

MONTESSORI FROM THE START: FOUNDATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE

by Lynn Lillard Jessen and Paula Polk Lillard

Ms. Jessen and Ms. Lillard begin with a documentary style of describing the adult's role in a Young Children's Community at Forest Bluff School, where both are members of the professional community. The multifaceted but focused work of the directress illustrates ideal functioning—deliberate, peaceful, joyful. Touching on the development of the will through choice as well as language formation, the article spans the planes of development, suggesting that the principles conveyed have extraordinary outcomes as shown by anecdotal evidence of later life success.

It is wonderful to see all of you here, each dedicated to serving the child at the beginning of life. You have responded to the true uniqueness of Montessori: "education begins at birth." This startling conclusion is the logical outcome of Maria Montessori's revolutionary perception of the child. For her the child is no empty vessel, waiting inertly to receive educational input from others. Rather, from the first moments of life, the child is actively engaged in forming its own self. Today neural scientists in their laboratories have confirmed Montessori's intuitive observations that human beings build their own brains and thus their own selves from early life. What is more, this self-directed plasticity of the brain can continue throughout our life spans (Doidge).

Paula Polk Lillard and her daughter, Lynn Lillard Jessen, co-founded Forest Bluff School (Lake Bluff, IL), where Paula Lillard served as head of school until 2006. Well-versed on parent education, Paula and Lynn co-authored Montessori from the Start: The Child at Home, from Birth to Age Three. Additionally, Paula is also author of Montessori: A Modern Approach and Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Plan of Education from Birth to Adulthood. This talk was presented at the NAMTA conference titled The Montessori Assistants to Infancy from All Perspectives: The Journey from Unconscious to Conscious in Baltimore, MD, October 16-18, 2008.

Lynn and I were attending the AMI International Congress in Amsterdam in 1979 when Dr. Silvana Montanaro first described Dr. Montessori's work with the child under three years old and the Assistants to Infancy Course that Silvana Montanaro and Adele Costa Gnocchi were currently directing in Rome. Fortunately for all of us here today, Judi Orion and Liz Hall were in the audience, too. They came back to the United States, determined that the A to I Course must be made available here as well. Lynn went to Texas with her year-old daughter in the summer of 1984 to take the first course established there, received her A to I diploma twenty-three years ago, and opened the Young Children's Community for children from eighteen months to three years old at our school in the fall. We also began, in the following years, a Parent-Infant Series for parents of infants from birth to eighteen months old. Thanks to the pioneering spirit and dedication of Judi, Liz, and Dr. Montanaro, all AMI schools in the United States today have the opportunity to "begin at the beginning," thus serving the child's optimal self-formation.

This morning we are going to address three areas in education that are changed forever by the recognition of the child's self-formation from birth onward: the role of the adult, the child's developing will, and the formation of language. First, let us consider the function of the adult in the child's education. In no other aspect of education is the revolutionary concept of Montessori so clear. Traditionally, the adult has had the active role in regard to the child's education. Throughout the child's early years, he or she was busily engaged in "filling an inert being," the more thoroughly and persistently the better. In Montessori education the adult must do an about-face. From the continual dispenser of knowledge, he or she has to learn to accompany and serve the child on a journey of self-formation, to an independent and fully functioning being.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

To bring this concept from the abstract to the real, I share with you a vignette of a visit to a Young Children's Community in our school a few weeks ago. This was my first visit since last spring, and after this long absence, my first and overwhelming impression was "So this is why new parents on tour react as they do." Uniformly, they have a stunned look, as if they have never seen anything like

this before, as soon as they enter the classroom. There is awe in their faces and they are smiling. Consistently, it is hard to get them to leave after the few minutes allotted for observation is over. For myself, I have written in my notes, "How can they be so young, yet so capable?" It is 10:15, an hour and forty-five minutes into the morning, yet all the children with the exception of one quiet observer are still busily engaged in concentrated work. I have written in my notes, "work everywhere."

Next to me, a curly-headed eighteen-month-old is washing her chubby little hands at the washstand. As she heads off to empty a bucket of water, she looks at me and loses her concentration. "Uh!" she utters, not yet truly verbal, as she spills a little and reaches for a little mop hanging at her height on the wall. She stirs over the spill with only one hand on the mop, then very precisely hangs up her apron on a hook and prances off across the room as if very pleased with herself. In front of me is a two-and-a-half-year-old boy washing dishes from the earlier food preparation for refreshment time. He is scrubbing so intently and capably with such concentration that he would put an adult to shame. Just behind him, a little girl is busily putting placemats on several larger tables, one at a time, then carefully folding and precisely placing a napkin on each. Again my notes say, "so young, so capable." I am reminded of Montessori's admonition that it is the opportunity to contribute to the real affairs of everyday life that truly satisfies very young children.

The teacher is smiling gently, and I realize that, in spite of many suggestions and reminders to the children during the morning, she has not once used a judgmental tone of voice.

The teacher is sitting on the floor across the room between a child who has work on a rug and a little boy at a table. The teacher is saying "rake, hoe, pruning shears" very clearly and distinctly. The boy repeats each word and places the object on a corresponding card. "Let's finish your work, Terry," the teacher says to the little girl with work on the rug. Distracted by the language lesson, Terry has gotten up and is leaning her hands on the boy's table. "Finish your work," the teacher reminds gently again, and returns to her lesson: "pruning shears, for cutting bushes." Terry continues to lean on the

table. The teacher gently pats the table with her hands, and Terry remembers to stand aside. After a few minutes, the teacher places her hands on Terry's rug and says quietly, "Your work." Terry now does sit down by the rug but she lies back on the floor.

"Excuse me, Terry," the teacher says matter-of-factly, and Terry sits back up in a cross-legged position but leaning back on her hands. "No," she says, but I sense little defiance in her body position or tone. "Is this 'no' a preliminary to 'yes'?" I wonder, and what is the teacher going to do? She actually does something that I have not seen before. She sits behind Terry on the floor, reaching around her, so that Terry has a sense of her body as a guide, feeling its stability and strength. She then carefully and gently replaces each piece of Terry's work into the basket for her. With this degree of support, Terry, on track again, returns the basket to the shelf and comes back to roll up her rug. The teacher continues her language lesson with the little boy next to her, but at the same time helps to guide one side of Terry's rug as she rolls it up. The teacher even gets up to go to the rug stand with Terry, thus staying with her to the very end.

To see someone "who is not yet there": In my experience, this is the secret to both successful teaching and successful parenting. It is very difficult at first. Each child's path is so different that it is nearly impossible for new teachers to see incremental steps of progress as they are happening. My advice to them—to you if you are a new teacher—is, "Don't end the day where the child is; end the day where the child is going."

On her way back from the rug stand, the teacher sits on the floor by a child who has started to put his basket of work away while his chair is still out. The teacher puts her hands on the basket, gently holding it on the table. Almost immediately, the child becomes aware of his chair and replaces it before returning his basket to the shelf. The teacher goes by another table where a child has taken a fistful of objects out of a bag. She holds up one finger and says quietly, "One." She repeats the names of objects then, distinctly and one at a time, as the boy starts to take each one separately: "grasshopper, ladybug, caterpillar, bumblebee, dragonfly." As he starts to put

them away, the teacher says, "Just one in the bag," and leaves to join several children sitting on the floor together prior to refreshment time. The boy, finishing his work with the objects, begins to talk to himself: "First, I have to put this away." Then as if to remind himself of what and why he is doing all these things, he says in a matter-of-fact tone, "This is my school."

By now all the children are gathered with the teacher, sitting crossed-legged in a circle, playing language games and singing songs. After a few minutes, she dismisses each child individually to take a place at the tables set for refreshment. Each child moves very slowly and deliberately, just as the teacher has moved all morning. In fact, I marvel with what genius controlled movements are built into every procedure of the room and opportunities are given continually for this centering of self in freedom. At their places, each child puts both hands on the table to wait. When all are gathered, they place one hand on top of the child's hand next to them. They sing a grace together, and the teacher says, "Would you like to start, Tom? Patty prepared our strawberries. Tom, please pass the strawberries to our friend, Michael." The children then begin to pass their food to each other. In frustration, one of the youngest children starts to fuss and cry. "Can't," she says, trying to spoon strawberries on to her plate. "Use our words," the teacher offers. "Please help." The little girl does manage then all on her own after all. The teacher continues, "So I know that you are ready, hands in your lap." And after a moment, "Everyone has gotten his or her food and water. You may begin to eat now." The teacher is smiling gently, and I realize that, in spite of many suggestions and reminders to the children during the morning, she has not once used a judgmental tone of voice.

As I think about this experience afterward, I ask myself, "What is it about this teacher that is so clearly helping these children?" I want to highlight four points. First, she has a quiet authority about her. She clearly knows herself well and is secure in herself. It shows in her peacefulness. In fact, she is the personification of peace with the warmth and smile of a happy person who has genuine joy in being with young ones. Secondly, she is unwavering. She is always the same, steady person. There are no surprises for the children, no sudden shifts in mood or expectation. Next, she has a few key strategies and it is clear that the children know

what her gestures mean. When a child leans on another's table, the teacher's hands patting the table mean, "Not your table." If she holds up one finger to a child working with objects, he or she recognizes that it represents handling one object at a time. A pat on your rug means, "Your work is here." Finally, this teacher is a thoughtful person. She clearly has thought deeply about these children, their prepared environment, and the procedures that will help these as-yet-unformed human beings progress on their journey of self-formation.

My whole visit this morning has reminded me of a comment from a parent some years ago. I had asked her why she had chosen Montessori for her child, what was so different?

She thought for a moment, as if searching for the right words. "It's the dignity with which you treat the children, from the moment the teacher, even of the eighteen-month-olds, shakes their hands in greeting in the morning." "Dignity." Not a word that typically comes to mind when we think of the adult's response to the small child in our present culture.

How do we prepare ourselves to treat the child with dignity? In Montessori's words from *Education for a New World*, "The first

The power to choose must be developed and encouraged in the child from his or her earliest years in Montessori. The confusion occurs when we perceive choice for the child from an adult perspective. Because our minds are formed, we can use our choices to make us happy and productive throughout our adult lives. Our children's minds, however, are as yet unformed. Children are not capable of making positive, realistic choices on their own consistently throughout their day.

step is self-preparation of the imagination, for the Montessori teacher has to visualise the child who is not yet there, materially speaking, and must have faith in the child who will reveal himself through work" (67). To see someone "who is not yet there": In my experience, this is the secret to both successful teaching and successful parenting. It is very difficult at first. Each child's path is so different that it is nearly impossible for new teach-

ers to see incremental steps of progress as they are happening. My advice to them—to you if you are a new teacher—is, “Don’t end the day where the child is; end the day where the child is going. It is not what is before you but what is coming that you must focus on.” Additionally, you must bring the parents with you in this approach. I tell parents, “It is not where your children are at two or six or thirteen years old that is important. It is where they are at thirty that counts.” We have to establish a partnership with our parents in this process by keeping up an “optimistic drumbeat,” as the Head of our school describes it in our parent conferences.

I want to share a story with you from several days ago to illustrate my point. A mother of a graduate of our Secondary Level (for students ages twelve through fourteen years), who is now a freshman in a very competitive college, called us with joy and triumph in her voice. Her daughter had just completed the college’s advanced placement tests for incoming freshmen and scored in the top tenth percentile in English. To appreciate this achievement, you have to understand that this young woman struggled in this area from her earliest years. As her Primary teacher, I still remember vividly our lessons together with the Sandpaper Letters. However, her mother was able to establish a good partnership with us from the beginning. She responded with respect and faith in her child in this difficult area of her life as in every other. Therefore, she did not rob her daughter of the joys of English in her early formative years. Further, there was none of the artificial judging or testing in school that invariably humiliates and shapes a different child. Freed to apply her very strong work ethic to her challenges in language, this young woman was able to make this area fully a part of her life, just as other areas that came more easily. The lesson for all of us is clear: Never limit a child, whether it is in social relationships, physical abilities, school subjects, or artistic expression. Montessori believed all areas of life are for every human being. We have only to imagine what is not there and to believe in what is to come.

THE CHILD’S DEVELOPING WILL

We come now to our second topic, the child’s developing will. To become all that each child can be as a fully functioning, independent being, the child must be helped to develop his or her will.

The goal is to be able as adults to exercise self-control in all areas of life: the ability to follow through, to make our actions follow our words, to be trustworthy, to develop what we are accustomed to call “character.” Thinking back to my Young Children’s Community visit, the teacher was constantly helping the children toward a developed will, a “willing obedience”: by staying with Terry’s work to the end, even returning the rug to the rug stand together and in good order; by giving strategies and encouragement to the children for waiting until all the children had served themselves food and were ready to eat; by giving the means for internalizing discipline from the environment so clearly evident in the child talking to himself, “First, I have to put this away. ... This is my school” as he readied himself for sitting with the group. In fact, this teacher was continually giving the means to an independent will through the environment that she had so thoughtfully and precisely prepared for the children.

Montessori was unique in emphasizing that the child is not born with a developed will. I am old enough to remember the time when adults assumed that the child had a developed will and it was the adult’s job to “break it” sometime in the child’s second year. Montessori, on the other hand, recognized that the child’s will initially involved a process occurring in three stages over approximately a three-year period. At first the child can’t do what is asked. In the second stage, he or she can comply sometimes, but not always. This is generally the period from eighteen months to three years old. In the third stage, usually at approximately three years old, the child has formed the will to comply—even though he or she might choose not to, of course! It is the role of the home and the school to help the child to form a “willing obedience” by the age of three. Therefore in the Primary Level if the child forgets to push in a chair upon finishing work, the teacher reminds him, “chair first,” with the expectation that he or she will follow through.

Again it is the quiet authority and manner of the adult in the child’s first years that helps the child to form a developed will. I am reminded of my first weeks in a Montessori classroom almost fifty years ago. I was an assistant to a first-generation Montessori teacher from Europe, a refugee from World War II. It was a beginning class of fifteen three- to five-year-old children and was held

in the basement of the independent school that the older two of my then four daughters attended. None of the materials from Holland had arrived, so the prepared environment consisted solely of practical life activities and exercises of grace and courtesy. It was the teacher's manner with the children and their response to her that made a lasting impression on me. She moved with gentleness, slowly, calmly, quietly, deliberately—almost in slow motion—yet she had an authoritative and dramatic presence at the same time. Someone happening in upon us would have found it unnatural, I suppose. Yet it had a calming effect not only on the children but on me as well. Everything this teacher did and said reflected invitation and collaborative effort. "I will help you." "Let's do this." "Come with me." "Ah, my friend." The whole mood was one of "I'm on your side": with you, not against you. As if by osmosis, the children gradually became like her in their responses to the environment and to each other.

It reminds us that children use adults in this way in their self-formation and incorporate the parts of us that they need. A few weeks ago another mother of a Secondary Level graduate called me to tell a story that makes me smile every time that I think of it. I had taught her son for three years in the Primary and was the Head of School until his graduation eight years later. Last spring five of the very closest friends of her son, who is now in his junior year in boarding school, had engaged in some risky behavior that was against the school's rules. The situation was serious enough that these students received disciplinary action that ranged from temporary to permanent suspension. Subsequently, his mother asked him, "These were your best friends. Weren't you tempted to join them?" He replied, "Honestly, I thought about it." Now these parents had been particularly supportive of their son always and had built a very close relationship with him even into the Third Plane. "What stopped you?," his mother asked, expecting that he might say something about disappointing his mother or father. But no, he responded, "I saw Mrs. Lillard's face."

Before leaving this discussion of the developing will, I would like to say something about the role of choice in Montessori education because I think there is some confusion about it. As adults, we reveal ourselves through our choices. The ability to make choices

allows us to operate in freedom. Children reveal their true selves to us through their work. Choice in work allows the child to follow his or her interest in the prepared environment of the classroom, and thus learning takes place. This is true learning, an in-depth learning. Thus the Montessori student learns to understand versus learning to memorize. The power to choose, then, must be developed and encouraged in the child from his or her earliest years in Montessori. The confusion occurs when we perceive choice for the child from an adult perspective. Because our minds are formed, we can use our choices to make us happy and productive throughout our adult lives. Our children's minds, however, are as

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yet unformed. Children are not capable of making positive, realistic choices on their own consistently throughout their day. Yet, because we want nothing so much as for our children to be happy, our misperceptions lead us to give them too much choice, too often and too soon.

Let's review briefly an eighteen-month- to two-year-old Montessori child's routine upon awakening. The parents know to limit the very young child's choices to two (three at the most) possibilities. Therefore, they have laid out for wear a choice of two shirts and pants or shorts, socks, shoes, and sweaters. When their child arrives at the breakfast table, he or she is given a choice of eggs and toast or cereal and fruit and choice of beverage: milk, juice, or water. When the child is finished and ready to leave the house, a choice is given on whether to use the bathroom now or at school. Finally, decisions must be made as to which coat to wear and whether a hat or mittens are needed and which ones. All of these opportunities are offered before 8:15 in the morning. Is it any wonder that many little ones arrive at their Montessori school already overwhelmed by this plethora of choices? The negative consequences go beyond a less-than-optimal start to the school day. Far from making children happy, constant choice gives them a false impression of the world. They develop a perception that they can have the world on their own terms, that they are its center. Such an outcome leads to misery

for the adult and the child, both of whom are now at the mercy of the child's unformed mind.

THE FORMATION OF LANGUAGE

We talked first about the adult's role in serving the child's self-formation, and secondly, how to aid the child's developing will. Lastly, I want to say a few words about the formation of language and its role in bringing the child to a positive response to life. We know that Montessori did not regard language as a subject to be taught. Rather, she recognized that language is an integral part of us as human beings. It is the essence of who we are and what we can become. We have described how the Young Children's Community teacher effectively assists the children in their formation of language, surrounding them with the facts of the world through clear, accurate pronunciation, helping them to use words, not tears, for communication, and choosing her words carefully with an emphasis on effective, precise communication, not babbling on in a running, meaningless commentary all morning long. In *Montessori from the Start*, Lynn and I describe the timetable and specifics for the child's formation of language from birth. I won't repeat that information here. Instead I would like to offer additional thoughts about the child's formation of language that I find particularly pertinent to the historical moment in which we find ourselves today.

In late September, as part of our school's Continuing Education Series for parents, our teachers presented an evening program on the Montessori approach to botany. In this series, the parents, regardless of their children's ages, begin in the Young Children's Community and proceed to the Primary Class and then the Elementary Levels during the evening. Proceeding in this way, parents see the presentation of a real toad and plants with language identification cards for the youngest children to the language cards for parts of plants and animals and their definitions for the older Primary children, all given with an emphasis on fact: "to see and touch."

When we moved on to the Elementary Levels that evening, the visual effect was startling. Spread out on the floor was the most beautifully illustrated Time Line of Life and classification material for the Kingdom Vegetalia that I have seen. The children's beautiful

work was everywhere: on the tables of all sizes, on rugs on the floor, in the hallways, all displaying the children's newly found powers of reason and imagination.

Seeing all of this, I was inspired anew by Montessori's vision of humanity, embedded as it is in the universal order and in service to it. Her educational approach is so thoroughly pragmatic and logical, proceeding from the whole to the part with the children doing follow-up work, based on their own choice with like-minded companions, thus following their interest, after each new presentation of material by the teacher in the Five Great Stories and subsequent lessons. Therefore, Montessori children are freed to search for their own understanding versus only learning to memorize the knowledge of others.

Most extraordinary of all, of course, is the language and intellectual framework that Montessori chooses to tell the stories of creation: life on earth, the human role, and all the following lessons of human invention and exploration (see Lillard, *Montessori Today*). What other educational system presents the whole universe and human history engulfed in gratitude and appreciation: that pure love that gives all and asks for nothing? Montessori wants nothing less than for the child to be in love with the universe and all of humanity. She continues each presentation of material for further discovery for six full years, the whole of the child's Second Plane, against this backdrop. What she effectively does is form in the child a response to the world of love, optimism, and courage: three prerequisites for calling forth the hard work of the child's independence and zest for the task ahead, the formation of a complete human being, adapted to time, place and culture, ready for his or her cosmic task and place in history.

What I find especially compelling in this positive presentation of the world to the child is that Montessori's personal life was one of continual struggle, upheaval, distress, and destruction. She lived through revolutions, world wars, worldwide economic breakdowns, and depressions. She was a refugee almost her entire adult life, her personal work and contribution taken away in an instant several times over in many countries. And yet, she found it within herself to present the world to the young entirely in the language of love and gratitude. She asks us to do the same.

How do we do this for the young child in the first sub-plane when they don't so much reflexively copy us (although they do this, too) as they absorb us: our thoughts and language in response to life. In this pre-verbal time, they are literally building themselves out of our language. Therefore, our internal dialogue, the daily conversation that we have with ourselves, whether we are parents or teachers, matters. The following is a quote from *What Happy People Know*, a book that I highly recommend to you, by the psychologist Dan Baker:

We don't describe the world we see. We see the world we describe. Language as the single most fundamental force of the human intellect has the power to limit us or evoke our courage. Similarly, the story we tell ourselves about our own lives becomes our lives. We can tell healthy stories or horror stories. The choice is ours. (Baker & Stauth 38)

We need to be especially alert to the influence of the media: on ourselves and on our children, even children under three years old. Children's absorbent minds need to be protected from a constant barrage of negative information. Modern technology makes it likely that all of us are exposed to every negative story from around the globe on a daily basis. Human beings need time to assimilate the latest technological discoveries from cell phones to BlackBerries to the Internet to video games: to make our revolutionary technology work for us and not against us. Our present global financial crisis could not have reached the proportions that it has, for example, without the sophisticated financial structures, the derivatives and securitized mortgages, made possible only through computer models of risk and the instant worldwide transfer of millions and billions of dollars through the press of a button. Meanwhile our youngest children are absorbing the stress and distraction and confusion that these revolutionary inventions and behaviors create in the adults around them.

Certainly we need to keep ourselves informed about national and world events. Yet for our children's sake, we have to train ourselves to hear the challenges to our lives as clarion calls to courage, and not to react to them in fear or panic. Reading good books by knowledgeable authors is one way to help us maintain our perspective in time of challenge. For example, I have just finished an excellent

book on the current financial crisis, *The World Is Curved* by David Smick, and I highly recommend it to you. As we eventually grasp the convergence of factors that led us to the various manmade dilemmas of our moment in history, we can begin to see our way to their solutions. Human beings created these problems; human beings can solve them. In addition, reading books for more thoughtful knowledge and perspective has the added advantage of presenting a positive model for our children. They need to see us reading often and for stretches of time, in order to assimilate the importance and pleasure that written communication through books has afforded throughout human history.

In the last weeks of my mother's life, I asked her, looking back, when she had been the happiest. Without hesitation she responded, "When I first became a mother and you and your brother were at home, before you started to school." My brother was born in 1929 and I followed in 1931. These were Depression years. I remember my father sometimes being at home in the daytime, studying and reading in his chair. I learned many years later of his worry and sense of responsibility for his family and the thirty men in his small machine tool shop as he struggled to find orders, and thus work for them. He was twenty-six years old. My mother, who was equally young, must have been frightened. Yet, she did not show fear to her children, and, as I grew older and had gained some perspective on her life, I sensed that courage was her greatest strength. She had spent her first three years of life on a small Ohio farm. Her parents then moved to Oklahoma to better their lives, but instead the Dust Bowl years followed. My mother's most prized possession from those years was a small golden locket that she had earned by picking cotton before she was even of school age.

Despite these hardships in early life, or perhaps because of them, my mother managed to give my brother and me a childhood full of happy memories. I have the strongest impressions of running and laughing together as we ran through the sheets hung on the line to dry; digging in the garden and bringing in vegetables for dinner; baking pies and cookies from scratch and licking the bowls of cake frosting; gleefully jumping from upholstered chair to couch to chair in a never-ending game of tag when furniture was brought outside to air and be beaten of dust; and when I wanted to be alone,

hours spent playing with my dolls under the weeping willow tree whose branches hung to the ground making the perfect hideaway for childhood make-believe.

We can tell our children stories of woe and tragedy, failure and disappointment, or stories of times when hard work, courage, and perseverance overcame our challenges and the simple pleasures of life set the tone of our day: sunlight shining on a pond, fall leaves turning brilliant colors, squirrels chasing each other round and round a tree trunk, the smile of a child (in my case, grandchild) sharing it all with us, and at the end of the day, a bedtime book chronicling the challenges and triumphs of past civilizations as well as more recent times, giving us intimate knowledge of heroes, past and present, both to inspire us and subsequently share with our children. I believe this is the language that Montessori calls on us to incorporate within ourselves, thereby giving it to our youngest children in the First Plane.

I would like to close now with my favorite Montessori quote. It sums up for me why Montessori education has been the passion of my life for nearly fifty years and why I believe that, properly implemented, it will indeed lead us to a better world for all humanity: "Not in the service of any political or social creed should the teacher work, but in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgment, unperverted by prejudice and undistorted by fear" (Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential* 2).

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