

INSIGHTS INTO LEARNING AND TEACHING

by

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THE W H Y OF LEARNING

A. LEVELS OF MOTIVATION

1. No motivation at all - no hunger for truth
satisfied with what we have - indifference to higher truths
2. Motivated to learn out of obedience - to parents, teachers, religious authorities
3. Motivated to learn out of intellectual curiosity
4. Motivated out of desire for self-realization - personality integration
5. Motivated to learn out of desire to obtain the knowledge and wisdom which will enable us to help others
6. Motivated to learn out of a sense of responsibility towards God the Supreme - We have realized that he triumphs through us

B. TWO WAYS THAT WILL LEAD SOMEONE TO DESIRE TO KNOW GOD

1. As a result of the experiences of living
Trials and difficulties of life
2. As the result of contact with the lives of God-knowing individuals

LEARNING AND TEACHING TRUTH

- A. The best way we can teach: permit the Father to reveal himself in our lives. (1466)
1. The apostle Phillip's technique "Come and see" (1557)
 2. Advice to parents (1557)
- B. The best way we can learn: experience of living
1. Pure inductive method

We deduct our personal conclusions from what we perceive and understand through observations, personal experiences, reasoning.
 2. Advantages
 - a. joy of discovery (1573)
 - b. knowledge retained longer
attitude of mind may be changed

} because of personal effort
personal involvement
 3. Disadvantages
 - a. many chances for erroneous, hasty conclusions
 - b. tendency to generalize from a few facts, observations, experiences
 4. Role of adversity, tribulations in learning wisdom (556 #12, 557 #16)
- C. Importance of the intellectual and spiritual maturity of the truth-seeker
1. Some factors
 - a. heredity (556 #3)
 - b. environment and education (848)
 - c. assimilation of past experiences
 - d. level of harmony, communication with Thought Adjuster
 2. Role of the teacher
 - a. adapt truth to the capacity of receptivity of learner (1474)

Examples from Jesus' life

 - Nathaniel and the Scriptures (1767)
 - Gadiah and the tradition of Jonah (1428)
 - b. adapt truth without changing it

D. Importance of the particular religious and philosophic background of the learner

1. The concepts the learner has acquired may help or hamper his progress
2. Role of the teacher
 - a. have a knowledge of the main concepts of the living religions of his time (1476)
 - b. choose and stress the positive concepts understood and accepted by the learner (In the light of the Urantia Book's teachings.) (1769)

E. Serving spiritual food in attractive form

1. Comparisons and analogies (84, 1235)
2. Advantages
 - a. help learner gain mental concept of truth
 - b. have flexibility of adaptation to level of receptivity

F. Guided inductive method: Conveying the teaching (s) through questions and answers. (1546, 1583)

1. Role of the teacher: leads the inquirer to arrive at certain definite conclusions by himself
-helps the inquirer to recognize the nature of what he has already experienced (1134)
2. Conditions of efficiency of the technique: person to person, small group ministry
3. Not systematic - teaching moments - teach as the occasion serves from life - (1672)
4. Advantages: participation, direct involvement, clarifications through discussions, etc...

G. Deductive method - Authoritative method

1. Systematic teaching
2. Having learned laws, relationships, etc... we apply them to particular cases
3. Epochal revelations

4. Value of such revelations: "transiently clarify knowledge by
 - a. The reduction of confusion by the authoritative elimination of error.
 - b. The co-ordination of known or about-to-be-known facts and observations.
 - c. The restoration of important bits of lost knowledge concerning epochal transactions in the distant past.
 - d. The supplying of information which will fill in vital missing gaps in otherwise earned knowledge.
 - e. Presenting cosmic data in such a manner as to illuminate the spiritual teachings contained in the accompanying revelation." (1109)

5. Disadvantages

- a. tendency to lean too heavily on the "experts" (scientists, philosophers, religious authorities)
- b. tendency to learn like a parrot - repeating without understanding
- c. tendency to diminish creative speculation
- d. tendency to crystallize religious concepts

H. Role of emotion in learning

1. Warning against it

- a. "appeal to human feelings is transitory and utterly disappointing" (1705)
- b. "strong feelings of emotion are not equivalent to the leadings of the divine spirit" (1766)
- c. "should not be directly appealed to in the teachings of those who would advance the kingdom" (1765)

2. Nevertheless it has a role

technique of arresting and focusing the intellectual attention (1705)

3. Teaching ≠ preaching

I. Role of spirit in learning

1. "Make your appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men" (1765)
2. What it implies in teaching

J. Role of teaching in learning

1. "Knowledge is possessed only by sharing" (557 #26)
2. Teaching what one has learned - on morontia worlds (428 #4)

CONCLUSIONS

- A. Because of the many different levels of motivation, intellectual and spiritual maturity, the different religious and philosophic background of the inquirers, we have to individualize our teaching, choosing the method that is best suited to each individual.
- B. Because of the presence of the divine spirit within the minds of men, the role of the teacher is mostly that of a "facilitator" of learning.

Insights into Learning and Teaching

SUMMARY

The teacher of truth:

1. Attracts only those who are hungry for truth.
2. Discerns the intellectual and spiritual capacity of receptivity of the enquirer and adapts truth to that level without changing it.
3. Respects the religious and philosophic background of the truth-seeker. He chooses the best of what the latter accepts and understands and he stresses it to prepare the ground for higher truths.
4. Uses techniques that:
 - present truth in attractive form
 - help the learner to discover it by himself
 - whet appetite for more truth
5. Does not overwhelm the learner with mental superiority or shrewd eloquence.
6. Appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men.
7. Is himself constantly learning. He is teachable.
8. Permits the Father to reveal himself in his life, thus causing others to desire to know the Father, to become hungry for truth.

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SELECTED URANTIA BOOK REFERENCES

- 84 - The discriminative operation of the spirit-gravity circuit might possibly be compared to the functions of the neural circuits in the material human body; sensations travel inward over the neural paths; some are detained and responded to by the lower automatic spinal centers; others pass on to the less automatic but habit-trained centers of the lower brain, while the most important and vital incoming messages flash by these subordinate centers and are immediately registered in the highest levels of human consciousness.
- 428:4 - ...the morontia mortals who are assigned as helpers to those of their kind who are just behind them in the scale of ascendant life.
- 556:3 - Inherent capacities cannot be exceeded; a pint can never hold a quart. The spirit concept cannot be mechanically forced into the material memory mold.
- 556:12 - The greatest affliction of the cosmos is never to have been afflicted. Mortals only learn wisdom by experiencing tribulation.
- 556:14 - Whet the appetites of your associates for truth; give advice only when it is asked for.
- 557:16 - You cannot perceive spiritual truth until you feelingly experience it, and many truths are not really felt except in adversity.
- 557:26 - Knowledge is possessed only by sharing; it is safeguarded by wisdom and socialized by love.
- 848 - The observation of Abel's conduct establishes the value of environment and education as factors in character development. Abel had an ideal inheritance, and heredity lies at the bottom of all character; but the influence of an inferior environment virtually neutralized this magnificent inheritance. Abel, especially during his younger years, was greatly influenced by his unfavorable surroundings. He would have become an entirely different person had he lived to be twenty-five or thirty; his superb inheritance would then have shown itself. While a good environment cannot contribute much toward really overcoming the character handicaps of a base heredity, a bad environment can very effectively spoil an excellent inheritance, at least during the younger years of life. Good social environment and proper education are indispensable soil and atmosphere for getting the most out of a good inheritance.
- 1109 - In the last analysis, religion is to be judged by its fruits, according to the manner and the extent to which it exhibits its own inherent and divine excellence.

- 1134 - It is fatal to man's idealism when he is taught that all of his altruistic impulses are merely the development of his natural herd instincts. But he is ennobled and mightily energized when he learns that these higher urges of his soul emanate from the spiritual forces that indwell his mortal mind.
- 1235 - Just as a butterfly emerges from the caterpillar stage, so will the true personalities of human beings emerge on the mansion worlds, for the first time revealed apart from their onetime enshrouding in the material flesh.
- 1428 - And when he had concluded his remarks, he asked Jesus this question: "But do you suppose the big fish really did swallow Jonah?" Jesus perceived that this young man's life had been tremendously influenced by this tradition, and that its contemplation had impressed upon him the folly of trying to run away from duty; Jesus therefore said nothing that would suddenly destroy the foundations of Gadiab's present motivation for practical living.
- 1474 - The miller he taught about grinding up the grains of truth in the mill of living experience so as to render the difficult things of divine life readily receivable by even the weak and feeble among one's fellow mortals. Said Jesus: "Give the milk of truth to those who are babes in spiritual perception. In your living and loving ministry serve spiritual food in attractive form and suited to the capacity of receptivity of each of your inquirers."
- 1546 - Though Jesus' public teaching mainly consisted in parables and short discourses, he invariably taught his apostles by questions and answers. He would always pause to answer sincere questions during his later public discourses.
- 1458 - An experience is good when it heightens the appreciation of beauty, augments the moral will, enhances the discernment of truth, enhances the capacity to love and serve one's fellows, exalts the spiritual ideals, and unifies the supreme human motives of time with the eternal plans of the indwelling Adjuster, all of which lead directly to an increased desire to do the Father's will, thereby fostering the divine passion to find God and to be more like him.
- 1459 - Truth cannot be defined with words, only by living. Truth is always more than knowledge. Knowledge pertains to things observed, but truth transcends such purely material levels in that it consorts with wisdom and embraces such imponderables as human experience, even spiritual and living realities. Knowledge originates in science; wisdom, in true philosophy; truth, in the religious experience of spiritual living. Knowledge deals with facts; wisdom, with relationships; truth, with reality values.
- 1459 - Revealed truth, personally discovered truth, is the supreme delight of the human soul; it is the joint creation of the material mind and the indwelling spirit.

- 1459 - The human soul (personality) of man survives mortal death by identity association with this indwelling spark of divinity.
- 1459 - The concealed seed of the human soul is an immortal spirit.
- 1476 - Jesus and Ganid had thoroughly discussed the teachings of Plato when they attended the lectures in the museum at Alexandria.
- 1478 - "The soul is the self-reflective, truth-discerning, and spirit-perceiving part of man."
- 1478 - "Moral choice and spiritual attainment, the ability to know God and the urge to be like him, are the characteristics of the soul.
- 1557 - He had that great and rare gift of saying, "Come." When his first convert, Nathaniel, wanted to argue about the merits and demerits of Jesus and Nazareth, Phillip's effective reply was, "Come and see." He was not a dogmatic preacher who exhorted his hearers to "Go" - do this and do that. He met all situations as they arose in his work with "Come" - "come with me; I will show you the way." And that is always the effective technique in all forms and phases of teaching. Even parents may learn from Phillip the better way of saying to their children not "Go do this and go do that," but rather, "Come with us while we show and share with you the better way."
- 1466 - "Ganid, the man was not hungry for truth. He was not dissatisfied with himself. He was not ready to ask for help, and the eyes of his mind were not open to receive light for the soul. That man was not ripe for the harvest of salvation; he must be allowed more time for the trials and difficulties of life to prepare him for the reception of wisdom and higher learning. Or, if we could have him live with us, we might by our lives show him the Father in heaven, and thus would he become so attracted by our lives as sons of God that he would be constrained to inquire about our Father. You cannot reveal God to those who do not seek for him; you cannot lead unwilling souls into the joys of salvation. Man must become hungry for truth as a result of the experiences of living, or he must desire to know God as the result of contact with the lives of those who are acquainted with the divine Father before another human being can act as the means of leading such a fellow mortal to the Father in heaven. If we know God, our real business on earth is so to live as to permit the Father to reveal himself in our lives, and thus will all God-seeking persons see the Father and ask for our help in finding out more about the God who in this manner finds expression in our lives.
- 1546 - Though Jesus' public teaching mainly consisted in parables and short discourses, he invariably taught his apostles by questions and answers. He would always pause to answer sincere questions during his later public discourses.

- 1672 - Jesus was a teacher who taught as the occasion served; he was not a systematic teacher. Jesus taught not so much from the law as from life, by parables.
- 1705 - "You see, my children, the appeal to human feelings is transitory and utterly disappointing; the exclusive appeal to the intellect of man is likewise empty and barren; it is only by making your appeal to the spirit which lives within the human mind that you can hope to achieve lasting success and accomplish those marvelous transformations of human character.
- 1705 - Jesus taught the appeal to the emotions as the technique of arresting and focusing the intellectual attention. He designated the mind thus aroused and quickened as the gateway to the soul, where there resides that spiritual nature of man which must recognize truth and respond to the spiritual appeal of the gospel in order to afford the permanent results of true character transformations.
- 1722 - He knew how human beings are swayed by the preacher's eloquence, and how conscience responds to emotional appeal as the mind does to logic and reason, but he also knew how far more difficult it is to persuade men to disown the past.
- 1730 - "Go now apart by yourselves, each man alone with the Father, and there find the unemotional answer to my question, and having found such a true and sincere attitude of soul, speak that answer freely and boldly to my Father and your Father."
- 1730 - Their spirits were uplifted, their minds were inspired, and their emotions mightily stirred by what Jesus had said. But when Andrew called them together, the Master said only: "Let us resume our journey. We go into Phoenicia to tarry for a season, and all of you should pray the Father to transform your emotions of mind and body into the higher loyalties of mind and the more satisfying experiences of the spirit."
- 1765 - Overpowering arguments and mental superiority are not to be employed to coerce men and women into the kingdom. Man's mind is not to be crushed by the mere weight of logic or overawed by shrewd eloquence.
- 1765 - While emotion as a factor in human decisions cannot be wholly eliminated, it should not be directly appealed to in the teachings of those who would advance the cause of the kingdom. Make your appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men.
- 1766 - Sometime the children of the kingdom will realize that strong feelings of emotion are not equivalent to the leadings of the divine spirit.
- 1767 - "Nathaniel, you have rightly judged; I do not regard the Scriptures as do the rabbis. I will talk with you about this matter on condition that you do not relate these things to your brethren, who are not all prepared to receive this teaching."

- 1769 - And this is illustrative of the way Jesus, day by day, appropriated the cream of the Hebrew scriptures for the instruction of his followers and for inclusion in the teachings of the new gospel of the kingdom.
- 1769 - Jesus took the best of the Jewish religion and translated it to a worthy setting in the new teachings of the gospel of the kingdom.
- 1777 - Emotional excitement is not the ideal spiritual stimulus. Excitement does not augment energy; it rather exhausts the powers of both mind and body.
- 1777 - Granted the possession of a normal body and reasonably good health, we must next look for those lures which will act as a stimulus to call forth man's slumbering spiritual forces. Jesus has taught us that God lives in man; then how can we induce man to release these soul-bound powers of divinity and infinity?