

# *"The Education of Our Youth"*

**A**t this point of my life, I seem to be traveling deeper into the question: who are we as a species? I look forward to further exploring the potential of human education and the possibilities of this planet's future.

Today I laid on a familiar beach in Berkeley, California and shared the steaming sun with a voluminous variety of people. Two genetically tan women on my left spoke passionately to each other in Spanish. I watched a man beside me slowly turn to an uncomfortable looking shade of red. Many children, uncaged by summer, played in the sand and splashed in the chilly waters of Lake Anza. Even though I was surrounded by tall trees and cooling water, I found it difficult to quiet my mind.

Thoughts of children and education seem to be constant subject matter for this unrelaxed brain. Is there not a more beautiful sight than hope in the eyes of a young child? The color of their skin does not matter, nor the amount of change in their pockets. What will these joyful children playing at the beach learn about the world as they grow?

As I continued to observe the people and scenery around me, I shuffled between reading and writing my thoughts and feelings for this entry. I have been reading a book by one of this centuries great human beings, Krishnamurti. The book is entitled, "Think on These Things." The beauty of his teachings is that he is constantly reminding the listener that to live is to find out for yourself what is true, and that you can only do this when there is freedom.

Do the children of today have freedom? Are we educated to discover our own truth? What if the young hopeful eyes are given the opportunity to develop their own power of understanding? If the student were given more global awareness at a young age? To learn about refugee camps, and human rights abuses? They need to know about the war and hatred that extends to every corner of the globe. We seem to speak about the world in the classroom with a historical perspective, but what about the world of today? Does the rich child learn about the reality of life in the housing projects? How can a student develop compassion when they have not experienced suffering? How can a child of poverty develop hope?

What we are exploring is the potential of human education, where the student learns to discover the gifts that are within them - and to build relationships, not fences. I know that I felt a bit deadened by the ritual of education. It seemed to be about memorization, taking examinations, and learning to become economically productive. How could I tell my teacher that I wanted to learn about human beings? How could they test me about this?

One of the wonderful gifts of living in today's world is that children can build bridges between them. The internet is filled with global resources that make it easier for a child to understand the life of a child in another culture. With the VCR, the classroom can evolve into a journey through faraway lands. A wealthy student can face the reality of life that haunts the homeless and impoverished. An African-American can learn about the reality of life in Africa. The young girl from Afghanistan can learn about the Taliban armies recent ban on education for girls over the age of eight.

Why is this necessary? The children of America learn many harmful things. The quest for accumulation may be stifled if the child sees other children of the same age who face extinction on a daily basis. Fear and violence can only be broken with communication and understanding.

What if the student was given more global responsibility at a young age?

How would they deal with homelessness? What solutions would they provide for the violence that plagues urban youth? How do they envision the human community?

Perhaps, it will take generations to re-think the real possibilities of education. To develop humanitarians in the classroom. To send students out into the world driven with compassion and fueled by revolutionary ideas. But, we can start now by asking the question: How do we educate our youth?