



**Closing the Achievement Gap
Annual Conference 2016**

Heroic, Humane, and Happy

Guiding Children to Develop Character

Jonathan Wolff
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Most discipline or behavior management approaches focus on how to redirect children's disrespectful and irresponsible behavior in a manner that builds confidence and gets results. This represents only half of the task of cultivating a happy, healthy, socially intelligent human being. It's analogous to "weeding" a garden.

But what about planting the "seeds" of noble behavior and more responsible decision-making in children's hearts and minds? That's character education. In this workshop Jonathan Wolff will explore how to employ storytelling, roleplaying, poetry, and team-building activities to help children develop the qualities and skills of sound character.

It is vitally important that every school clarify the kind moral thinking and behavior they want children to develop and exhibit in the world.

ENVISIONMENT WORKSHEET

The Operative Paradigm of Non-Sectarian Character Education

- 1. Every moment in life requires us to make**

CHOICES

About what we believe, what we intend, what we feel,
what we say and what we do

- 2. Every choice we make produces**

CONSEQUENCES

Pleasurable or painful, that affect us, others or the
environment

- 3. Repeated choices and consequences create our
current life**

CIRCUMSTANCES

Happy or unhappy, healthy or unhealthy, purposeful and
constructive or impulsive and destructive

Emotional intelligence

- **The ability to quickly identify emotions** in an honest and respectful manner
 - **The ability to manage emotions** in a healthy way – neither repressing feelings nor letting them rage out of control
 - **The ability to harness emotions to do good**, to bring about change
 - **The ability to express empathy**, to sense and respond to others' feelings and needs
 - The ability to employ emotional intelligence to **cultivate and maintain healthy relationships**
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6 Activities That Help Young People Explore and Develop Character

1. Storytelling
 2. Reflective Roleplaying
 3. Cueing
 4. Affirmations
 5. Visualization
 6. Sharing Our Own Tests & Triumphs & Tests With Children
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4 Types of Stories that Foster Character Development

1. Object Lessons
2. Fables and Parables
3. Heroic Human Sagas
4. Personal History Tales

Affirmation for P e a c e

Ocean of peace I am.

Sea of calm I am.

Beyond the waves of words,

Beyond all angry storms,

Beyond all rainy tears,

Beyond all windy fears,

I am an ocean calm,

I am a sea of peace.

Nothing breaks my peace.

No one takes my peace.

With words of peace I care,

With hands of peace I share.

With thoughts of peace I live,

With thoughts of peace I give.

5 Messages of Appreciation and Acknowledgment

- for children, parents and fellow staff -

- I ***“I am happy you are in my life.”***
“I am happy you are here with us.”

Message: *“You are valued. You are a vital member of our family, classroom, or school community.”*

- II ***“I love this about you _____.”***
“Your quality of, or ability to _____ is appreciated.”

Message: *“I enjoy and am grateful for the qualities of character, gifts, and talents you share with us.”*

- III ***“I see and appreciate the effort you are making.”***

Message: *“Your labors have not gone unnoticed. I see you working to improve yourself.”*

- IV ***“I notice the progress you have made. I celebrate your gains.”***

Message: *“You are moving forward in your learning and life.”*

- V ***“I am happy for what you have accomplished. I cheer your success!”***

Message: *“Congratulations! You have achieved your goal.”*

The first essential is that the teacher should go through an inner, spiritual preparation - cultivate certain aptitudes of the moral order. This is the most difficult part of her training, without which, all the rest is of no avail. . . . She must study how to purify her heart and render it burning with charity towards the child. She must put on humility, and above all, learn how to serve. She must learn to appreciate and gather in all those tiny and delicate manifestations of the opening life in the child's soul. Ability to do this can only be attained through a genuine effort towards self-perfection.

- Maria Montessori

The “Spiritual Preparation” of the Teacher

1. **Why do we teach?** What are we here to learn?
2. **The importance of “walking our talk”** – the alignment of belief and behavior. Whatever we ask of the children, our character and conduct must exemplify these values, mores, and norms
3. **Maintaining one’s peace and emotional equilibrium** amidst conflicts and contingencies that occur in the school community
4. **The art of “rapid renewal”** – quieting, centering, and energizing our minds and bodies – before, during and after the teaching day.

The Fly

*Little fly
Thy summer's play
My thoughtless hand
Hath brushed away.*

*Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me?*

*For I dance
And drink and sing,
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.*

*If thought is life
And strength and breath,
And the want
Of thought is death,*

*Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live
Or if I die.*

*William Blake
Songs of innocence*

rain circles on the lake

expand unbroken

through one another