



# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Education / Raju Z Moray

As we strive to arm our children with the best possible education it is time we stopped to reconsider its relevance to leading a balanced life.

What we are today is due in a large measure to the education that we have received in schools and colleges or at least we would like to believe so. This belief prompts us to provide a similar, if not better, education for our children. Even those who were themselves deprived of formal education, desire to give their children the best education which they can afford. And the best education is considered to be the one meted out by the recognised and established schools and colleges. Since the demand for such education always outpaces the supply, education in prestigious institutions is a luxury few can afford. Getting one's child admitted into such an institution is considered an achievement of sorts. Few, if any, analyse this situation to raise the question: Is this really the best education I should be giving my child?

If we reflect a bit on this, we can see that very little of what we studied is of any practical use to us in our daily life. Our education lacks what philosopher-mystic Alan Watts calls "survival techniques for both natural and urban wildernesses." In a very perceptive autobiographical piece entitled 'On Being Half-Miseducated', Watts pointed out (in 1972, mind you) that almost all schools and universities had become "production lines turning out stereotyped personnel and consumers for the industrial machine—a machine which is more and more subsevient, not to human needs, but to the abstract purposes of techno-logical expansion for its own sake, of the money game, and of competition for the hollow rewards of status." This observation is valid even today. There is a singular lack

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making, metalwork and carpentry, printing and typography, optics and acoustics, dancing and yoga in the curricula of modern mainstream educational institutions.

John-Roger and Peter Me Williams, best-selling authors of 'Life-101'

(published in 1990) observe that: "After twelve (or more) years of schooling, we know how to figure

the square root of an isosceles triangle (invaluable in daily life), but we do not know how to forgive ourselves and others (and the value of that).

"We know what direction migrating birds fly in autumn, but we were not sure which way we want to go.

"We have dissected a frog, but have never explored the dynamics of human relationships.

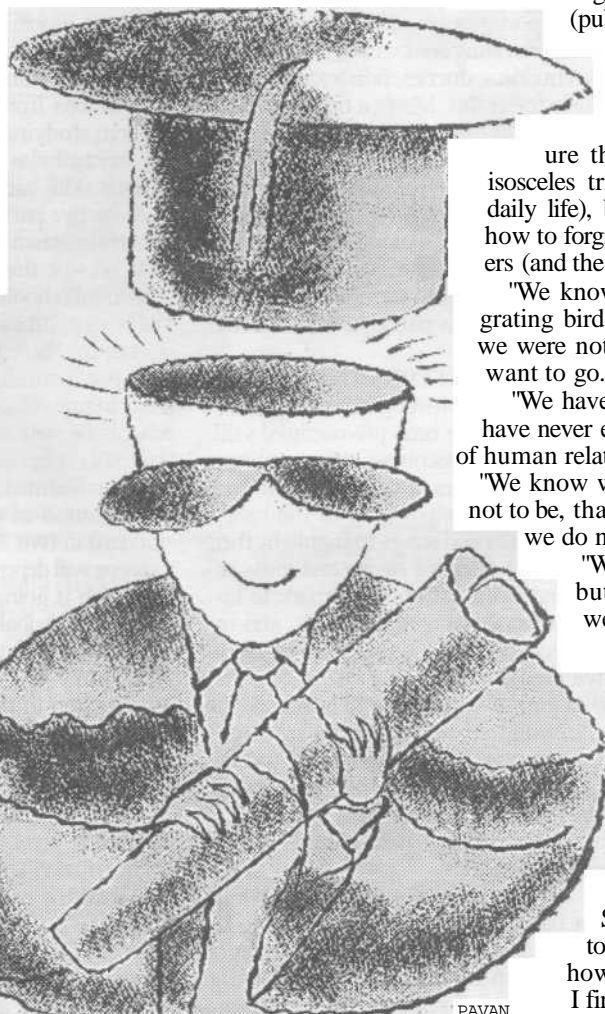
"We know who wrote, 'To be or not to be, that is the question', but we do not know the answer.

"We know what 'pi' is, but we are not sure who we are.

"We may know how to diagram a sentence, but we may not know how to love ourselves.

"That our educational system is not designed to teach us the "secrets of life" is no secret. In School, we learn how to do everything - except how to live."

I find myself utterly helpless, despite my Masters degree, when the plumbing leaks or the lights fuse out. I have to rush to the plumber or electrician, plead with him,



PAVAN

of practical (and interesting) subjects like vegetable gardening, first-aid medicine, sexual hygiene, cookery and clothes

pay him astronomical rates and settle for a shoddy job, badly done. Why? Because I am not "educated" in these simple things. If someone collapses from a cardiac arrest right in front of me, I do not know what I can do to resuscitate and revive him. I know that in three minutes a precious human life will be lost forever. I look around at the crowd that has gathered. No one knows what to do. They just crowd around. Its all over. Even if all of us had jointly recited. "Two one's are two" the life would not have been saved. But if I had been trained in rendering first-aid and cardiac massage, I could have saved a life. We have invented sophisticated calculators to do the most complicated mathematical sums and we have mass-produced them to an extent where they are now available for the price of imported chocolate - but we have no such device to save a life. Yet, my son still parroting his tables and knows nothing of what is to be done if I collapse in front of him.

J Krishnamurti proclaimed in 1953 that our entire educational system is diseased and warped because our education



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is not linked to the "significance of life." He said that conventional education makes independent thinking extremely difficult. The urge to be successful and the desire for comfort "smothers discontent, puts an end to spontaneity and breeds fear; and fear blocks the intelligent understanding of life." He said, "Our whole upbringing and education have

made us afraid to be different from our neighbour, afraid to think contrary to the established pattern of society, falsely respectful of authority and tradition." The classic book in which Krishnamurti gave his diagnosis and suggested the remedies (*viz Education and the Significance of Life*) has gone into several reprints and is still a bestseller, but nothing has changed in our mainstream education. What was said in 1953, could very well have been said yesterday. Whenever I meet a teacher, an educationist, anyone connected with education, I ask them if they have read this book. Most have not even heard of it. When I give them my copy to read, rave reviews often come back (though the book very often does not) but everyone expresses helplessness, shrugs shoulders and blames the "system."

No one grasps the fact that "We make up this system. We are at its centre. It exists for us. We do not exist for it. If we decide to change our outlook and our priorities, the system cannot withstand us for long. If we want a change, change will happen. But do we really want it? H