Sullivan pumped water onto her young student's hand and then spelled the word *water* into her palm. It was a breakthrough that opened the window to learning and boundless knowledge in Helen's young mind.

But her teacher called this moment "an important second step" in Helen's education. What was the first?

Two weeks after Anne Sullivan arrived at the Keller residence, Helen finally accepted a kiss from her teacher and climbed up onto her lap. Until then, she had rejected any contact with Ms. Sullivan and had raged about like a wild animal.

But after two weeks of living under the same roof, Helen finally accepted Ms. Sullivan. Trust had been forged — trust that would support and nurture the subsequent miraculous and monumental feat in humanistic education that teacher and student achieved.



What is the basic goal of education? First Soka Gakkai president Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the father of value-creating education, declared that it is making children happy. One of the greatest problems of modern education is that we have lost sight of this most fundamental purpose.

Only when children feel that their teachers are genuinely concerned for their welfare do they begin to trust and open up to them. And only when teachers give serious thought and attention to their students' happiness and well-being do they begin to see the character and personality of their students, their abilities and weaknesses.



I once heard the following story about Teikichi Miyoshi, the renowned Japanese artist who contributed the illustrations for *The Human Revolution*: When he was a 2nd-grade student, his mother visited his school and saw the children's pictures pasted up on the walls of the classroom. They were all pictures of chickens, and all of them showed one or two birds. But the young Teikichi's drawing showed a chicken cage with a rooster, a hen and many little chicks running about at their feet, flying in the air and pecking at food.

Teikichi's teacher said to his mother: "This is a delightful and amusing picture. He may not be very good yet, but he is original. If he says he wants to draw, please give him all the paper and pencils he needs."

After hearing those words from her son's teacher, Mrs. Miyoshi did just that, though the family was not well off. If not for those words of his teacher, Teikichi Miyoshi may never have become an artist. At the same time, the insight behind these remarks was born from the teacher's deep concern for the future of each student.



Mr. Toda founded his private academy, Jishu Gakkan, to put Mr. Makiguchi's educational theories into practice. Many very talented people emerged from this academy, among them the well-known scholar of Goethe and German literature, Dr. Hajime Yamashita.

Says Dr. Yamashita of his days under Mr. Toda's tutelage: "Mr. Toda was himself very passionate. Just coming into contact with him, you could feel his passion. There was a burning, almost scorching intensity about it. Even simply talking with him, you could feel it. It was very powerful."

That passion is the key to education. Education is a process of stimulating and awakening people at the core of their being, thereby enabling them to unlock and develop the power within to create happiness. The source of that stimulation is the passionate dedication of teachers to their students' welfare.

The courage to utterly devote oneself to one's students, along with maintaining an ever-inquiring mind and showing creativity in teaching are all the products of passion. And passion comes from having a profound recognition of and commitment to one's mission.

I, too, have resolved to dedicate my life to education, because I know that education determines the future and is the foundation for building peace and lasting value.

I am confident that our academic division members are the leading exponents of such humanistic education.

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