

Now I know, because I love Waldorf

25th of September 2017, source: the Turkish daily newspaper „Hürriyet“
(<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/nil-karaibrahimgil/waldorfu-neden-sevdigimi-buldum-40588937>)

Last week our newly founded kindergarden had a visitor from Germany. Our visitor was a scholar with indepth knowledge on the Waldorf philosophy. She addressed a group of us parents who have chosen to be a part of this kindergarden, and enlightened us further on the Waldorf pedagogy and the story of Rudolf Steiner.

Rudolf Steiner is a philosopher who supported the ideas of organic agriculture and homeopathy, and developed these concepts into what is today known as biodynamic agriculture and anthroposophical medicine respectively. He also disseminated great gold-dust wisdom on life, and on children. And we, as the people of a kindergarden inspired by the Waldorf philosophy, listened to her intently, and asked our questions.

I'm now sharing with you my thoughts and feelings at the end of the two-day seminar and the speeches we heard.

I feel that the word 'kindergarden' should be translated into Turkish not as 'anaokulu' (motherschool), but as 'yuva' (nest), or 'children's garden'.

This is not a school. What would a three year old child do in a school, anyway? This is a nest. A nest where bread is baked, and cinnamon apple-tea is boiled in the classes every week. A nest where voices are never raised. Just like home, a warm nest where one can play as one wants, without being judged for it.

“Trust is a concrete hope.” That phrase vibrates in my heart. What we call trust is actually solidified hope.

What children should develop in their initial years is trust. Trust in the external world, trust in themselves.

They must trust that life has a meaning, that struggles against barriers have meanings, that they themselves are valuable.

The path before them lights up only if this trust exists. Otherwise, it is like walking in the dark. To put it in a nutshell, if you don't trust yourself, there can be no step taken, if you don't trust the path, there won't be a path. And you can extend that trust, with love, with respect, living your life with it, within it.

More than being parents, what we are is role-models. And the child is an artist, much like Picasso; a sculptor shaping himself by looking at us.

What we say is of no importance at all. It is who the child models that is important. With the arrival of our children, what we should really say is, “Welcome, parent-school”.

A human being is constantly in the process of being built, but when a child arrives, you have to take another look at that structure and make yourself more beautiful. Because the child is looking at you. Looking through your eyes into the storms and turmoils inside you. Looking at how you solve a problem, what you say to the doorkeeper who opens the door for you. At how you walk in the park, what you do when there is no one around, how you treat the people you love.

Oh, that is *the* most important point – you might as well forget about the school or the kindergarden. This point itself requires to work on all your life.

In our kindergarden, there is no idle time for the mother that comes in. They want you to do *something*. You are a role-model, after all. They won't have you just sitting and staring at the wall, or watching the child like a jailor. I made a beautiful necklace for a child the other day, while my child was playing.

When he came up to me, he asked, "Mom, what are you doing?", oh, it was so lovely that he saw me working determinedly on something. He sees that you are exhilarated by what you are doing, and he goes off to get exhilarated by some game of his own.

Isn't that what we all are chasing? To be exhilarated about something meaningful in life?

We have to treat that human being as a guest who has come into our house to actualize himself. Someone is born. He's not here to do our bidding. He's here to do his own bidding. We shouldn't fall onto someone's path like a felled tree. We have to try to open up his path.

His wish should be up there like a firefly, high above, and it must be his sole guide. You, on the other hand, must seek the right path for yourself. You have a lot of work to do on yourself. Leave him alone – he, too, has to work on himself. All you need is to love him, respect him, be there for him with love and happiness in your eyes.

Also as important, is what a child eats. You cannot say, "He's eating anyway, he's growing up in good health anyway," and leave it at that. The physical body is important, and the food it takes in, becomes food for his soul as well. It impacts the health of his soul. We have to make sure children are fed in the right way. What they take in effects not only their bodies, but their whole existence.

Do not push the children into something you want. Do not push them like you push someone standing on your way in a bus. He is not there to be pushed around. He knows where he wants to go, anyway. Just respect his choice.

And what I love more than anything, is that we are always in a process of construction. Both she , and us, too. Think of it as two buildings being constructed side by side. While for one, foundation work is ongoing, on the other, we are building new stories at the upper levels. I mean, what we see out of our window, belongs to the baby building, it is not ours. It belongs to him. Those sounds of hammers and drills that we hear are the best music for parents.

Our kindergarden is about to open its doors soon. Hectic preparation is going on these days. If you feel all of this is a bit too heavy, just remember what Yonca said: "The best guidebook you have to read about child-rearing can be reached by looking into his eyes.

Stay with love,

NIL KARAİBRAHİMĞİL