



Dear friends,

Welcome to the combined November/December issue of the Homeschool Journey newsletter!

Our topic for November is 'humor.' In dark times, humor is needed more than ever---and it is certainly required when one is a parent.



We can get so serious about the serious business of parenting and educating our children---yet without humor, we risk stagnating into fixed patterns and forms. Humor implies risk and risk-taking is a huge part of becoming a free and independent person. By being filled, at appropriate times, with humor, we can model to our children that we are not victims, that we can transform, ease and breath into difficult situations.

A couple of months ago I wrote about the dangers of sexualization of children (this was followed up by a newsletter devoted to reader responses---[click here to access those and other back issues of the Homeschool Journey](#)). A parent wrote in after I had already printed the 'follow-up' issue but what she wrote stayed with me. Basically, she described an uncomfortable situation on a beach where scantily-clothed people posed provocatively for selfies. To my way of thinking, this is a great example of a situation where a sense of humor is called for.

Instead of getting upset at the situation or at the people, one could calmly say to one's children 'my, sometimes people are silly!' and then move on to 'I'll race you to the water' or 'I think it's time to build a sand castle---you get some seashells, and you get some....' and so on.

The idea is to not make a big deal about what is happening. Presumably, the reader was upset more about the provocative poses than the scanty clothing (it was a beach, after all) and it is simply not possible to deflect such behavior by getting upset or trying to explain it away: the bigger a deal one makes of such a situation, the more most children will get drawn into it.

I know that the person who wrote in about this has young children---to explain why one feels these people's behavior is unacceptable is not something we do with young children under about 10 or so. After that, it could be that one says something about how people perhaps should or should not behave in public. Children of that age start to need a moral compass though of course, at such a young age, they continue (for many years) to build theirs upon ours. Tiny ones are of course in the age of imitation---so if we get upset, they get upset. If we make a big deal about something, even if they don't follow suit on an outer level, they do within. So humor, deflating the situation, can work wonders here.



Sometimes humor can help in parenting dilemmas---sometimes when one feels that awful squaring up in opposition with a child, one just needs to diffuse the situation. Quacking like a duck, pretending to faint, hitting a child with a pillow, blowing a big raspberry---these are things a calm and centered parent can do. And with many children, the humor diffuses things, they can then laugh and breath, and you can both move on.

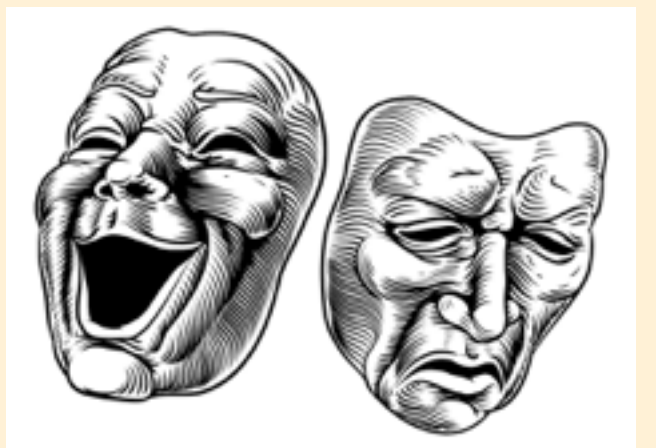
However, if you have a child (usually one who is melancholic) who takes offense at such behavior, then being silly, going for humor, is the worst thing to do. They need to feel heard---but they, no more than any other child, need to never experience parental collapse in the face of their anger. You need to exude

compassion and let your child (not by verbal cues but by inner warmth and movement of soul) know that she is heard....but that you are not caving to her behavior.

And so humor can, if we can only remember to use it, be a huge help in many parenting situations. One caveat: the parent using humor must be absolutely in control of his- or her-self. If not, humor can come out as patronizing, teasing, or sarcasm, none of which are ever helpful.

Comedy & Tragedy

The following is an excerpt from [our ninth grade Comedy & Tragedy notes](#). I taught this main lesson several times when I was a high school teacher and learned a lot about humor and teens!



This is a literature main lesson taught to the ninth grade in most Waldorf high schools. Through working with the polarities of comedy and tragedy the young teen can be helped to achieve balance in his or her soul life. Many 14 and 15 year olds have a rather black and white attitude towards life and by working to soften this polarity, the teen can be helped to let go of dogmatic or inflexible tendencies.

Much of this has to do with breathing -- with the in-breath and inward gesture of tragedy and the out-breath and outward gesture of comedy. To work with these elements and to find one's relationship to both is a step toward health, toward finding the middle way between extremes.

Also in this booklet I quote from Dr Karl Konig, founder of the Camphill Movement (intentional communities of variously-abled people that originally were based in anthroposophy):

Instead of the regular intake and output of air, in weeping, several short inhalings are followed by a long and deep exhaling. The opposite happens in laughing -- there is a staccato exhaling followed by an extensive and long drawn-out inhaling ... These two patterns are exactly reciprocal to each other and it often happens that laughter can change into weeping, and weeping into laughter. These phenomena show strikingly the deep relationship of the two expressions. Laughing and weeping are non-identical twins in the life of the human soul.

Waldorf education---real Waldorf education based in anthroposophy---is at heart a form of therapeutic education. We all come to this earth to learn and to develop. 'Healing' is what we call the journey toward wholeness, toward learning who we are and why we have incarnated on this earth. Humor, and its opposite, sadness, are both vital guides on our paths. Learning to move in a flexible way between these poles---learning to breathe physically, emotionally, spiritually--- endows our soul with the ability to meet the challenges that it faces---and in these dark days remembering humor and not losing oneself in sadness or worse, fear, is of the utmost importance.

The Internet and Behavior

I cannot stress too strongly that the worse possible thing a parent can do is give his or her child access to the internet. Period. Here are a couple of articles which can help folks dispel any ideas they might have that social behaviors amongst youngsters---especially girls---is not 'contagious' and that the internet and so-called social media groups exacerbate and encourage the most harmful and dreadful behavior in children:

- <https://www.verywellmind.com/news-self-harming-behaviors-may-be-socially-contagious-in-adolescents-5082279>
- <https://nypost.com/2022/09/17/how-social-media-is-literally-making-teens-mentally-ill-doctor/>

Feedback from homeschoolers

As always, do forward this issue and/or the archive link to anyone who might benefit from these newsletters. Here is some lovely feedback from the October issue of the Homeschool Journey newsletter on the theme of 'being green':

This was beautiful and brought me right back to my centre. As you say - the standard is "Am I / is this creating reverence, awe and gratitude?". As a past environmental and climate scientist and warrior, I have since reformed my beliefs to be much more in alignment with what you have shared this week. I am reminded of the quote by Chief Seattle ---

Man did not weave the web of life. He is merely but a strand. What man does to the web, he does to himself.

A life of convenience, speed, hyper-consumption has indeed thrown our web, and our Selves, direly out of balance. True sustainability starts from within and requires us to question every tiny assumption about our self, our life and society - and ask what are we really "progressing" to?

--Sarah xx

Thank you so much for this. Definitely things that have been on my mind. So nice to read something that resonates, and most importantly, that will move me to action for my family. Blessings always,

--Jennifer

Oh Donna! You really nailed it on this one, I appreciate your perspectives on this so much it really helps to reinforce why homeschooling is so important, as life unfolds and I'm due to have another baby I sometimes wonder if my 9 year old would be better in a "school", in my heart I know it's not so. The connection of heart to all other hearts from each individually, to the heart of humanity, to Christ and all the way up to God himself is worth holding in awareness from this point of view as when aligned with the heart and love itself there is no other true healing and solution for earth and humanity. Thank you again for your words, you are one I have a great appreciation for, you do a great service to us, much love to you dear woman!

--From ET

A story of St Nicholas

St Nicholas' day has passed (6 December) [but this is a lovely story to share with your children](#). It was written by a Christian Community (the church inspired b the work of Steiner) priest. May it be received with love and peace into your children's hearts.



Print-on-Demand

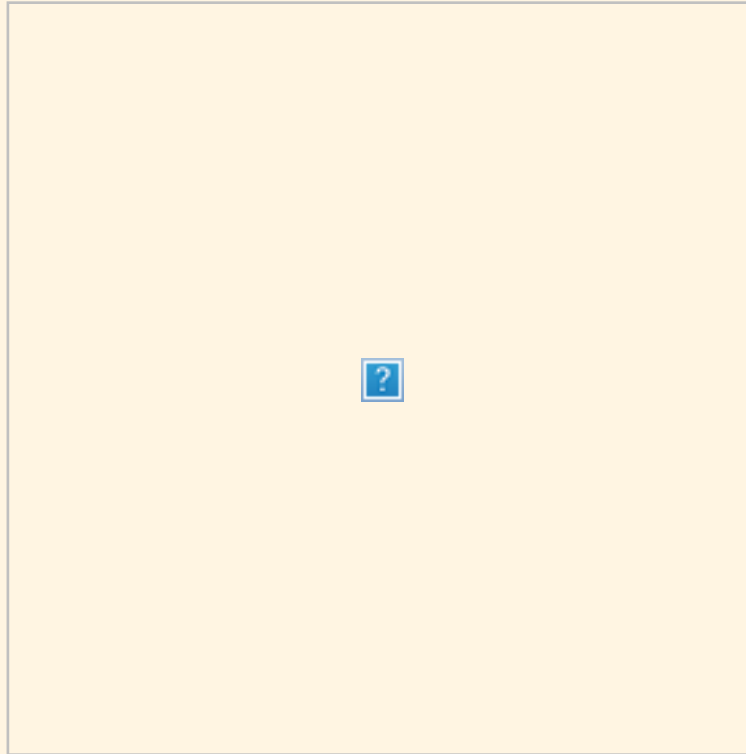
Christopherus is gradually moving all publications over to print-on-demand (Lulu). This process will take quite some time as we will be updating publications as we go along.

One of the most important considerations for switching to print-on-demand is that **Lulu has printers in many countries outside the US and this means that postage will be calculated on a domestic rate for sales in those countries!**

This will save those of you in places such as Australia, New Zealand and the UK an awful lot of money.

[We have a number of titles for sale in this way.](#)

Obviously, until we have gone through the process of setting up each publication on Lulu, we cannot sell other materials this way: those non Lulu publications will be sold the same way as before, ie as an international purchase from us.



Upcoming Sale

We will be having sales on various Christopherus things over the next few months---we hope this helps those of you who are struggling. In January we will be offering a coupon for a \$50 reduction on our [Self-Study Course](#), an invaluable aid to really penetrating to the heart of the Christopherus (Waldorf) approach, in terms of pedagogical knowledge, skills and inner development as a parent and teacher. Perhaps you'd like to [have a little look at the Self-Study Course](#) and consider if it might

be of help to you?

Many blessings to you all and may you and your families find peace during this special time of year.

Til January,
Donna