

QUOTES -- DR. MARIA MONTESSORI

Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so **to touch his imagination as to enthuse** him to his innermost core.

The training of the teacher who is to help life is something far more than the learning of ideas. It includes the training of character; it is a preparation of the spirit.

It is my belief that **the thing which we should cultivate** in our teachers is more the spirit than the mechanical skill of the scientist; that is, the direction of the preparation should be toward the spirit rather than toward the mechanism.

The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.

The word education must not be understood in the sense of teaching but of **assisting the psychological development** of the child.

Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking **the release of human potentialities**.

It is not enough for the teacher to love the child. She must first **love and understand the universe**. She must prepare herself, and truly work at it.

Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future.

The teacher's task is no small or easy one! He has to prepare a huge amount of knowledge **to satisfy the child's mental hunger**, and he is not, like the ordinary teacher, limited by a syllabus.

The first duty of an education is to stir up life, but **leave it free to develop**.

It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may **never be the obstacle** between the child and his experience.

Written language can be acquired more easily by children of four years than by those of six. While children of six usually need at least two years to learn how to write children of four years learn this second language within a few months.

One who desires to be a teacher must have an interest in humanity that connects the observer more closely than that which joins the biologist or zoologist to nature.

The most urgent task facing educators is to come to know this unknown child and to free it from all entanglements.

These words reveal the child's inner needs: "Help me to do it alone."

Sometimes very small children in a proper environment develop a skill and exactness in their work that can only surprise us.

The environment itself will teach the child, if every error he makes is manifest to him, without the intervention of a parent or teacher, who should remain a quiet observer of all that happens.

Any child who is self-sufficient, who can tie his shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of human dignity, which is derived from a sense of independence.

The life of the spirit prepares the dynamic power for daily life, and, on its side, daily life encourages thought by means of ordinary work.

Education demands, then, only this: the utilization of the inner powers of the child for his own instruction.

The most difficult thing to make clear to the new teacher is that because the child progresses, she must restrain herself and avoid giving directions, even if at first they are expected; all her faith must repose in his latent powers.

The more the capacity to concentrate is developed, the more often the profound tranquility in work is achieved, then the clearer will be the manifestation of discipline within the child.

We must, therefore, quit our roles as jailers and instead take care to prepare an environment in which we do as little as possible to exhaust the child with our surveillance and instruction.

A felicitous environment that guides the children and offers them the means to exercise their own faculties permits the teacher to absent herself temporarily. The creation of such an environment is already the realization of great progress.

Respect all the reasonable forms of activity in which the child engages and try to understand them.

We must help the child to liberate himself from his defects without making him feel his weakness.

The child is much more spiritually elevated than is usually supposed. He often suffers, not from too much work, but from work that is unworthy of him.

There is a part of a child's soul that has always been unknown but which must be known. With a spirit of sacrifice and enthusiasm we must go in search, like those who travel to foreign lands and tear up mountains in their search for hidden gold.

The adult must find within himself the still unknown error that prevents him from seeing the child as he is.

In their dealings with children adults do not become egotistic but egocentric. They look upon everything pertaining to a child's soul from their own point of view and, consequently, their misapprehensions increase.

There is in the soul of a child an impenetrable secret that is gradually revealed as it develops.

The first essential for the child's development is concentration. The child who concentrates is immensely happy.

"There is a part of a child's soul that has always been unknown but which must be known. With a spirit of sacrifice and enthusiasm we must go in search like those who travel to foreign lands and tear up mountains in their search for hidden gold. This is what the adults must do who seeks the unknown factor that lies hidden in the depths of a child's soul. This is a labor in which all must share, without distinction of nation, race, or social standing since it means the bringing forth of an indispensable element for the moral progress of mankind." (The Secret of Childhood, Maria Montessori)

If teaching is to be effective with young children, it must assist them to advance on the way to independence. It must initiate them into those kinds of activities which they can perform themselves and which keep them from being a burden to others because of their inabilities. We must help them to learn how to walk without assistance, to run, to go up and down the stairs, to pick up fallen objects, to dress and undress, to wash themselves, to express their needs in a way that is clearly understood, and to attempt to satisfy their desires through their own efforts. All this is part of an education for independence." (The Discovery of the Child, Maria Montessori)

The ancient saying, "There is nothing in the intellect which was not first in some way in the senses", and senses being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge, says Maria Montessori.

"This system in which a child is constantly moving objects with his hands and actively exercising his senses, also takes into account a child's special aptitude for mathematics. When they leave the material, the children very easily reach the point where they wish to write out the operation. They thus carry out an abstract mental operation and acquire a kind of natural and spontaneous inclination for mental calculations." (The Discovery of the Child, Maria Montessori)