

Educating for Creative Thinking: The Waldorf Approach

Joan Almon

Joan Almon is a Waldorf kindergarten teacher with twenty years' experience who serves as a consultant and teacher in Waldorf schools and training programs in North America and abroad.

Old solutions are not adequate for modern problems. Their solution requires a renewal of thinking, and there is no better starting point for that renewal than with the education of children, especially young children. Educators generally agree that the quality of thinking among American students has been deteriorating at the very time when modern life needs more creativity and liveliness in human thought. In this article, I will explore some aspects of the development of creative thinking and some of the ways in which Waldorf education works to cultivate it among its students.

THINKING AND THE GOALS OF WALDORF EDUCATION

Although Waldorf education originated over seventy years ago, many people believe it will show its full promise in the twenty-first century rather than in the twentieth. The fact that it has been undergoing rapid growth all around the world since 1970, and that the growth rate is accelerating in the 1990s, indicates that it may well be an education now coming into its own because it fosters a thinking appropriate for our age.

At the same time, many other forms of education are under increasing attack. American public schools, for example, are facing a crisis in thinking, and educators everywhere are trying to understand why. There are three key manifestations of the crisis, as has been reported in the media and discussed at educational conferences. At the preschool level, many children are showing signs of stress and are not doing well in academically oriented kindergartens. Educators are now recommending a return to a play-oriented curriculum in the kindergarten, rather than the academic one that has prevailed for the past twenty years. At the elementary school level, one frequently hears about burnout among third- and fourth-grade pupils. After age nine, many children simply do not want to learn any more. In the high school, educators say that many students seem unable to think. Ask them a defined question that requires a true/false answer or a multiple choice, and they do all right. But ask them to think through a problem and explain their solutions, and many are at a loss. Few educators seem to see a relationship between these three crises, but, from a Waldorf point of view, the problems of the elementary school and high school follow on the heels of early academics in the kindergartens as surely as night follows day.

The high school situation is of particular concern to American society, which is looking for an acceleration in thinking but is finding instead a decay. The educational community is deeply concerned over how to "teach thinking" to its students. The crisis in thinking is well described by Jane Healy, an educator whose interest is brain research and the development of the mind. In her book *Endangered Minds* (1990), she writes:

"Teaching thinking skills,' another 'movement' currently passing through the education system, is a response to a growing concern that Johnny can't think any better than he can read. Programs attempting to teach thinking skills are selling like hotcakes at teachers' conferences and workshops. Yet critics scornfully point out it is a contradiction in terms to rely on packets, workbooks, computer drills, and worksheets to engage students' higher cognitive abilities. (P. 308)

Healy goes on to point out the need for two types of mental activity in the students if they are to be well-developed thinkers: the analytic and the creative.

Good thinking requires good analytic skills, but it also depends on imagination. Both halves of the brain, not simply the linear, analytic-verbal left hemisphere, contribute to it. The more visual, intuitive right hemisphere probably provides much of the inspiration, while the left marches along in its dutiful role as timekeeper and realist. . . . Some observers, concerned about declines in creative thinking, as well as in imagination, have advocated teaching methods and classroom experiences to stimulate the right hemisphere . . . [but] it is increasingly clear that genuine creative imagination springs from much deeper developmental roots—which can easily get short-changed in homes and in schools. (P. 315-16).

It is these deeper developmental roots of creative thinking that have interested me greatly as a Waldorf educator of young children. Analytic thinking is a very important aspect of thought in modern life and needs to be cultivated, along with the creative side of thinking. But because it is already so valued by modern society, I will only touch on it lightly in this article, although much could be said about how to integrate it into a creative curriculum. The focus will be on the other half of thinking, the creative, imaginative side. Under present social circumstances, there is a great danger that the creative aspect of the mind will atrophy under the onslaught of the media, of the hours spent in dry academic studies, and of the pressure produced by standardized exams. If we can help children to grow up with both sides of the mind actively maturing, then new forms of thought are possible, forms that are much needed now and in the future. It is clear that creative, multidisciplinary approaches to learning will be necessary if we are to solve major problems such as environmental issues. There is much talk about divergent thinking as an appropriate form for the future. Such thinking is defined as "creative, imaginative and flexible thinking that results in a variety and abundance of ideas or answers to a problem" (Thesaurus 1990, 72). Parents and educators remark that they commonly find such thinking in Waldorf graduates.

As a young teacher in the early 1970s, I was committed to being very eclectic in my approach to education. Some friends and I started a nursery school whose primary goal was to keep the spirit of the child lively and growing. We had all experienced the deadening effects of our own education and were convinced that there must be a better way to keep the inner spark of the child alive. When we first discovered Waldorf education, we liked the ideas and the methods, but it was really the children who convinced me that this education brought them more deep-seated satisfaction than any of the other approaches that we offered them. As we brought more Waldorf ideas into the classroom, the children turned to them and drank them in deeply. They opened to them like flowers opening to the sun. Their responses went well beyond their enjoyment of other educational practices that we offered them. The children convinced me that they loved Waldorf education, but I had many questions concerning whether this form of education worked over the long run. What sort of thinking did the students

display in high school? How did they do in college? How did they do in life? For years, I plagued the more experienced Waldorf teachers with my questions.

One Waldorf high school teacher told a story that made a deep impression on me. When her high school was new, it encouraged its twelfth graders to apply to less-pressured colleges, steering them towards small liberal arts schools. Gradually, the school's confidence grew, and it began to encourage students to apply to Ivy League schools. A number were accepted and, in their first year there, letters from the colleges began to arrive at the school, saying, "Send us more of your students. They are not necessarily the most intellectual students we have had, but they are by far the most well-rounded."

These thoughts are echoed by other educators who have worked with Waldorf graduates. For example, Dr. Warren Eickelberg (1991), professor of biology and director of the premedical curriculum at Adelphi University, has worked with a number of Waldorf graduates. He has this to say about them:

Without any doubt my past three decades (in the teaching profession) have been marked by change, change, and ever more change. Throughout this dynamism of activity, where values were under attack and standards of behavior were challenged, from time to time there would be a unique stabilizing influence in my classes: a Waldorf School graduate. And they were different from others. Without exception they were, at the same time, caring people, creative students, individuals of identifiable values, and students who, when they spoke, made a difference.

Waldorf School graduates see behind the facts that often must be repeated or explained on examination. They are keenly interested in the macrocosm of the universe and microcosm of the cell's ultrastructure, but they know that Chemistry, Biology and Physics can't tell them much about the nature of love. I feel certain that all Waldorf School graduates believe in the orderliness of our universe, and they believe the human mind can discern this order and appreciate its beauty. (P. 2)

Another quotation indicates that it is not only at the college level that the Waldorf students' thinking capacities shine forth. In Marin County, California, the Waldorf school goes only to eighth grade, and students transfer to local high schools, private and public, for the remainder of their schooling. A number have attended the Marin Academy, and its history teacher, James Shipman (1991) describes them in this way:

What I find most remarkable about Waldorf kids [is that] they have been taught to

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think; thinking is an "okay" activity for them to engage in. I think they intrinsically understand the difference between thinking about an issue and merely memorizing "the right answer" for the test. . . . It is as if somewhere in their early years of schooling they somehow got the idea that learning is a lifelong enterprise. (P. 1)

These anecdotal remarks describe some of the qualities of Waldorf students. There are not yet many quantitative studies about Waldorf education, but one major study in Germany compared Waldorf graduates with those graduating from college preparatory high schools called *Gymnasias*. Professors at the University of Bonn studied the test scores of 1,460 Waldorf students on the very rigorous state college entrance exam, the *Abitur*. The study compared their scores with those of students attending *Gymnasias*. The expectation was that *Gymnasia* students would score higher than the Waldorf students because the whole of the state school curriculum is geared towards the *Abitur*, but the opposite was found. Not only did the Waldorf school students score better than *Gymnasia* students, but the longer the students had been in a Waldorf school, the higher they scored (*Der Spiegel*). While the *Abitur* is hardly a test of creative thinking, these results do show that Waldorf education, far from handicapping students who prepare for such tests, actually seems to help them do well.

A THREEFOLD VIEW OF THE HUMAN BEING

What is it about Waldorf education that cultivates such all-around human qualities, including a strong capacity for thinking? When Rudolf Steiner founded the first Waldorf School, he placed much emphasis on three activities of the human soul—thinking, feeling, and willing. Steiner related these three aspects with the major parts of the physical body. He associated thinking with the brain and nervous system, feeling with the heart and lungs, which he called the rhythmic sys-

tem, and will activity with the limbs and metabolic system.

The three areas are distinct but also highly interconnected. One cannot function without the other two, yet each brings its unique qualities to the individual. When we speak of a well-balanced person, we usually mean that all three aspects are active and working together harmoniously. If one aspect predominates so strongly that others are suppressed, we find one-sided people. From this condition there arise stereotypes and caricatures. The caricature professor, for example, lives in an ivory tower, a picture of living solely in the activity of thinking, isolated from feelings and will. In contrast, the oversized jock, all brawn and no brain, lives in the will, in the limbs and in the huge amounts of food he consumes. In between, the artist is wrapped up in the feeling life, a bohemian existence teeming with human relationships and with little connection to the practical or intellectual. These are extremes, of course, but the pictures are helpful in understanding how one-sided we become if we do not cultivate all three aspects of our nature.

Rudolf Steiner not only described the three aspects in rich detail but spoke of how to educate children in order to develop all three capacities. Thinking, feeling, and willing do not develop at identical rates, but rather the focus is first on one, then on another. In the first seven years of life, the child is primarily living in the *will*, learning nearly everything through physical activity. During these years, learning takes place mostly in an unconscious manner through the child's imitation of the activities of adults and older children. Between the approximate ages of seven and fourteen, the child's *feeling* life is the strongest, and all that is taught through imagination and the arts penetrates deeply. Human relationships are also of great importance at this age. In a Waldorf school, they are fostered through the relationship with the class teacher, who ideally remains with the class for eight grades, teaching all the main lesson subjects and developing a deep connection with the children and their families. It is also very important that, in addition to creativity and imagination, the teacher foster an orderliness and healthy respect for boundaries in the classroom. These qualities will emerge later in the students' thinking, as well.

In the high school, cognitive and intellectual *thinking* awakens strongly, and students now work with teachers who are specialists in their own subjects. The students are helped to

observe phenomena, especially in the sciences, so that they can formulate their own conclusions and learn to explain and defend them. The thrust is toward developing independent judgment in the students, rather than feeding them finished statements. By working with diverse points of view in their studies, the students become skilled in looking at questions from a number of sides and appreciating the differences that are uncovered.

When the *thinking* in the high school years builds upon the *feeling* in the grade-school years and upon the *will* fostered in the pre-school age, the result is a mind characterized by creative imagination (thinking plus feeling), coupled with a strong wish to bring ideas down into practical reality (thinking plus will). It is a mind that sees relationships between the sciences or the world of nature on the one side and the humanities or the world of mankind on the other. It enjoys the interpenetration of the two. Such a mind also sees human activity, including thinking, as a harmonious art of a greater universal picture. The cultivation of such a worldview is an essential element of Waldorf education.

From early childhood on, a sense of wonder, gratitude, and reverence is cultivated in the child. He sees himself as part of a greater universe in which the hand of the creator plays a mighty role. Waldorf education is not a religious education in the sense of teaching a religion, but Rudolf Steiner (1979, 14) spoke often of the sense of wonder in childhood and the importance of cultivating it as a precursor to thinking. He described it in this way: "It is absolutely essential that before we begin to think, before we so much as begin to set our thinking in motion, we experience the condition of wonder." Although they are not affiliated with any religious institution, the Waldorf schools are filled with a deep reverence for the divine aspects of life. The human being is viewed as a bridge between the heavenly and earthly realms of life, and Waldorf education makes room for both realms.

LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR CREATIVE THINKING

The development of thinking is a rich and complex story, and one can only give a brief introduction to it in an article of this length. I have chosen to focus primarily on the first seven years of childhood for two reasons. One is that early childhood has been the focus of my own work for the past twenty years, and the other is that it is during these first six or seven years of life that a lifelong founda-

tion for thinking is laid. Absorbing academic content can wait until first grade begins, but the early years are full of experiences that affect the way the mind works and whether it will be rich or poor in creative forces.

The First Three Years

One can say that the most fundamental steps in thinking are taken during the first three years of life when the child has traditionally been at home. During the first year, the child focuses on physical movement, gradually gaining control over his head, trunk, and limbs. Controlling the head, turning over, sitting upright, standing, and walking are the high points that every parent eagerly awaits. Around age one, once the child is able to walk erect, he leaves the horizontal realm and enters the vertical. A new perspective of the world enters the child's being.

During the second year, the child works actively on the acquisition of language. Words begin to come, at first usually nouns for naming objects. The child begins to group and sort the surrounding world through the naming process. Little Hannah, for example, was fascinated by the dog across the street. Her first word was "dog," and for some time "dog" meant any creature that moved, be it on four feet or on two. Gradually she learned that Mommy, Daddy, and other humans were not "dogs" but had their own names. Then she began to realize that not all four-footed creatures were called "dogs" as she distinguished them from cats, squirrels, and other animals. In Hannah, one could see that the development of language is more than the mere acquisition of words. It is a whole process of sorting out the world and relating to it.

Out of speech, the rudiments of thinking begin to emerge. The more able the child is to describe the world with words, the more the child begins to ponder the world and tries to understand it. Now comes the series of "Why?" questions, as the child seeks to understand the world. Why is the sky blue, the sun yellow? Answers about atmospheric conditions and burning gases have no real meaning to the young child, but answers about the qualities of nature and how they make us feel satisfy deeply. The child's mind understands that the blue sky is like a great blue blanket that stretches over us and makes us feel safe, whereas a yellow sun fills us with warmth. The three year olds challenge us to return to a place of imagination and wonder in our own thinking as we ponder their questions.

During the third year, as the child enters

the realm of fantasy-filled thinking, several other major changes take place. At first glance, they do not seem related to thinking, but actually they are an integral part of it and show us much about the true nature of human thought. A most noticeable development is the use of the word "no" as the child enters the terrible twos. To the beleaguered parent, it seems as if a monster has entered the home, but all the child really wants to say is, "Step back and give me space. Something new is about to be born." What is new is an emerging sense of self, the beginning of a sense of "I." The word "I" is a most personal word that cannot be taught from without; it must arise from within. Prior to using this word, the child usually speaks of himself as "Johnny wants milk" or "Me wants milk." By now saying "I want milk," a new phase of self-awareness enters the child.

When this new sense of self enters, it often comes so strongly that one feels there is no room left in the child for a sense of "we." The child's social sense is pushed aside for the moment. It may seem that there is no one on the face of the earth quite so egotistical as a strong-willed three year old who has just discovered his or her own I. Consideration for others seems to disappear for a time, and only I-ness exists. Fortunately, the next stage of development brings forth an interest in the world, and the child begins to feel part of a larger social body again. The initial awareness of self is a necessary step for thinking because to think requires drawing into oneself. We do not stand in the center of the marketplace to do our thinking. We retreat into the ivory tower of our own minds. Descartes (1960, 20) said, "I think, therefore I am," but the three year old seems more to say, "I am, therefore I think." The experience of "I am" and the experience of thinking go hand in hand.

There is one other major development in the child that coincides with the development of thinking around age three, namely, the birth of fantasy in the child. Often beginning around two and a half, the child's play becomes less reality based and more filled with fantasy. Banging on the pots and pans no longer suffices. Now the pot may become a house, and the spoon a person who lives in it. Offer a two year old—who is still engaged in sorting out reality—a bowl of sand and say that it is a birthday cake, and she is very apt to put it in her mouth. Offer it to a three year old, and she or he may look quizzically at you and ask, "It's make believe, right?" Offer it to a four year old, and he or she knows it is a

play cake and proceeds to decorate it with sticks and leaves and calls her friends together for a birthday party. Fantasy, once born, allows children to play with the simplest objects and transform them into all that is needed for their play. Born around the same time as thinking, fantasy is a powerful partner to it. If fantasy is allowed to ripen side by side with thinking, these two faculties mature into creative thinking, a capacity to visualize not only how things are but also how they might be.

Regrettably, a great deal of modern education has misunderstood the importance of fantasy in the development of thinking. For the past twenty years or more, the cultivation of healthy fantasy in young children has been largely ignored in American early childhood centers. Emphasis instead has been placed on the development of rational, intellectual thought. From a Waldorf point of view, the absence of fantasy in the early years leads directly to the problems of stress, burnout, and the inability to think that now plagues so many American students. One of the great scientific minds of the twentieth century, Albert Einstein (in Stimpson 1988), understood the importance of fantasy as a critical part of modern human thought. "When I examine myself and my methods of thought," he said, "I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking (139).

The Kindergarten

If the child enters a mixed-age Waldorf kindergarten around age three and a half, then the "I" of the child is usually well established, and interest in life outside the self and home is beginning. The child enters the kindergarten at a time when his fantasy forces have been awakened and have begun to manifest in a lively way. His fantasy will go through several steps of development during the kindergarten years. At first, fantasy, young and fertile, bubbles up like the sweet porridge in the Grimms's fairy tale of that name. Like sweet porridge, it flows out everywhere. The child's fantasy is so full of activity and change that the three year old is more or less in perpetual motion. Gradually, the child becomes more focused in play, and the four year old can set up a play situation and remain with it for half an hour or more. The threes and fours, however, still have much in common in their play, for both are dependent on creating play situations out of what is at hand. They typically enter the kindergarten without an idea of what they want to play and

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wait for inspiration. This or that object captures their fancy, and their fantasy transforms it into what is needed. It is a great help to the growing fantasy if very simple natural objects are given as play materials. From these simple logs, stones, cloths, and other building materials, the child can create anything he needs, and his fantasy is not limited by defined objects. A fire engine that clearly looks like a fire engine is no use to a child who wants a space ship, or vice versa. But a handful of chairs, some cloths, and ropes can become any vehicle that the child desires.

A new stage of play consciousness begins with the five year olds, who often enter the kindergarten with an "idea" in mind. They do not wait for inspiration to arise from the objects at hand but start with an idea for play and then seek to create the objects that they need. They can easily stay with a play situation for an hour or longer and may play out the same idea for days on end. With the six year olds, this process goes one step further. They have an idea but often need few materials, if any, to carry out their idea. They will go through a period of time during which they take great pains to build a house or vehicle but take few props inside with them. Instead they "talk out" their play, expressing all the steps in play through conversation. That which previously took place outwardly with objects and busy limbs now takes place inwardly as imagination is born.

This change from fantasy play to imaginative play was beautifully described to me by Bronja Zahlingen, a well-known Waldorf kindergarten teacher from Vienna. As a child, she loved to play with small objects on a deep window seat in her bedroom. She would create a scene with little dolls and houses and play with them for long periods of time. She remembers that one day, when she was about six years old, she set up a scene as usual but then closed her eyes and played "inside." Imagination had been born, and she was able to participate in her play in a new way.

The development of imagination is an essential step in thinking, but where the development of fantasy has been curtailed, the development of imagination also suffers. Without imagination, one cannot picture an event in history, a verbal problem in mathematics, or the characters of a book. To approach academic subjects without imagination is a dull affair at best, and it is not surprising that children who are being educated without benefit of imagination at the elementary level find learning so uninteresting. Their newborn imagination is not being fed and nourished. Those who have been asked to master academics at the kindergarten level may suffer an even deeper problem, for in them imagination may be aborted before being born. There are indications that children who learn to read before age six or seven lose their early advantages, for they lose interest in reading and may eventually suffer burnout. This is not surprising when one thinks of how dull reading and learning are without benefit of imagination to bring them alive. In contrast, in my experience, the children who are the best players in the kindergarten and have the most active fantasy tend to become the most imaginative elementary pupils with the greatest interest in reading. They also tend to be the best-adjusted emotionally, both as children and even as adolescents and adults.

The relationship between success in fantasy play during the kindergarten years and later gains in mental development, as well as in social and emotional development, has been explored extensively by Sara Smilansky (1990) and others. They found that children who scored highest in what they called socio-dramatic play also showed the greatest gains in a number of cognitive areas such as higher intellectual competence, longer attention span, and more innovation and imaginativeness. The good players also showed more empathy towards others, less aggression, and in general more social and emotional adjustment. In addition, children who played well showed better ability to take on the perspective of others and showed fewer signs of fear, sadness, and fatigue. Smilansky's findings also point to simple, open-ended play materials as contributing more towards these developments than identifiable "toys" or learning materials. Her work is a strong confirmation of the relationship between fantasy play in young children and the development of capacities for strong thinking and a healthy emotional life (Smilansky 1990, 18-42).

Grades One to Eight

Between the approximate years of seven and fourteen, the intense physical activity of early childhood gives way to the feeling life of the child. Learning through imitation diminishes, and the child turns to the teacher in a new way, looking to her or him as a loving authority who knows the world. The preschool child feels, "I can do whatever you can do through imitation." The elementary child feels, "There is so much I do not know, but you are my teacher and you know and will teach me." The path to knowledge for the school child is through the relationship with the teacher as a loving authority.

The Waldorf class teacher is faced with a number of challenges in working with the child. The curriculum is particularly rich and diverse, and the teacher is expected to offer creative presentations on a vast array of subjects over an eight-year period. The intellectual challenge to the teachers is enormous. Their own thinking is constantly stimulated, as well as their own creativity and love of learning. Moreover, they have to find the living relationship that they form with their class over the eight-year period. Relationships with the children and their families are worked on and deepened over these years, and the children benefit tremendously from the continuity of relationship. At the same time, they learn to relate to a variety of teachers, for they have specialty classes in subjects as varied as foreign languages, arts, handwork, gymnastics, and gardening.

Another aspect new to the school child is the freeing of the memory forces. Preschool children often amaze us with the details that they remember of past events, but they can rarely call up memory at will. Rather, something is needed—a sound, smell, or sight—to trigger their memory, which then flows forth in abundance. By contrast, the school children are able to go into their minds and find the memory that they seek, an essential quality needed for mastering academic subjects.

An additional change in the elementary children is that they are very interested in rules. One sees this in play, where games with rules now predominate over the creative fantasy play of the younger child. In learning, too, the child is ready to be guided by rules. The rules of mathematics or writing make sense to the elementary child in a way that they cannot make sense to the younger child, for whom rules still have little inner meaning.

There are many other aspects of conscious-

ness that awaken in the school child. Many are related to the maturation of the rhythmic system, for heart and lungs now settle into a regular rhythm, whereas in the younger child they are still quite irregular. With the development of the rhythmic system comes the love of rhythmic games such as jumping rope with verses, rhythmic hand clapping, and throwing balls to the accompaniment of long verses. Moving in a rhythmic way (for example, in counting and recitation) speaks deeply to the school child.

As the rhythmic system develops, the feeling life of the child comes more and more to the fore. Education can be cool and intellectual and bypass the feelings, or it can stir them deeply. The teacher approaches the curriculum in artistic ways, bringing to life a wide range of subjects. The love that the children develop in these years for the subjects that they study ripens into a deeper quest for knowledge in adolescence and beyond. One of the tasks of the Waldorf elementary teacher is to present the curriculum in such a way that it stirs the imagination and feelings of the students, creating a context in which they can experience sympathy and antipathy, joy and sorrow, anger and tranquility, and much more. Through mythologies, great stories, and stirring biographies, the children's own moral impulses are awakened, and an idealism begins to grow in them that will flower in adolescence.

High School

Around age fourteen, the more formed cognitive and intellectual thinking life of the teenager begins to develop strongly. Now the student works with teachers who are specialists in their fields. They guide the student through the phase of critical thinking so characteristic of the young teenager and help the older adolescent develop independent judgment. In the Waldorf high school, students are taught to observe and reflect so that they may arrive at their own conclusions about life. They are encouraged to examine problems from many points of view, so that their thinking can be well rounded rather than narrow. From deep within the adolescent, there awakens a quest for truth, and this pursuit of truth takes them on journeys as profound as those of King Arthur's knights seeking the Holy Grail. Indeed, an idealism enters their being at this time not unlike that found in the Grail seekers of old. The Waldorf high school teacher recognizes that profound questions are stirring in the students, such as "Who am

I? What am I doing here? What is it I am seeking in life?" The academic subjects, both in the humanities and in the sciences, open doors to those deeper answers that students are seeking at this age.

High school students experience so many changes in the physical body, emotional life, and mental realms that it is very easy for them to become unbalanced in their development. Many teenagers devote themselves so fully to the cultivation of social life that they have little energy left for the development of thinking. Others turn their energies so avidly toward sports that the development of thinking again suffers. Whereas a balanced interest in social life and sports aids thinking, an excessive interest in them diverts energy from thought. There are no foolproof ways for guiding young people through adolescence, but there is a much greater chance that their minds will be able to blossom in a well-balanced manner if their physical nature has had a healthy chance to develop in early childhood and if their emotional life has had the opportunity to deepen during the elementary school years.

THINKING IN ADULTHOOD

All that has taken place in the first two decades lays a foundation for the coming of age at twenty-one, when young persons experience a more profound birth of the "I" or individuality than that which took place at age three. Now they are ready to take on much more inner responsibility for their own life's direction. Their "I" works through their thinking, feeling, and willing, and where these aspects of the self have been allowed to develop in a healthy and harmonious way, the "I" has a strong, clear instrument for its future use. If the instrument is damaged, then young adults will have to work extra hard to bring about a healing so that the individuality can sound forth in a clear and wholesome way.

If the mind is fertile and well related to the feelings and the will activity, then there are tremendous possibilities for growth and de-

velopment throughout a whole life. Our self-education may then lead us into the new realms of thinking spoken of by Rudolf Steiner. He described the modern human being as standing on a threshold. New capacities for higher forms of thinking can now be developed that were not possible before. In the opening sentence to his book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* (1975), he writes, "There slumber in every human being faculties by means of which he can acquire for himself a knowledge of higher worlds." The challenge for the modern human being is to awaken these faculties.

This awakening is not an easy process, but Steiner gives exercises and indications for helping to bring it about in a healthy manner. The path is made easier if the faculties of thinking have been allowed to mature in such a way that fantasy and imagination ripen in their own time, and independent thinking filled with idealism grows in the adolescent. All of this, when coupled with a sense of wonder, opens doors to new ways of thinking. A renewal in thinking becomes possible and, through it, a renewal of all other spheres of life.

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ReVision is published quarterly by Heldref Publications, a division of the nonprofit Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation.

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