

# Conclusion

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What does a *next version* person look like? For one thing, she is more *intuitive* – sensing relationships in context of the whole group of people or situation she is part of. The new person embodies a certain level of *vulnerability*, though to the old school, this trait was not usually seen as strength. He might want to *think as one* with others at work or in school, not seeing this as a loss of individuality. A next version person may jump at the chance to shift a posture of opposition to alignment. In a move from exclusively using the left brain to separate and see this as opposed to that, there would be a greater blend of using the right brain to transcend polarities and authentically embrace true relationship. Whereas the old version person saw *self-reliance* as 'rugged individuality', which often became selfish and fostered an education fraught with high stakes testing, right answers, and an over-emphasis on the job market, the new person might redirect attention back to Emersonian self-reliance. Emerson would have you listening to your own, higher self. He would promote the pursuit of higher human aspirations to be both socially healthy and economically sound.

Don't we need a new version of teachers for the next version of students - adults who will increasingly listen to students? The new students can teach us, perhaps more than ever before. Education can become an adventure in mutual self-transformation; that is, in *becoming*. Teachers and parents can be in a reciprocal relationship. If you review the psychological-spiritual nature and needs of most, if not all, the students in these stories, you will discern qualities or dynamics consistent with those that are characteristic of future-oriented children and adults. The theme of reciprocal teaching-learning between teacher and student, which is central to more than one of the chapters in this book, is entirely consistent with the challenge of star children (the increasingly numerous, new kids who have serious gifts beyond most of our abilities) presented by Kuhlewind (2004) among others. Kuhlewind asserts that only teachers working authentically on themselves will have the power to be effective with star children. Of course - as virtually all my stories show - students with more ordinary "problems" pose the same kind of challenge; which is perhaps why my path has led me to work with so many of them in alternative schools and prisons. Some lessons I've learned from students ...

- *Accept me and work with me right where I am.*

- *Create authentic learning experiences from that perspective.*
- *Open to, foster, and trust in intuitions in both yourself and me.*
- *Be awake to the connectedness or spirit of the group.*
- *Create a safe, supportive space in which positive responses toward each other prevail.*

I don't mean to advocate for any one type of schooling. My heart is warmed every time I see a single, successful lesson. What are some aspects of those lessons?

- love of, and respect for, the child in the teacher
- enthusiasm for the subject and for teaching
- experiential learning
- love of the subject for its intrinsic nature, versus extrinsic excitements or rewards, including the competitive drive
- addressing the whole person - focus on engaging right brain creativity and intuition, as well as left brain intellectual and analytical thinking (which makes the above possible)
- mutual help among students and encouraged openness to multiple perspectives

Thank you.

## References

Kuhlewind, G. (2004). *Star children: understanding children who set us special tasks and challenges*. Southport, Merseyside, United Kingdom: Temple Lodge.