

Mentor's Energizer

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Measuring Human Happiness

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"Today, GNH (Gross National Happiness) has come to mean so many things to so many people but to me it signifies simply-Development with Values. Thus for my nation today GNH is the bridge between the fundamental values of kindness, equality and humanity and the necessary pursuit of economic growth."

Jigme Dorji Wangchuk
(King of Bhutan, 1972)

2nd Nat. Conf. on Universal
Human Values (30-31 May 15)



Human development and human wellbeing are inherently hard to quantify. Both are multi-faceted and hard to measure by material means alone. Up to a certain point, material wellbeing correlates with happiness, but past having a person's needs met, the connection weakens. Freedom from illness, access to education, social status and the accumulation of "things" signifying wealth are not a guarantee of happiness. One only has to look at the rates of depression, substance abuse and suicide seen among the richest citizens of the richest nations to see the disconnect between access to the material resources and the human desire for a life well lived. True transformative change can only come when we transcend the seemingly obvious and create a vision of true development: human lives and societies increasingly characterized by peace, wellbeing and happiness; by knowledge, culture, and industry; by dignity, value and purpose. In the past, "development" has been defined as the "few" helping the "many", but the advancement of global civilization will need to be shouldered by greater and greater proportions of the human family. This work, of building an ever-advancing, morally capable civilization is inescapably tied to individual human beings and the beliefs, feelings, values and aspirations they hold dear. In this view, human happiness is defined as much by qualities of the spirit as qualities of the material environment. Perhaps the following questions might be asked: What are the foundations for human happiness and contentment? How will human beings need to act towards one another if all are to live life to the fullest? What patterns of interaction will be required between and among individuals, communities, and the governing institutions of society? In what ways will qualities of spirit such as generosity, respect, or justice find practical, tangible expression in everyday life? Questions like this are challenging because they touch on complex issues of personal belief and social value. They resist answers that fall into a simple recipe or formula. In our universal human values classes, we encourage students to undertake a conscious exploration of these concerns and then put their findings into action. It is a humbling experience to be a mentor to students tackling such important issues. (Adapted from Development, Human Happiness and the Challenge of Distinguishing Means from Ends by Daniel Perell, Representative of the BIC to the United Nations, 25 August 2014.)

Teachers' Orientation Workshop on Education in Universal Human Values Fostering Personal Development & Social Progress Module 1: Moral Capabilities, 2-5 July 2015

The Objectives of the Workshop is to» Enhance Teachers' professional growth and train them to become Mentors of Education in Universal Human Values»Train the participants on Moral Capability module»Train the teachers on some Cooperative Learning Structures such as pair structures, Team Structures, Jigsaw and Brain Storming) »&Learn about and practice mentorship.

The Workshop includes:

1. Contact Sessions using Cooperative Learning; 2. Experiential learning through educational games and activities; 3. Happy Hippo Show

Introduction to:

1. Practical assignments: Equal Wings, Uprightness and Conceptual Framework
2. Service Learning Activities in the community

Arrival Date and Time: Evening of Wednesday 1st July 2015, 6:00 p.m.
Departure Date and Time: Sunday 5th July 2015 at 4:00pm.

How to get students talking



Sometimes our students are afraid to speak up on important topics, especially when asked to give their opinions. Whether it's because they are afraid of being wrong, laughed at, or judged in some way doesn't really matter. Our classrooms are places where the students can feel safe to be who they are and say what they would like to say. Before tackling the tough subjects, some games to warm them up to the idea of saying something beyond "yes" or "no" can really help. Here are two from our Energizer Compilation that are fun and productive.

One Minute Please

The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute. Use a pack of cards to randomly select i.e. person who draws the lowest number. Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and which may be amusing. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before running out of things to say. Subjects might include: my earliest memories, my favorite computer game, why beans are good for you, 10 things you can do with potatoes, dealing with snakes in the bathroom, how to make curry, etc.

Would you rather . . . ?

This is a variation of the game Mix and Match from the Energizer Compilation, but it involves a rope and jumping. Place a line of rope down the center of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape. When asked 'would you rather?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in, too. Here are some starter questions, and more can be found in the Energizer Compilation on the website.

Would you rather: Visit the doctor or the dentist? Eat broccoli or carrots? Watch TV or listen to music? Paint a picture or knit a blanket? Own a lizard or a snake? Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday? Be an apple or a banana?



Back issues of the Mentor Energizer and the full Energizer Compilation are available on the website. If you've missed an issue, please feel free to download it at www.bahaiacademy.org

What is true communication?

True communication means that you've touched the person you're communicating with at a heart level. You've seen beyond any barriers such as nationality, age, race, class or gender and are willing to share a moment in time where information and feelings are exchanged. Chattering isn't really communication. Words are being said, but no message is exchanged. This kind of conversation just fills the air with noise. True communication transfers a thought, feeling, opinion or piece of information from one person to another. A transfer is an exchange, not a one-way imparting of knowledge to a listener who might not be paying any attention. Here are a few tips about how to get a message across.

Stick to the topic: Before attempting any kind of communication, think about what it is you're trying to say. Organize it first in your mind and write down the key points so that you won't lose track of the topic. Whether communicating in person or by some electronic means, focusing is much appreciated by your listener.

Clear and Articulate: What can be said in thousands of words can probably be summed up in just a few. Eloquence means choosing the right words and saying them in the right way. We hold the attention of the listener when we are concise. Eloquence also implies a respect for the listeners. We don't waste their time with knowledge that begins in words and ends in words. Instead, what is worth passing on is meaningful and significant.

Listening: Communication is a two-way street. Active listening means not only hearing the words being used, but understanding their meaning and reflecting them back so that the speaker knows you understood.

Tone of Voice and Body Language: Being aware of how you come across to others through your tone of voice and body language. Our current mood comes through in our speech so remaining upbeat and positive is important. However, there are times when the context of the conversation requires a more concerned approach. Reading what the other person requires is part of active listening and true communication.

Next month: How do we cultivate an attitude of gratitude?