

Secrets of Getting Children to Study Nurturing Creativity in the Child

The principle behind effective education and learning is a simple one that applies to children of all ages as well as to adults. This principle is joy. When we understand that joy and happiness arise when we are growing and displaying an ever larger portion of our inherent ability and infinite potential, then our objective is clear. Dr. Taniguchi explains this as follows:

Our method of learning is a happy one. The most ideal learning is when children think it is fun. It is only natural that it should be joyful. This is because it is guiding one's inner life so as to allow the true image to grow. Learning is to freely unfold outwardly one's true self, the law, God's life the everlasting life that dwells within. The feeling that wells up when one lives his life freely is called happiness. Therefore there is no reason learning should not be fun. If learning does not make a child happy, it is because even though it may be called learning, in the true sense, it is not the kind of learning that nurtures life.

I firmly believe that there is something lacking that is distorting the learning, if a child is not having fun. Learning such as this is only suffocating a child's life while claiming that it cultivates the child's life. There is concrete proof of the theory that one's feeling is happy when life is growing and it suffers when life shrivels up. A good example is that you suffer when you are confined in a small area. However, at the beach basking in the sun when you take a deep breath and stretch yourself out, it feels good. In essence, when your life is free, you are happy. It is only natural, therefore, to be happy, if learning is nurturing your life. On the other hand, if it makes you feel uncomfortable, it is suppressing your life and children feel they are being suffocated.

This is a different way of looking at the process of learning. If we regard joy as the essential ingredient, the ingredient that brings life to study, then we realize that where there is no joy, there is no life and study that is lifeless is of very little value. When this principle is kept in mind then what is created in the child is a desire to pursue his interests and talents to their maximum and his life is filled with joy and happiness. Parents often have been conditioned to think that study is work, a kind of chore, something that must be done whatever the effect on attitude. Here often the opposite result is obtained. Children grow up disliking study of any kind because in their minds it is equated with lifeless drudgery. For them life becomes an endless treadmill of existence that seems empty and joyless. This is so because inside the true self is not expressing itself in growth.

You may think I am advocating simply pleasure without any thought to growing up as a useful member of society. This is not true and a misreading of what is being said. What I am saying is that it is more important to emphasize the inner compass of children that encourages the development and expression of their true selves than phenomenal results in the moment. If their true selves are unfolding in a natural and unimpeded way, then their true genius will reveal itself. When you see children's activities through the perspective of the development of

that inner spirit, you release their infinite power to accomplish whatever they set their hearts on. Dr. Taniguchi explains as follows:

Children by nature like to study. You may think that children want to play all the time but it is not true. The reason why they appear to be playing in the eyes of the parent is because they are judging from the standpoint of its usefulness. When children are playing with mud, they are not playing but they are actually studying. They are learning about the nature of mud. What happens when they dig into it? What happens to the color of their hands when mud is on them? What happens when it gets in their eyes? Their hands get rough if they play with it too long. Children are studying and learning by experimenting with these things. When they start to take interest in their studies, they will develop artistic ability, if they have talent, or take interest in physics or chemistry experiments, if they have scientific talent. The modern chemical industry is a product of the growth of those children's talents who started by playing in the sand or mud. The parents are so caught up in the immediate usefulness of what a child is doing and think that playing in the sand or with mud only makes children dirty and really has no merit. That's why they stop them and tell them "to go study." They keep their children away from interesting studies and tell them to study something they have no interest in. Therefore, in the minds of children studying is not interesting.

When we study the lives of great men like Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein and Abraham Lincoln we see this principle at work. They had very little formal schooling or didn't do well in school but their inner genius was encouraged. We often set these people apart as special extraordinary people, not like the rest of us. However, what is the quality that sets them apart? Is it not the inner spirit, the joy of expressing that infinite potential within? They are examples to all of us of what Dr. Taniguchi means when he says, "Learning is to freely unfold outwardly one's true self, the law, God's life the everlasting life that dwells within." Whoever does this is a genius.

by Bruce Mallery