

Inheriting Steiner – How a Grandmother’s Learning Shapes a New Baby’s Daily Life

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ABSTRACT

I watch my eighteen-month old daughter talking to the soft-bodied doll that I have made her. I wonder what she sees in the undefined cloth face. I wonder if she will make a similar doll for her child one day and I wonder if she will wonder as I do. While the repetition across generations of early childhood experience is both common sense and much documented, through moments of self-awareness, memories of my own childhood, discussions with my mother and observation of my teenage daughters playing with their new sister, I have found myself questioning if and how the very practice and materialisation of discrete Waldorf principles within the home might be implicated in a future inclination towards mothering in this way. Where does knowledge become reflexive? This questioning is presented via a selection of vignettes that illustrate tenets of a Waldorf approach: the sanguinity of childhood and the incoming will; the breathing rhythm of the day; the child’s task to incarnate into their body. These reflections are contextualised by literature tailored to parenting in a *Waldorf way*.

KEYWORDS: *Rudolph Steiner; Play; Learning; Grandparents; Waldorf Kindergarten*

BEGINNINGS – A QUESTIONING OF VALIDITY

As I sit down to being writing, to find words for the impressions that gave birth to the sense of this paper, I am aware of a funnelling feeling. Suddenly the many, many wispy threads of relevance, not only weave, but tangle, and their beautiful blending threatens to become stuck in spaghetti gloop or to disintegrate into dishwatery insignificance. I am at a loss to express the tiny everyday complexities of something that is perhaps fundamentally simple. How to do so, in a way that might speak to other mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and those who would support their truth? In a way that says, ‘Yes in this how we are, there is something worthwhile, nourishing, locating, grounding, about considering why we parent how we parent, and how our learning, our knowing, our doing, interacts today and with the past and the future.’ Without such tangibility, what use is there in this attempt at words?

I feel the smallness of my voice, as a mother, a tired mother, compared to my voice when I write as an academic, even though mothering is and has been the

biggest part of my doing, every day and for twenty years. I am familiar enough with modern qualitative research methodologies, not to balk at subjectivity, to know the value of lived experience. Yet do I have anything worthwhile to say, anything that will mean something and be useful to anyone more than me? I have no sensational findings to offer, nothing particularly eventful. As I consider this, a book that I read as a teenager, Alice Miller's *The Drama of Being a Child* comes to mind (Miller 1995), and I am struck by the juxtaposition of the perpetual cycle of negative, abusive parenting—so big, pin-point-able, and shockingly pervasive in its nature—to the un-newsworthy-ness of benign or even valuable inherited parenting.

However, something tells me, there is importance in small human sharings and I am filled once more with a sense of richness when I prod the question, which perhaps began to form into something expressible, that day, as I watched my eighteen-month old play with the doll that I made her. The question about how my sense of rightness about this kind of doll, made by me, is such a deeply ingrained part of me that I would feel any alternative dolly style to be a disservice to my daughter at this age. The question of how this 'Waldorf' way of being and doing in myself as a mother is and has been experienced by my daughters, and may or may not continue down our matriarchal line.

BECOMINGS - UNSTRAIGHTENING THE MATRIARCHAL LINE

From where do I begin the story of our matriarchal line, as it pertains to this question of inheriting Steiner? Is it relevant that my mother adored both her grandmothers? When I listen to the tenderness with which she speaks of these relationships in her early years, I feel the tone of her mothering and her grandmothering. Was this quality instrumental in her wish to work with young children? In her seeking of a way that fitted her? My mother first tried a Montessori training but chose to become a Waldorf kindergarten teacher before I was born. My education was in Steiner schools and in my mothering of three girls, now nineteen, fifteen and three years old, I have, without much conscious decision, framed their home life and their home-education within a broadly Waldorf approach. My grandmother was a playwright who home-educated the younger of her five girls, but, at age nineteen it was my mother who was looking after these younger sisters for much of the time.

When I studied playwork at university I undertook a comparative evaluation of underpinning principles and worked and observed in a collection of Waldorf kindergartens. Though I had not during my education studied Steiner's works, I found my sense making of his lectures almost instinctive. My daughters grew up unavoidably surrounded by discussions of playwork, but have not been exposed to conversations regarding Steiner's philosophy - not so long ago one of my older girls asked, 'What is Steiner anyway?' 'A person?', to which I replied, 'Yes, a philosopher, Rudolf Steiner'. 'Oh a reindeer!' she quipped. However, watching this daughter with her little sister has been a fundamental contribution to the question of this reflective paper. As I start to gather illustrative happenings, this middle child, who incidentally, or not, has a particularly close relationship with her granny, features in much.

INTEGRITY – PHILOSOPHY OF SELF AND SELF-LESS-NESS

In acknowledging all the players and interactions, and in declaring the many more, of which I am less aware, I also come to wonder how much Steiner's philosophy itself, in its form and its forming, has to do with its propensity to inheritance. Steiner fundamentally believed in the paramount importance of the way of being the teacher of young children. This is perhaps my strongest sense of Steiner's writing, and as I dip into the lectures again after years without reading these books, I am struck again by the force with which this is insisted and the diversity of example. In lecture two of *The Kingdom of Childhood*, Steiner discusses the kindergarten aged child as primarily a sense organ, and asks teachers to make it possible for the child to imitate their being, "... from their own inner impulse of soul" (Steiner 1995: 19), cautioning as to the harm that can be wrought simply by an adult's surly expression.

In the first lecture of *The Study of Man*, he similarly states, "Do not let us underestimate the importance of what has now been said. For you can only become a good teacher and educator if you pay attention not merely to what you *do*, but also to what you *are*." (Steiner 1966: 23 *original emphasis*). Here he continues, discussing the difference of the influence that a teacher will have on a group of children if s/he "occupies himself with thoughts of the evolving human being". Via such considerations, Steiner suggests, that something happens within the teacher that combats his (or her) purely personal nature and allows the children to form a relationship with them. He continues by explaining that any so-called challenges to the adult should be experienced merely, 'like a good shower of rain' (ibid: 24), namely something that happens and should not be taken personally. Steiner's admonishment to move personal feelings aside offers an almost paradoxical challenge, as such inner changes must occur with absolute integrity in order to be of any use. However, for me the feeling of these and other passages, is towards being thoroughly awed by the child, and keeping that sense of wonder, of respect, at the forefront, especially when struggling with something within oneself. Caroline von Heydebrand (1886-1938), a student of Rudolf Steiner and one of the teachers at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, can be seen to transpose and facilitate what Steiner is expounding when on the first page of her book she writes, "We live surrounded by miracles—but we have grown accustomed to these miracles ... What tenderness and intimacy we should feel, otherwise for these plastic growing forces. They take hold of the substance present in the mother's organism after conception, and shape from it the human form" (von Heydebrand 1995: 7).

Awareness of the importance of the person I am, so as to be a mother who enables my children to be and become themselves in the world, is something that sits deeply inside me. However, it is also something that I manage better on some days, in some hours and in some ways than others, and which is often not easy. This diary extract addressed to my youngest daughter, is on reflection, demonstrative of the big minutiae of such self-awareness and alteration in the light of being awed by the child, there in that moment, in every detail.

Today I was praised by a leaf, the leaf that you picked up as we walked towards the park gate, the leaf which you held out to me saying 'let's stop and look at it'. The leaf that we noticed had red bits, and brown dots and a tiny

hole, that I pointed out to you and you tried to make a little bigger. The leaf which when we had walked a little further you said again, 'let's stop and look at it'. The leaf which had bumpy patterns on one side. The leaf which you told me I could lay flat in my hand and which you put there in my palm and then lifted to your hand and which when the rain started falling just a little bit you held out to the sky and asked if we could catch a raindrop on. This leaf praised me for the effort it took last time we were leaving the park, the effort to be slow and to take time when you found a conker, a treasure, the strange effort it took to stop every three or four steps along the way to the car and kneel next to you and speak of the beauty of your conker, and stroke it, and share it between our hands, hand to hand to hand to hand in a little tender square. The patience to be fully in those moments, and enjoy them without wanting to just get home for lunch. The presence to say to you when you asked if we would find 'another treasure' that this one was enough, that we were lucky to find one conker.

As I re-read and consider this entry, I sense a kind of inverse echo of the way that Steiner's emphasis on the being of the teacher grounds the many parts of his instruction to teachers—for me, this very simple happening with a conker and a leaf, was helped by other areas of my Waldorf-ish awareness. These include: the sanguinity of childhood and the incoming will; the breathing rhythm of the day; the child's task to incarnate into their body.

My perception of these aspects within this described experience, point perhaps more to their integration into my parenting awareness than anything else. It makes sense thereby that these areas would pertain to, or hold, much of the experiences and observations related to the question of this paper. I shall therefore, with an unfolding naturalness, use them to select from what could be included. In doing so I acknowledge the already evident and obvious overlaps, as well as the possibility for alternative interpretations both by those with knowledge of Steiner's works and others through alternative perspectives.

The noticed moments and reflections which I will share, as vignettes, within these selected areas, are drawn from the weekly diary which I keep for my youngest daughter, from which I also draw a regular column for the play and playwork magazine *iP-DIP*¹⁷. I began this writing to support my acclimatization to an unexpected late return to mothering a little one. Instinctively, the talking that happened silently in my head and sometimes vocally to my baby as I held and nursed her, developed into this writing voice, as such these entries are addressed to her. It is within that reflexive dialogue that the questions of this paper evolved and to stay with the original form of those conversational entries seems most tangibly authentic and most available to other mothers. I feel a wobble of uncertainty as I write the previous sentence, again the sense that there is nothing grand or mind blowing in that material, nothing proved or categorical, yet this recurrent wavering seems also a confirmation of the credibility of this choice, I am just mummy in these written offerings, *just...* so much, yet so ordinary.

¹⁷ *iP-DIP* can be accessed at <https://meynellgames.wixsite.com/ip-dip>

THE SANGUINITY OF CHILDHOOD AND THE DEVELOPING WILL

The origin of our understanding of the four temperaments can be found formalised in ancient Greek philosophy; that knowledge holds hands with an understanding of the elements, earth, water, wind, and fire. For Steiner the temperaments offered a means to probe the fundamental riddle of man. He wrote, “ ... the fact that the temperament is revealed on the one side as something which inclines toward the individual, which makes people different, and on the other side joins them again to groups, proves to us that the temperament must on the one side have something to do with the innermost essence of the human being, and on the other must belong to universal human nature” (Steiner 1944: 3). Much guidance can be found in Steiner’s own words and in the interpretive works of others concerned with approach and activity for the predominantly choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine or melancholic child. However, Steiner added to the mix of temperaments within the individual, by suggesting that the phases of human incarnation (which I will touch on later) also correspond to one of the temperaments.

As documented in *The Mystery of the Four Temperaments*, Steiner asked those listening to his lecture, to “Observe what a strange glance even the sanguine child has; it quickly lights upon something, but just as quickly turns to something else; it is a merry glance; an inner joy and gaiety shine in it”, and suggested that, ‘The sanguine temperament manifests itself especially strongly in childhood. See how the formative tendency is expressed there’ (Steiner 1944: 15). Gradually through my mothering years, I have noticed and grown more adept at embracing my young children’s flighty flexibility and this has allowed me, when present enough, to support rather than combat their will.

Within the moments of reverence with the conker and then with the leaf, when leaving the park, I was aware not only of each minute, but also of the nourishment these pauses on the pathway to not being in the park anymore, were giving my daughter. As she created their interval and duration, her will was being followed. I was also inwardly remarking on the simple absorbing distraction, which these treasures were offering from leaving and change, which are not always easy processes. These two thoughts intertwined fuzzily without specifics, while my attention was in the beauty at hand. However when, as I nursed my little one to sleep another day, I started to read Steiner’s words looking for reference to bring to this reflection, I opened the book, beautifully serendipitously, to this, “What arises in Nature from the womb of death to become the future of the world, this is comprehended by man’s will - that will which is seemingly so indeterminate, but which extends right into the senses themselves” (Steiner 1995: 45). Steiner understands the child’s will as vital and deserving of much attention. He writes of the will in relation to the body, the relevance of physical action and movement, and the difference between *will* in relation to the necessities of life and *will* within the actions, which flow from feelings of love or enthusiasm (p.77). These considerations add further to my sense of satisfaction in my mothering with autumn’s gifts and my sense of satisfaction surprises me in suggesting a deeper need for confirmation than I would have imagined. These aspects of Steiner’s writing also offer an interesting perspective as to the role of love, in the following happenings.

Vignette 1 – What inspiration comes to hand

My darling girl, there is a dance between your will and my capacity for inventiveness, between your need to do doing and your interest in new doing – I have just parked the car, and you have asked if Minu is here (at home) ‘will we see Minu?’ I tell you no that she is out, you make your sad sound, and I tell you that you will see her this evening, you ask if daddy is there? I say that he is at work. You are yet more upset, and tell me that you are crying, I ask you to come out of your car seat, you tell me no, that you are staying here. ‘You go in mummy, I’m staying here.’ I try to tempt you with this or that for lunch, you refuse to come, I feel an urge rise up in me to take you out of your car seat and carry you in; I feel a counter to that urge, not to hurt your feelings, not to take you against your will, not to have you cross, kicking and screaming. I put down the things I am holding to carry in, I pause, I listen within myself a little bit, saying nothing. Then there is a little pause in you, and I feel you looking for something. I ask you if you would help carry Lily’s heavy ballet shoe bag, with the bunny pattern on it. I emphasise the heaviness and ask you if you think you can manage. I tell you how pleased Lily will be when we tell her later that you carried it in for her (I make a mental note to remember). You climb out of your car seat and I hand you the bag, you carry it in, we are home.

Vignette 2 - Flightiness at and around Granny’s house

We have just arrived for a visit at Granny’s house and she asks you if you would like to go straight into the garden and fly silks in the wind, because the wind is big and blustery and soon the rain might come, which would make the cloths too heavy to fly. You smile and take on your busy air, and take hold of one of the scarves and say, ‘this is mine’ and you give one to granny ‘this is yours granny’. You both go outside, within five minutes you have returned, and you are on your way upstairs for your routine of waking the dolls and bears from their pram and dancing them and looking under the bed for the stories. On your way upstairs you find the red wooden horses and begin a game with those. Granny looks at me and smiles and says, ‘we’ll never get stuck in our habits with little ones around’.

Later we are at little stream near granny’s house, a hornet is flying forcefully around and I feel we need to leave. I look at your sister, she feels that need too, but you just want to throw your usual quota of music tinkling tiny stones into the water. As you walk away from the bridge to pick up another handful, your sister says, ‘Oh look, can you catch my shadow...’ She takes a few steps backwards, you follow, and we are off, out of the flight path, towards home. As I watch your sister I imagine her playing this game again, in some distant day with a different little person, or perhaps it will be you, like her doing the running away from a new little one, at just the right pace in that perfectly togetherness way.

THE BREATHING RHYTHM OF THE DAY

Steiner spoke extensively about rhythm; rhythm in relation to human beings as microcosms of the cosmos, the rhythm of the seasons, and the rhythms within our bodies, our sleeping and waking, our heartbeat and breathing. Though some of this teaching could be seen as erudite, he also made practical recommendations about the healthy rhythm of the child’s day, which can be validated by sensitive

observation. For example, as recorded in *A Modern Art of Education*, he speaks of the interchange between artistic activity, and physical activity saying, “When children have been occupied artistically for perhaps two hours...something that longs for expression as specific body movements begins to stir in the organism. Thus, after children have been busy painting and drawing with their hands, singing with their voices, or playing musical instruments (and this should begin as soon as possible), we gradually lead those activities into the spatial movement of play” (Steiner 2004: 110). This passage refers to the needs of the school-aged child, but has been interpreted by kindergarten teachers into a structure of contraction and expansion, (see for example, Balwin Dancy 2000; Darian 1999). In my mothering I have been aware both of the pull of one kind of activity towards the other, and of the sometimes falling-apart-ness which happens as a young child comes to the natural end of their need for one way of engaging with the world and is ready for the other. Sometimes the interchange is faster than other times, sometimes the doing of something evaporates and more of the same form of activity is what is called for. There is no exactness, I have found, but a sensing of where my daughters are at in relation to this rhythmic structure is and has been very useful to me.

As I walked with my youngest girl from the park to the car, with the conker, and then with the leaf, I was aware of the urge towards inwards activity in her attention to the small treasures of the outside world within our hands, but I was also aware within that larger rhythmic exchange, of the music like rhythm of step step step and pause... pause... that she was creating for herself.

The following vignettes illustrate the strength of this little girl’s urge for such exchange between contraction and expansion when it is possible, and her older sisters’ matter of fact response to this as it happens.

Vignette 3 - Nourishing bread

Today I was making bread, and after you had helped me with the mixing, I took a piece of dough and added a little extra flour to make it unsticky, and gave it to you in a big open bowl. I showed you a little that you could knead it, and you took it and held it against your cheek. Then you pulled it into a long thing and pushed and poked and squished, all the while chattering to it and yourself. This piece of dough lasted you for nearly an hour, sitting in your chair, while I made the rest of dinner and cleared up. When I felt you were nearly ready to stop playing with it, I gave you a little pile of raisins to add. I said to you that you could make the dough into a little bed and wrap the raisins up, and you loved this. Finally, together we added some apple pieces, which you ate quite a lot of straight away. Then I showed you how to put your little bread in a dish and we put it on the radiator to rise. And then when you had had a bit more apple and come down from you chair, you ran and ran and ran back and forth, needing to breathe and move and expand after all that soft concentration. While you were running your eldest sister came in from being out, she looked at you running, and asked what you had been doing, she smiled with understanding at the way you couldn’t stop running with your words spilling jubilantly, ‘so fast, so fast, look at me I’m running so fast’.

Vignette 4 - Absorbing chores

We have been out all afternoon at the playground, and when we come in I have a few things that I really need to do. You are already in your room playing, scrubbing your dolls house with your little brush. I call your sister to be with you while I do some of my own chores. When I return she is standing just outside your room, where your rocking horse lives, she whispers to me that you don't need her, that you are absorbed, and I love her for not having interrupted you, even to say hello.

THE CHILD'S TASK TO INCARNATE INTO THEIR BODY

In the introduction to *The Kingdom of Childhood*, Christopher Bamford writes, "Many of the ideas which Steiner stressed forty years ago have since appeared - in modified forms - in the general practice of education. But there is no other form of education which affirms the existence of the eternal being of the child in the spiritual world before birth, which regards childhood as a gradual process of incarnation." (Bamford, in Steiner 1995: xvii) The view of the child as gradually becoming into their body, into themselves, is central to all the guidance to teachers offered by Steiner, and is also perhaps one of the most difficult considerations to distil, woven as it is through everything else.

It is, I imagine, easy enough to disregard the spiritual underpinnings for the practical. In my curiosity about how other mothers interacted with their Waldorf-way of parenting, I asked in an online Waldorf home-educating group that I recently joined, about other authors who are felt to be in tune, supportive and useful to the Waldorf approach. The work of many of the thinkers suggested by mothers in that group can be seen to align loosely to the implementable repercussions of an awareness of the young child's gradual incarnation. Jean Liedloff (2004) discusses the child's gradual awakening awareness as she is kept in body to body contact with her mother; In guidance towards simplicity parenting, Kim John Payne suggests that, "... by simplifying we protect the environment for the child's slow, essential unfolding of self" (John Payne & Ross 2009: 6). One of the books that many find relevant to their Waldorf home-educating is *You are Your Child's First Teacher* by Rahima Baldwin Dancy (2000). Her reference to incarnation in the index is just four pages of a three hundred and forty page 'how to' kind of book. Yet what little she writes about the subject echoes my own relationship to the meaning and feeling of this foundation of anthroposophy.

Perhaps you have had the experience of walking into a room where a newborn is sleeping and wondering how the room can feel so filled by such a tiny creature sleeping over in the corner. This individuality is present from before births, which explains the feeling many parents have of a child wanting to come to them, (Baldwin Dancy 2000: 16)

I cannot know what it would be like not to see my children as having a before; to hold a new baby without wondering about the who of who they are, not who they will become as they grow, but who they are, what they have, in their being, experienced; not to let my instinctive sense of this person guide me as to how to be, how to make room for them to live their life.

For me this sense is bound up, not with any denominative religion, but with an awe for the young child's lingering knowledge of what, in my adult state of analytical

thinking, I am less able to perceive. It is bound up in my role in honouring my children's greater sense of what is, and in saying, 'Yes, you are right, life is beautiful'.

That was the core of my way of being as I knelt next to my littlest girl and held the conker between our hands. To me, her choice to repeat the experience with a leaf suggests that my way of being was appropriate. I wonder if this relationship to the idea of incarnation has to do with my childhood with a mother who brought praise for nature into every festive celebration, and into so much daily noticing and living. I wonder if this interpretation is made possible by the foundational position of incarnation to Steiner's teaching, and thus its interaction with every aspect, or practice by the teacher/adult in response to the child. I wonder how much a sense of wonder opens the possibility for a sensitivity to the possibility of incarnation.

My final vignette, a mistake on my part, illustrates the palpable complexity of the young child's response to their sensory experiences and to the quality of colours. Recalling the atmosphere of this small happening creates a strange sensation in my skin, and then a realisation that already, a year and a bit later, this happening would all be different, or would not be at all - whatever was perceptible then, to me and my older daughter, is less noticeable now.

Vignette 5 - Red

Your sister is sitting at the dining table with her watercolours and sketchbook and, of course you want to paint too. I want to give you the experience of spreading colour on wet paper, Waldorf style wet on wet painting, the place your sister's painting experience began, years and years ago. I go to the drawer, the only one of the primary strong *Stockmar* water colours that still has some un-dried up paint in it, is red, I put some in a dish, find some watercolour paper, and a proper brush,

As you dip your brush and mark the wet paper we watch you. We watch the colour spread. We watch you, I feel you, you do not stop, but something is not quite right, the hold of the colour over you feels uncomfortable, though absorbing, it suddenly seems too bloodlike to me, what is this feeling like to you? I look at your sister, she looks at me and pulls a little face. 'Maybe find a different colour next time', she simply says.

On a different day, this same older sister wrote the following poem in expression of her sense of her little sister's being. I am moved by the love, by the hints and unknowing, by the willingness to express these not-fully-formed ideas, but most by the individuality of this poem, by the fact that it is neither me nor mine, but beautifully expressively her and hers.

The death of a gymnast

To Beethoven's ninth
She took her fall
From the beam
Into darkness
In the arms
Away from the war
She fell
To Beethoven's ninth

~T. Walter

IN CLOSING – SETTLING IN PLACE

From a place of reflection about how Steiner's teaching about incarnation translates into my mothering, I return to the experience, which birthed this paper, watching my baby with the doll I had made her. The process of writing, from feeling into the small happenings of life re-collected here, has brought a deeper realisation of the essence of my Waldorf-way. That essence is towards making it possible for my children to be and become themselves. I am relieved to realise that essence is what informs my aesthetic preference, and that makes such a simple home-made doll important to me. On the subject of simple dolls and other toys, Steiner writes, "It is particularly good for children to be given the opportunity to add as much as possible to playthings out of their own fantasy" (Steiner 1995: 22). And, "Anything that evokes an inner feeling of liveliness and flexibility is always suitable for young children" (Steiner 2003: 129). Creating or holding such space - that calls and leaves room for the child to put themselves into the world - is the core of who I am and want to be as a mother.

As I sit with that thought, I have a sense of value. At the same time, I have a feeling of disappearance, and reflecting on my mother's way with my sister and I, I realise how fundamental this making space for, is part of my inheritance of Steiner. Perhaps that dichotomy is itself an aspect of inheritance, of passing on, of being part of something which places me, but into which I merge. Am I anything in my space between my mother and my daughters? I suddenly wonder. And then it surges in me, Yes! Yes I am! If I have inherited a Waldorf-way of doing, I have done so through the being and becoming of an individual, yet and perhaps because of this, I am able to parent in a way which makes room within the way I am and the way I parent, for my children to be themselves.

Now suddenly as, in order to add a little referencing context, I dip into a lecture of Steiner's that I hadn't read before. I come across this, a fundamental, which though making perfect sense in relation to the whole of anthroposophy, I have not previously read in such a succinct questioning expression: "What must I do to enable this child to develop the fullest consciousness of human freedom at maturity?" (Steiner 2003: 116).

As I return again to the question of inheriting Steiner and consider the way of being of my older daughters, within themselves and in response to their little sister, I see their personal freedom and I also see their instinctive, considered, yet unthought-out, space making for their younger sister to be.

With this realisation I feel content in the inheritance which I am offering my daughters and this contentment feels like a cradle, a holding for those days when I am full of tiredness and disillusionment, when I am forcefully challenged by my toddler and my teenagers. I am grateful for this process of reflection and with that gratitude comes confirmation, a validation for the sharing of this writing, of my process. I am supported and challenged in my way of being, by and in this space between my mother and my daughters. In living into that need for support I recognise the other mothers whose writing I draw on, online, in books, and I realise that they, though not all working in a Waldorf way, share a fundamental of respect for their child. I realise that this, the essence of my parenting inheritance, and its relationship to other women's mothering, makes the houses of my village, the village that they say it takes to raise a child. My sharing here is towards mother-lore, for others to draw on, in content, but more importantly in a sense of recognition for the role of reflection in the sustenance of motherhood.

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How Babies Learn Language. During the first year of a child's life, parents and carers are concerned with its physical development; during the second year, they watch the baby's language development very carefully. It is interesting just how easily children learn a language. Children who are just three or four years old, who cannot yet tie their shoelaces, are able to speak in full sentences without any specific language training. The language of the parents and caregivers act as models for the developing child. In fact, a baby's day-to-day experience is so important that the child will learn to speak in a manner very similar to the model speakers it hears. Given that the models' parents provide are so important, it is interesting to consider the role of "baby talk" in the child's language development. Shapes are important to study not only during geometry classes but English lessons as well. So let's teach shapes to our kids in a funny way! Find out more! | Skyteach. Cartoons are always great especially with toddlers. It's a great chance both to have fun and remember new words. Here are some shapes cartoons from YouTube: Learn Shapes with Tino. Choo-Choo Train. Caillou Learns the Shapes. Remember, that cartoons should be used as an educational source, so it's not enough just to turn them on. You have to make pauses, talk to children and analyze everything you've just watched. Flashcards. The grandmother hypothesis is a hypothesis to explain the existence of menopause in human life history by identifying the adaptive value of extended kin networking. It builds on the previously postulated "mother hypothesis" which states that as mothers age, the costs of reproducing become greater, and energy devoted to those activities would be better spent helping her offspring in their reproductive efforts. It suggests that by redirecting their energy onto those of their offspring, grandmothers can