

## *Social Inclusion Workshop with Kim John Payne*

The healthy social life is found  
When in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community finds its reflection,  
And when in the community  
The virtue of each one is living.

Rudolf Steiner – The Social Motto

### **Introduction:**

Our community was privileged to have the opportunity to hear Kim Payne speak about the concept of Social Inclusion and its very practical applications both at home and in school. Parents, faculty, teaching assistants, administrative staff, playground supervisors and members of the wider Calgary community attended. There were 70 people in attendance for the public presentation on Thursday and about 45 people that continued for the facilitators training workshop on Friday and Saturday.

Over the next few Wednesday Notices we hope to give all of our community members a chance to read about the new understandings that Kim Payne brought to us on those three days. There were so many gems of wisdom that Kim shared with us. One of Kim's background is in counselling. He has had to work with children and young adults for whom mainstream Waldorf education has not been working. He is also helping the Waldorf world wake up to its burgeoning social responsibility in working with children, parents and teachers under new and uniquely stressful circumstances that were not a part of the social life just a few decades ago. Kim has really embodied the essential wisdom of Waldorf education and brought it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Kim Payne Workshop Summary Part 2**

The following article is a continuation of the summary I am doing of the 3 day workshop we had with Kim Payne. Last week I reviewed the informal evening a few of us had with Kim in when he answered our questions about parenting and educating boys. This week I am writing about his introduction to the larger group of 70 people. On Thursday morning he provided us with the background and premises from which he developed his Social Inclusion Process. I am doing my best to provide these summaries in digestible portions. Kim Payne used the metaphor of causing "Soul Asthma" when we try to take in too much at once. There are copies of Kim's handouts on the office counter for parents to take if they would like to follow along with the summaries.

#### **Dynamic Human Encounters – A Modern Social Initiation**

Kim Payne began by looking at the role of conflict in our lives and our varied reactions to it in modern times. He helped us to see how conflict is a dynamic and necessary force that contributes to our development as human beings. He identified two reactions to conflict that are preventing conflict from being a positive force in our development. Kim's Social Inclusion Process provides another reaction we can consciously choose in order to give everyone an opportunity to learn and grow from these encounters. The process helps us to keep from getting stuck in extreme and destructive reactions.

### **Why is Bullying Such an Issue Now?**

In the past, cultures have created initiation ceremonies for helping the youth to experience conflict and challenges as constructive contributions to their maturation and soul development. The search for identity and one's place in the larger community was facilitated by the youth under going these tests of ability and capacity.

The erosion of these culturally sanctioned rites of passage has caused the youth to create rituals of their own. They know they have a need for this testing of their abilities but the forms they create are not always healthy, i.e. harmful and demeaning hazing, the creation of gangs and bullying. At the end of this article is a chart comparing the elements of a traditional rite a passage with the socially destructive results of bullying. Bullying is not necessary for growth and development and it does not achieve the goals of a rite of passage. In fact it undermines the development of both the individual and society.

### **Conflict Avoidance**

Kim outlined a cultural tendency for harmony addiction and the avoidance of conflict as equally destructive. The avoidance of learning and growing from conflict denies both us and our children opportunities for development. If conflict is viewed as wrong and bad then we have a tendency to blame each other for its cause. Aspects of our experience are left unresolved. He stated that in the context of a school community, "We blame each other if our children are not happy." Waldorf communities can have a tendency to "cocoon" the children from conflict. So that when it does occur someone must be to blame. The social inclusion approach is a no-blame approach but rather a chance to find out more about ourselves and our fellow community members.

### **Modern Initiation**

During the Renaissance there was an awakening of the thinking capacities of individuals. The ideas and processes that were developed in that time period are still foundational for how we are in the world today. Kim explained that Rudolf Steiner has identified that our task now as a human beings is to bring forth, explore and invent new social forms. We are struggling to birth the Renaissance of our social life. Our modern initiation is through dynamic human encounters. In modern times, "we define ourselves increasingly through social relationships. Intense social encounters have become a new rite of passage." We need to embrace these encounters as part of being alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Everyone loses both the individual and the community when we do not embrace transformation through social encounters. Kim has developed his process so that we can all win.

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Rudolf Steiner

Next week we will look at the specifics of the dynamics of bullying and how helping community members to develop resiliency has been identified as one of the best ways to prevent bullying from developing.

### **Kim Payne: Social Inclusion Workshop Summaries, Part Three**

This week's instalment looks into the definition of what bullying is and how developing resiliency in children and in ourselves helps to improve our chances of dealing with bullying in a transformative way.

#### **What is Bullying?**

There are many definitions of bullying and they do not all agree. Kim encourages communities to develop their own Codes of Conduct. He gave us some examples of which behaviours can fall under the definition of bullying and helped us distinguish between teasing and bullying. He is very conscious of his use of language: He refers to children who bully and those that have been targeted rather than locking someone into the definitions of being a bully or being a victim.

(The following lists are from Kim Payne's handout that he gave us during the workshop. I have put extra copies on the office counter if anyone would like to take one.)

Bullying can include the following acts especially when they are persistent, prolonged and deliberate.

- Exclusion and leaving someone out
- Physical abuse or hitting
- Verbal abuse or name calling
- Ignoring
- Disrespect of property or stealing
- Ganging up
- Malicious and hurtful rumours
- Active intolerance of differences
- Incitement or getting someone else to do any of the actions named here

#### **Understanding Teasing**

- All forms of teasing become bullying when pushed too far.

Teasing is not OK:

- When someone asks for it to stop and it doesn't
- When the person teasing reacts badly when they are teased
- When everyone doesn't think it's funny
- When it becomes a habit
- When no one will help because they think they will be teased
- When it is meant to hurt or put down another

There can also be mindless bullying when the person does not have the intention to do harm; nonetheless it can still hurt and it is an opportunity for everyone to learn. There is also a form of educational bullying that may be intended as constructive criticism but it is ill timed and over emphasizes a child's weakness. This part of the workshop helped all of us begin to examine some of the insidious ways in which bullying happens in our lives and the lives of our children.

#### **Watching for Signs of Bullying**

There are many signs that a child is being bullied and research shows that there are often stages of reactions to the bullying as a child tries to cope with the aggression. This "Descending Continuum of Harassment" incorporates the classical fear reactions of flight, fight and freeze. It is only in the final stages that children tell their parents and then tell a teacher. This is why we need to watch for the signs that a child is being targeted and do our

best to catch it sooner and why it is necessary to develop a culture in which bullying behaviour shows up as out of place by everyone. Kim also warned. Some of the signs are: taking an unusual route around the playground or on their way home; an abrupt lack of interest in school or refusing to go to school; bullying of younger children; torn or missing clothing; out of character withdrawing from family or school activities; excessively hungry; difficulty focusing on any one task.

The effects of bullying can be far reaching and prevent the full and healthy development of everyone involved; the child that bullies, the child that has been targeted and those that have been either active or inactive bystanders. We all loose when that happens. Kim assured us that there is a fourth reaction. There is flight, fight, freeze or **fine**. Research has shown that children that possess the qualities of resiliency are the least likely to be targeted, to be more resistant to the effects of bullying and more likely to confront someone when they are targeting other children. The following is the list of what is and is not resiliency from the workshop handouts.

### **Building Resiliency**

#### **What is resiliency?**

- Ability to respond freshly to each situation
- To return to a restful, alert state between events
- Ability to engage socially and enjoy friendships, play and humour
- Ability to "bracket" negative events; in time: it's only happening now) (in space: it only affects this aspect of my life, not everything)
- Ability to accept positive feedback about one's performance

#### **What is Trauma Response?**

- Reacting habitually; repetition, re-enactment of archaic patterns of response
- Maintaining low grade vigilance between events, rising to high vigilance for all events
- Startling at novelty and only attending to emotionally charged, highly relevant info.
- Social isolation, fixed routines, avoids play, unable to generate or respond to humour
- Spreading effect of negative events; (in time: it will always be like this) (in space: it affects my whole life and contaminates everything)
- Rejects "strokes" and consistently sees success as failure, an accident or not good enough

Two of the ways to establish a foundation for resiliency for your children are rhythm and reducing the clutter in their lives. Our fast paced and chaotic lives can often set a child on edge. They do not know what to expect and develop a state of hyper vigilance. Rhythm and routine are reassuring and a child can relax because they know their needs will be met. This does not mean that they need to lead mundane lives and to be cloistered from excitement. It does mean that a parent needs to keep a balance of calming and arousing activities in their child's life. A day at the circus should probably not be followed by a sleepover at a friend's house. We need to create an environment for children where they can easily return to a relaxed state after stimulating activities. This fosters a flexibility of reactions to situations.

A look at the amount of sensory and material clutter in a child's life is also important to creating an environment in which a child can experience calm. Kim is known as the "green garbage bag therapist" because he will go to the home of his clients with his garbage bags and have the parents fill them with half of the child's toys, he then gets them to give him

half of the half that is left. The toys are put away for a period of time to see if it helps the child settle down and achieve more focus. The results are usually amazing and the parents are able to understand how clutter is a key stressor in a child's life.

Remember the peace you felt entering a Waldorf Kindergarten for the first time? This is the kind of environment that supports the children in becoming resilient. Of course your 11 year old will not appreciate a "kindergarten" style bedroom but I think you understand the general idea and can help adapt the de-cluttering principle to any age.

We broke into groups to do some brainstorming on how to support the development of resiliency in our children. There were many great ideas. One theme that showed up in many forms was the role modeling of resiliency in our own lives. Do we have enough calm in our own lives?

Nonviolence:  
Reverence for Life

The rush and pressure of modern life are a form,  
perhaps the most common form,  
of its innate violence.

To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns,  
To surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to many projects,  
To want to help in everything is to succumb to violence.

The frenzy of the activist neutralizes work for peace.  
It destroys the fruitfulness of work,  
Because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

### **Social Inclusion - Where do we go from here?**

Kim Payne cautioned us to be very aware that we are **piloting a process** when we set our school on the path of the Social Inclusion Approach. It is not just a matter of setting new rules or laying out new steps to follow. We must first of all develop new strengths and understandings from within ourselves and our community. This is one reason that I have been doing my best to carefully make plain the key ideas that Kim Payne brought to us in his workshop.

After awareness comes the development of skill. Kim Payne advised us to practice using the process 5-6 times before we put the process into action for real situations that occur at the school. The Council has designated 6 of the upcoming Faculty Meetings as practice times for the Social Inclusion process. Beginning October 15, we will be setting out role plays and breaking up into teams to practice working through real situations. **We invite all of the parents that attended the last 2 days of the workshop to join us in these role plays.** Please let me know ahead of time when you will be attending. We want to have an idea of how many groups to break into and how much snack to bring. You do not necessarily have to commit to be a facilitator or to be a member of the Social Inclusion Task Group. Your willing

participation in the role plays will be helpful and your input on what you recall from the workshop will also be important.

Out of these practices we will be forming a Social Inclusion Task Group. Council has charged them with proposing a timeline of activities that we need to implement in order to be ready to go into action. The group will coordinate the process facilitators and take a look at the ideas that Kim Payne gave us of how to grow the awareness of the process among the students. i.e. One school gave the task of creating a 'Code of Conduct' to the grade eight class. The class then used various means such as puppet plays, role plays and discussion times to help the children at all levels of development understand the code.

We need to adapt the process to our own community. We are "growing" a process so we will need to review frequently and most likely do some revising. Most importantly all community members both students and adults need to be open to learning along the way.

Debora Lloyd for the Council

### **Social Inclusion Summary - Part Four**

Last week we had a look at what is bullying and teasing and how to foster resiliency in our children. I will start off this week's summary with a few of the ideas for developing resiliency that came out of our brainstorming session. The first part of the workshop that was open to everyone was mainly focused on the younger children. How we as adults can support the development of resiliency in children. The next 2 days of the workshop we spent on learning about the actual process that is used with the older children who are in conflict and then practicing the "No Blame" Approach through role playing.

This week, I have put copies of the article "The Anger of the Temperaments" that is written by Kim Payne out on the office counter for any one to pick up and read. This is a topic which we had scheduled for Kim to speak on during the last session on Saturday. As we began to delve into learning about the "No Blame Meeting" we soon realized we needed to absorb as much as possible while we had Kim to guide us. Kim was gracious to offer us the article he has written on the topic. Everyone that has talked with me about the article has said it has been helpful in understanding the role of conflict in our lives. So I am offering it to the whole community.

### **Building Resiliency - At School**

- Dramatic role plays to show that there are choices in how we react to challenges.
- Balance of activities in the day between arousing and calming; make sure there is a reserve of energy to meet challenges when they come
- Role model setting priorities in order to create a balanced day for the children- i.e. the rousing game that they want to play in gym will have to wait for Thursday, today we are going on a hike.
- Be fully present when you speak or listen to the children, ask the same of them for each other. Be genuine in your praise of the children. Express appreciation often for what is good in your life.

- Consistent boundaries – do not give too many choices at too young an age -this can be overwhelming and stressful for the child. Work towards compliance training with children- not everything is negotiable. (Kim noted for us “if you bargain for compliance now – when the child is young- then you will beg for it later when they are teenagers.) We need to know we are right to set limitations. This is an important part of teaching and parenting.
- Tell stories of your own childhood when you have shown resiliency.
- Allow the children to struggle to find solutions.
- Be sure to balance your positive and negative comments when looking at something that has been a challenge for a child or yourself. Encourage them to do the same.
- Structure social situations for success.

### **Building resiliency –At Home**

- demonstrate strong inner morals when you make important decisions
- enough sleep for everyone in the family
- healthy rhythms and routines
- Set boundaries around exposure to media. Help reduce over stimulation in their lives.
- allow children to experience “failure” and help them to learn from it, using a no blame attitude.
- Active listening with children, don't assume or jump to conclusions.
- Parents need to have fun with each other and the children
- Foster age appropriate independence so that they can learn to do what needs to be done for themselves and not for outside approval
- Refer them back to peaceful images when they need to relax and be relieved of stress
- Practice prioritizing- Kim passed on to us how one very busy single mom helped her child develop resiliency by reviewing the day and preparing for the next. At night she would ask, “What was the hardest thing you had to do today? What was the easiest?...the most fun?” And then she would ask him the same questions about what he would anticipate about the next day. She kept in touch with her child and gave him the opportunity to speak about what was on his mind. She helped him balance his view of his life.
- Touch and human warmth.
- Invite over resilient friends to play
- The “magic pause”. Take the time to stop and reflect when you are under pressure for something from your child or an emotional issue comes up. Don't react. Kim cited research that they average child needs to hear “no” nine times before they will accept the answer. It jumps to 32 times when it is a media promoted item. (Here's where we could use some effective speech lessons from Helen Lubin!)

### **The No-Blame Approach**

#### **Ready for change- Catching Each Other Being Good**

When a conflict has arisen between children a group is called together to try and understand the situation as best as possible. There is usually one or two facilitators, two students from the upper grades, the children's teachers and the children involved. The group meets with each child individually. It is important that the meetings are held during class time so that no one perceives that they are missing recess or gym as a punishment.

**Let's figure this out.**

It is important to establish that no one is being blamed. The group takes the attitude that we are trying to figure this out.

**Tell me what is happening?**

Key questions and statements:

"Tell us about the situation." Reflect back to the child what you heard them say, including a reflection of the emotions expressed.

"Is there anything else that has been a problem between you?"

"I'll try and say back what I understand from what you are saying, tell me if I leave anything out."

**How is this affecting you? How is this affecting the other person?**

Key questions and statements:

"If you can imagine this situation getting worse what would happen?" "If you can imagine this situation getting better what would happen?"

"Tell us what you know about (Nancy's) life...what are her interests etc?" "What do you think may be the effect of this problem on (other person's) life?"

**What is it you need?**

Key questions and statements:

"What is it you want to make this situation improve?" "How can we get your needs met in a way that helps everybody especially you?"

**You often win.**

Key question:

"How many times have you been annoyed and not said or done anything that people take as hurtful?" This is a question for a specific situation. Create the question so that it applies accurately.

**Explore in what situations the person has avoided negative reactions.**

Key questions:

"How did you do that?" "How can you do more of that?"

**Who can help?**

Key questions:

"Who is it that we should tell that you want to do things in another way now?"

"How can we tell them so that they might want to help?"

**Let's celebrate.**

All too often this is forgotten. Celebrate genuine achievements openly.

After the facilitation group has met with each child involved they then make a report to the Social Inclusion Coordinating Group. This group then makes a decision as to what the next steps will be. The usual options are:

- i. Bring only the interviewed students together.
- ii. Call for a No Blame/Real Justice meeting.
- iii. Arrange for another round of "Ready for Change" meetings.
- iv. Speak with the Learning Support Committee at the school if there is a perceived need for therapeutic help.
- v. Hand the situation on to the administration/ faculty.  
This may be necessary if one or more of the students did not respond well and showed negativity or continued aggressive attitudes. Usually the student/s then

would be subject to the school's disciplinary code.

Well it looks like I've used up my space for this week and I will have to go into the process of the "No Blame Meeting" next week.