



A Mini-Handbook for Humankind,  
Being With Nature As Teacher & Friend

A Playful and Purposeful Handbook for  
Children, Women and Men

Growing in Self-Discovery,  
Becoming Citizen's of Planet Earth

You, Me, We

**Diane Willian**  
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The world is ever so ripe for a practical, hands-on way to create a planetary shift toward peaceful ways of understanding, communicating and interacting. In this little book a wonderful gift has been given our earth: a playful and purposeful common path for children, women and men of all ages and cultures to travel together in pursuit of personal growth and planetary understanding and goodwill. We who say we seek understanding and goodwill in our world will need a vehicle for universal growth and bonding. This playful, yet purposeful little book provides this opportunity for all ages and cultures using gentleness and wisdom and growth as a call for all earth travelers to join in. It unites us with a simple plan to reach out to the family of humankind saying: "Look! There are many of us! Join us! We are learning and growing and understanding the ways of wisdom and peace."

In a Mini Manual for Humankind the complexity of human behavior and interaction has been broken down into:

- A unique Universal Teaching Tool
- A personal Daily Growth Practice
- A simple, How Life Works, Primer

Together, these create a common path and set of tools which become a common denominator of understanding one's self, others and the process of life while giving us the opportunity to reach out to others around the globe in understanding and goodwill.

Here is the very simple way the tools in this little book provide this opportunity:

- Combining the simple things we all do
- Using modern technology along with plain old paper and pencil
- Looking at nature as teacher and friend, creating a wonderful opportunity to explore our own lives, understanding each other better and having nature with us as a daily companion.



# A Dedication To Children

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Dear Children,

This little book is written especially with you in mind. You have the opportunity to create good for yourselves individually with its contents and to reach out with an idea to help create a path we can all walk for growing understanding and goodwill on planet earth.

With a fun daily activity and a playful new learning tool you can give yourself a gift for life. By encouraging other children to join in you will help create a world wide community of children walking a common playful and purposeful path toward understanding and goodwill on planet earth.

With this fun and simple practice your generation can provide a common path for young people and adults around the world to come together in awareness and understanding. Think about how wonderful this world would be, and how wonderful it would be to be a person who helped us bond together in common behavior, a common path, hearts and minds recognizing that we are all citizens of planet earth working to bring about good. Yours is the first generation to have such a wonderful opportunity!

# Children With A Purpose!

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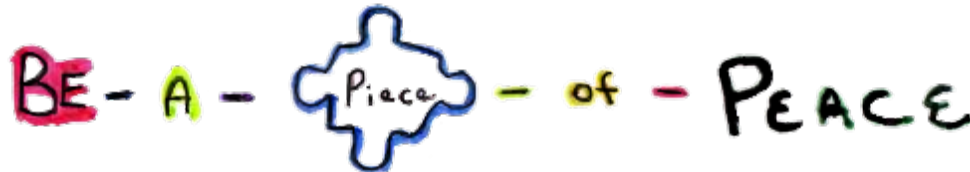
Here are some ideas on how to use this book and to get started today:



Look at the four picture pages at the beginning of **The Flower Exercise** to understand how it works. In the beginning it is good enough just to learn what the nine symbols from nature mean. As you think about them and what each symbol represents over time it will become natural to use them when you need them. Then read the examples of **The Flower Exercise** to help you understand how to use this playful learning tool in your everyday life. It will be helpful to talk with an older child or an adult about Seeing Nature as Teacher and Friend because this section takes the symbols from nature a bit further and in a different direction than in The Flower Exercise.

# Children With A Purpose!

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Do a **Be-A-Piece-Of-Peace** practice every day! It won't be very long until you come to see just how helpful and rewarding it is. Use the journal pages in the back of the book or find a notebook to write in. You can use anything for drawing pictures or writing in a journal: pencils, pens, crayons, paints, stickers, etc. For the stretching, be very aware of what you are doing. Experience how your body feels as you stretch and bend to feel every muscle and how it feels to take long deep breaths when you are in a pose. Noticed how your eyes feel when you look up, down, left and right, near and far. Another fun thing to do is to make a face! Scrunch up your face as tight as you can and then open your mouth and eyes as wide as you can. It's fun and good for your face and neck muscles. Have the book you are going to read handy so that you can grab it in a minute. The nice thing about doing these fun and good for you activities is that you can spread all seven activities out during the day to do them when you find time, like singing your song while waiting for the bus or walking to school. Be creative in working them in as a natural part of your day. You will be surprised how helpful this is in helping you understand yourself and bringing you joy and growth. This can be one of the best gifts you can give yourself all the<sup>5</sup> days of your life.



# Children With A Purpose!

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Encourage friends to do the daily **Be-A-Piece-of-Peace** practice and to learn how to use **The Flower Exercise**. What fun to share! Think about forming a Be-A-Piece-of-Peace Club. On that day you could do all the activities together and have a lot of fun, share refreshments and make it a rewarding part of your week.

Encourage your family and the people you live with to begin doing this fun and good for you daily practice. What fun to grow together and to help grow this practice around the world!

Ask a teacher or another adult to help you reach out to other children around the world! Just as there are pen pals, create "Peace Pals".

I hope thinking about this brings you laughter and joy. What a fun way to bring a common good to our world. I wish you a joyful and rewarding adventure!



# Welcome to the Mini-Manual

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The world is ever so ripe for a practical, hands-on way to create a planetary shift toward peaceful ways of understanding, communicating and interacting. In this little book a wonderful gift has been given our earth: a playful and purposeful common path for children, women and men of all ages and cultures to travel together in pursuit of personal growth and planetary understanding and goodwill.

We who say we seek understanding and goodwill in our world will need a vehicle for universal growth and bonding. This playful, yet purposeful little book provides this opportunity for all ages and cultures using gentleness and wisdom and growth as a call for all earth travelers to join in. It unites us with a simple plan to reach out to the family of humankind saying: “Look! There are many of us! Join us! We are learning and growing and understanding the ways of wisdom and peace.”

In this mini manual for humankind the complexity of human behavior and interaction has been broken down into:

- A personal Daily Growth Practice
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# Three Books In One

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This little book can be looked at as three separate books in one. Each presents an entirely separate idea while carrying a common theme of self discovery and bonding.

The **Flower Exercise** is a unique learning and teaching tool. The examples of the Flower Exercise demonstrate how the Flower Exercises can become *A Primer for Life* which gives one a basic manual for looking at life's issues and responsibilities.

*Seeing Nature as Teacher and Friend* looks at the symbols of The Flower Exercise separately, giving them lives of their own and giving the user a way to walk daily with nature once again.

The second book, **Be a Piece of Peace**, presents a playful and purposeful daily practice for children, men and women; its simple activities encourage the process of personal self discovery and create a bonding experience for all to join in.

The third book, **The Building Blocks of Growth**, presents a personal growth and development process using simple terms and a simple visual so children and those struggling can more easily understand how they grow from stage to stage. It also presents a simple theory for action for those whose lives become more surviving than thriving.

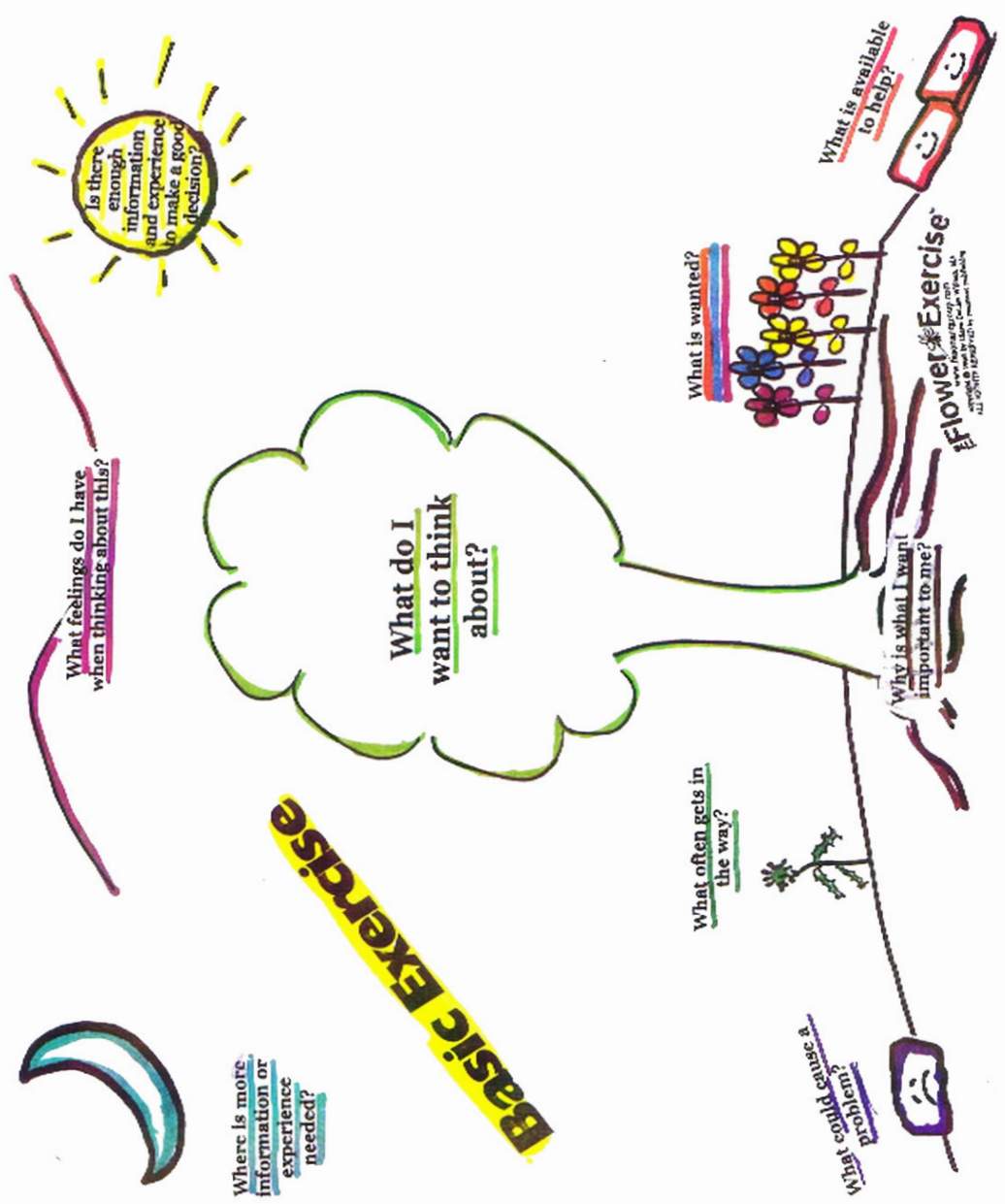




A comforting scene from nature creates a picture of our thinking process, creating a breakthrough of simplicity, turning the complexity of human thinking into a playful and purposeful hands-on tool creating a simple process to understand ourselves, others and life.

When we are taught how to place our thinking process against these symbols from nature, almost instantly there is core recognition of how this process works. It feels natural as if somehow we knew it all along. The Flower Exercise will give the children of the world, and adults as well, a framework for studying, and understanding decision making and interacting with others that will serve them all of their lives – a gift for life.

Universally there are numbers for mathematics, musical notes to create songs, and laws, formulas and tables in the fields of science, yet until now there has not been anything in the social, psychological, and human relations fields that could bring down the complexity of human thinking and behavior into a simple hands-on working formula for understanding and interaction. The basic premise of The Flower Exercise is that when you can see your thinking, you can see a situation in a minute.



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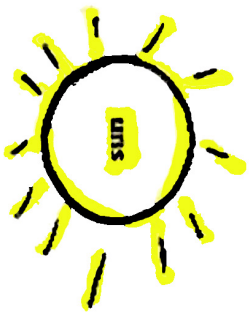
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# The Symbols



Flower Exercise  
www.flowerexercise.com  
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# The Meaning of the Symbols



Flower Exercise  
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www.heartwords.com

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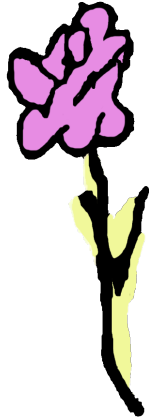
Nine symbols from nature form the basis of this universal teaching tool. The earth we walk on is probably our most common denominator. How we think (process information) is probably our second most common denominator. These two form the basis of The Flower Exercise. The nine symbols are set in a comforting scene from nature with the tree being the focus in the middle. Each symbol represents a part of our thinking and when all the symbols have been looked at, a bigger and more complete picture of the subject being explored will be in place. Seeing a bigger picture of the subject you are exploring enhances understanding, choosing behaviors, making good decisions, interacting and achieving goals.

The essence of the pattern of working The Flower Exercise is a conceptual tool, not a rigid formula. It can be s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d to meet the needs of nearly any subject.

Begin with the **tree**: The tree, being the largest element in the forest holds the focus of what is being explored i.e., a decision that needs to be made.



Looking at the right of the page  
is looking toward the results  
being desired.



**The flower:** *what is wanted (needs, goals, desires, etc.)*



**The sun:** represents what "light" one has about the decision being made (do I have the information and experience needed to make a wise decision?)



**The stepping stones:** the assets one has to accomplish the goals desired (what is in my environment that can be used now?)

*Looking at the left of the page is looking at what might be missing or what might get in the way.*



**The moon:** reflects on what is harder to see or what we are still in the dark about (what is still needed to make a wise decision.)



**The weeds:** represent the little things that slow down progress i.e., your own disorganization or a habit of waiting to the last minute, etc.



**The stabling blocks:** represents something that could slow down or shut down forward progress in the area desired like a failed class or a missed deadline, etc. It is important to see difficulties as potential for good and growth possibly bringing forth a more complete picture or an unseen opportunity.

**The roots** – represent critical aspects of knowing why one is seeking an accomplishment or goal. (Is it demanded by others or chosen by you and for right or wrong reasons? Is the motivation coming from deep in your own roots, as in your own calling and fitting for your life plan?)



Do the sky last after all the other elements have been explored.

**The sky:** represents our emotions and just as the weather changes continually so do our emotions. We need to pay close attention to how we are feeling about the focus of the tree and the goals we are seeking. What is resonating? Am I feeling passion about doing this or do my feet drag when thinking about it?

We have a climate, just as does the area we are living in. Am I basically a mellow, angry, sad, depressed, positive, negative, fun-loving, forward thinking type of person?

\*\*\*This is a good subject to explore in the Be-A-Piece-of-Peace practice to better understand one's self.

Lets make this playful and purposeful path  
toward personal and planetary PEACE  
A Priority



Bless  
the  
stone



Bless  
the  
Flower



Bless  
the  
Butterfly



Bless  
the  
child

WALK Gently With All the Earth

# Seeing Nature As Teacher & Friend

Seeing nature as teacher and friend is a whimsical way to say “let nature adopt us” and be with us as we journey through life. Who doesn’t need a wise and comforting counselor to walk with us through our days? When we add nature into our daily lives, we journey toward a more inclusive world. We come to value both our earthly walk and the ground on which we tread.

Walking in nature for so many years and in working with The Flower Exercise, I became even more grateful for this earth in a way I never had before. I began to think “how could this ball of dirt flying through space, which sustains us, all, become even more intertwined with us in the technological world we live in today?” So it was just a bit of a stretch to look at the symbols in The Flower Exercise and ask, “How can you be more? How can you be with us vitally today as you were with the ancient ones?” I was amazed at the diversity and wisdom waiting there, ready to be used for our benefit and comfort. It is surprising, pleasant and humbling to see how much we can learn from something that we see every day and take so much for granted.

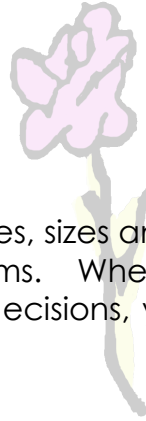
Let’s take a **deeper look** at the nine symbols and what they mean: We have trees with their overriding ability to cover and protect. The flowers in all their varieties give us a bigger picture of the uniqueness which we all are. The roots go deep and provide strength and nutrition. The thorny issues of life are like weeds. The sun warms us and gives light and energy to our days. The moon reminds us that we may be unaware of a need or caution. The complexity of the sky reminds us how to balance our thoughts and feelings. The stumbling blocks teach us to walk carefully on our paths and the stepping stones show us how to map the path we want to take. Isn’t it humbling and amazing to see how much diversity can work together in such complexity to create so beautifully?

# Seeing Nature As Teacher & Friend

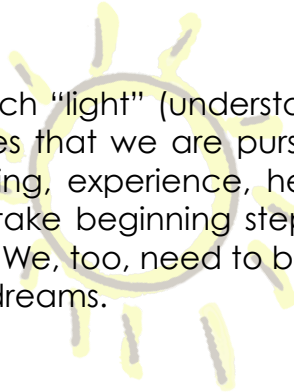
## The Tree

When you do The Flower Exercise, visualize the tree with its strong limbs gently holding the subject or situation that you want to think about. Also, think about the characteristics the tree has that we need in our lives: strength, flexibility, patience, endurance. It doesn't ask for more than it needs. And consider how much nurturing a tree provides without moving a step. It gives shade, shelter, safety, beauty, and a place to rest or nest. The tree needs the nutrients of good soil, water and sunlight to sink deep roots and become strong. The tree reminds us to take good care of ourselves as well as to reach out to others. The tree reminds us that our roots (self care) must match our limbs (activities). We need to be wise in not creating more branches than our roots can care for. It would be a good thing to become more like a tree.

*Remember: Looking at the right of the page is looking toward the results being desired.*



**Flowers** come in all shapes, sizes and colors and so do our tasks, needs, desires, goals and dreams. When you create beautiful bouquets in your own life with wise decisions, you also bring beauty to the lives of others.



The **sun** reflects how much “light” (understanding) we have on the goals, needs, and desires that we are pursuing. Do we have the information, understanding, experience, help and assets to make good decisions and to take beginning steps? The sun warms our earth and gives us light. We, too, need to be full of light and energy to pursue our tasks and dreams.


**Stepping stones** help us visualize the assets we have to work with. They also remind us to appreciate all we take for granted like freedom, food, clothing, shelter, safety, health, family and friends. Many in the world do not have all of these precious treasures. In all the circumstances we find ourselves, we need to use what we have in place to build our lives. We can find our interests, abilities, talents, training, experience, our health, financial resources, public offerings like the library and internet, our faith, the support and encouragement of others, and the time we have available. Intangibles like a positive attitude and a sense of humor also serve us greatly in all our pursuits.

*Remember: Looking at the left of the page is looking at what might be missing or what might get in the way.*

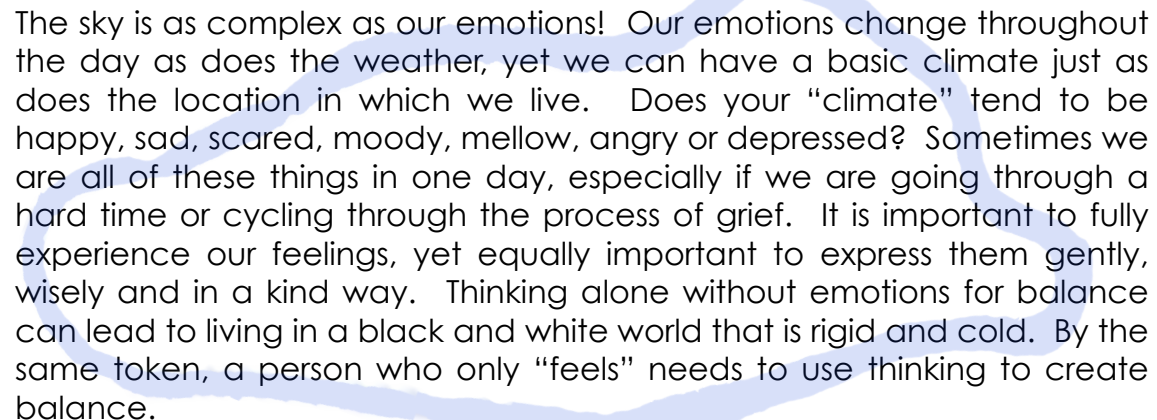
The moon reminds us to not be blindsided by darkness; for just as it is hard to find things in the dark, it is usually what we are unaware of that leads to problems in our lives. Maybe it is a gift that the moon cycles from quarter to half to full as a continual reminder of what we may be unaware of in our lives, in a project, in a loved one's need or toward seeing a bigger picture of life.

Weeds symbolize those thorny issues in our lives such as bad habits or a repeating irritant which slows down progress toward a task, goal, or our growth process. We need to pull them out by the roots if possible or at least keep them under control. Keep in mind that an unweeded garden yields little good growth.

Stumbling blocks are the things that can get in the way and slow down or halt our progress. They can be little bumps in the road or major road blocks. Most can be worked through. Good planning can prevent or prepare us for when these stumbling blocks appear. Good problem solving skills will serve us well here and in all parts of our lives.



Roots create the health of the tree. Roots reflect our value system and the whys of our doings. For us, our passions tempered with wisdom provide strength and energy. A good test of working with our passions is that our work/life feels more like play.



The sky is as complex as our emotions! Our emotions change throughout the day as does the weather, yet we can have a basic climate just as does the location in which we live. Does your “climate” tend to be happy, sad, scared, moody, mellow, angry or depressed? Sometimes we are all of these things in one day, especially if we are going through a hard time or cycling through the process of grief. It is important to fully experience our feelings, yet equally important to express them gently, wisely and in a kind way. Thinking alone without emotions for balance can lead to living in a black and white world that is rigid and cold. By the same token, a person who only “feels” needs to use thinking to create balance.

Here is a good practice. In all things, do your best thinking and then let your emotions come fully. Then when you need to make a decision, ask the question, place your hands on your tummy (your center) and let the answer come, usually as a quiet knowing. It is important in doing this that you have been giving yourself, as a way of life, permission to be who you are so that you are well in tune with yourself. Being yourself and hearing your own answers gets easier and easier with practice.

**(A caution here:** *When there is much foundation work to do [see the Getting to 51 Theory and Chart] one needs to be careful as some of the missing pieces in the foundation may interfere with the knowledge and experience needed in wisely doing this practice.)*





# Universal Teaching Tool

First and foremost, The Flower Exercise is a tool to explore subjects and situations (*examples follow*). Second, it can diffuse sensitive subjects. Personal perceptions and emotions can become too intense for objectivity and sensitivity to prevail, causing further difficulties in reaching an agreement or solution. The sensitive subject becomes more manageable when one takes the thought or emotion one is feeling and places it on the proper symbol because a bit of distance and a bit more objectivity come into play. When the painful subject can be seen through a picture on a page the person is more able to see a bigger picture and view a more workable situation. This also helps others to understand thus bringing more sensitivity toward the person and the subject involved. Third, it has a great advantage because the parent, teacher or guide is no longer “the heavy” for the child or person. They can then see in the gentle and wise picture of nature the process and/or possible path that needs to be taken. Fourth, parents who show children how they come to decision using The Flower Exercise will help those children to understand how their parents think! Parents can be as confusing to children as children are to them. Fifth, a person can learn that their “flower” may be another’s “weed”.

Using a common cultural analogy, a woman may feel that shopping is a flower, while her husband may feel it is a weed. A husband may feel that watching a sports event is a flower and his wife may see it as a weed. And then, even harder, a parent may want a child to be involved in sports while the child’s heart is geared to music or the theater. So the child’s flowers are the parent’s weeds.



# Universal Teaching Tool

While these needs and wants are being looked at playfully, the desires behind them are serious. Each person needs to pursue his or her own purpose and passions in life. When authentic needs, wants, and passions are not met, life itself becomes a stumbling bloc

Using the analogy of weeds and flowers helps those involved to understand that we are not all the same and those whose ideas are different from our own are not trying to be difficult. This gives us an opportunity for understanding and sensitivity toward ourselves and others. Hopefully, helpful questions come up like “How can this difficulty be resolved? How do we make this a win-win situation for all of us?”

Sixth, it can be introduced playfully to preschool and kindergarten children. A young child this age would love to be able to say what “flowers” they would like to have today. And they would probably have great fun being able to say “that’s a weed” about something they didn’t want to do. When it’s time to gather supplies for play or to go to school or to pick up and put toys away, “what do the happy rocks (stepping stones) say?”

The Flower Exercise can be a playful and purposeful Be-A-Piece-of-Piece practice geared to the child’s age. It can also teach beginning awareness of personal identity and responsibility.

And seventh, everyone who becomes a part of this practice is invited to see even bigger pictures and especially to have fun.

Next are a **few examples** to help you see how The Flower Exercise is both playful and purposeful and how you can use it to paint a picture of thinking, communication and interaction across a broad spectrum.



# A Primer For Life

## *Examples*

These examples explore and explain the flexibility, wisdom and playfulness of The Flower Exercise. The Flower Exercise examples demonstrate the versatility and range of subjects and behaviors The Flower Exercise can address. It is truly a Primer for Life giving one a structure that is gentle and wise with which to study and work life.

The examples begin simply with preschool and the early grades, along with those who are developmentally disabled; then become expanded gradually from grade school to high school; then on to the issues of life, ending with a simple philosophy of life. The wording is kept simple to allow all ages to be able to grasp the material yet it is the same thinking process each and every human being uses daily, regardless of the duties performed or the decisions being made.

When I face darkness, do I know how to **reach out** for needed resources?



Do I feel content on my journey?



Does my heart sing?



Do I have an **encouraging environment** to live and grow in?

## My Walk on Planet Earth

Do I feel **rooted**, planted, a part of everything?



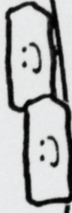
Am I aware of the **need to need** in my own life?



Do I know the environment and the **path** I need to be on?



What helps me **move** toward my goals?



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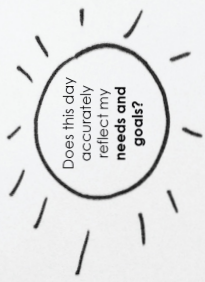
Is there something I'm not remembering or aware of?



Thinking about today is bringing on **these feelings...**



... are they making me feel my life is **on track?** ...  
... or that some **adjustments** need to be made?



Does this day accurately reflect my **needs and goals?**

## Looking At Today (AM)

Is there a **nagging habit or situation** that needs attention?



Is there a **trouble spot** that needs to be addressed?



What are the **desires and duties** of this day?



Is everything **in order** to do what is wanted or necessary?



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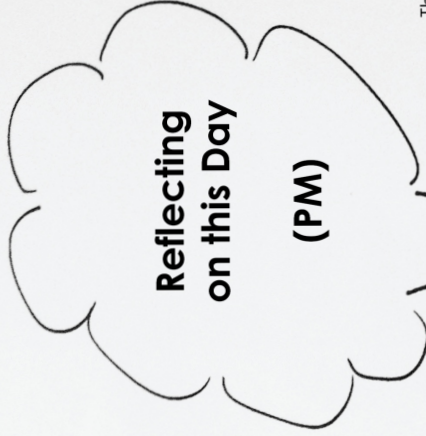
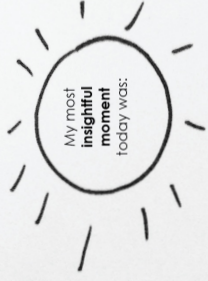
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Today I was most in the dark about:

Today my feelings ranged from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Given my life at this moment and the events of the day, I feel these were:



The little irritants in my life today were:



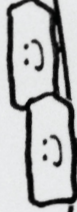
The thoughts I had today about a potential problem were:



The Flowers in my life today were:



Today I was most grateful for:





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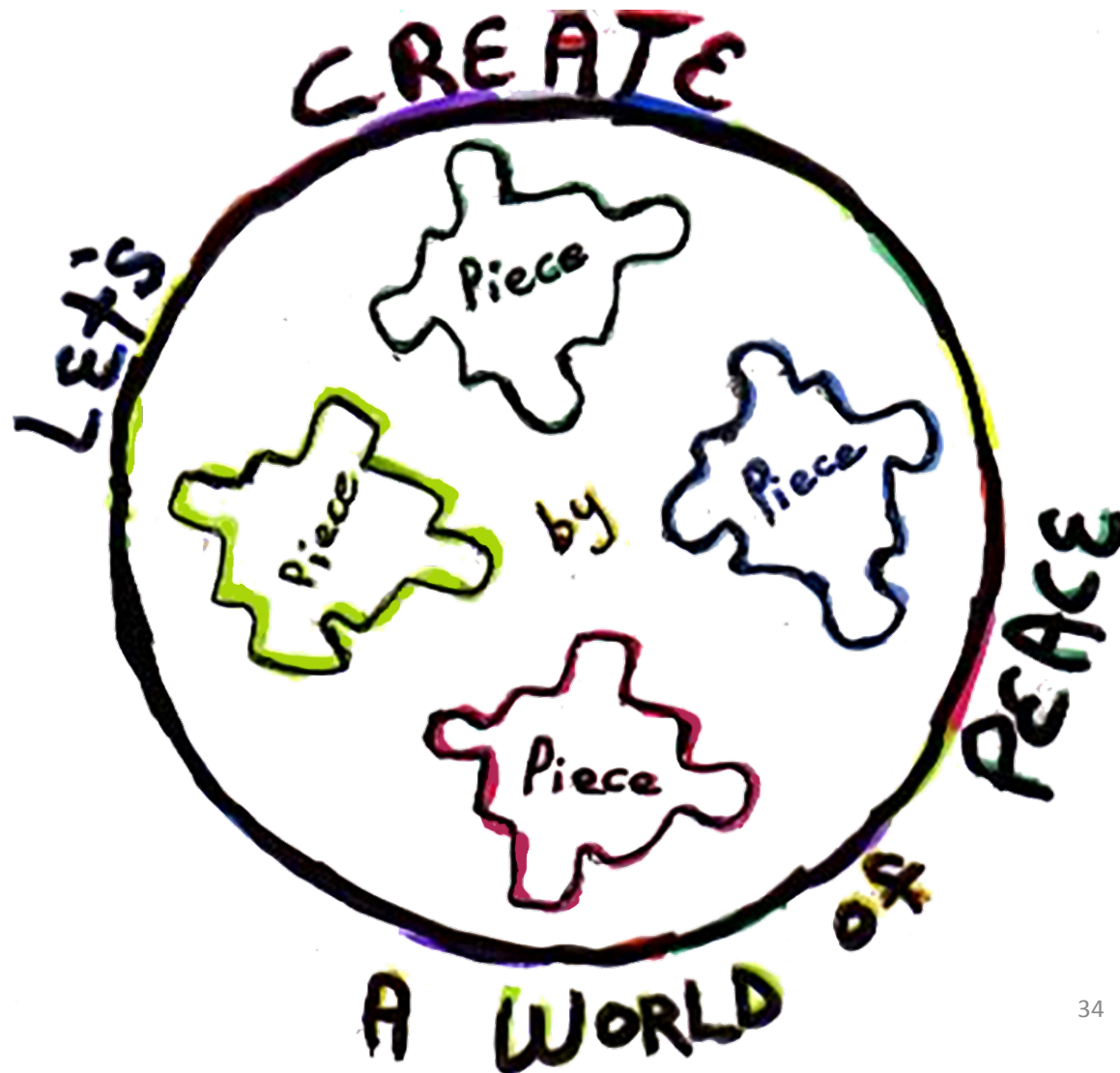
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BE - A -  - of - PEACE

Children, Women and Men for World Peace  
through Awareness and Understanding





# Overview of Be a Piece of Peace

Be a Piece of Peace is a treasure, giving us a way to come to know and honor ourselves and collectively giving us a way to bond together by doing a playful and purposeful daily practice.

The world needs a hands-on way to bond children, women and men together in a way where all are equally able to participate. Be a Piece of Peace helps us discover our own identity and understand others and life; while, at the same time giving us a way to bond together in a common behavior.

Children of all ages will naturally embrace this playful and purposeful practice and will come to value it more all the days of their lives. For adults who are not doing similar practices in their own lives it may, at first, seem childish, foreign or unnecessary. But this is not the case! It is a whole brain trainer written to bring balance, insight and joy no matter ones age.

The seven daily practices take little time and can be done in bits and pieces throughout the day, if necessary. Under each of the seven categories are a variety of ways to approach the practice that is being presented. This is not only for personal preference, but to meet the requirements of cultures throughout the world. It allows all cultures to adapt the practice within their own guidelines.



# Be a Piece of Peace For Groups

**Teachers:** How wonderfully prepared you are to practice Be A Piece of Peace in your classrooms. Everyone could take turns choosing a practice for all of you to do together.

**Parents:** This can be such a fun and playful way to be with your children. A great tool and toy for family time while learning and playing. The gifts of The Flower exercise and Be A Piece of Peace give children a set of tools that can serve them always.

**Children:** Start clubs with your friends and do the Be A Piece of Peace practice together. You can set aside time to talk about how this daily practice and The Flower Exercise are helping you and how you can reach out to children around the world to join you in this playful and peaceful activity.

**Teens and Adults:** Create support groups or introduce the Mini Manual for Humankind to groups you already belong to. Think about creating some performance rhythm routines to perform to encourage others to become A Piece of Peace.

**Elders:** What a wonderful opportunity you have to role model creativity, wisdom and growth; encouraging others to also follow this path of feet moving toward understanding, compassion and good will.

**Business Members:** Use your ability to see the big picture to help others with the See a Situation in a Minute with the nine elements in The Flower Exercise. Encourage your coworkers to recognize the value of a Be A Piece of Peace daily practice.

Caregivers: Working with people that are physically, mentally, and/or emotionally challenged provides another opportunity to help develop a gift of self. Pay special attention to the A Day for Fun and Play and A Dutiful Day in the Flower Exercise.



# Be a Piece of Peace For Groups

**Caregivers:** Working with people that are physically, mentally, and/or emotionally challenged provides another opportunity to help develop a gift of self. Pay special attention to the A Day for Fun and Play and A Dutiful Day in the Flower Exercise.

**People that are Incarcerated:** Reach out to others with “while here I have learned...” and create support groups, or action groups like Prisoners for Peace. Help create this practice in prisons all over the world. You can be change agents in a world that is desperately in need.


Each of us and all of us can be “Piece Pilgrims”. Whether we do it privately and quietly in our own homes or form a support group for a sense of community and reaching out to others, being a Piece Pilgrim is a great way to help us grow in wisdom and goodwill and to spread joy around the world. Have a peace party!

Create The Flower Exercise picture in your own favorite medium. Use pencil, ink, crayons, markers, artist's paints, needle and thread, fabric, clay, wood tiles, metal, bits and pieces of miscellany, or an old bucket of nuts and bolts!

Doing the “daily-do” of peace pilgrims could be sending out peaceful thoughts to your fellow Piece Pilgrims world wide.

# The 7 Daily Practices of Be a Piece of Peace

We all have thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Writing or drawing our thoughts on paper gives us a more balanced perspective. And as we continue to write down thoughts, create poems, doodle and/or draw we come to know ourselves better and this adds to our self identity. Music resonates throughout our lives, sometimes speaking to us more clearly than words. Moving our bodies to the feelings of our heart brings awareness for growing that may otherwise be missed. Our breath and our body are the gifts life gives us to travel with on our earthly journey; stretching and breathing adds to our physical health. Appreciating the wisdom of others is part of a life of wisdom, and choosing to walk daily with a symbol from nature provides nurturing and nourishment.

BE - A -  - Pilgrim™



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## Write in A Journal

A poem about  
today

OR  
your thoughts  
and feelings

OR  
tell about the  
weather

OR  
make a list

OR  
write down  
your hopes,  
plans, goals

ONLY two Rules  
in journal writing

--1- date it

--2- do what  
you want!!

## Stretch Wiggle & Pose

Stretch, wiggle  
and pose until  
you have felt  
every muscle  
in your body -

when in  
A Pose

breathe deeply  
from your  
stomach

don't forget  
your eyes!

look up, down,  
left, right, near,  
far

OO OO OO OO

## Read books

that teach  
encourage  
uplift  
give  
guidance

CREATE

under-  
standing  
and

goodwill

Choose one of  
the symbols  
from The Flower  
Exercise™ Scene

to be your  
companion  
for the day

what do you  
need most today  
to REFLECT on

TREES  
FOCUS

FLOWERS  
desires, needs

SUN  
INSIGHT

Stepping Stones  
what is in place to help

Roots  
motivation

Moon  
awareness

WEEDS  
irritants

Stumbling Block  
difficulties

Sky  
feelings

SEND OUT PEACEFUL THOUGHTS TO YOUR FELLOW "PIECE PILGRIMS"™

# The Daily-Do of Piece Pilgrims World-wide

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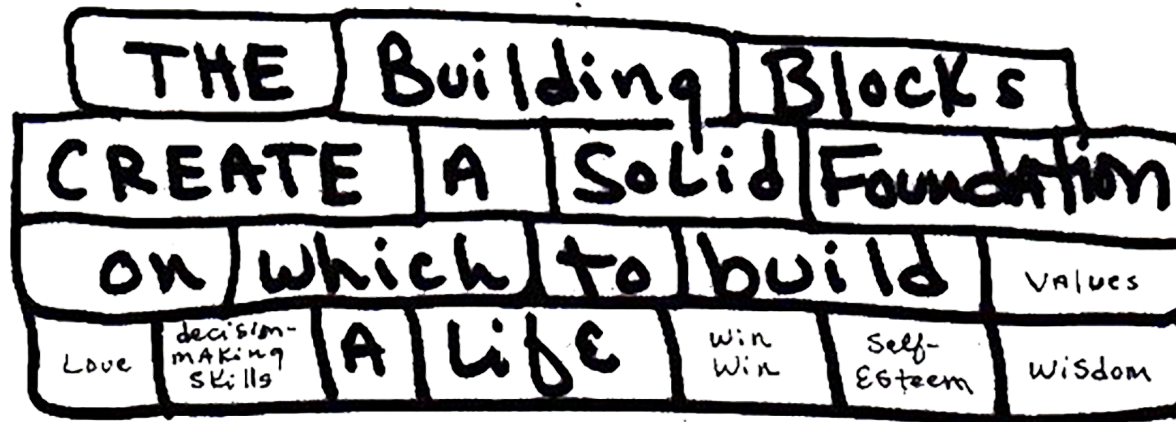
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A simple theory and a one-page reference sheet take the process of personal growth and development and create a simple framework for individuals and families to understand and make choices for participating in their own growth processes.

86 – 100% the highly functioning person, the self actualized person – no one makes it to 100%.

51 – 85% where mainstream populations function for the most part.

Mentors (career, growth)

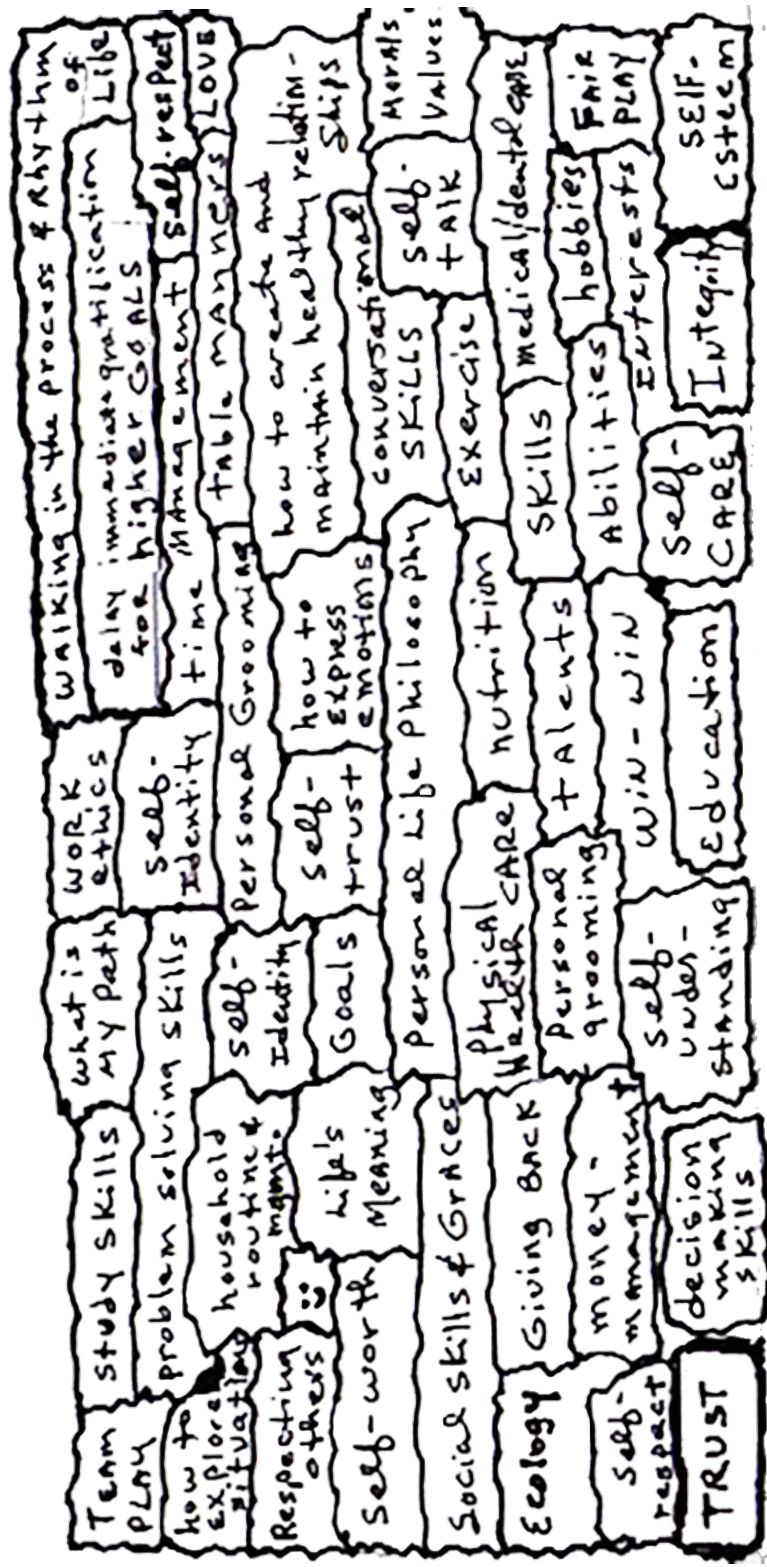
Life Coaches (personal, professional development)

Personal Trainers (physical health)

0 – 50% the normal process of growth plus adults who just survive rather than thrive and children who are falling behind developmentally.

Professional Parenting

Foundation Builders: Professional parents would have the task of helping individuals to build in the missing foundation blocks.



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# A Simple Theory of Personal Growth and Development

## Part One: The Growth Process

### The Normal Growth Process

In an ideal setting, a well parented child will have formed a healthy sense of self by age three and by school age will have developed enough social and self discipline skills to enter school and do well. If all continues to go well, by high school graduation the young adult, bathed in good self esteem and self identity with sufficient life experience and learning skills will have reached or bettered the critical number of foundation stones needed to step into the adult world. With good luck this group will continue to grow and develop and will create healthy and fulfilling lives for themselves and their families.

### An Insufficient Growth Process

Many other young adults will graduate from high school (some will have dropped out) and will begin their journey into adulthood without the critical number of foundation stones needed. Being young adults, they will begin with all the inherent desires, dreams and responsibilities as the first group. But the likelihood is that sooner or later this group with an insufficient amount of the needed foundation stones to achieve success will begin to falter in their progress toward the goals they desire.

At this point one of two things usually happens. If a person from this group has been gaining in self esteem over the years, has been able to create job and relationship success and has come to live by a self chosen value system, he or she will likely be able to recognize when the deficiencies begin to take their toll and will seek the needed help. The other portions of this group will more than likely founder in their attempts to create the lives they desire. The following material addresses the group who falter in their attempts to make good progress toward the



# Personal Growth and Development

lives they want and seeking help or not, continue to founder in small and/or large ways.

I believe that most people, understandably, assume that with age comes a certain level of understanding, abilities, skills and wisdom to make wise decisions and meet life's responsibilities. It is assumed that if you are an adult, you have enough of what you need to function in the adult world. This is not necessarily true! A healthy adult life cannot be lived on a faulty foundation. The need to build in the missing stones in the foundation and the missing or unfinished steps of the developmental process are areas of difficulty not commonly recognized.

What is needed is a recognized common understanding of the needs of this group by both the person or family needing help and those who would offer assistance, and a simple and practical process to encourage the needed growth. I hope that the following words will speak to this need.

Our society has come to recognize and appreciate mentors for career enhancement, life coaches for personal and professional development and personal trainers for physical health, yet the need to address this large group who need to shore up a faulty foundation with the help of a recognized professional support system has not yet been sufficiently understood or addressed in a simple practical way. The following material presents a simple plan for those in this category. Ideally, there would be professional help in this process, but in this theory I will explain how I think a person could do some of this work on their own and how a paraprofessional could be a valuable asset in this process. I will call this category of helpers professional partners.

# Personal Growth and Development

If you recognize yourself in this category, it would be good to receive supportive counseling toward or help in shoring up the missing or insufficient foundational stones.

If you do not have the opportunity to receive professional help in this area, possibly a wise friend or wise and loving family member could offer support. If you need to work on this alone at this time, look for role models among friends, family or society who seem to have these qualities. Find people who seem to function as those who have been raised with and have themselves highly developed parental skills. Learn to look for and observe loving, balanced, wise, gentle and successful people. Come to understand what they say, how they say it and how it is responded to. Study what they do and how they do it and the results it brings. Learn to speak as they speak and to do as they do. This is not easy, but it is necessary if one is to move from this group to a chosen and productive life. Most importantly learn to be a wise and gentle parent to yourself. This creates the cornerstone on which to build the quality life you desire. Especially observe how the good and wise among us parent themselves, the quality care they give themselves, and the gentle and loving concern they show themselves.

## **Part Two: Thoughts on Various Aspects of Para-Parenting**

Here are some thoughts on how a paraprofessional parenter might help an individual or family, and some ideas for individuals and families to gain awareness of areas of growth that may be needed. The client (and the client's spouse and children) need true parenting. The paraprofessional parenter could be a role model for how to be a parent and explain the work of building in the needed foundation stones and how building in the stones will help create happy and healthy individuals and families.



# Personal Growth and Development

The paraprofessional parenter could be a professional parenter or a happy, mentally healthy volunteer or contract worker with training who would work in conjunction with other professionals if the family is already in therapy. The paraprofessional's work would be to be a true parent to the individual or family, always modeling healthy parenting behavior, most especially how a healthy person does internal self talk and how healthy individuals talk to and behave with each other and with others. The paraprofessional parenter would teach and demonstrate feelings, decision making, time and money management, social skills, playing games and working through issues in maintaining a functioning household. This would take place in the client's home, at parks, restaurants, playgrounds, museums, etc. Over time, the paraprofessional parenter will have been with the family through a full range of normal activities. Often a same sex professional parent would be needed. Activities could include shopping walks, sports activities, budget planning at a coffee shop, etc.

Adults and children have talents, ideas, interests and expertise that they would like to share. Learning how to do, show, and tell these things surrounded by family members who show their caring and encouragement would do wonders for self esteem and relationship skills.

As each person works through a "stone" in his or her foundation, it could be recognized and colored in by the client in a little ceremony to help them have a clear understanding of self appreciation for a job well done. This would also help each person to become more aware, more understanding and more responsible for themselves and their own growth process. Often, people are able to perform a behavior but do not own the qualities of this behavior experientially. This, also, would be asked of the paraprofessional parenter in order to come to know when a missing stone is truly in place – not just being correctly performed.

# Personal Growth and Development

The good parent recognizes where the child is developmentally and then uses wisdom, gentleness, guidance, and encouragement in allowing the child to learn to do the many tasks life requires. (This, too, is expected of the paraprofessional parenter.) The wise parent recognizes each next needed growth step and uses wise and gentle guidance to build in a sense of self esteem and accomplishment as the child masters the task at their own pace. The good parent also gives the child the freedom to fail.

Those who struggle or find themselves surviving more than thriving do not (nor does anyone) need to be badgered, hard-lined, restricted punitively, hammered, criticized, ridiculed, teased, bullied or judged.

This book, A Mini Manual for Humankind, would be an excellent resource used for individual quiet time or as a family time activity as part of this process. It can serve as a basis for discovering worth of self, understanding life, becoming sensitive to others and learning to appreciate the joys and fragility of life. I hope these words will resonate personally and offer encouragement to those discouraged in their own journey in life, and will be of benefit to those who would work with this population in building healthy self care skills.

## **Part Three: Thoughts on How to Recognize and Begin the Needed Growth Process**

How can you tell how much work you need to do on your foundation? Look at the quality of life you are living now. Do you make good progress toward reaching desired goals? Are you where you had hoped to be or is life always "out there" beyond a healthy reach? Do you have happy and healthy relationships? Do you feel that you are living out your own personal calling? Are you comfortably yourself in all areas of your life?



# Personal Growth and Development

Here are some ideas for becoming more aware:

Become an observer of yourself and others. Become sensitive to the varieties of behaviors we human beings display and of your own patterns of action and interaction.

How do you learn best? Do you learn most easily by reading, watching demonstrations, or using visual aids? Do you learn best by listening to lectures and tapes? Or do you need hands on experience along with these to truly learn new material?

What is your work/life style? Do you wake up running and do so until bedtime? Or do you enjoy putting in a good day's work and having some quiet time at the end of your day? Can you happily multi-task or do you need to have one major focus or project at a time? Do you tend to be so busy or so engrossed that you miss information that is needed, and are unaware of the needs of those around you? Do you miss out on life's enjoyments and need to address this for your own well being and the well being of those around you?

Study your own motivation so as to be clean and clear in all your dealings with others. If you have ever had the experience of someone putting their motivation on your behavior (maybe even unknowingly), you know how very uncomfortable this can be. If someone gives you credit and you know your own motivation was not clean you can be equally uncomfortable.

Artists, highly sensitive people, and people who do not fit into the system especially need to be aware of and sensitive to their own needs while at the same time, learning to work well with the world at large. People in these groups need more space, and can be shut down when placed in a rigid structure. This population often sees a bigger picture of life and<sup>51</sup> emotionally feels both higher and lower.



# Personal Growth and Development

Practice living a clean, clear, and simple path. Look for the good in yourself and others and in each day.

## **Part Four: For Those Who Seem Unable to Make Needed Changes**

When a well functioning person takes a fall in life, their foundation helps them bounce back up. After dusting themselves off, figuring out what happened, and incorporating the learning in order to be wiser in the future, they are off again on their journey in life. This doesn't happen to those with faulty foundations. When they take a fall, they also fall into their crumbled and broken foundation and are injured a second time by reliving again the pain and frustrations and losses of the past. The real heartache here is that this often leads to being hurt yet again.

Our beliefs come from our foundations. When a person with a faulty foundation falls, what comes to mind and seems real is the past where their present belief system was formed. What needs to happen here instead is that the person realizes that they fell into the broken foundation and that they need to self nurture and be nurtured from the fall and from the fall into the broken foundation. This person needs to have a way to gain perspective again; to be able to say "Yes, I was hurt twice, once from the fall and then again from falling into my broken foundation." This will get the person back to ground level.

But here is the key and critical element. The person, and this is the breaking point, must be willing to look at the foundation to see if any of their beliefs played into the first fall, and to ask "How do they square with the truth?" If this person takes old, inaccurate beliefs back to attempt life again, so begins a repeating pattern for failure. The person in this category needs to change the inaccurate beliefs in the foundation, even if this feels nearly impossible to do. The person with a faulty foundation does not have much trust so to trust someone else's words is not easy. It may feel like selling out one's soul and losing one's self completely.

# Personal Growth and Development

Here is a good way to help someone in this population who needs to change a belief. In addition to the reading, studying, listening, and observing this population needs to do, they also need to look around in their lives or in the lives of someone in history or one who has societal recognition and find a role model who has lived or is living a quality life. As good mental health requires, one needs to have congruency in their thinking, feeling, saying and doing. Have the person choose one or more of their role models and ask themselves: "What do I think about this? What am I feeling about this? What do I want to say? What do I want to do in this situation?" It is also helpful to ask the person to think about the best thing that can happen here, the worst thing that can happen here and a balanced possibility. Then have the person ask themselves:

What would \_\_\_\_\_ think here?

What would \_\_\_\_\_ feel here?

What would \_\_\_\_\_ say here?

What would \_\_\_\_\_ do here?"

The critical element is for the person to say and do what the role model would do. When this is repeated enough over time the person, at some point, will come to recognize and validate the best behavior. This is the beginning of building a foundation that will provide self nurturing and wisdom with which to continue life's journey.



# Personal Growth and Development

The person with a faulty foundation is already exhausted and discouraged at life. When told to perform even more it can bring on anger, confusion and sometimes acting out. This person has not had normal nurturing, does not know this and therefore has little capacity to say when they are overloaded. Acting out and over indulgence probably reflect this misunderstood need. One who would work with this person needs to teach, model and give healthy nurturing especially during these times so that healthy self care can be learned. Another consideration is that a person with a faulty foundation does not realize that the person who is successful has also paid the price to learn and to keep healthy behavior in their life. It seems to the student that the rules are arbitrary and not something each and every person has had to learn in their lives. When the student has enough personal growth and foundation reinforced, this, also, will come to be understood.

# A Final Note

Become a student of life. Observe the process of life – the seasons of nature, the seasons of a person's life. Become a wise and gentle person to yourself and to others. Practice a curious appreciation for all of life's intricacies and complexities. Enjoy and protect the “two legged”, the “four legged”, the “winged” and the “finned” of our world. Embrace the mysteries of life itself.

Two Intriguing Thoughts to Ponder (from two who do)

“Why is an ant not flung off this spinning ball called earth into space?”

“If your life were a song title, what would it be?”

Let's make this playful and purposeful path toward personal and planetary peace a priority.

Walk gently with all the Earth.

Bless the Stone

Bless the Flower

Bless the Butterfly

Bless the Child

The pages end and the practice begins...

I wish you the very best,  
Diane

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# Thank You Reading The Mini Handbook

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Please share with us how you have used this book on our website.

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I wish you the very best,

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