

Education for Regeneration

Pulse of Spirit

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I want to tell the story of Harry Elkins Widener, for whom the largest library in Harvard University is named. Harry Elkins Widener was on the *Titanic* with his parents, and he was a famous bibliophile, which means a book collector at the time. Widener had brought important books with him on the *Titanic*. The story goes that as the ship sank, he had to scurry to a lifeboat carrying books in his hands. The story is told that when he took the last step just before the lifeboat, he had a change of heart and ran back to his cabin, shouting, “Just one more book!”, handing the others to his parents. Those were the last words ever heard from Harry Elkins Widener... “Just one more book!”

We don’t know if the story is true, although it has often been told. But I see the tale as a metaphor for the hopes of modern man about education. Just one more theory, one more methodology, one more invention, one more great idea, one more degree, one more formula, one more university, one more philosophy, one more technology, one more book, one more...

And you fill in the blank. Corporations were mentioned earlier, so we could say one more corporation or organization... One more... whatever...will save mankind.

And yet, in the meantime, the species aboard the good ship Earth have been sinking, and the “titanic” human ego has not succeeded using the present paradigm, no matter what the curriculum or the school of thought. None of the classes, degrees, workshops, ideas offered on board the “titanic” have reversed the downward plunge, especially since most educators have taken the same approach that built the *Titanic* in the first place.

We could also say that human beings have been degenerating into endless violence and greed, and so why should we take the same approach that led us to degeneration? One more book, one more theory, one more degree will not matter if we are living on borrowed time.

So we must focus on a new paradigm, one that *floats*, one that brings sustainability, wholeness and

regeneration. We need education that moves from the “me” generation to the *re*generation—the regeneration of humankind.

Just as it is important to pull back to see the whole “titanic” situation in context, if we are going to regenerate we must pull back and also see and educate the whole person in context, by drawing forth emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, physical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence—not just isolated mental intelligence. The whole person must be honored, educated and restored.

Now, I have the privilege of working in an excellent college, and perhaps many of you have had fine educations with fine colleagues at other excellent schools. And I have fine colleagues where I work, just as there are many committed, quality educators of integrity worldwide who truly love and inspire their students. So we want to see what is right and bright and creative among educators and reinforce that. I want to honor these great colleagues.

And yet both we and they have all inherited a system in which the university has come to act as if it is *apart from* the universe, not *a part of* the universe. In many cases, the attempt has been to use science to manipulate nature, rather than allow the elementary, middle, high school and university to be nourished by nature...and to teach us how to honor the basic laws and rhythms of *true* nature, nature in the hands of the universe.

I am hardly a perfect teacher, and we teachers must stay humble so we can learn from our students. And although I am hardly a perfect teacher, I have been blessed to learn some basic truths from spiritual

education over the years; and I want to thank my spiritual education teachers for these truths. Let me enumerate some of them.

First of all, that everything we do is teaching. We all teach by example. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, “Do not say things. What you are stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary.”

Secondly, since *educio* means “to draw forth” what’s already there in all people, isn’t it our privilege to inspire engagement so that students put their hearts into it? The heart must be engaged for something to be drawn forth for passionate learning and for change, deep change, to occur.

Thirdly, everyone in the education process must be loved—not romantically but divinely—so that they feel safe to bring changes and explore, and to make mistakes and become leaders themselves.

Fourth, what might be called “know how” and “know about,” although they are often necessary, are not enough. The most important knowing is to know thyself. How can the world change unless people change? And how can *we* change and be regenerated to our potential unless we know who we are and our purpose, and how to build substance, how to work cooperatively instead of competitively, how to create a climate of inner peace rather than a world of outer violence?

Ultimately, it is not what you know, or even *who* you know, but *who* you *are* that matters most. And it is not the *transportation* of information from one mind to another that is primary. It is the *transformation* of

each of us, beginning with me. Inner change educates the outer circle. People feel my change and growth, and that inspires. Genuineness attracts. Vibrational shift and attunement open the heart. And where the heart goes, the mind will follow.

We live in a time when the number one educator of the day has become the mass media—it is the number one educator. As early as fifteen years ago, research showed that children spend more time with their machines than with their teachers or with their parents. And although media are made to appear multi-channeled and therefore to give us multiple perspectives, ultimately the media have delivered one message again and again, thousands of times, *tens* of thousands of times, to impressionable young hearts and minds, and indeed to all of us. And in the aggregate, that one message is: *Something is wrong with you. Buy something.* And yet the number one message of regeneration education must be: *Something is right*

with you. Create something. Express something positive. Find your voice and express it. Be your true self in action. Our twentieth- and twenty-first-century generation have been the most saturated with electronic programming of any generation in history. And true education must ask of the student and the teacher, “Who are you *beneath* your programming?” And we must be the living answer to that question.

The answer is “*I am!* Beneath my programming, *I am. I am that I am.* I am the creator. The creator brings regeneration, and the collective Creator brings the power of true education, leading with light from the highest love.

It is a privilege to be doing that together with you.

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