

∞ Introduction ∞

At fourteen as a result of profound personal experiences, I began to see the vast capacity available to every human being. Since then, my consuming passion has been to understand who I am as a human being and why most of humanity is unaware of the limitless potential that is our birthright. My life-long search has been to find the answers to these questions:

1. What does it mean to be fully human?
2. Why are most members of the human race so completely unaware of their own potential and that of their children for brilliant intelligence, extraordinary human effectiveness and deep inner peace?
3. What can humanity do to incorporate this awareness into the way we raise and teach our children; how can we support them in unfolding the infinite intelligence inherent within the human soul and attaining the quality of life that is our ultimate destiny?

The widespread lack of models for this innate greatness is one of our most pervasive problems. It creates a humanity that is less than what it should be. It gives birth to an educational model for our children that is pedestrian in concept, relegated to processing our children rather than finding their true brilliance. It creates adolescents who feel lost and even abandoned by life. Their natural instincts lead them to the awareness that something great is intended to unfold within them, but it hasn't happened.

The almost universal failure of our human development process has brought us to a monstrous misunderstanding of

who we are and who we are destined to become. We have largely lost our capacities to nurture our children in ways that support the unfolding of their unlimited intelligence and capacity for inner peace. Because of our own failure to develop, we as adults cannot provide models for this mode of living, and it can never be a didactic or intellectual process.

For this reason, it is essential that we reform our early childhood development approach and our lifelong educational processes in line with nature's intended plan for all of us.

Our culture has a great impact on our perceptions of reality. The distortions that exist in our culturally-conditioned thinking limit our ability to deal with reality as it is. The structure of our knowledge of the world is built into the neural connections of our brain during infancy and childhood. That structure becomes the underlying and unconscious process through which all future learning and interaction will be defined. Cultural assumptions can either facilitate or inhibit the development of our unlimited capacities and the extent to which we create our world in accordance with those images.

As I became clearer about the details of this biological plan, my concern for children intensified. Everywhere, I saw the symptoms of a serious breakdown in the human development process. The symptoms of this breakdown—epidemic increases in child and adolescent suicide, child abuse, infantile autism, and declining educational performance—led me to the monumental tragedy that has befallen our children.

I began to see that in Western civilization we are living out an enormous misconception of what it means to be human, what an infant is, and what a child is. As my writing and my worldwide lecturing continued, I collected vast quantities of information about how we develop. I began to deepen my understanding of the intense importance of the maternal/infant bond, of play, of the imperative that, as children, we become our parents, our teachers, our cultural idols and other human models.

I saw clearly that spirit is an integral dimension of human intelligence and not an afterthought. Spirit must be foremost in our awareness in order to see development in its full scope and possibility. I expanded my understanding of the stages of development and of the types of learning that are, and are not, appropriate for those stages.

My concern for our schools increased as I understood that most of learning is state-specific. By that I mean that the state of emotion and consciousness while we are learning is more important to the application of knowledge than is the academic component of what is taught. I recognized that it is the intelligence of the heart rather than the intelligence of the intellect that forms the foundation for the survival of civilization. I learned that our optimal development from infancy to adulthood depends on having a safe and nurturing environment for learning, a clear sense of our source of power at each age, and an intuitive sense of the possibilities which are to become manifest at that stage of our lives.

Successful parents and teachers see that an environment of love and safety is fundamental to effective learning and growth. They know that children are multidimensional, possessing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects that must develop in an integrated way and as an evolving whole. They understand that life is a dynamic flow and that much of what happens in our relationships with children is unexpected and surprising.

These parents and teachers deeply understand that each of us—adult and child—has a unique purpose and destiny. Thus, they learn to take their cues from the child regarding the stages of the child's development and the kind of experiences that will nurture the child's unique gifts and talents. They understand that nurturing the child's uniqueness requires a depth of emotional and spiritual bonding with the child in which child and parent/teacher become available to each other at increasingly deep levels. They encourage the child's imagination and

intuition. They recognize and acknowledge the child's deep capacities for wisdom that can emerge in a safe and bonded relationship. Such parents and teachers seek to embody the sense of wonder, excitement, and trust that weaves parent/teacher and child into the same state of consciousness.

As I have seen what is needed and what is possible, I have been in despair about the condition of most of our traditional schools. It is for this reason that I felt so very fortunate to receive Resa Steindel Brown's book The Call to Brilliance. This important new book documents the immeasurable benefits available to children, and to society, when we trust life itself and open our children to the extraordinary possibilities inherent in life: when we guide and support their process of learning and full development consistent with nature's design.

By following the passion of the child rather than forcing the child to adapt to the consensus reality of the culture, Resa's approach allows the child to begin to learn from life as it is rather than life as the culture believes it to be. In this process, the higher mind or universal spirit can guide the unfolding of intelligence both within the child and the teacher/parent—and in such a way that both child and mentor are engaged in an ongoing dance of continuous transformation and transcendence.

I became totally engrossed in this engaging, inspiring, enlightening and unusual work that is the biography not only of a remarkable person but also of a remarkable educational approach. We could say, in fact, that each, the author and her school, gave birth to each other. Here is that author's fascinating account of the unfolding and development of a new paradigm of learning that meets the actual biological, psychological, intellectual and social needs of young people.

In this book, Resa's biographical account of her own childhood experience graphically displays what I had called the 'tragedy of schooling' back in the 1950's. Her keen adult perspective on how things stand today is, again, from the inside

out as a teacher and not just another abstract analysis of a critical outsider.

The Call to Brilliance, as she explains, illustrates “a paradigm shift from processing children through a curriculum of predetermined classes and requirements, to an educational system designed to discover the intrinsic talents, passions and brilliance of every child.”

Her account of rising to meet the occasion by actively taking the initiative, daring to innovate and explore, taking her cues from the children, and responding to their individual needs instead of taking the easy way of mechanical formulae, is an admirable and remarkable story. In this book, Resa offers us a tangible, living model exemplar of what can be done against all odds in any situation, given sufficient time, energy and attention. She describes the experiences of children who had the opportunity to follow their interests and discover the passion that led to their brilliance. She shows us how the same could be done anywhere and in any situation.

Throughout Resa’s writing, appropriate comments and observations from great thinkers old and new illustrate her insights—all of which add up to a unique, informative, optimistic and hope-filled account we can only praise.

As we legislate for stricter learning standards, we find that it does not solve our problems; it deepens them. Most people cannot envision education any other way. Resa came up with a better way. She has not only envisioned it, she has built it, lived it, and now she shares it with us all. This is a book that must be read by every parent, teacher and adult who senses there is a better life possible for their children and all children.

Thank you, Resa.

Joseph Chilton Pearce,
Author of *Crack in the Cosmic Egg* and *Magical Child*

