

## **The Robert Muller Center For Living Ethics**

### **Balance And Synthesis Leading to Unity**

#### **Nicholas Roerich and the Banner of Peace**

Nicholas Roerich, world-renowned artist, philosopher, archeologist, and author was an eloquent and passionate spokesman for the synthesis of science, art, and ethics. During World War I, Roerich saw the great loss to culture in the wartime desecration of architecture, sculptures, and paintings. In 1929, he introduced an international peace treaty, the Roerich Pact, in which the participants agreed to hold cultural treasures sacred, even in wartime. President Franklin D. Roosevelt presided over ceremonies at the White House in Washington, D.C., in which twenty Latin American countries joined the U.S. in signing this historic document.

Nicholas Roerich dedicated his life to the task of inspiring people to transform ugliness into beauty, to overcome desecration with creativity, and to replace wars with brotherhood. According to Nicholas Roerich, “Positive creativeness is the fundamental quality of the human spirit. Let us welcome all those who, surmounting personal difficulties, ...propel their spirits to the task of peace-building, thus ensuring a radiant future.”

This profound philosopher-artist discovered during the course of his travels that many cultures include an ancient symbol consisting of three adjacent circles within a ring. The symbol appears on the pillars and walls of houses, silver serving vessels, military banners, prayer banners, and woodcuts. To Nicholas Roerich the three circles represent three domains of human endeavor: science, art, and ethics or spirituality. The circles are adjacent to represent the synthesis of all sciences, all arts, and all religions. Encircling this synthesis of research, creativity, and ethics is the ring of peace through culture.

The Banner of Peace through Culture bears the all-encompassing ring signifying wholeness and unity. The three spheres, represent a synthesis of science, art, and ethics. They signify balance and the relationship of the whole and its parts. This unified triplicity is the philosophical matrix for the four-sided tetrahedron of the World Core Curriculum. The synthesis of the spheres is enhanced by the synergy of the four tetrahedrons. The Four Atmospheres breathe the air of compassion and understanding into our environments. The constitution of the human being illumines multidimensional considerations and challenges us to ennoble physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realities. The Four Premises provide a dynamic, responsive matrix for curriculum design. The Four Harmonies provide fluidity, so subjects are not taught in isolation, but flow in relationship to one another.

We have suggested that schools of the coming era unite under the Banner of Peace, striving for a synthesis of art, science, and ethics. Within the Four Harmonies, the development of synthesis in education can proceed unencumbered. The World Core Curriculum can serve as a philosophical umbrella for holistic education with built-in flexibility for introducing and blending innovative methodologies. Every generation will require new considerations. Always there will be brilliant minds that cause us to stretch to new possibilities. The challenge is to adopt new approaches without becoming crystallized. It is organic, life celebrating processes that breathe culture into the structure of civilization.

The inculcation of educational communities with ethics, the third element of cultural synthesis, requires the leadership of adults who are aware of themselves as cultural role models, and who guide the children with respect for child natures. The adults model culture by serving as constructively engaged, socially responsible, balanced leaders.

The World Core Curriculum community offers the child an extended family that has the obligation to model respect for individual rights. We must demonstrate our willingness to sacrifice special interests to the achievement of a consensus among members. Beyond tolerance, we must celebrate the differences among human societies. The relationships among the surrounding adults, their treatment of children, and their subtle and apparent attitudes toward their fellow humans either deprive our offspring of badly needed skills and attitudes or immerse them in harmonious relationships. The demonstration of harmonious relationships will help our children bring their own full measure of heart to the world as they become adults. If the adults around a child are drawing up sides, overtly gossiping, and exhibiting impatience with childish tendencies, the child learns self-justification and intolerance. On the other hand, if the child's elders are patient, willing to see another's point of view, and magnanimous when they refer to other people, the child learns thoughtful self-discipline and compassion. These are the education center's foundational lessons about the human family. Through the lens of the child's immediate experience, we bring the scope of the human family to the child.

### **Nurturing the Child Nature**

Nature has encoded into the child the perfect timing for a metamorphosis of astonishing beauty far beyond the version we would coerce, contort to our specifications, or hurry along toward completion. Our sacred task is to provide proper nurturing and an appropriate psychological atmosphere as we patiently encourage these metamorphoses. The work of guides, mentors, and protectors is the synthesis of research and sensitive observation, logic that serves intuition, and reverence for the hidden processes of the soul. Let communities of adults leave behind forever the life-dulling practices of being primarily judges, coercers, lecturers, homework assigners, and test-givers of children. Let us become guardians of ripening potential, stimulators of boundless creativity, challengers of profound thought, and leaders in humble quests for enlightenment. Let us emerge from the dark ages of cold autocratic environments to an age of warm, child-friendly centers in which maternal and paternal energies combine to nurture and stimulate warm hearts and strong intellects. In our redesign of educational communities, let there be no further suppression of the heart by the intellect; rather, let the heart engage the brain as its faithful servant.

### **Wider Matrices and the New Paradigm**

One of the most common questions that innovative, child- and globally-centered schools are asked is, "Are you preparing these children for the real world? Aren't they in for a real culture shock when they leave this protected environment for the harsh realities of survival in a 'dog-eat-dog society?' Are they equipped to withstand the psychological isolation and relentless demands of a competitive world?" These are very important and valid questions that schools following "the road less traveled" need to conscientiously address.

We agree that the purpose of education *is* to prepare people for the real world. However, its purpose is not to prepare yet another generation to fit into the corporate or political status quo. The world needs leaders who have the inner strength to blaze new trails. The backbone of such people is strong ethics. In true culture, there is no substitute for integrity and no hedging in true courage. The

cultured CEO would refuse to victimize Third World populations or entice children with images of cynicism and violence. Nor could an obsession with power and status or the desire to line his pockets with gold divert political or corporate attention from the spew of pollutants devastating the planet.

Centers of learning that practice right human relations, and in which the children *live* their connectedness with all life as they gain knowledge of the world, are wombs of wisdom and ethics. The application of feminine intuition and sensitivity to organic processes in learning communities encourages future leaders who will carve out a place for themselves by establishing organizations that are socially responsive organisms. No doubt they will face many obstacles. Who doesn't? But who has a greater measure of the inner peace, clear conscience, and realized brotherhood for which humanity hungers—the ruthless and stressed executive pursuing power and money, or the courageous leader motivated by a noble cause? Who is better prepared to tackle interpersonal conflicts in the workplace—the adult product of years of judgmental and punitive measures, or those who have participated in effective yet compassionate communications from their earliest relationships? Child/global centered education *does* prepare children for the real world. However, our goal is to nurture world citizens who, rather than fitting into the mold, carve out elevated possibilities.

### **The Unity Cycle**

The shift that is occurring in the physical and social sciences concerns the relationship between the parts and the whole. Emphasizing the parts, the mechanistic, reductionist, and atomistic world view has dominated the sciences and social institutions including schools. The new paradigm emphasizes the whole inclusive of its organisms that exist in ecological relationships. In the twentieth century, the holistic perspective has become known as “systemic” and characterized by “systems thinking.” This is not simply a new intellectual domain to be conquered by analytical thinking. It requires humanity to retrieve the feminine aspect—the bearer of intuitive and whole-brain comprehension.

### **Nature's Playgrounds**

Learning settings that meet the requirements for the whole child, factor in large play areas in nature. Children thrive in natural settings where nature offers opportunities to climb, stretch and run. As the children play freely under, and up in, a variety of trees, in the midst of large shrubs, and in fields that follow natural contours of land, they develop an intimate connection with nature. This can ripen into love for the Earth as they smell the earthy scents, hear the bird songs, and devise endless uses for sticks, twigs, leaves, seeds, fruits, and nuts.

The happily absorbed child is developing concentration and dedication to the project at hand in preparation for the future scientific or corporate realm. Beyond this, the child is learning of her connection with our planetary home so that the metamorphosed adult will hold the Earth inviolate in inventions and pursuits.

## **From Meaningful Immersion to a Sense of Unity**

The child's observation of, and immersion in, the interrelated laws of nature is a sacred process. His experience of the power and beauty of natural phenomena, merges with and enriches the child's own developing nature. When his experiences are in association with adults who themselves appreciate the beauty of these cycles, the learning process is both joyful and profound. Guiding children according to the law of attraction is the surest path to an inclusive society of people operating with more whole-brain functioning. On the other hand, imposing curriculum in unattractive and premature assignments is a sure way to cripple the creative potential in vast numbers of people. Guidance along the golden mean requires patient, informed, insightful nurturing of potential. It also requires faith that the seed, though buried beneath the soil, will respond irresistibly to the warmth of encouragement, according to its own precise timetable.

The schools of the future factor freedom, joy, and enlightened leadership into more diverse and humane measures of success. Including these elements yields results that far surpass the current versions which confine and constrain the human spirit. Schools of the future go to the child and draw out her powerful spiritual potential for her unique mission. They closely examine their curricula to make sure it contains equal respect for a variety of paths that lead to excellence in the artistic, scientific, and philosophical domains. When the child-centered curricula is global with respect to the child's brain, as well as to our planetary home, we have schools that are child/global centered. Synthesis is a multifaceted jewel blending masculine and feminine, individual and group, ethical and practical, and subtle and apparent realities in multihued radiance. Thoughtful guidance, which synthesizes pairs of opposite qualities, stimulates a transformative process in harmony with individual interior ecology and planetary laws of nature. It interweaves the science of human psychology, the many branches of human knowledge, and the science of moral laws. Transformative education strives for the welfare of the child along with the benefit of the world.

Under the auspices of the Four Harmonies, modern education will welcome the feminine principle with its gifts of intuitive nurturing, compassion, and creativity to positions of prominence. Without this balance, humanity will continue its march of desecration and violence to final extinction. Among the children benefiting from an education of the heart, are the bright and eager forerunners of a new humanity. As adults, these children will act more in consonance with angelic impressions than brute impulses. The brain receives and organizes input from our multidimensional intuition, and that is the catalyst for whole-mind functioning. If we choose the path of cultured evolution, the seventy percent of our brain that few of us currently use will one day be at the Suprahuman's disposal. Governed by the heart, the future child's mind will intuitively and instantaneously access knowledge and wisdom. By means of a sense of fantasy, he will synthesize masculine and feminine influences to precipitate new cultural designs and engineer planetary centers of breathtaking beauty and economy. World Core Curriculum schools are centers to midwife evolution's next great leap in consciousness.