

## Heart Notes from the Desk of a Child Care Worker

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Put a string around your finger; how easy it is to forget. Our V.I.P.'s (very important people) need the most amount of love and care when they are the least lovable.

Child care workers assist and encourage young people's spirits to grow and gather new resources toward a full and healthy way of being. We offer a multitude of choices to aid in their learning and growing from each experience life presents them, always knowing that we must grow with them. Know yourself, listen to the children and grow wise. Take time to remain in a loving place — be aware of your personal power and use it with integrity.

When the child is relaxed and open he/she may then be introduced to new ideas, feelings and behaviors. Each new experience introduced in a relaxed/open state becomes a part of the child's knowing (a part of the whole). Assisting children to be relaxed/open is the responsibility of an efficient child care worker — providing a safe and caring environment.

Now, imagine all the available information on growing and changing: theories, assumptions and guesswork — *know* it all works. Inkblots to intuition — it *all* works. Each technique/resource is insightful and powerful and each facilitates young minds to create new choices of behavior.

The list of techniques available is unlimited — from massage, music, Satir, Gestalt, Neuro-linguistic Programming, Tarot Cards to games and on and on. Each situation is unique and the technique will be chosen from the interaction or exchange of energy between counselor and child.

With the integration of these acquired techniques, professional insight, and personal intuition comes flexibility and stability. In other words, know where you are going with the child (what you want for him) and

be willing to explore lots of ways to get him there. Failure comes only when you think you have tried everything. If it works fifty-one percent of the time, you are a success. In physics, the law of requisite variety says that, in any system of man or machine, the element with the most choices (directions) will be the controlling element. The lesson: be flexible, baby!

A lot of energy is wasted trying to make unwanted behaviors disappear as opposed to providing alternative choices that are useful to these children in meeting the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected by their age and cultural group.

You cannot eliminate a behavior, whether it's useful or not. A particular behavior once owned is always there. Embrace those behaviors that appear irrational or inappropriate in the present context knowing, at one time, this behavior kept them alive (at one time it was the best choice with what they had learned up to that point in time). Everybody's doing the best they can with the information available to them.

Avoid getting caught up in the "unwanted" behaviors. How often does one hear "don't do this," "don't do that," — not real effective communication. Current research indicates that the mind refuses to recognize negatives. It hears and imagines "do, do this." Acknowledge patterns/routines each child has and find creative ways to break his/her patterns. Do the unexpected, throw them off balance and help them come up with a new way of responding. Model flexibility and playfulness to the children. Dig a hole and put unproductive behavior in a box; bury it and know you will always have it if you need it, but it is time for new choices. Three of the most important gifts we have to offer children in the adventures of our day-

to-day living are creativity, spontaneity, and imagination.

you have been crying  
young,  
delicate one  
have you happy times  
to call upon?  
remember watching clouds  
    passing overhead  
making pictures —  
    unicorns,  
    angels,  
    soft fluffy beds.  
picture a rainbow,  
feel a kitten,  
    smell a rose.  
so many joys to life  
feel cool grass on your toes  
let me hear you giggle  
let me see you glow  
may the beauty you bring to the world  
    come back to you galore.