

# Living Values Education: VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE

A collection of articles from around the World

**For information** about professional development workshops, our online programmes and free resource Values based material and LVE generally, please visit ALIVE's website at [www.livingvalues.net](http://www.livingvalues.net).

**Acknowledgement:** ALIVE would like to profoundly thank all of the Living Values Education contributors from many countries who have shared from their hearts of personal and professional feelings and practical application on the many facets relating to the LVE Values-based Atmosphere. ALIVE is grateful to be able to share this unique and valuable resource.

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The development and advancement of Living Values Education is overseen by the **Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE)**, a non-profit-making association of organizations around the world concerned with values education. ALIVE groups together national bodies promoting the use of the Living Values Education Approach and is an independent organization that does not have any particular or exclusive religious, political or national affiliation or interest.

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## *Our Aims*

- 1)** To encourage educators, parents and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development and choices so they may integrate themselves into the community and world at large with respect, confidence and purpose;
- 2)** To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, families, others, the community and the world at large;
- 3)** To deepen understanding, motivation and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices; and
- 4)** To inspire individuals to choose their own personal, social, moral and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them.

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Today ALIVE brings together, from about 40 countries, organisations and individuals that have taken up the responsibility to provide LVE professional development workshops and distribute curriculum resources, based on ALIVE materials, principles and guidelines. In each country, they offer students and teachers, children and adults alike an experience of exploring values and the opportunity to develop practical, personal and social skills for use in a diverse range of learning environments through a vision of education called **The Living Values Education Approach**.



# FOREWORD

By Chris Drake,  
President Association for Living Values  
Education International (ALIVE)

**For many people concerned about values, it's apparent that talking about values is important but not enough.**

This is particularly the case for values educators and it may well be said that by the example of our actions, and the values that we express in them, all of us are educators of values.

Just as we learn from the actions and example of others, so also we influence and may leave an impression on others by the way we behave and live.

*It is not just our actions and words that affect others, but also the tone of our voice, facial expression, mood, frame of mind, attitude and what is in our heart.*

These can create an atmosphere that can be experienced by others. While many of us will have forgotten some (or much!) of what we learned at school we often retain a stronger memory of how we felt in the presence of certain teachers, perhaps nervous with some who seemed harsh but at ease, inspired and joyful in the caring and nurturing presence of others.

It is in such an atmosphere, or values-based learning environment, that values may be **caught**, or felt and experienced, and when values touch the heart in such a way there is a fertile ground in which values may also be **taught**.

Not only taught, but also **sought** as students and teachers alike embark on a journey of self-reflection, looking within and asking themselves what values are most important to them and why.

*The choice of values then becomes a conscious choice, one which can be explained by the head as well as being rooted in and experienced by the heart.*

If the first step in values education is for teachers to look at themselves and their own values then a crucial foundation of classroom values practice is the creation of a values-based atmosphere. It is only when this is in place that one considers values lesson content and even when lessons do not have an explicit values content, values education can take place by virtue of the values-based learning environment with which the classroom is blessed.

To mark World Values Day, this book gathers together experiences of a values-based atmosphere from LVE practitioners around the world.

Many thanks to all those who have shared their stories and to the many more whose thoughts are not included here but who have touched countless others over the past twenty-five years of Living Values Education. You have given us all much to be grateful for and good reason to celebrate!



# VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE

From USA –  
Diane Tillman, Director of ALIVE  
and author of the  
*Living Values Education Training Guide*

## A Culture of Peace, Caring and Respect

As values must be “caught” as well as “taught,” the adults involved are integral to the success of the programme, for young people learn best by example and are most receptive when what is shared is experienced. The establishment of a values-based atmosphere, that is, a culture of peace, caring and respect, is essential for optimal exploration and development. Such a student-centered environment naturally enhances learning, as relationships based on trust, caring, and respect have a positive effect on motivation, creativity, and affective and cognitive development.

Creating a ‘values-based atmosphere’ is the first step in LVE’s Developing Values Schematic. During LVE Educator Workshops, educators are asked to discuss quality teaching methods that allow students to feel loved, valued, respected, understood and safe.

Recent research by Diana Divecha and Marc shows that the “two research-tested approaches that show the most promise for reducing bullying (along with other forms of aggression and conflict) are a positive school climate, and social and emotional learning.” “Schools with a positive climate foster healthy development, while a negative school climate is associated with higher rates of student bullying, aggression, victimisation, and feeling unsafe (2019).”

~

*A positive school culture  
and social and emotional learning  
are hallmarks of LVE.*

~

## LVE Theoretical Model

The LVE Theoretical Model postulates that students move toward their potential in nurturing, caring, creative learning environments. When motivation and control are attempted through fear, shame and punishment, youth feel more inadequate, hurt, afraid, shamed and unsafe. In addition, evidence suggests that repeated interactions loaded with these emotions marginalise students, decreasing real interest in attending school and/or learning. Students with a series of negative school relationships are likely to “turn off”; some become depressed while others enter a cycle of blame, anger, revenge – and possible violence.

Why were these five feelings – loved, valued, respected, understood and safe – chosen for the LVE Theoretical Model? Love is rarely spoken about in educational seminars. Yet, isn’t it love and respect that we all want as human beings? Who doesn’t want to be valued, understood and safe? Many studies on resiliency have reinforced the Living Values Education Training Guide importance of the quality of relationships between young people and significant adults in their lives, often teachers.

What happens to the learning process when we feel loved, valued and respected? What happens in our relationships with educators who create a supportive, safe environment in the classroom? Many people have had the experience as a child of an educator who they found positive, encouraging and motivating. In contrast, how do we feel when an educator, at school or home, is critical, punitive and stressed or when the peers are derogatory or bully? While an interesting stimulus can heighten the creative process, high anxiety, criticism, pressure and punitive methods slow down the learning

process. Simply the thought that others may be critical or have dislike can distract one from a task. Neurophysiologists have found positive effects on brain development when a child is nurtured, and deleterious effects when there are traumatic experiences. Lumsden notes that a caring, nurturing school environment boosts students' motivation, that is, students' interest in participating in the learning process; their academic self-efficacy increases as well (Lumsden, 1994). A caring, nurturing school environment has also been found to reduce violent behaviour and create positive attitudes toward learning (Riley, quoted in Cooper, 2000).

Currently in education, in many countries there is considerable pressure on teachers to raise student achievement levels. Constant pressure and an emphasis on memorisation and test scores often reduce "real" teaching as well as distract teachers from focusing on nurturing relationships with students. Much of the pleasure inherent in teaching well is lost. It is also harmful to levels of motivation and the classroom atmosphere. Alfie Kohn writes of "... fatal flaws of the steamroller movement toward tougher standards that overemphasise achievement at the cost of learning. Kohn argues that most of what the pundits are arguing for just gets the whole idea of learning and motivation wrong, and that the harder people push to force others to learn, the more they limit that possibility" (Janis, quoted in Senge, 2000).

### Real Learning Comes Alive in a Values-Based Atmosphere

Achievement automatically increases as real learning increases. Real learning and motivation come alive in values-based atmospheres where educators are free to be in tune with their own values, model their love of learning and nurture students and the development of cognitive skills along with values.

*This is not to say that excellent teaching will always occur when there is a values-based atmosphere; a values educator must also be a good teacher.*

This is not to say that excellent teaching will always occur when there is a values-based atmosphere; a values educator must also be a good teacher.

As Terry Lovat and Ron Toomey concluded from their research: "Values Education is being seen increasingly as having a power quite beyond a narrowly defined moral or Living Values Education Training Guide citizenship agenda. It is being seen to be at the centre of all that a committed teacher and school could hope to achieve through teaching. It is in this respect that it can fairly be described as the 'missing link' in the quality teacher... and quality teaching (2006)."

### Modelling the Values from the Inside

In LVE Workshops, educators are asked to reflect on the values in their own lives and identify which are most important to them. In another session, they are asked to share quality teaching methods they can use to create their desired class climate.

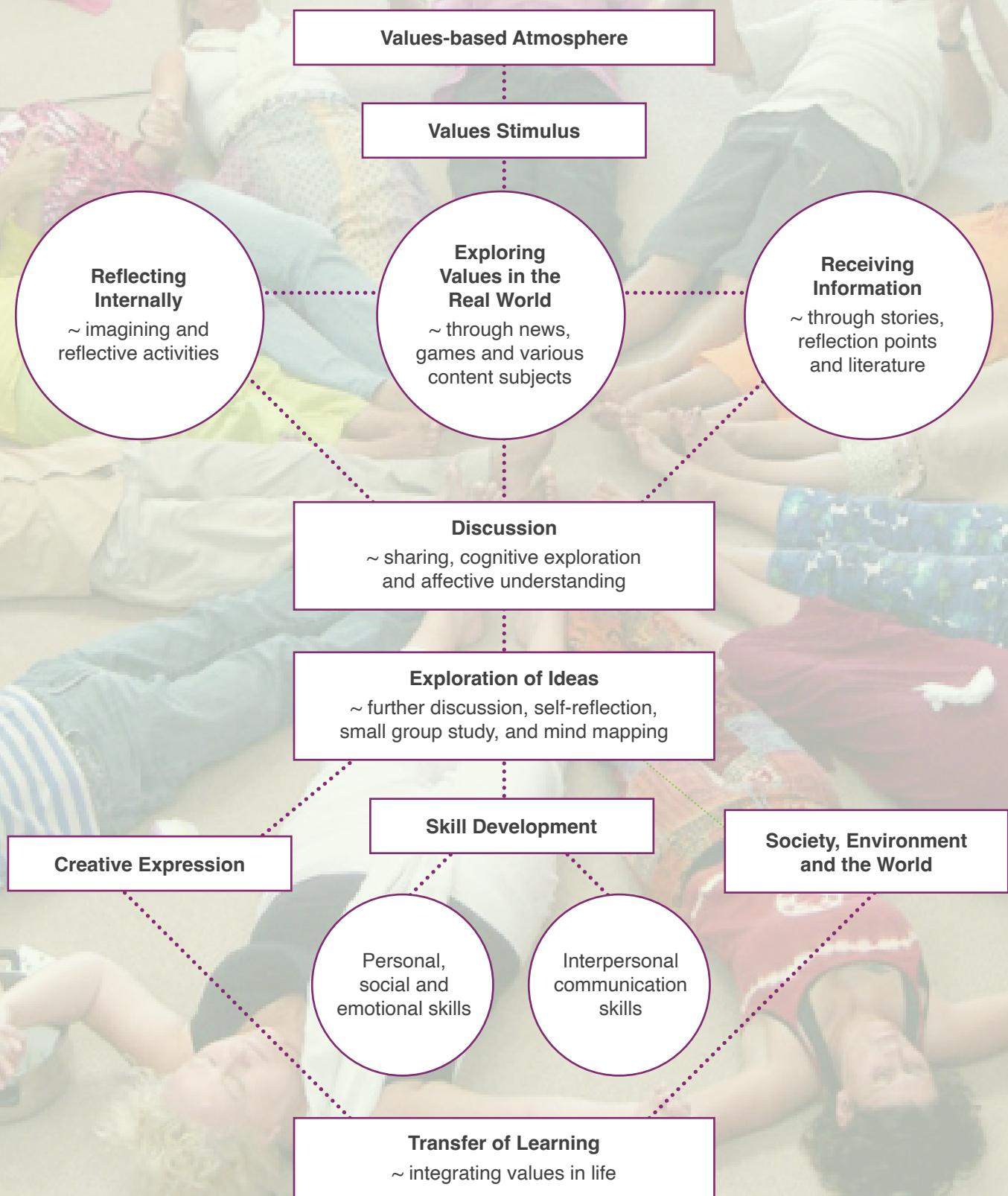
Modelling of values by adults is an essential element in values education. Students are interested in educators who have a passion to do something positive in the world and who embody the values they espouse, and are likely to reject values education if they feel teachers are not walking their talk. LVE educators have shared amazing stories of change with angry and cynical pre-teens and teens, when they were able to stick to their values in challenging circumstances.

*Teaching values requires from educators a willingness to be a role model, and a belief in dignity and respect for all.*



## Developing Values Schematic — the LVE Approach

*Explore ... Experience ... Express*



This does not mean we need to be perfect to teach LVE; however, it does require a personal commitment to “living” the values we would like to see in others, and a willingness to be caring, respectful and non-violent.

## Skills for Creating a Values-based Atmosphere

The Theoretical Model and LVE’s workshop session on “Acknowledgment, Encouragement and Building Positive Behaviours” combine the teachings of contingency management with a humanising approach, that is understanding that it is love and respect that we want as human beings. Showing interest in and giving respect to students while pointing out well-done relevant characteristics over time can be used to build the ability of students to analyse their own behaviour and academic skills, and develop positive self-assessment and intrinsic motivation. In this approach, there is a focus on human relationships as well as sensitivity to the level of receptivity and needs of the students.

Skills for creating a Values-based Atmosphere also include: active listening; collaborative rule making; quiet signals that create silence, focus, feelings of peace or respect; conflict resolution; and discipline with peace and respect. Active listening is useful as a method of acknowledgment with resistant, cynical and/or “negative” students. A key tool of counsellors and therapists, active listening is an invaluable tool for teachers. Thomas Gordon’s understanding of anger as a secondary emotion is a concept that is useful to educators in dealing with resistant students. Living Values Education Training Guide Collaborative rule making is a method to increase student participation and ownership in the rule-making process.

Many educators have found that when students are involved in the process of creating, they are more observant, involved and willing to be more responsible in monitoring their own behaviour and encouraging positive behaviours in their peers.

LVE training in discipline with peace and respect also combines the theories of contingency management with a humanistic understanding of students and the belief in the importance of healthy relationships and wellbeing. Some people use the methods of contingency management as though the young person is a machine; the need for feeling accepted and valued as a person – by teachers and/or peers – is not factored into the behavioural plan. When social and relationship needs are considered as part of the intervention plan, outcomes are far more successful.

Educators can use the LVE Theoretical Model to assess the positive and negative factors affecting one student, a classroom, a school or an organisation, and adjust the factors to optimise young people experiencing being loved, valued, respected, understood and safe rather than inadequate, hurt, afraid, shamed and unsafe. In conflict resolution or disciplinary settings, the emphasis is on creating a plan which supports building positive student behaviour. Educators focus on treating the student in such a way that she or he feels motivated to be responsible in regulating their own behaviour. There are occasions when students hold onto a negative attitude and logical consequences are needed; during the time period in which that consequence is paid it is recommended that the student not be treated as a “bad person.” While at times an educator may find it best to be firm, serious or even stern, opportunities are looked for to build the young adult’s ability to self-monitor and build relationship while the consequences are being carried out. This reflects back to Virginia Satir’s work;

*“people feeling full of love and wellbeing are more positive in their interactions and behaviours.”*

## LVE Workshops

The creation of a Values-based Atmosphere facilitates success with young people, making the process of education more enjoyable, beneficial, and effective for both students and teachers. An LVE Educator Workshop for all members of the school or an organisation’s staff is highly recommended whenever possible, however workshops are often given to educators from many different schools and educational organisations. Depending on the student population, consideration of additional training for the use of the LVE at-risk materials may be appropriate. ♦



ACES students with letters received from students doing LVEP in India!



## THE THREE PROMISES

From Africa –  
Helen Sayers, Director of ALIVE,  
LVE Regional Support for Africa

I was about to take on a new job in the UK as a supply teacher at a school that had a reputation for having a high proportion of youngsters that were extremely difficult to handle. For one term I was to replace a science teacher who had recently and abruptly resigned, until a permanent member of staff could be recruited. I was told that the said teacher had been severely challenged by a particular class of 15-year-olds that included the two naughtiest girls in the school!

You may have guessed it – this was one of the classes that I had been assigned to teach! Some students in the school were notorious for treating temporary / supply teachers as ‘cannon fodder’, but I was reassured by the principal that his support and that of other staff was there should I need it. He added that I shouldn’t take any negative behaviour directed towards me in a personal way.

Just before the start of the new term, I had attended an international Living Values Education workshop held in Oxford, which left me feeling energised, inspired and uplifted, and I took with me a new vision of my role of a ‘values-based’ teacher. I had also learned some excellent practical tools that I was eager to put into practice.

**Aware of the challenges ahead, I made these three promises to myself:**

- 1. I will not get angry, no matter what**
- 2. I will look for the best – see the diamond – in every student**
- 3. I will not listen to other teachers’ judgements, especially concerning members of the infamous class I was about to inherit.**

The term began and I soon met the biggest examination in my teaching career in the form of ‘the dreaded year 10 bottom-but-one set’!

I was provided with the grades that my predecessor had predicted for the group. The list was depressing... several of the students were expected to fail and most had been given E or D grades. Just a handful shone out from the rest with the hope of achieving a C. I was to teach a 55-minute science lesson four times per week. Already I began to empathise with these youngsters, who were obliged to follow a heavy, academic curriculum that simply wasn’t designed to cater for the needs or interests of the majority of them. On top of this, due to the discipline problems that other teachers had experienced, I was advised not to take this group of students out on visits of scientific interest in the community or into the natural environment. Such motivational trips had always featured in my delivery of a science curriculum.

I will leave the scenes of the first three weeks to the imagination of the reader, as these young girls and boys put my patience, tolerance and self-esteem to the ultimate test in as many ways as they could invent! I had to request the principal to intervene on two occasions when I had effectively lost control of the group.

*Although I was frequently driven almost to breaking point, I managed to continue to stick to my three promises.*

## Then the turning point came.

I had prepared what I thought would be a really interesting lesson about the environment, to include a great video I had found that illustrated current issues in a vibrant cartoon form. I booked the newly built auditorium which had tiered seating and an excellent black-out, giving a cinema-like atmosphere that students enjoyed. Once the stragglers had finally arrived, with a cheeky, attention demanding “sorry we’re late Ma’am”, I welcomed the class, introduced the film and turned the lights out. The average attention span – normally set at around five minutes – extended to a good ten minutes and I settled down to enjoy the film in relative peace. It was not meant to be. Slowly a gentle hum morphed into whispered chatter and finally into unashamed calling out to each other, and even in the dark I could see the paper darts flying across the room! My heart went out, as it always did, to the small group of keen, conscientious students sitting at the front, who were straining to listen to the video, which they clearly appreciated. For their sake, if nothing else, I managed to restore order and we limped through the rest of the lesson.

The school bell rang signalling the morning break and I turned on the lights and dismissed the class, indicating that I was not amused and that there would have to be changes in their behaviour if we were to continue. But in my mind, I was already writing my letter of early resignation. After all, I had clearly failed.

They all filed out of the auditorium, towards the exit door at the top – the sweet ones thanking me for a special lesson as they passed by me – bless them. It was so easy to see the diamond in these angels, and I

think they genuinely felt sorry for me!

As the last student left the room and I sank into my chair, the lights went out and I heard a key locking the door! I groped to try to find the key and sure enough it had been removed from my desk when I had not been looking!

And so there I was, in pitch darkness – with twenty minutes ahead of me to decide what to do... ‘I mustn’t get angry’...‘I must continue to see the diamonds’. So I waited...

A few minutes went by and I heard the key slowly opening the door. A narrow vertical band of light appeared and I was able to see objects in the room. I waited. I then saw the silhouettes of three heads, then four, then as the door quietly opened further, there were six or seven of them craning to look for me –

“Where is she?”

One of them saw me still at my desk “What are you doing, Ma’am?”

“I’m enjoying my break thank you, what are you doing?”

No reply, as a few more silhouettes appeared. “But what are you doing, Ma’am?”

“I’m having a nice quiet break time, thanks.”

“But why aren’t you angry?”

“I’d prefer to relax and enjoy some peace and quiet”

“She’s not getting angry!” I heard one of them say to another who was behind.

~  
*It was so easy  
to see the  
diamond in  
these angels,  
and I think they  
genuinely felt  
sorry for me!*  
~



Young street boys in LVE “At Risk” workshop, South Africa

I recognised the voice of one of the ‘tough’ kids, melted in confusion... After a few more minutes of this exchange, I couldn’t hold myself and started to laugh! At this point, a few of them started to walk down the auditorium towards me. They were genuinely curious about my reaction and realised that I held nothing against them. In fact, to the contrary I felt a wave of affection for them. I’m sure they had already realised deep down that I empathised with them and that from the beginning I had been trying my best to make the lessons interesting and certainly not to make their lives harder than they already were. We had a friendly chat; the key was returned to me with a spontaneous apology and we all went on our ways to the next lesson.

Somehow the ice had been broken and from that day. The group became easier to control, their attention span increased, and their need to seek attention decreased. Harmony (relative!) reigned at last and some good work was done.

On the last day of term I had a science lesson with my Year 10 class, and suggested that since I would be leaving the school today, we could do something relaxing like a quiz.

“You’re leaving Ma’am??!! You didn’t tell us!”

“I’m sorry, I thought you knew that I was only here for one term” I replied.

“No! We didn’t!”

With that they all grouped around a big table and bent over, busy doing something that I was clearly not allowed to see. Oh dear, I thought to myself, just as I thought I was managing to cope with this class, I seem to have lost control again! Yet there was something very different in the way they were ignoring me this time...

There was a totally different atmosphere in the classroom. As they continued, a straggler arrived, as she always did, perhaps to assert her self-assurance within the group.

“What’s going on here?” She asked her friends.

“Ma’am’s leaving” they said.

The girl spun around to face me and came closer. I could see tears in her eyes.

“Oh Ma’am” she whispered, “I’m so, so sorry I was so unkind to you!”

I felt her deep and sincere regret – her honesty and

innocence shone through her moist eyes. From being the rebel of the group, she was transformed in an instant into the softest, loveliest diamond you could imagine!

*My heart went out to her and I'll never forget that moment.*

“What are the others doing?” I asked her, to distract us from the intensity of what we were both experiencing.

We went across to the table and I was presented with a handful of beautiful cards that they had been busy making to wish me goodbye. Cards filled with good wishes and illustrated with flowers and birds – the complete opposite to some of the graffiti – verging on offensive – that had been used to ‘decorate’ classwork in their many attempts to annoy me during the trying first weeks of the term!

I recognised that these young adults had been my teachers.

*I learned so much during our time together, about myself, about the beauty to be found in every student if one can only fulfil their need to feel loved, valued, respected, understood and safe... the elements of a values-based atmosphere.*

Those students had been enabled to grow and to succeed. And my predicted grades to be presented to their future teacher were on average two grades higher than their earlier, demeaning ones.

Interestingly, that was the last lesson in my teaching career, one which I will always remember fondly. The lessons I learned from my experiences with that wonderful class, and the skills I developed, were transferable, and continue to work for me. I went on to spend eight years in Geneva where I gravitated towards adult education in a new chapter in my career, focusing on personal and professional life-skills training. ♦



# CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING

From Venezuela –  
Belén Maggiolo,  
Focal Point for LVE in Venezuela

I have had the pleasure and fortune to be involved with the wonderful Living Values Education programme for over 15 years. During this time, I have had the opportunity to do different activities with students, teachers, parents, and caregivers.

One of the main and unique aspects of this programme is the creation of a values-based atmosphere. Based on the premise that for something to have the desired impact or to be effective, an emotional component needs to be involved first, that is, both the one who teaches and the one who learns, need to feel that they are part of a process that takes into consideration the human need to feel loved, respected, valued, understood and safe.

A Values-based Atmosphere implies freedom for those involved in the learning process, students, teachers, parents, caregivers, to be attuned to their own values.

The unique and specific Living Values training sessions, guide the participants in the process of reconnecting with their own values, reliving through visualisations and other practical exercises, the values that matter most to them. Along with other practices, this process helps them understand the importance of living their values from within and modeling them in their daily

*A Values-based Atmosphere implies freedom for those involved in the learning process, students, teachers, parents, caregivers, to be attuned to their own values.*

work, so that creating a Values-based Atmosphere becomes a natural part of the learning process.

Value modeling by educators and parents, and in general by the adults involved, creates a firm platform where students find strong support, strive, and learn.

It is a wonderful experience and an amazing feeling of fulfillment and joy to see, how young adults in their final years of high school feel so comfortable expressing their opinions and solutions to different problems, knowing that their opinion will be respected and valued, even if they are diametrically opposed to those of the majority.

It's also wonderful to see the shine in the eyes of individuals working and learning in an environment like this. How children and young adults strive to behave in the most positive way possible, knowing that they will be understood and valued. And even when their behaviour is not the most desirable or positive, they know for sure that they would not be punished, but listened to and supported to find ways to transform and move forward. This type of environment helps to build bridges of understanding and appreciation that are not experienced with any other practice. ♦



Children in a Peaceful World Project



# THE CONTRIBUTION OF POSITIVE ATMOSPHERES

From Kuwait – Peter Williams,  
Former President of ALIVE,  
Superintendent of the  
Kuwait American School

## Introduction

How do students, colleagues, friends and other people feel in your presence and how do you feel in their presence? We all carry a ‘presence’ and are attracted to ‘presence’ – but what is it? Is it physical appearance, vibrational energy, charismatic magnetism, familiarity, common ground, intuitive belonging or something else? Each of us will be aware that sometimes, we feel comfortable in the presence of others even though they don’t notice us, and sometimes our instinct or intuition calls upon us to avoid the presence of another – but what is presence?

The ancient wisdom and quotations from primarily Ancient Greece will help to illuminate our understanding of words with sometimes forgotten meanings that have been either lost or misunderstood during the passage of time.

## What is Presence?

Presence is a living energy that we each carry with us all the time.

The term originates from the Greek word ‘*par-oussia*’ meaning ‘the essence of you’ – the fact or condition of simply ‘being in the now’.

As a living energy, it carries with it the essence and embodiment of who we really are, a state of being that offers an essence of oneself with no design, intention or expectation of return, and, in life, the sum of all our experiences, our roles and relationships, friendships, connections and spirituality.

The ancient Greek philosopher, Ierakas quotes presence as: ‘The soul energy which is expressed through the body’. Yet, how does what we ‘give from our presence’ carry its message to others?

**Presence carries its message in three ways:**

- **In silence**

In silence our presence brings comfort or discomfort to others around us just by the nature of our physical presence. In this situation, we don’t have to say anything or do anything or even notice others around us because our ‘presence’ is sufficient to ‘carry the message’. It can be likened to an invisible giving or invisible embrace that helps others to feel at ease with themselves when our silent energy carries a positive message or to perhaps feel uncomfortable around us if our energy is less than positive.

- **In sound and silence**

In sound and silence, our positive presence can uplift those around us by listening to what others are saying through words and feeling what they are saying through their own vibrations, presence and sentient nature. When we respond in a thoughtful way, the ‘atmos’ – the inner spirit – is understood and appreciated.

- **In actions**

In actions, our presence brings to the outside world what is on our inside. We understand that presence in action is the sum of who we are at the moment in time. It is here that our behaviours are very tangible and where our presence proceeds all that we do.

**All presences contribute to the atmospheres of all.**

Presence relies on itself alone and comes ‘alive’ when we give it our attention. This attention picks up the vibrations or ‘vibes’ of presence and can be:

- Comforting and reaffirming
- Insightful and intuitive
- Uplifting and challenging, and
- A reflective mirror to our own presence.

Our interpretations are uniquely our own. Some people feel positive around others whilst others feel uncomfortable. Just imagine being in a gathering, for example, a party. What attracts you to someone who you do not know, yet avoid others?

The vibrancy of presence fluctuates according to its own energy and, in relationship to it, our understanding and choice of accepting this energy helps us to understand our own 'spiritual make up' and that of others.

Our presence in life and the classroom – knowingly or unknowingly means so much to so many.

~

*Developing, nurturing and caring  
for our own 'spiritual make-up'  
helps to create our own positive  
presence and a 'vitality of being'  
that we carry with us wherever we  
go and with whatever we do.*

~

## **The vitality of presence in the classroom**

A presence and atmosphere full of vitality that trusts, reaches out and attracts a love of learning draws the very best out of children. In classrooms around the world, most students respond to a loving presence and, in turn, genuinely feel that their best interests are being listened to and addressed. This love of giving and altruistic serving from educators with presence doesn't seek to acquire but by its very nature seeks to give through generosity and kindness.

Positive presence inspires in others a 'can do' attitude and security free from fear failure that is so often the catalyst of under performance and doubt in one-self. Positive presence inspires its own way that can be



witnessed and educated in many ways from children and teachers.

### **From children**

From children, the indicators of uplifting presence in action in the classroom include:

- Bright eyes and a naturalness of expression
- Rising to personal challenge, personal responsibility and genuine ownership of learning
- Learning with purpose, honesty and clear direction
- Moving onwards with a clear and secure sense of value and belief
- A positive acknowledgement and feeling that their contributions are appreciated and accepted
- Feeling safe from 'put downs' and being told that you are not 'good enough', and
- A respectful freedom to ask, clarify and articulate within a warm hearted and caring environment.

### **From teachers**

From teachers, the indicators of uplifting presence in action in the classroom include:

- Being there
- Being available
- Acting as a gentle and sheltering strength
- Offering calm reassurance with clear direction and professionalism
- A reassuring and confident 'look'
- Resonating a comforting knowing and understanding
- Letting go, trusting and empowering
- Warmth of honest expression
- Firmness of clarity, and
- Using sound and quietness to best effect.

*Presence is a living energy that we each carry with us all the time.*

*Our presence in life and the classroom – knowingly or unknowingly means so much to so many.*

Vitality is simply the capacity to live and develop in energy or vigour. According to the Greek Philosopher Theophrastus: 'Vitality is the strength of the soul in words and deeds'.

***I wonder? How much do we activate and educate for the inner world of values with a positive presence and the nurturing of the soul's life energy within?***

### Towards Active Presence

Activating presence is knowing that: 'Where our attention goes, energy flows'. Imagine what the classroom would be like if no-one lived in the now and was either thinking of the past or what will happen a long way in the future. Attention would be divided and concentration on a given task would be weaker. Presence is encapsulated in the now – our *par-oussia* – and is simply our state of being and vibrational energy at that moment.

~  
***When we feel good, the moment  
is good, when we feel down,  
the moment is down.***  
~

When we enter a space, such as a room, a classroom or a building, it is our energy that makes the space come alive and makes the most

of its layout and form. So often we believe that it is the space that provides the energy. This is not so. Spaces help but it is we who fill them!

The four walls of the classroom when decorated brightly can act as a catalyst for stimulating an atmosphere of learning readiness, but it is ourselves who add the inner attractiveness to that space by the very nature of our presence. When this space is activated, with our presence of realistic expectations that inspire rather than over extend to the point of failure, success is natural.

### Activating Presence in the Classroom

Within all classrooms around the world, the commonest elements at work are sound and silence – sound for imparting information and instructions, and silence for maintaining a positive learning atmosphere with just 'a look' and 'a feeling of presence' being sufficient. Yet, how do teachers naturally connect their knowledge, skills, understanding and their presence with the natural and conscient energies of children? This is a gift that comes through experience and an 'inner knowing' sometimes called instinct and sometimes called intuition that invites us to adapt to situations.

Inner knowing comes from the derivative 'gnosis', to know, that according to Socrates invites in 'True wisdom in each of us when we realise how little we understand about life, ourselves and the world around us'.



Expanded awareness as practiced in some ancient Polynesian cultures also adds to our understanding of this concept inviting us to extend ‘just beyond the now’ and collaborate with our surroundings, relationships with people and adjust to decisions and actions that will optimise the flow of learning.

Have you ever had one of those days when whatever you plan to do never happens for all sorts of reasons? When this happens, we learn to change direction. The ability to be flexible and adaptable means to act on our thoughts that:

- Build on the trust in our own ability and presence
- Have confidence to remove ourselves from the trappings of our initial plans
- Restructure the task in a new way, and
- Having the confidence to let go of the immediacy of instant results or instant information.

This is a special gift that educators use around the world in so many contexts. One of the most gifted and intuitive teachers I have known always prepared her week’s work with great care – as a menu. All the intentions were delivered but not necessarily in the order that they were planned. Why? She ‘read’ the students, ‘read the classroom energy’ and created the ‘right menu’ according the needs of the time. She had the great capacity to ‘read the pulse’ with an ‘extended awareness of all around her’ and never ‘put down’.



*Every child succeeded.  
Every child felt equality of  
contribution. It was personalised  
learning at its best.*



The positive presence of a teacher trusts its own way. In their classes, their students’ exude and delight in their learning with a luminosity, brightness, and in younger students, a constant surprise of what will happen next.

We all see differently but often require children to see our way. I recall a field visit being over enthusiastic and totally absorbed about how miners dug minerals out of the ground. This lesson, I believed, was an excellent lesson with all objectives being met. My assumption was that the children shared my aims and enthusiasm. Not so. A herd of cows had also gathered to listen and had drawn the students attention to them. A colleague videoed what was happening. It was one of the best lessons of my teaching career. However well intentioned, I had totally missed the real lesson including that we

all see differently. Through this episode, I discovered that forcing our way on others can hurt the growth of in born potential of a child. Inviting in their perceptions and inborn talents to the equation of learning became the preferred option. I learnt and moved on.

When learning out of doors or on field visits, when did we last hug a tree or walk looking into a mirror by your waistline to view the world as ground animals would see it? These activities open up new perceptions inviting us to ‘see how others see’, for example, in the ways that we can appreciate nature, breathing in fresh air by the seaside or in the countryside, and ‘walking in other’s footsteps’. Valuing ourselves is akin to appreciating oneself and, in turn, valuing and appreciating others.

Activating our presence to look differently and seeing ‘out there’ with ‘new eyes’ and ‘real eyes’ re-awakens and activates the art of seeing beyond the conventions of sometimes being confined to one way of thinking.

I recall a meeting with an alumni student who was educated in Kuwait, was born in Egypt and was studying for law in Canada. When I asked him about his life in Toronto, he replied that he was learning about ‘the world out there’. When asked if he was flying the flag for the people of Egypt he said: ‘No. I’m flying the flag for all people in all nations in one world. That’s what living values education has taught me’. Is this the ‘real eyes’ of presence at work?

## Activating Our Own Presence

As educators, we give so much, yet, sometimes, we forget to remember to take care of ourselves. Burn out and exhaustion are too prevalent in our learning worlds today with the passion for learning and giving far outweighing the important virtue of compassion for ourselves. Balance in life is so important so often forgotten under the weight of ‘doing’ instead of ‘being’.

Remembering to take time to ‘Relax’ and ‘Still’ ourselves is essential to help activate and rejuvenate our own presence. The results of ‘relaxing’ and ‘stilling’ include:

- Appreciating time for ourselves
- Appreciating being in our own stillness
- Rejuvenating our inner personality
- Awakening our innate brightness
- Strengthening our clarity and purpose
- Broadening interpretation
- Creating richness in diversity
- Awakening the beauty of seeing with different



~  
*...your soul friend who will  
always listen and uplift  
you to be yourself with no  
expectation of return.*  
~

perceptions

- Adding meaning and security to our innate positive values and beliefs
- Uplifting our own specialty, and
- By example, uplifting the presence of others.

Educators with a positive presence offer an inner contentment and childlike nature that helps everyone to feel at ease with themselves, able to leave feelings of blame and shame behind them, and able to embrace exploration, creativity, trying, doing, ‘failing’, resting and simply being.

~  
***A great friend of presence  
is reflection time.***  
~

Through reflection, we learn:

- To appreciate silence and the ‘silence of nature’
- To appreciate soft music or guided words that bring us into silence
- To get ‘in touch’ with our inner world through prayer, meditation, stillness or mindfulness
- That building and caring for body and soul is in the now
- That there are no ‘quick fixes’ to what we do, and
- That changing direction with unexpected ways of doing and ‘going with the flow’ are often more expressive and creative than ever imagined.

As we learn to set potential free, educators with positive presence and clear guidelines for self learning, empower all children to draw out their natural born gifts and ways of belonging. In classrooms where a warm environment and positive atmosphere lives, and where educators are alert yet not stressed, the eyes of students shine, give and learn. It is their genuine

presence at work where presence simply shines on its own.

**Towards genuine presence**

Genuine presence has no complications, no hidden agenda, no accommodation of subtle manipulations and no dependencies on circumstance. In genuineness, the simplicity of naturalness educates our belonging where we learn to ‘be ourselves’ rather than being defined by others. Genuine presence means that we need not fear from being ourselves!

In genuine presence, we discover true friendship and what the Irish mystic John O’Donohue would state – your Anam Cara – your soul friend who will always listen and uplift you to be yourself with no expectation of return.

An Anam Cara is a true gift and rarely found. An Anam Cara is more than a friend or partner in life with their spiritual and emotional bond that ‘joins’ them together. An Anam Cara carries a deep ‘soul friend’ connection that understands that we are together yet never together as two trusting souls. It’s more than what Pythagoras would define as ‘Friendship is an attuned equality’ and more than what Epictetus would state:

~  
***'The key is to keep company  
only with people who uplift you,  
and whose presence calls  
forth your best.'***  
~

Genuine presence, however, also carries with it a vulnerability that comes from an illusion of fear of what others may think or say. This fear may hold us back. Yet, when we maintain our self-respect, we continue

to trust ourselves and value the noble gift that we offer without expectation of return. It is in this gift of genuine presence when we are ‘ourselves’ that we can learn to be true to ourselves, trust ourselves and, with benevolence, allow others to overcome their own illusions. Anam Caras are great friends in this process and act as honest mirrors to help discover our true selves.

Anam Caras also help us to wake up to a ‘clear and genuine presence’ that carries with it a natural awareness that we are the beauty and constancy in an ever changing world where presence and events aren’t always what they first appear. Anam Caras have no expectations on ‘the other’ – just giving.

### I wonder? Do you have an Anam Cara?

In genuine presence, whether an educator or a child, we are simply true to our natural selves radiating a living energy, a state of being and silence that offers an essence of oneself with no design, intention or expectation of return. It is our greatest gift to humanity – our spiritual self.

Catherine Ingram offers a reflective activity as a metaphor for life. Each reader will interpret it in their own way.

- Imagine swimming in a glacier lake – clear, blue, fresh, pure, aerated and at a perfect temperature. Around you are trees swaying with coolness and freshness. This is our true presence.
- Imagine growing up in a mud hole knowing nothing of the glacier lake. Although the mud hole smells you get used to it.
- Imagine finding the lake and enjoying it.
- You return to the mud hole. The mud hole is the same but you have changed.
- You discover that the glacier lake is the genuine self and the mud hole is the false self.
- You enjoy the glacier lake and keep returning.

### The Power of Your Presence

The power of presence is in the now and with us all right now. It carries with it an energy like an invisible ‘glow’ and intuitive energy that reflects the purpose and essence of who we are.

‘Now’, in Greek, spelt as ‘Paron’ comes from the verb ‘par-eimi’ meaning ‘to be’ – a period of time where we exist and act as opposed to the past and future.

Add to ‘par’ and you return to ‘par-oussia’ – your presence and essence of you on show all the time in sound and silence.

Have you ever noticed when two people are in love? There is a shine on their faces and an invisible connection that speaks between words. It’s the same resonance in the classroom with a love of learning where there is no need to speak as the moment speaks for itself.

Yet, change is constant – or is it?

Change, in Peter Senge’s model, is a process moving from sensing to presence to realisation where the process of presence depends on ones’ understanding of the moment.

*Change can be momentary,  
shallow, deep or profound.*

Figure 1 model captures the power of presence in the now – and shows how the element of time within change is different for each person.

The realisation can be momentarily – a ‘click’ - or as Mike George would say an ‘Aha’ moment, or it can be deeply profound.

And as the Greek philosopher Parmenides stated: ‘In the Now there is the unique undivided and indivisible’

### Sensing

### Presence

### Realisation



Figure 1



and in 'Profoundness' comes the ancient meaning 'em-vrithi-a' meaning 'I'm full'.

Whether it is the 'Now' or 'Profoundness' – living it through your presence is sufficient to help empower others to seek new depths of learning, understanding and values that are but a 'click away' and can be accessed and acted upon.

At its most profound level, positive presence brings hope, stability, unconditional benevolence and gentleness free from the shadows of instability and hurt. For example, in countries affected by war, children carry an 'often hidden' energy of pain and inward suffering. Behaviour can manifest itself through withdrawal, or excessive outward showing both of which are symptoms of a yearning to live together in peace and to be. In schools, too, where the local area reflects depression, fear or uncertainty, the students seek the comfort of belonging, to play free from fear and hurt, and to learn with a sense of truth, self worth and contribution.

In these circumstances, the positive presence of a gentle teacher is like a giving tree – not lacking in strength – but offering a special quality that gives but doesn't disturb. The presence of discipline comes from inside. Sometimes the act of external show is required to calm a situation, but equally, it is the respect for the self that maintains a routine for learning, discriminating between right and wrong, securing positive values and beliefs, informing choices, seeking a goal and guiding attitude that reflects our own moral compass.

Adding positive power to our presence helps to rebuild the gentle inner glow and our inner spiritual identity that radiates purpose and surety.

### The presence of a Gentle & Sure Teacher

- Is always honest and never tries to be something they are not
- Brings discipline from a commitment to give from a position of unbroken safety

*Adding positive power  
to our presence helps  
to rebuild the gentle inner glow  
and our inner spiritual identity  
that radiates purpose and surety.*

- Softens the resistance of weakness in others to want to go on
- Nurtures the learning shoots to strive ever upwards
- Loves learning and their vocation.

*A gentle and sure teacher  
is also very mindful that their  
presence can also be bound by its  
own expectation and needs to 'let  
go' when the time is right.*

### The Secret Presence in every classroom – Ourselves

Being natural with ourselves invites us to discover our true selves. In values-based schools, the glacier lake is always there and we learn that self-discovery, character building, curiosity, invention and creativity add vibrancy to all that we do. We learn to be fascinated by what we can see and what we cannot with love of mystery, unity, uniqueness, understanding and appreciation towards what we may just take for granted.

In Values-based schools, learning isn't just about knowledge; it's a place where you can enlarge yourself with understanding and empathy. It's a place for quietly being and learning with joy and wonder where we can come alive with our own spiritual vitality of being who we are and what we do. In values-based schools, we learn that no-one is perfect and that we are all on the same journey bound by the common root of shared values such as peace, love, respect, fairness, justice, co-operation, honesty, harmony and freedom.

In each moment is a new experience where every presence carries its own vibrancy and gift – and the secret gift every classroom – the presence of you. ♣



# CREATING A VALUES-BASED ENVIRONMENT

From India –  
Godeliva Rodrigues, LVE Distance  
Trained Facilitator and Mentor

A value based environment is resourceful and enriching. It involves joy, satisfaction, self-introspection, sharing, caring and a benevolent atmosphere. Values bring about cooperation and coordination; it promotes a 'we' feeling. A sense of belongingness.

Values-based Atmosphere respects each other's perspective of life, customs, cultures, religion and most of all the uniqueness of a person. Self-actualisation is attained in a value based environment.

## We need to foster:

- Effective communication (through words, actions and deeds which are value based)
- Accepting, each one is unique so is each one's attitude, past experiences, culture and ecology.
- Respect, it should be reciprocal. Respect leads to tolerance and humility.
- Responsibility, being responsible as a facilitator, knowing one's subject matter and practicing it as experience is the best teacher. Imparting the resources selflessly. Responsible with simplicity.
- Love, a kind heart goes a long way it brings about honesty, cooperation, freedom to express and unity.

We also need to be kind and provide consistent consequences of behaviour and enforce positive reinforcement. Focus on relationship building in the group, where every view point is respected even if it is not accepted. Provide coping skills and emotional regulation activities and strategies.

We do activities to change the mindset. Meditation to change the atmosphere. Encourage the participant to use appropriate value based language to get their needs or point across to the group.

We all are resourceful and adaptable so we need to build a rapport with ourself first then build on our sensory acuity – watch, listen and feel the cues for values that lead into a value-based environment.

*Everyone has a unique model of the world, so respect that.*

- Listen with an open mind, share with an open heart, that contributes to the goal or vision.
- Time and ideas are valuable so respect them, be precise and clear.
- Cooperate mentally and physically to maintain the flow of matter and ideas. ✦





## MY EXPERIENCE

From the Maldives –  
Aishath Liziyan, LVE Facilitator

I joined a Living Value Educator Training workshop in 2012. I went through the 5 days training which inspired me to help others. After the training I remember my first experience as a facilitator in Living Values Education which was organised by NGO VIBE in association with NGO 'Hand in Hand' for the school drop-outs. When I first entered into the room of 15 participants age between 17-20. I heard someone said, "nice perfume!" and some were using slang words (which is not acceptable in normal communication). I started the session with my introduction, and the first value was Peace, in between they were interrupting, making noises, laughing loud but still I was willing to tolerate, as I know and believe at the end of the sessions there would be a change. While I was going through the Reflective Exercise, the participants started to share hurtful experience, some were disrespecting their mothers and some shared how they were mistreated in the school environment. But at the end of the 5-day programme I saw the change in them and it inspired me to do more.

*Values education programmes gives the opportunity to think about selves and provides the elements to inspire for a better life. It touches the hearts and soul of the participants.*

In a camp where I facilitated value education programme for school students, there were a boy who called his supervisor 'monster' whenever she passed by the classroom, and this supervisor was much affected by this student. This specific student was very arrogant knowing his father was a powerful citizen in the community, and his mother pressured him

to participate in the camp. I remember the first night he tried to quit the camp, and because the camp was organised by crime prevention unit of Police, everyone tried to motivate him and continue. I personally had to deal with him with some individual sessions and his mother also came and talked to him. He refused to sleep and stayed overnight.

In the morning after breakfast, he was in the value education programme with his friends and the rest of the school students. While doing the reflective exercise, I saw him with tears, in my programmes I use some local songs *Magey Loabi Mamma Mashah Maafudhee*, which means 'my loving mum, please forgive me'. And during the session I make them close their eyes and think about how parents want them to be better people, the hope parents have for their children.... etc. During the second night, while I was talking to the supervisor, and she was sharing her concern and feelings about this particular student, he passed by and greeted her with respect, and she had tears in her eyes to see the change in him.

*Living Values Education gives a way of life, it awakens the things which we are leaving behind.*

I have noticed peacefulness in kids of age 3-7. Luckily, I had the opportunity to work as an administrator of two pre-schools run by Aminath Ismail, the founder of NGO *Hand in Hand*. Before the academic years starts all the teachers get refresher training on the value-based environment so that they can use it properly in the classroom settings.

Living Values Education teaches students, teachers, parents and who ever involved to love each other. In brief, I can say Living Values Education Approach is a



holistic approach motivating each individual to change the individual for the better.

I believe the solution for many of the problems here in our country is due to lack of values or we have forgotten to use our values and nurture them to our children. Even the social media is influencing children and youth creating chaos. Children get involved in crimes while they are in school, such as violence, bully, and disrespecting the elders etc.,

*In a Values-based Atmosphere (VbA) children are feeling loved and respected.*

And this reflects on attitude in school and get motivated to think positive.

VbA helps to create positive thinking and reduce violence and negative thinking of children which motivates the children to focus on their education and achieve their goals. Acceptance of differences in children makes them respect each other. In VbA the teachers practice and preach values in their teaching which would be reflected by the children in their homes. VbA helps children to be more responsible and help them to view education as a goal to be successful citizens. ♦

## VALUES ARE INTRINSIC QUALITIES OF THE SOUL

From Indonesia –  
Wayan Rustiassa,  
Founder of Karuna Bali Foundation/LVE Trainer



The word atmosphere is formed by two words; ‘Atma’ means soul and ‘sphere’, so soul place. Every moment whether we realise it or not, a human being (human soul) constantly creates atmosphere.

When we remember our intrinsic qualities, we are automatically connected to the very essence of our being, the truth of who we truly are. When we reconnect ourselves with the core, the very essence of who we are, we experience our innate values. In fact, we experience ourselves as there is no separation between us and our values.

Remembering who we are reconnects us to our innate qualities, nurturing the seed of our values with loving acceptance of the reality of who we are. This remembrance and connection naturally creates the Values-based Atmosphere within us and around us.

Values-based Atmosphere isn't something that is static; it is constantly influenced by our state of being. Our remembrance (awareness) will influence our vision and the way we look at ourselves, others and

the world, and thus determines our attitudes and actions.

Some of us, perhaps strongly focus on creating VbA by focusing on the actions such as creating best practices, but we focus less on instilling our consciousness of who we truly are which allows the very intelligence energy of our being to guide us to create the necessary visions, attitudes and actions that are in alignment with our values.

The challenge to creating VbA is our habit of seeking outside of ourselves to experience our values. When we transition from seeking to remembering, the journey in creating VbA begins. This is a lifelong journey.

Nowadays, the world and all people desperately needs a Values-based atmosphere. The amount of fear, worries and sadness spread in the energy of our atmosphere is escalating. The stock of a Values-based Atmosphere is depleting. It is time to exercise our ability to respond using our most essential resource, that is our values. ♦





# CREATING A LIVING VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE – PRACTICAL APPLICATION



From Switzerland –  
Patrizia Tamburrino, Representative to ALIVE  
of the ALIVE Associate in Switzerland

## Welcome the children at the beginning of the year...

When the children arrive in the classroom, a puppet greets them and says that she is happy to see them. She says "I already know you because I can read the heart... and I know that you are a very special person... You are (for ex.) helpful (or caring, or smiling... or peaceful). The puppet underlines a positive character trait of the child. The child feels valued as soon as she/he enters the classroom with a smile.

To carry out this exercise, it is necessary to ask the previous teacher for a list of the qualities of each child. This first quality is then pasted on a sheet of paper. The child adds their first name and decorations. The sheet is glued to the front of their table.

## Integrating the qualities

At the beginning of the year, draw up the rules of life in the classroom with the children. Ask them how to live together well.

What is important for everyone to feel good (here we explain the words respected, safe, valued... in connection with the 5 fundamental human needs: safe, respected, understood, valued, loved...).

Then we try to mimic what is good, positive, safe and we take pictures of the children putting these rules of life into practice.

For example: I walk in the classroom, this brings safety for me and for others. I raise my hand to ask or say things; this helps to maintain harmony, respect for others, etc.

All pictures are pasted onto cardboard and displayed in the classroom.

Every week, present, explain, and illustrate one or two new qualities. If possible, have a story with the hero or characters who embody these values. They represent the '**challenge**' of the week. Each day, each child endeavours to embody the quality and observes how many of his or her peers succeed in putting it into practice. At the end of the day, a small self-evaluation is carried out.

For the older pupils, the qualities are displayed on large boards with the definition or a picture of it. Each time the pupil expresses this quality, they write their name on the board in colour.

In the morning circle, the day starts with a slightly unusual good morning. It's a good morning with the eyes. We look at each other, we don't say anything but we think of a quality of this person and we say thank you in our head. Then, to encourage self-esteem, before starting the day, each pupil says one quality that she/he appreciates about her/himself. The same activity can be carried out by naming another pupil's quality.

## Stars of the week

When the vocabulary of the qualities is well assimilated, we start the 'Stars of the week'.

One child is chosen at random; all the others have to observe him/her during the week and come and tell the teacher what they see as his/her qualities. At the end of the week, the child receives a poster with his or her photo in the centre and all the positive comments made by his or her peers.

This ‘Stars of the week’ exercise can also be done as an audio recording. The children love it and are very proud to take their poster or recording home.

### ‘Good News’ telegrams

In a box in the classroom a number of positive messages are placed, for example: “I think you draw nice pictures, I think you are helpful, I think you are generous, you always have a smile on your face”. Each week one pupil is responsible for the box and distributes the telegrams; he or she can take the box home and write or draw with the help of his or her parents...

### Advent calendar

Instead of putting chocolates in the advent calendar, the teacher can prepare positive messages like: “You are a very appreciated pupil in this class, you always have a smile on your face and we are happy you are here...”

Each day a pupil draws and reads his/her message. The others applaud.

This message is then glued in a notebook called “*My well-being notebook*”. In this notebook, drawings, lists of qualities, ‘good news’ telegrams, messages that make you feel good, etc. can be glued.

I was happy on several occasions to see how much good these messages did the pupils. I remember a little girl who often interrupted me in class to ask me if she could go and look at her notebook and reread the messages she had received.

### Theatre

Putting on a show with the children is the most fascinating project ever. It develops cooperation, concentration, responsibility and self-confidence. It helps to overcome fears.

It brings a lot of joy and togetherness to a group of students; everyone is important for the success of the project!

In Living Values the story of *The Emperor and the Flower Seeds* lends itself to a beautiful production. What has fascinated me over the years is that the activity of theatre allows students who don’t shine in other school activities to stand out. In every project I have found that the best actors are the students who

are struggling in school. That’s why it’s so important for me to do theatre in school. It helps and encourages students who otherwise spend their whole school career underestimating themselves.

What is important is the notion of ‘project’ which brings us all together. Setting up exhibitions on a theme is also a source of great motivation. The students want to give their best when they are in front of an audience and what they do becomes more meaningful to them. Putting on plays and creating exhibitions are big projects, with real audiences. This sometimes scares the children. But during all these years, I have always seen them overcome their fear and make amazing progress in self-confidence, speaking in front of others, self-esteem and respect for all their peers... These are wonderful projects that should be compulsory in my opinion in school as they are so valuable for the development of the child.

### Conflict resolution

The method proposed in Living Values to resolve conflicts is based on Non Violent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg. This method is truly effective because once the needs of the two children in conflict have been heard and reformulated, there is often nothing more to be done. The tension goes down very quickly. This is why in case of tension or conflict the most important thing is not the solution or to ask for forgiveness or to scold... you just have to **‘hear’ the needs of each other** and everything will settle itself.

It is essential to keep in mind that each person already has everything within herself or himself. We just have to find out how to help her or him to bring out this wonderful potential that is lying dormant.

The best memory in my career concerning conflict resolution was what the mother of a pupil told me. One evening when she and her husband were arguing, it was their six-year-old child (who was in class with me and who had learned how to resolve conflicts with feeling- and need-based questions/answers) who guided them with the right questions. I still remember the emotion of this mother when she came to tell me about this episode.

To create a classroom atmosphere based on values, it is of course necessary to practice a little every day and the teacher herself/himself must be in an attitude of benevolence and above all of confidence because it is not accomplished in a day. ♦



# WHAT IS A VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE (OR VBA)?

From Hungary –  
Zsófia Fried, Representative to ALIVE  
of the ALIVE Associate in Hungary

## What is a Values-based Atmosphere?

A peaceful, harmonious, affectionate atmosphere, based on Unity. An atmosphere, attitude, way of seeing things, emerged in a group of people, which call forth the ultimate positive features of the members and promotes the use thereof. An ambience based on trust and cooperation, where one can offer the most of his/her abilities for the good of oneself and for the community.

## Where can one find a VbA?

Where everyone is aware of his/her own values and people respect one another. People can generate VbA wherever by means of their attitude and way of seeing things.

## How can I create a VbA?

By exploring my own values consciously and deliberately. Whilst using them, I will emanate those values. I was always eager to get acquainted with a new community. I am sure, even in the beginning, that I must have the people feeling, this is important for me. It is also an essential factor, how they feel at school and what kind of problems they have. There are more and more games aiming at the development of the personality and we have to make use of them. Even the habits created consciously/ deliberately by us show a certain scale of values and we have to capture the attention of the

children for the cooperation in a clever way. Without VbA it is rather difficult to pass knowledge to and teach anyone. Raising children is much more important than training them.

## How can I maintain a VbA, once created?

By continuous control and refining, and change or development of my personality. Some relevant ideas: Conversations and games based on values; making practice of doing certain things by forming new habits, also based on values. Simple but creative decoration of the classroom or other places of the meeting, which may include considerable values. Decoration produced by common work, will be respected and appreciated by the members of the group. Tours and excursions may cause satisfaction and good atmosphere. Reminders: boards with the names of the living values already discussed may be fixed in different and discernible places of the classroom. These boards can be completed with illustrations. We may organise value related exhibitions or competitions, we can give tasks etc.

## The benefits of a VbA and how to make the best use of it?

It is useful, because energises me and develops my attitude towards the world. How? By daily use. Acceptance of the others' ideas and features takes place in a VbA and we will find real tolerance all around.

## What does it feel like to be in a VbA, in your personal experience?

Elevating, joyous, happy. Inspiring feeling: one feels precious; people respect one another. A loose and trusting atmosphere takes shape. **A memorable experience of being in a VbA and how it touches you:** Unity, tranquility, easiness. The feeling of easiness, gaiety, being in tune with the others, playfulness touched me. We badly need these feelings. I have realised that people



are eager to live in a value based atmosphere and are longing to have conversations with the others. People need to feel confidence and trust. In such an atmosphere they are able to become open-minded persons and show and express their most secret feelings. This liberates the person.

### How students respond to being in a VbA?

VbA is inspiring for the students. They are have more courage and are open-minded. They are able to talk about their life and themselves, etc. freely in such permissive atmosphere. VbA grants revitalisation, hope, love etc.

### What quality of interaction and relationship emerges in a true VbA?

- Kind and friendly relations take shape, based on honour and trust.
- Communication based on trust, acceptance and helpfulness is typical.

### The importance of a VbA as a foundation for values education?

VbA is important so as to understand myself and others It is also important for bringing trust into being, for the growth of each person and for encouraging meaningful conversations, etc.

### The role or place of a VbA in implementing the Living Values Education Approach and conducting LVE activities?

In such an atmosphere participants are more receptive, more understanding, more open and become ready to accept newness. This way the process of learning is more rapid. The persons in question get positive experiences that prove they are able to change, and their self-respect and self-esteem flourish. In my opinion, the Living Values projects and activities are successful only in a values-based atmosphere.

### Anything else you think is important or useful about a VbA?

I am glad that I have been able to experience this atmosphere several times. As a teacher, facilitator I can do my best consciously to assist creating and securing VbA. ♦



## DISCOVERING THE VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE IN THIS DIFFICULT ERA

From Sri Lanka – TT Mayuran,  
Representative to ALIVE  
of the ALIVE Associate in Sri Lanka



What we have inside to share others to become more positive?

*I discovered the need of value-based atmosphere for every one of us and to the world.*

Sri Lanka is extremely vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 that has made new challenges to the people here. Many fathers and mothers have lost their family income and children are disconnected from their schools for over a year. Violence against women and children tends to increase, households become unhappy. Deaths, separations and losses. More sad stories fenced around us due to various reasons.

The situation has put the biggest questions in front of us: **What to do next? Where to start? How to correct and rebuild?**

In a materialised world where we are losing many things, which seeds can grow positiveness?

I think, this is the most relevant time to realise the worth of Values that we have. We were measured by many scales so far. Now, let us recognise the values in us. We start to expand the opportunities through all possible ways to grow the values to be supported, Safe, Respected, Understood, Loved, peaceful and happy.

Our children may prioritise the green values to hand over the world more beautiful to next generations. We all adults find our own ways to recognise the values of Peace, Love, Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Tolerance, Humility, Happiness, Cooperation, Simplicity, Freedom and Unity to realise the wellbeing in us and in our children. ♦



# TREE OF FAMILY VALUES

From Hungary –  
Csilla Molnár, LVE Trainer in Hungary

## Where can one find a VbA?

**Csilla:** VbA can be found wherever we create it. Anywhere. It depends on the receptivity of the persons in question. It is a wonderful thing to be the member of a family that has been living in a value based atmosphere. In 2015 my children were 2.5 and 0.5 years old, when I first met value based thinking at the meetings organised by BK. I liked it so much, that since then, it has been the part of our family's everyday life and the basic pillar of our ordinary communication and thinking.

## How can I create a VbA?

Our online Parents Team has been working for more than 1 year. We put emphasis on the VbA of the virtual meetings. By means of the continuous homework, members adopt more and more this atmosphere in their own families, too. Eg: During one of our meeting we produced a *Tree of Family Values*. Onto this tree the families continuously added labels/leaves/fruits including the description of good things happened to them.

## The experiences of 3 team members are as follows:

**Csilla:** My son of 8 years is very open-minded, especially in respect of this kind of thinking. Once he even asked me to allow him to participate in team meetings. He was very enthusiastic, reflects on the questions by expressing his own thoughts, comments on the topics as a participant of full value. It warms my heart to see his openness and attendance. I know it was worth the effort to give him all the attention, as well as the trials in raising him, because now he focuses on goodness and on living amongst values. He concentrates on the nice things happening to him and he is eager to discuss these with other people.

Connecting to the above let me tell you a short story.

Once we had a conversation with the children about accidents and scars leaving a scar on our body. Some years ago Boldi, my 8 years old son broke the glass of a door with his knee. The scar thereof reminds him of this accident forever. I told him how much I was sorry that I had not been able to warn him to the danger of the glass door in time. The accident happened just at the same time when I could have told him to heed. But Boldi, who was about 6-7 years old that time, answered that he loved this scar, "because it reminded him of the summers spent in that house at the 'Lake of Balaton' and awakened his nice memories of this place". It is incredible and wonderful that a child thinks this way to an accident, isn't it? We can learn this attitude from the children.

**Orsi:** I made the *Tree of Family Values* of a very special material. This stiff, thick and golden foil coated cardboard was originally the baseplate of my daughter's birthday cake. The children kept on assisting in the complete process, from preparing the tree to fixing up the fruits on it. It was a very precious time we spent together. Our younger child (3 years old) participated in the first working, only, whilst the elder child of ours (6 years) enthusiastically listed the fruits he wanted to place on the tree. Moreover, he got a separate tree which he was going to use as his own values tree.

**Judy:** What does the Goodness Tree mean for us? When the task of preparing and decorating the tree was given to us, we were dealing with the topic of self-trust. This is why my first thought was that making this tree is a really expressive way of confirming our self assessment. Next step: What material shall we use to make that tree? I have had a bunch of catkin kept in a vase in the most part of the year and I used it for this purpose. This apt idea led me to the first label/leaves: "Creativity" was placed on the tree. On basis of this, until our next online meeting I collected values that were offered by situations or experiences of the everyday life. Later I adopted the other group members' method:

I also put labels/leaves including positive events or a well-done life situations happened to me. This tree has been placed in our living room, for all the members of the family to see.

## How can I maintain a VbA, once created?

**Csilla:** One of the best means of maintenance is the *Tree of Family Values*, which is, at the same time, an ornament of our everyday life. On the one hand the tree reminds us to the pleasant or successful events/happenings of the day. On the other hand it inspires us to put further labels/leaves on it. When my little son, who was just getting acquainted with letters and writing, understood the relevance of the tree, he started immediately to write on a leaf-label. In our family it is a tradition to tell the best, funniest, most interesting and unforgettable experience of the day, during the conversations carried on at the dinner and whilst going to bed.

*The benefits of a VbA are  
the possibility of a happy life,  
experience of good feelings and  
positive attitude we create.*

We can make the most of it by attentiveness, cooperation and perseverance. As a mother, now I think that this is one of the greatest 'teaching' I can give to my children. If they are ready to recognise goodness in their lives, and in themselves, as well as to appreciate what they have, I can be satisfied with my 'work'.

**Orsi:** My long-term plan with the *Tree of Family Values* is to 'harvest' and 're-grow' fruits. To pick off previous ones and put up newer ones, because good things



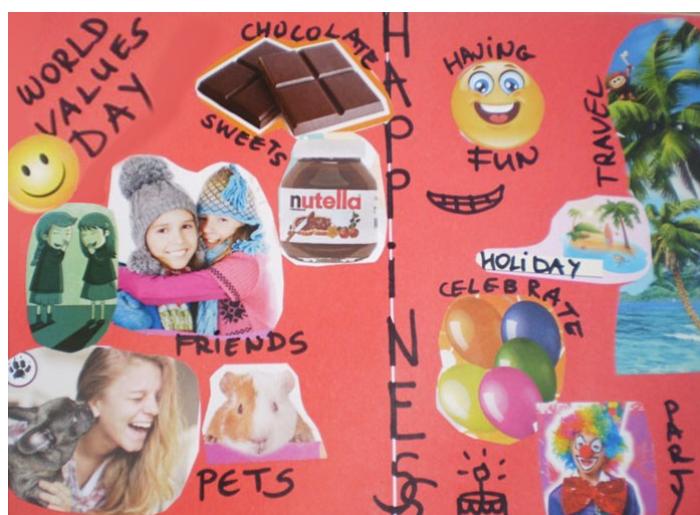
Posters created by the students, ages 9 – 14, in support of World Values Day

are often happening to us. The Tree helps us to focus on these. It is important to let us be aware within ourselves what we did that day and also the person who was concerned in the 'action'. For the time being it is our common game with my little daughter, 'boys' (my husband and son) are not participating yet. I guess that within a short time my little son will also be a partner in this project.

**Judy:** It is a good feeling to look at the Tree as if it is continuously deciduous. In the beginning I was wary of putting in new leaves, but soon it was an easy practice to make. I am always glad to place a new one on it. This process strengthens me, as well as the actual sight of the Tree. Yes, I can surely declare: **it makes me stronger**. Until now, when I had to speak about my good qualities, I was always in doubt. Is that feature really emphatic in me? Whether patience belongs to my strengths, if I am impatient sometimes? The Tree helps me to put an end to such doubts, because each leaf is based on current events that prove my positive characteristics. The Tree reminds me that I possess plenty of goodness and that, pleasant events very often happen to me.

## What does it feel like to be in a VbA, in your personal experience?

**Csilla:** To be in a VbA is both an elevating and simultaneously a very good feeling. It is one of the bases of my happiness. Thanks to the VbA my self-confidence developed a lot during the past years. I became addicted, as I keep on longing for a much better state of mind and the stability thereof. I do my best to involve the people around me so as to inspire them. This is why I have chosen a new profession i.e. to act as a trainer. The same reason motivated me in supporting the Living Values activity in Hungary. ♦





## A VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE BEGINS WITH ME

From Australia –  
Raj Miles, Director of ALIVE,  
Focal Point for LVE in Australia

### **The opportunity to be a vehicle for the expansion of Love in the world.**

As with any living, loving organism MY ‘Values-based Atmosphere’ is a creation, as such is and always has been at every stage of its growth like any child overshadowed by its Creator.

My VbA comes with responsibility, when I am loving, I am duly compensated, and that which I attract supports me in my activities and experience. Thus when I am unloving I am also duly compensated and what I attract shows me that I am out of alignment with God’s loving laws.

*I demonstrate my Values-based Atmosphere in every moment for it emanates from within me, it is felt by every living thing, family, friends, all people, animals, and is fully visible in my environment.*



I don’t define my VbA, my VbA defines who I am, what I stand for, my purpose, providing a continuous perspective of opportunity for change and growth.

To deliver good and through following God’s Laws enriches the lives of all those it touches, bringing alive the love within each person who is themselves willing to expand their spiritual consciousness to a higher level.

In particular, for those individuals drawn to Living Values who are seeking a greater purpose for their life, accepting the means to share their love for humanity and with a desire to grow their own soul, owning our Values-based Atmosphere must be our first accomplishment.

*As we awaken to this dynamic within ourselves this becomes the foundation from which we extend love into the world.*

Our desire attracted Living Values as the means by which we may be the example.

*Take this infectious gift and share it, invite duplication in others, in the classroom, in the home, in the workplace.*

The activities of Living Values Education provide me with a means, a vehicle to expand my Values-based Atmosphere and influence the world, inviting and offering participation at many levels, touching lives and changing people it attracts by opening its doorway and opportunity to the heart of each one it touches.

A Values-based Atmosphere knows no boundaries, nor constraints within the Law of Good, it can do no harm, it can morph and change without struggle secure in the knowledge that its guidance is fully supported. Each of us is only limited by the consciousness for a vision of a better caring world and by virtue of our willingness to play in the delivery of Love in every moment and expression of our day.

Take this infectious gift and share it, invite duplication in others, in the classroom, in the home, in the workplace. The Values-based Atmosphere is a tangible, palpable dynamic embodying all of Living Values. Our humility, peace, respect, love, tolerance, responsibility, cooperation, honesty, happiness, simplicity, caring, freedom and unity.

At the heart of LVE lies the opportunity for living every moment in a Values-based Atmosphere, and it is always just my choice.

## Which Values?

The values that each of us chooses to live by is a deeply personal matter and we have the freedom and responsibility to make our own choices as individuals. Yet at the same time, across the whole world, there is also a striking commonality about what each of us holds to be most important in life and it's apparent that there are some timeless values that can transcend differences and have often brought out the best in humanity. As members of one human family and one human race sharing the one home of the planet we all live on, this commonality should not be surprising.

Perhaps more important than which values we adopt and call our own is the depth of our awareness of them and whether, or to what extent, we live by them and implement them in our lives and relationships. ✦



Facilitators training in values activity delivery, Australia



# EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY: A DAILY EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

From Brazil – Paulo Sergio Barros,  
Representative to ALIVE of the  
ALIVE Associate in Brazil

One of the most pertinent topics in education has been how to create and keep ethical relations among those who form the educational institution and make this practice a daily experience that goes beyond the school physical dimensions, to a communitarian, social and planetary experience.

In this sense, human values-based education has been one of the chosen roads which is conducting to the practice of methodologies with positive effects in the approached topics's cognitive process.

At the same time, such educational fundamentals have been inspiring educators as well as students to effectively reflect on and 'live' their condition of ethical citizens. In this perspective, school community is stimulated to re-evaluate their *ethos* so to create an environment that values the students physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development. How that ethos can be moved by relationships of cooperation, tolerance, respect and solidarity in order to teach what Morin (2000) calls the 'ethics of human race', i.e., the civilization of the planet through movements aiming the citizenship on Earth.

In this way, a better acquaintanceship of the subjects with themselves and with others is achieved. This

premise becomes the means to take the experiences to communities, societies and the planet. This reasoning chain has illuminated the practice of many educators in their work of teaching, informing, educating and above all, their practice of humanisation.

*In this perspective, the Living Values Education Approach is an essential tool being used since 1996 by an ever growing range of educators around the globe.*

The LVE is in tune with educational paradigms that propose an education for peace (Jares, 2002), valuing the multidimensional aspect of the individual (Morin, 2000). Values as peace, love, respect, understanding, solidarity, tolerance, cooperation, etc. must be at the heart of education, making it responsible for the 'ethical living in human scale' which demands a simultaneous development within our personal autonomies, individual being, responsibility and participation in human race (Morin, 2005, p. 102).

Throughout this text, some considerations on the effectiveness of the LVE's methodological and theoretical model were drawn to provide students and educators with the understanding, reflection and practice of universal values in school environment. We also shared our experiences from the programme application with teenagers and youth at *Escola Maria José Medeiros*, in Fortaleza, Brazil.

## LVE and a multiple look at the Being

The LVE was developed from a kaleidoscope look at the being. In its models for educators training and in values-based activities for students, the human being is seen from a physical, psycho-social and spiritual dimensions. Within its theoretical essence and methodological proposal, the unique dimension of individuals (personality) and their respective interaction with others and with the planet are implicit.

The LVE activities focus firstly on the positive character of human personality (virtues, positive skills, talents). The recognition and practice of these qualities are the starting point for the development of the ethical awareness through thinking, communicating, acting and the relationship with the world. In order to develop talents and being the protagonists of their own history, individuals re-learn how to recognise their personal and spiritual values, besides being inspired to appreciate the values of their culture, live with diversity, create their values-based judgments, elaborate autonomous and judging thoughts and those which exercise the freedom to discern, feel and imagine. In other terms, the programme's activities contribute to the creation of a larger citizen awareness connected to more urgent global issues which demand from human beings an ethical life posture before their relationships with their fellows and the planet.

Diane Tillman (2002, p. 01), the main writer of the LVE series of books, believes that the atmosphere in which the student lives is of a capital importance to encourage the practice of values. The creation of an atmosphere based in values within the apprenticeship is essential to optimise the student's exploration and development of values. A learning environment in which ethos is encouraging, careful and creative, propitiates the development of positive behaviours in students.

The Values-based Atmosphere can be defined as a place of love, respect, understanding and acceptance which contributes to the individual's development and apprenticeship. In such environment, students feel themselves loved, respected, heard, valued and safe, thus developing personal, social and emotional skills – which are clearly interpersonal communication skills, i.e., values-based behaviours which will lead the students to naturally integrate these values in their lives and in their relationships with others. Such atmosphere is encouraging, questioning, open, flexible and creative (Tillman & Colomina, 2004, p. 79-80).

Tillman observes that in negative educational ethos where motivation and control work through fear, shame and punishment, students feel themselves inadequate, fearful, hurt, shy and insecure. Interactions filled again and again with those emotions marginalise students, reducing their true interest in learning. That results in a series of negative relationships, making them depressed or drawn into a cycle of shame, anger, revenge and possibly violence. (Tillman, 2007, p. 01).

LVE offers the means to examine these cycles of inadequate state, grief, fear, resistance, shame and anger in order to eliminate them. The aim is to improve the quality in education and promote the development of the student's positive emotional and social skills by the means of a familiarisation with universal values (Tillman & Colomina, 2004, p. 80), which will break the cycles of inadequate state and create an atmosphere of values.

By an 'atmosphere of values' it is understood the ethical relationships permeating all school community in its multiple relations. If the content and methodology of a programme are adequate to human values education, but disassociated from a daily practice on the part of educators, breeders, students and other school staff; and if there is no interaction between school and families in the process of education and human development, the success of their application becomes an aim of difficult reach.

*It is essential to have the  
recognition of unity in diversity  
and the spiritual awareness  
of the human condition*

According to Morin (2000, p 93-95), 'education is responsible for ethical experience in human scale', which will lead us to the learning of 'being here' in the planet, i.e., learning to live, share, communicate, commune. For such, it is essential to have the recognition of unity in diversity and the spiritual awareness of the human condition, i.e., the use of thought to exercise mutual judgment, self-criticism and mutual understanding. Without these, we do not learn how to live together, how to recognise diversity and perceive interdependencies in a way to allow the common projects to be carried out and to have a coherent management of conflicts.

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*LVE is an emblematic example of education that considers the individual as a unique being with a plural consciousness.*

~

i.e., a being who learns how to perceive inner subjectivity and spirituality whilst living with the particularities of each individual and the diversity expressed in society. In this sense, it constitutes an education perspective that generates planetary citizens, i.e., in tune with the most important global issues, inspiring students and educators to act for positive changes.

The LVE humanistic approach also incorporates a Values-based Atmosphere by the development of a positive consciousness in educators through which they practice values whilst sharing time and activities with students. Three are the stimuli in LVE activities in order to create that atmosphere of values: inner reflection (imagination, reflection, relaxation), exploration of values in the real world (games, news, etc.) and the intake of information through stories, literature, points for reflection, etc. (Tillman, 2002).

Each activity contained in the manuals starts with a stimulus and is formulated so that students can develop their cognitive and affective understanding of the focused value through a diversified, creative and interactive methodology.

Discussions over each activity's topics for reflection are an essential starting point so that students can develop cognitive understanding and effective insight on each of the twelve values proposed by the Programme. Students also socialise their ideas and feelings and experience values through moments of self reflection (texts, poems, relaxation, visualisation), groups studies and mind mapping. The latter being a very useful graphic technique which develops the skill of systematic thinking, and stimulates students emerging several abilities by using word, image, number, logic, rhythm, colour, spatial awareness (Buzan, 1994). Mind mapping is suggested in some values lessons and encourage students to develop creativeness, concentration and memory, besides those already mentioned skills.

Such exploration of values develops a range of personal (calm down, inner qualities insight), social and emotional skills as well as interpersonal communication which enable the use of values in life, so that students can experience positive values, understand the effects of their behaviour



and choices on their own well-being and be able to develop the ability to make socially aware decisions (Tillman, 2002, p. 8-9).

On an emotional level the LVE activities encourage students to build an effective understanding of the role of grief, fear, anger and their consequences in their relationships with others. Many lessons offer techniques of conflict resolution, positive communication, cooperative games, cooperative projects execution that build up interpersonal communication skills. (Tillman, 2002, p. 10).

Through artistic language, present in many LVE lessons, students are stimulated to sing and write songs, perform, paint, write poems, carver, create posters, charts, paste up art, etc. For Tillman (2002), when students are engaged in arts, they frequently have to take the help of values and discern what they really want to say. From the process of creation emerges a new understanding and discernment about value, making it more significant in their lives. Thus, creativity, self-esteem, concentration and the sense of community are developed.



### *Students experience values in the real world by reflecting on social facts, environment and the world in their wider dimension.*



Through the understanding of the values's practical implications in relationships from a global perspective, emerges the desire to contribute to their community, society and the world with respect, confidence and purpose.

The unities on respect and simplicity approach topics as: present world problems, ethical diversity, sustainability, among others; proposing activities which encourage students to create methods for a peaceful, tolerant and respectful ways of living together, as well as to be able to intervene in the creation of justice, social cohesion and dignity for all, by integrating values in their lives and instigating them to develop social ecological and educational projects, etc.

### **LVE effectiveness in classroom**

LVE activities inspire educators and students to understand and experience values in three perspectives which are quite wide and intrinsically related.

The first could be called self-knowledge, the experience of the spiritual dimension of the being. Students are stimulated to recognise virtues as something inherent to them, identify and put them in their lives. How do they feel in a situation in which virtues are needed but not practiced and what are the benefits when they do apply them. It is observed that this practice leads, as consequence, to a more favourable atmosphere for the development of relationships filled with respect, cooperation, understanding and solidarity. A recognition of the self and others is established and they begin to deal better with emotions of anger, fear, shame, developing thus their cognitive capacity and self-esteem.

The LVE effectiveness relays on considering the individual as a central point for an ethical education. For such, it is necessary that students recognise their own values. Yet, that is not possible without the inter-subjectivity which creates understanding, insight and cooperation. When living in community, individuals, as social beings, learn how to live together and, in doing, so they also learn how to be. Living together in an ethical way creates an universal consciousness that we are all one same family and that our problems are planetary. For such, the programme encourages the application of values in the real world, in our present time through the knowledge of other cultural realities and recognition of the unity in diversity we need in order to create a fair, democratic and peaceful society desired by all.

In this sense, as a stimulus, many lessons of the LVE manuals propose techniques of physical and mental relaxation and visualisation. These techniques are frequently used in Peace, Respect and Love activities, which are the first values suggested by the programme to be worked with students. They lead to an experience of peace, silence and tranquility in the classroom environment, reduce mental stress and propitiate a better interpersonal relationship, concentration, cognitive development and creativity.

We have observed that for some students the positive effect of LVE activities is immediate and the practice starts being a constant and welcome classroom experience. For others, in the beginning they feel it as something strange, yet soon they are involved by the experience of silence and calmness and even the few that remain resistant are soon touched by the atmosphere when the teacher suggests that the moment is of personal silence and that each one can make something positive and peaceful in silence.

The use of instrumental music whilst students create texts, solve exercises, elaborate activities using art

language or make evaluations, contributes to keep the concentration and the atmosphere calm. In twelve years of experience with the programme application, it was seen that students care about values and develop them when in an adequate atmosphere.

~

***Students develop skills of relationships and creativity which prove to be very useful in the process of learning, in better concentration, recognition, acceptance and practice of their values.***

~

Aesthetically, the quality of the activities improves considerably. Others who used to limit themselves to linguistic skills have broken their fears and resistance and started to improve and use their creativity.

The second perspective is called cognitive understanding of values and is exercised through the methodology proposed by the basic lessons on values, i.e., points for reflection, elaboration of texts, poems, debates, group activities, mind mapping, artistic activities, research, outdoor classes, daily experiences, etc. We try to apply LVE lessons in such a way that they are closely connected to a subjective reality of each individual,

to a socio-cultural reality and the planet's most emergent issues. In this perspective, by applying the values activities we are reflecting on concepts and developing skills proposed by the various disciplines, on the daily events and practices.

The lessons of *Peace Imagining a peaceful world* and *A world of peace versus a world of conflict*, inspire students to reflect on what in the world causes conflicts, individual and collective actions which form peaceful relationships, in what kind of society they would like to live and how could they act towards transforming it.

The activity on Respect (Problems of the World) proposes a group reflection on world's problems, the cause factors, the anti-values which are behind them and what values should world leaders practice to avoid them. Some activities on Simplicity work with the concept of sustainability and encourage students to practice it by being in contact with nature: researching on the ethnical diversity of the planet, their country and community.

This perspective goes beyond a concept alone. Students reflect on, make and discuss a concept and their understanding about the value, besides being inspired to practice it through their school activities and their lives.

The third perspective is the association of values to the curriculum contents and the student's socio-cultural experiences, i.e., the recognition of what is valued by students in their community and school, their ways of socialisation and the extent they value



it so that they are inspired to make positive personal and social choices. Freire (1999, p. 4) stressed that "it has never been possible to separate in two moments education from the content of the ethical bringing up of pupils." Many educators working with values-based education see in the contents of their disciplines a unique opportunity for the cognitive and effective understanding of values. Thus, they offer the students a daily reflection on topics as politics, society, culture, science, arts and their citizen practice in the world they live in. In this perspective, students can make positive personal and social choices by developing interest in scientific research, literature, by engaging themselves in the effectiveness of their community rights or by opting for actions in favour of major social issues, ecological movements, human rights, etc.

Our experience with History and Geography teachings has been directed to create a constant relation of knowledge/ethics. Any content can be approached from an ethical perspective and be an auspicious opportunity for students to reflect on their role of historical subjects and their performance in school, community and world so that they can act and relate inspiring peace, cooperation, tolerance, respect, etc. We have also experienced this through the interdisciplinary activities involving projects and activities with teachers of various disciplines. In different times, the school developed projects in which human values permeated the activities, becoming a collective experience. Activities developed together with other History and Geography teachers were emblematic in this sense. Values were the compass to inspire them to participate and create innovative activities in projects organised by the school. They approached topics as: the 50th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Year of the Ocean, the 5th Centenary of Discovery of Brazil, the Sydney Olympic Games, Sustainable Development, the 2000 Manifest among others.

## Final Considerations

The LVE activities application generally brings to educators and students positive results in short terms. Consistency and regularity in their applicability are surely required, besides the practice of values proposed for the school routine. Otherwise, a favourable atmosphere will not be created, compromising thus the success of any education proposal based on values.

In parallel, teachers must be attentive to the content of the studied disciplines which must not miss the ethical

focus. To keep an interaction among content/subject/reality having the ethical perspective as a central point also creates a consistent perspective for the student's practice of values.

*Education based on values is an effective, conscious and judging way to intervene in the world.*

To live our values whilst in contact with knowledge also becomes an opportunity for students to be able to decide and elect their ways of positive intervention in their community. Within this perspective, the teaching of contents "implies a teacher ethical testimony" (Freire, 1999, p. 72). This because the way he/she observes them, put them in context and analyse them, express his/her vision towards knowledge, the world and human beings and will be contributing considerably for the bringing up of ethical citizens.

Encouraged by values activities and the teacher's positive approach, many students develop their skills of cognition and creativeness and start showing interest in topics related to human rights, environment and their community's problems. Thus they adopt a judging and human approach towards their attitudes of social intervention.

Nevertheless, we cannot think on a values-based education in which only the students practice them. The educators practice and the involvement of the school's relationships and pedagogical policies are essential. Students must see them in school on a day to day basis to be inspired to practice them in their multiple relations with themselves, their peers, community and society as a whole.

For that, the school's politic-pedagogical project must contemplate the values-based education. Therefore, as a social institution, the school must reflect on the society's cultural and spiritual values in which it is inserted, since educators as well as pupils are created within that society. In this way, the school will be guiding the citizen's bringing up in terms of learning to know what to do, to be and live together as proposed by Delors (2004). These last two aspects are very much absent in our educational system, which places the school far from its essential role: **to teach what is our identity as human beings.** ♣



## HOLISTIC VBA

From Vietnam –  
Bich Ha Nguyen,  
Representative to ALIVE of the  
ALIVE Associate in Vietnam

As I am writing these lines, Saigon is on the 4th day of the 15-day strict lockdown period. A vibrant, energetic, always warm welcoming Saigon, a safe place during the 3 previous waves of Covid is now under serious adversity.

An atmosphere of fear, worries, and negative feelings is overwhelming when the number of infected cases is increasing day by day. During the time of darkness, acts of love, kindness, and sharing bring light to our heart with news of mobile supermarkets supported by local business communities where the poor in very difficult areas can buy food and essential stuff at 0 Dong (Vietnamese currency), or a kitchen operated by volunteers that provides free 3,000 meals per day.

For LVE Vietnam, a beautiful light is coming with the 2020-2021 school year report from Wellspring International Primary School. Teachers there applied LVE both in and outside their classrooms with Love and Sharing, Respect, Cooperation, and Tolerance. They shared good results of applying listening skill, 'time out' to their students.

*For some, especially teachers they see the lockdown time as an opportunity to slow down, have time with their family and time for themselves. They can think simpler and more positively.*

Especially, many teachers see the lockdown time as opportunities to slow down, have time with their family and for themselves, participate in other online courses. They can think simpler and more positively.

There are good wishes and hope to continue to work in the atmosphere of Wellspring school, which they consider as their second family.

Over the years, we have trained facilitators and teachers about the Values-based Atmosphere and the skills to create that Atmosphere.

*Educators also understand that in order to create a VbA for students, they need to have that Atmosphere for themselves.*

It becomes even more important during the time schools, offices, and all public places being locked down and people are mostly with and by themselves. Not only for values educators, these experiments are useful for students and everyone, too.

To support LVE educators and volunteer in Vietnam, we organised online events on different topics. As people are more aware of the connection between body and mind, gut and brain, I apply my knowledge and experience in health coaching from a VbA perspective. For example, during the epidemic people are quite concerned for their health, especially the health of their immune system.

General nutrition principles such as eating whole, diversified, more plant-based food are not applied exactly the same for everyone.

~

*Healthy eating is the way we show Love to our body and boost the immune system. To do that we need to listen carefully to our body and pay attention to the spaces inside, such as spaces of breathing, digestion, elimination, and the space of our mind.*

~

The food we eat directly affects the lightness or the heaviness of those spaces. And not only the food for our stomach, food for our senses (eyes, nose, ear, and skin) play their important roles too.

**Understand and Respect the uniqueness of each body** through listening to it and through experiencing, we can apply different ways of cooking. For example raw or well-cooked, with more or less water, oil, and choose the tastes that are the best fit for each person, etc.

The way we eat food is equally important as the way we select which food to eat. When our body is in Safe mode, nutrition is fully absorbed.

Therefore, our responsibility is to eat food only when we are in a Peaceful mind. Mindful eating with gratitude, highly Value each part of our body that works 24x7, appreciate the food, the cook and mother Nature are also recommended.

Beside the VbA, I found it quite amazing that so many values we can relate to nutrition topic such as responsibility, honesty, tolerance, freedom, simplicity, happiness. And I think you can do the same with your favourite topics, too. ♦





# THE CONTRIBUTION OF POSITIVE ATMOSPHERES

From Kuwait – Peter Williams,  
Former President of ALIVE,  
Superintendent of the  
Kuwait American School

## Body Heading

Education – from the Greek ‘ek-paid-eu-si’ meaning ‘to teach’ coupled with the Latin ‘edu-care’ meaning ‘caring for the learning of the self’ – is a very personal journey. There are many ways to prepare ourselves for personal learning in which positive atmospheres play a very important part in both protecting and activating our presence. Yet, what are positive atmospheres and how can they help in raising the spirit of our learning?

The word ‘atmosphere’ is made up of two Latin derivative words: ‘atma’ meaning ‘spirit’ (atomos in Greek) and ‘sphere’ meaning the energy space we carry around us. In its simplest visual form, imagine the ‘atma’ or ‘atmos’ being like an atom – a small dot – and the energy around us like a large circle as illustrated in figure 2 below. The dot would be our centerpoint from which all other activities would flow.

In reality, no human spheres would be perfectly round but awakened to the myriad of senses that make up life experiences. The second image reflects this scenario whereby the ‘atmos’ remains in the center whilst the outer edge contains open doors to new experiences of exploration and expression from a life of learning, giving and sharing. Some of the outer flaps at the edges of

our learning may stay open, and equally, we have the choice to close some of the flaps, too – or do we? Each person will find their own way and own responses as we are each uniquely ourselves with perceptions on life and living as only we can see and make.

## What are positive atmospheres?

Positive atmospheres offer an invisible embrace that welcomes your ‘atmos’ with love and mutual respect. It’s a place where we take our own presence and where we can feel ‘at home’ with our own learning, ‘at ease’ with ourselves and where we can come to fully appreciate and respect our own innate potential without fear of ridicule or harm from others. Positive atmospheres simply offer a harmonious space where we can be ‘in tune’ with ourselves and others around us, inviting in the same positive regard we have for others as we seek in ourselves. At its best, positive atmospheres uplift the spirit of learning for all.

One of the most ‘electric’ atmospheres I entered was for a concert to be played by an Indian mystic musician. As he entered, the audience became still. He broke the silence with words of comfort and laughter. A collective warmth then filled the hall and then he said, “The secret of good music is first to be tuned with yourself”. A meditative/contemplative silence filled the hall until the first notes filled the air from his flute. He was in tune with himself and in harmony with those around him.

Good classroom climates create the same feeling where the learner is at one with their presence, learning and sharing with others. Of the thousands of classrooms I have visited, the more amicable ones for learning are where the teacher knows themselves and are at ease with themselves. This naturalness carries

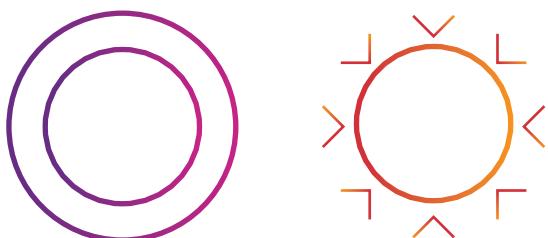


Figure 2

with it an honesty of intention that is the pre-amble to the learning objectives and purposes of learning. We each add to atmospheres.

Positive atmospheres bring an inner and outer attractiveness to learning with a special emphasis on the inside that includes:

- clear learning goals,
- reflection,
- a nurturing tone of voice,
- specific praise,
- identifying with the good,
- intuitive language,
- the language of the eyes,
- non verbal communication with meaning and truth,
- speaking truthfully and with feeling,
- being a good listener,
- wearing a smile, and
- embracing the inner world of thoughts, feelings and emotions.

According to Euripides, and I adapt his quote for context:

~  
*"When we are in tune with ourselves,  
our natural and intellectual  
powers can be naturally wise  
for one's own benefit."*  
~

This agreement and accord with oneself is a simple truth and one of many wise sayings and methodologies from around the world that are fit for culture. Adding to this richness in diversity, and enriched by the writings of Idries Shah, makes us what we are today – yet – there are common strands that come together to form a basis for the creation of positive atmospheres.

### **The 11 ingredients that help to make up a positive atmosphere are:**

- Positive and Authentic Presence
- Building and Maintaining a Healthy Intellectual Pursuit
- Positive Learning Objectives and Authentic Learning Goals
- Attention and Attunement

- Effective Communication
- Going ‘Beyond the Glass Ceiling’ and ‘Looking Otherwise’
- Utilising Hierarchical and Empowering models for engagement
- Appreciating Privacy, Silence and Concentration.
- Accessing Potential and Valuing Our Natural Gifts
- Applying Humility, and
- Educating and Modelling Expectations in a Values-Based way.

### **1. Positive and Authentic Presence**

We each carry with us our presence and with it the sum of who we are and what we do all the time. In Chapter 1, it was introduced that ‘presence’ – your parousia - means ‘the essence of you’ and, it is here that we each bring our own personality, attitude to life, gift, and, amongst others, our capacity to respond to life’s challenges with realism and authenticity.

Empowering the ‘atmos’ and the ‘sphere’ of learning is a great art. At its best it is authentic - meaning the one who accomplishes something in a genuine way.

Within Greek Ancient Wisdom, it was Descartes who first proposed the idea of authenticity as ‘following a moral inner voice; and, according to this voice, individuals must think and act responsibly’.

World-wide, there is a call for uplifting the inner moral voice, yet, how can we each play our part? I believe it begins with ourselves, a healthy moral and intellectual pursuit and as Epictetus quoted: “Don’t just explain your philosophy. Embody it and be authentic.”

### **2. Building and Maintaining a Healthy Intellectual Pursuit**

Whilst, a healthy intellectual pursuit is an essential ingredient for learning and understanding, it is our positive attitude and open mind that helps us to learn to grow; and in this process, come to understand that what we believe to be right in one context may be totally inappropriate in another.

Maintaining positive attitudes and being prepared to be flexible and ‘looking differently’ at teaching, learning and giving keeps education alive and helps us to take us away from the false barriers and ‘only one model for

all' that we sometimes place in front of our potential. The challenge of rising above the 'closed book' and towards the 'open book' is an art that requires positivity and a genuine love of learning. Around the world, modern day society favours academic programmes for teaching, but ultimately it is the virtues of determination, self respect, willingness and humility that begins the learning journey and keeps its momentum.

It was Andrew So-Kwok from Hong Kong at a Living Values Training Programme in Beijing in 2001 who stated that:

~

*"The strength of humility is an inner knowing that the pot is never full, and however much we believe we are right – we may be wrong!"*

~

In this context, we can learn to become aware that our own subtle prejudice can lock out possibilities – whereas open mindedness keeps the door open. Positive atmospheres help to open the mind and build that love, values, respect and understanding for secure learning.

The Living Values Education (LVE) model, below, shows the benefits of creating and maintaining a positive atmosphere to help support secure learning.

The model (figure 3) illustrates the five attributes of feeling loved, valued, respected, understood and secure. When you feel secure, loved, respected, understood and valued – the sky is the limit – you will try anything and give yourself every opportunity to succeed and learn from mistakes. Equally, if you

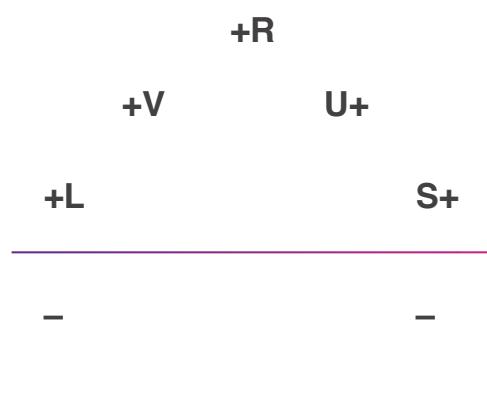


Figure 3

feel unloved, insecure, disrespected, misunderstood and not valued for who you are – you don't have the same motivation – and, in turn underperform and block yourself in with glass ceilings. Which approach would you choose?

### 3. Positive Learning Objectives and Authoritative Learning Goals

We all need clear learning goals and objectives as part of a healthy intellectual pursuit, but which is better - clear expectations of a fixed outcome or acceptance of what you learn will be right?

- Clear expectations of a fixed outcome carries with it an authoritative interpretation to a fixed end result, whilst
- Acceptance of 'what you learn will be right' carries with it the acceptance of 'where you are' that maybe sometimes below the authoritative interpretation or above!

As educators, we acknowledge that many forms of objectives and outcomes are present in all situations – but which one do we aim for? Are we clear in our minds? For example, when we approach learning with a fixed expectation, we carry our subtle prejudice that judges the purpose and the outcome. Is it right or wrong? Or, do we approach learning with an 'open ended' expectation yet maybe still subtly pre-judge the purpose and outcome? Thoroughly preparing ourselves and the students with clear and authoritative learning goals and objectives is therefore essential to assure that an 'authoritative' interpretation of what we do together is achieved. Building on success, with no 'put downs', adds to an assured positivity with personal space for assimilation and accommodation.

An ancient Persian proverb states that: "However fast you run, or however skilfully, you cannot run away from your own feet..."

This quotation reminds us that we, alone, are responsible for our own learning, that we build step by step, and that we alone are responsible for our own positive attitudes and approaches to learning with that all important ingredient – attention and attunement.

### 4. Attention and Attunement

It was Socrates, in regard to education, who stated that: "The right way to begin is to pay attention to the young, and make them just as good as possible."



*"The right way to begin is to pay attention to the young, and make them just as good as possible."*

~



Attention meaning ‘pro-so-hi’ – ‘to offer to give’ and in its derivative ‘pro-se-xo’ – ‘to take care’ – encapsulates the meaning of education to simply focus to receive on what is being given and learnt with care. Yet, what is our aim with regard to making the young ‘as good as possible?’ How often do we address that question?

Teaching, learning and education in, about and for the values-based dimension have a greater value when we are simply, like the musician, ‘in tune’ with ourselves – simply altogether and ‘all there fully focused’. Whilst our attitude to learning may be positive, if we are not attuned or attentive, then learning is unlikely to achieve its preferred purpose.

Attunement – ‘syn-tonus-mos’ - means ‘together and to extend’ – the quality of someone who extends, reinforces and gathers all powers on the same place.

There are seven elements that assist in the process of establishing and maintaining attention and attunement.

They are:

- Attunement to your own nature
- Engagement with the inner nature, attractiveness, and learning potential of the learner
- Positive objectives and authoritative learning goals
- Concentration, listening, looking and understanding
- Harmony between learner and teacher
- Harmony between the learner and previous experiences, and
- Belief in the purpose of learning.

To help access attention and attunement, silence, brain gym, gentle discussion or sharing ways to live our values at the start of a lesson can create an atmosphere conducive to better attention and a greater fullness of learning.

For example:

- Closing your eyes

- Listening to soft music
- Gentle stretching
- Sharing journals

### Evaluating Attunement – A cautionary tale

Attunement takes time and is reliant on the prepared readiness of the learner to respond and the professional to empower that readiness.

I’m recalling this cautionary tale as, I feel, it is wise to take care to avoid ‘quick fix’ results in the presence of over enthusiastic time constrained evaluators when your style of teaching begins with attunement. Why do I share this? I have known highly proficient educators who have been ridiculed and ‘failed’ for not teaching ‘with speedy effectiveness’ to a prescribed way or to a prescribed judgment. Evaluation certainly has its place, yet without valuing the ‘pause’ and ‘connectivity’ to learning, one may be viewed to achieve an intellectual target yet miss the heart. Where judgment is predicted to be ‘sticky box in nature’, educators may teach ‘perfectly’, for example, by giving knowledge in a prescribed way, but the student may not learn but merely conform – and attunement will be missed. I recall one evaluator who criticised ‘time for attunement’ being invited to teach the class and model the lesson without attunement. The evaluator never returned leaving the professional to ‘tune in’ to expanded awareness and capture the moment before delivering an effective lesson with all intellectual targets met.

## 5. Effective Communication

Clear and well understood communication is essential to help maintain positive atmospheres. If you don’t know or understand – ask and articulate. We are not just vessels to be filled through obligation! So often learners can make the wrong assumptions and live with them to the detriment of their true potential. We each see and interpret the world differently – so learning how

to communicate using a variety of language landscapes including instinct and intuition adds value to attunement. It also helps us to go beyond the false limitations we put on ourselves when looking ‘otherwise’. Attunement optimises learning from the outside in and the inside out.

### Active Listening

Listening actively means to attune and engage, whereas, simply listening can carry, by way of reply, an opinion or perceived arrogance that ‘one way is right’ and ‘another way is wrong’. Active listening brings humility. The following activity (figure 4) illustrates the ‘pit falls’ of not actively listening – in a humorous way.

Colleagues/ students face one another sitting on chairs. On one side are the ‘A’s (called Stars) and on the other side are the B’s (called the Diamonds).

At first the Stars talk to the Diamonds explaining what they did yesterday. The Diamonds have to listen. The facilitator holds up an instruction behind the Stars to be read by the Diamonds. The instruction is to look away. The Stars feel what it is like to be ignored. Then, the role is changed.

The Diamonds have to ask for advice on how to travel to point X. The Stars are given the instructions to talk all the time with advice. The Diamonds feel what it is like to receive an answer based on ego. The process can continue with other scenarios.

## 6. ‘Going beyond the Glass Ceiling’ and ‘Looking Otherwise’

In learning, sometimes we put up a false barrier believing that we cannot go higher or aim too high with an unrealistic goal. Both extremes deny access to potential. Balance and natural wisdom is preferable.

Plato’s analogy of the sun, line and cave is a useful metaphor to illustrate one false barrier where students are denied access to unlimited learning.

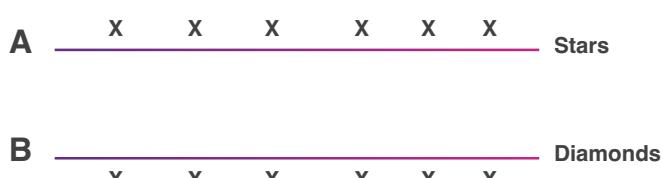


Figure 4

Imagine a classroom where the students are facing the teacher to learn about facts, opinion and learned wisdom according to authoritative interpretation. They sit with their back to the sunshine but can see the sunlight on the teacher’s face. The teacher sees the outside of the cave – beyond the window – the line between the inside and outside of the classroom and sees the ‘real world’ outside. The lesson is a Geography lesson about the sun and the clouds. There is a picture of the cumulus nimbus cloud in the book. Outside, the sky is scattered with clouds and a yellow sun. In the classroom, the students learn about and respect the assessment about the sun and clouds from the book. They pass their test and move on oblivious to the living experience that was taking place just behind them. The message here is – when do educators offer closed knowledge to be interpreted as information and when do they offer open opportunities that are guided according to the innate capacity and observations of the student?

In regard to ‘attention and attunement’, sometimes, schemes require obedient responses to learning outcomes that are subtly pre-judged according to authoritative interpretation, and sometimes, schemes require an equality of contribution from the unique perception of the individual. Looking ‘otherwise’ builds on strong foundations, learning laws, ‘raises the glass ceiling’ and invites the sky to be the limit. All that it requires is a nurturing intention that ‘touches the pulse’ of the learner and invites natural wisdom to prevail. Keeping the balance is essential, as sometimes, we can aim too high as well as too low.

With regard to following your dreams and fulfilling your natural born gift to life, it was Sophocles who quoted that:

*“It is really important for anybody to manage to gain what he dreams every day.”*

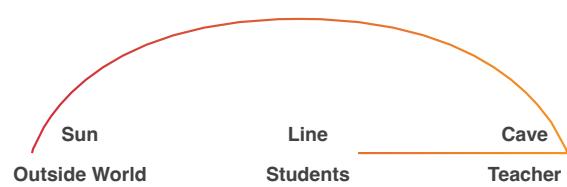


Figure 5

It is in this context that the research of Felice Kaufman into exceptionally able students brings to our awareness the dangers of not following your dream.

In 1964, the brightest 50 students from the United States, one from each State, were invited to the White House to receive an award from the then President of the United States. After the event, they returned to their own States and pursued their careers. Twenty five years later, Felice Kaufman tracked them all down. Without exception, all students became leaders in their chosen fields. There were doctors, lawyers, university professors, cutting edge scientists and internationally acclaimed medical researchers. However, with the exception of two students, all quit their jobs between the ages of 30 and 35 years. One lady, called 'Natasha', was a leading quantum physicist when, one day, she walked into her office and informed everyone that she was quitting. She did.

A few days later, she was back in her home State and back on the farm where she had grown up. She put on a checked dress and skipped into the fields, hugged trees, played with the animals, spoke to the hens and dangled her bare feet in the cool running stream. When asked why she did this, she replied that as a child she wasn't allowed to because she had to study. Other members the 'brightest' 50 students did similar things. When asked why, the same answer came: "We were following our parent's agenda".

Natasha is now a very successful fruit farmer. She always wanted to be a fruit farmer. Her natural gift was to work with nature and be in nature. Unknowingly and through great love, her parents had not realised that they were hurting her and dampening her spirit. Her unhappiness ended when she freed her spirit, and she could follow her intuition.

Around the world in the UK, Germany, China, the Sub Continent and the Middle East, I still witness students

and adults who are spiritually hurt because they follow agendas. Stepping beyond the line of authentic interpretation and 'looking otherwise' opens up new horizons. Knowing when to respect the status quo or to build on convention or when to move towards the unlimited needs confidence, concentration, clarity and a very deep understanding of the cultures and traditions that add richness and diversity to how individuals choose to live around the world. The keys for decision making are self empowerment and self mastery built on the virtues of an honest pursuit of learning, living powers and the inner world of thoughts, feelings and intuition.

Learning atmospheres that promote and engage positive characteristics for learning create a secure basis for exploration, learning through success and error, and don't allow subtle manipulation to steer preferment to learning in a given way. Instead, they open up heart felt pursuits utilising both head and heart. Both perspiration and inspiration are conditions are key elements in positive learning atmospheres.

## 7. Utilising Hierarchies and Empowering Models for Engagement

There are two hierarchical and empowering models.

### Hierarchical

These hierarchies function particularly well when the positive atmosphere supports the goals of 'self empowerment' and 'altruistic giving to others'. In this context, positive hierarchies create a preferment and 'approval' for learning with a preferred style for good as opposed to negative hierarchies that only choose the way that students must 'buy into the system'.

Hierarchies that support an attitude of – 'Do this and I'll reward you' or 'Don't do this I'll harm you' – beyond the conventions of rules and discipline – have no place

~  
*"Learning is 99% perspiration  
and 1% inspiration"*

- Albert Einstein

~



in positive personalised learning. At best it is a subtle form of moral persuasion and at worst a subtle form of blackmail that can turn our moral compass against altruistic giving. Positive hierarchies build positive people where each one can make a positive difference with their own valued contribution.

### Empowering

This method also supports the goals of ‘self empowerment’ and ‘altruistic giving to others’. Empowerment functions particularly well when the atmosphere supports the development of inner powers for good rather than the unchecked self made laws that just stoke self fulfillment. One particular benefit of empowerment is that it complements the logic of the mind with insight and intuition.

Einstein was often chastised for his approaches. His answers came from his private world of silence well beyond the logical mechanics that hierarchies and systems can dominate. His use of intuition as well as logic beyond the limitations of spoken language brought meaning and life to inner knowing. Intuitive Hearts International have noted that bringing intuition to life with a gentle touch empowers the inner diamond in everyone ‘to glow’ and bring positive benefit to all learning situations. The condition is simply to seek balance in ‘drawing out what is there’ as well as ‘being informed’.

To ‘glow’ – ‘Iam-psi’ in Greek means to radiate with some emotional quality like light. This light is our presence that, when positive, invites in truth and the calling of your vocation.

The quotation of Phocydides adds hope to our quest with a little humour as he states:

~  
*“The one who's looking for truth  
remains always bright, even though  
he may be often misguided.”*  
~

The four levels of personal thought bring understanding to this process:

- Positivity brings joy, peace, honesty and enthusiasm.
- Negativity brings fear, stress, carelessness and egotism.
- Necessary brings work, career and family.

- Wasteful brings holding on to the past or living too much in the future.

Self empowerment brings understanding to the inner world of thoughts, feelings and emotions, and with it the power to choose. Choice brings positivity and the affirmation of dignity and ones worth.

## 8. Appreciating Privacy, Silence and Concentration

We all need privacy and our own sacred space where the engagement of thought and inner secrets can reveal new knowledge, insights and creativity. This can be seen through reflection, gazing into space, ‘mulling’ things over or sleeping on it. This key skill to all learning helps to open doors to deeper understanding. It can be activated by ‘doing nothing’, walking by oneself, lying on the grass looking at the clouds, staring out to sea or simply enjoying the peace of our own company.

It must, however, be understood that this practice develops over time especially for those who either seek answers ‘out there’ all the time or those who prefer to be influenced by the constant flow of noise. For example, children who watch too much TV, play music, play with game boys, are obsessed with electronics and fill themselves with ‘busy-ness’ can forget the simple pleasure of stillness and silence. It’s great to explore and to be curious – but it is also great to reflect!

The intuitive teacher is well skilled to know the difference between ‘idleness’ and ‘engagement in thought’ in students. Engagement empowers the authoritative interpretation of knowledge based on honest endeavour and by endeavouring to access the consciousness of our inner world.

Valuing privacy reaffirms the dignity of one’s own worth bringing into focus the natural gifts of our own goodness. Concentration on privacy, stillness and calmness also helps us to:

- Learn that knowledge is a great tool to learning but can be a great veil to learning;
- That our thoughts go to what we love and need at that time, but can be negative and wasteful as well as positive; and
- That from the power of our being comes our ability to be attentive and share the goodness of our natural abilities.

The secret for success lies in our concentration, silence and creative pursuits that nurtures the ‘atmos’ – the

soul, and the ‘sphere’ – the area around the soul – our own atmosphere.

## 9. Accessing Potential and Valuing our Natural Gifts

Attunement, concentration and motivation are three keys to all learning by way of giving, receiving and exchanging. Ultimately, all meetings are exchanges.

Getting the balance right is an art as too much attention could encourage excessive reliance or conforming – and little attention could lead to hostility to learning. Valuing our natural gifts brings with it satisfaction, altruistic giving and ‘in conventional terms’ increased grades.

Many students are attracted to learning by the attention that invites their contribution. Some students prefer a more silent and reflective approach to learning, whereas in some societies, some students just say; ‘Tell me what to do’ to conform leaving their creativity and potential locked in. Ultimately, letting go of the need for attention empowers the effectiveness of the capacity for learning.

NACE, the National Association for Able Children in Education (UK), empowers educators to help the innate abilities in all children to flourish. Look deeply, blocks will be removed, and the natural gift will flow and uplift their potential.

UNESCO (Early Childhood) believes that children are naturally curious and see our world ‘as one’. The education of the whole child and giving opportunity for all natural gifts to manifest themselves – the ‘SSPPICCCEE of Learning ‘Model – the social, spiritual, physical, personal, intellectual, creative, cultural, environmental and ethical – is essential and assures potential is tapped.

Intuitive teachers know that poor attention in children carries within them many factors ranging from a personal loss to a habit learnt through negative experiences.

One of the most misunderstood words in education is ‘always’ – meaning ‘he/she will always do that’. This negative interpretation of the child is a ‘put down’ that is felt by the child.

How often do we assume that someone or a group of people will ‘always’ do something in a given way?



The Greek root meaning of always is ‘pan-ta’ from the ancient Greek pronoun ‘pas-pan-tos’ meaning full or complete. Consider the story below where an assumption brought unexpected results highlighting the paradox within the meaning of ‘always’.

### The Story of Numbers

The story is of a young teacher who, on her first teaching appointment, was given the class that ‘always’ didn’t succeed. It was a five form entry school and she had been given what she thought were the IQ numbers of the students. She set out teaching the class with love and enthusiasm. At the end of the year, her class exceeded all expectations and were the ‘top class’ out of five.

“How did you do that?” asked the Head Teacher.

She responded: “You gave me their IQ scores so I pitched my teaching at that level. I believed that they would succeed and they did”.

The Head Teacher went on to reply: “the numbers I gave you – 123, 145, 137 and so on were the peg numbers for their coats.”

Both smiled and put assumptions to one side. The positive ‘can do’ atmosphere produced results beyond expectation.

A good teacher is a teacher who models by example:

- Knowing when to give a secure touch
- Knowing when to give a therapeutic word
- Knowing when to be firm
- Knowing when to be silent, and
- Knowing how to respond to the academic and emotional needs.

### Cause and Effect

How often do we try ‘to fix’ the ‘effect’ of something and not the ‘cause’? A good teacher, therefore, can also:

- Seek to address the cause and not the effect.
- Never leave any child behind
- Adapt to the needs of the time,
- Change lessons in mid lesson,
- Persist in the pursuit of exploration of talent.

Traditional grading by its nature leaves children behind. Competency led grading by its nature builds an appreciation and corrects at its own time. Intuitive teachers do the latter very well. Accessing potential and our natural gifts comes from within. Empowering

it through a hierarchy of strategies informs success. Without it, the education of our higher selves would be lost to indifference.

## 10. Applying Humility – a key tool to realising potential

Humility is not there to impress but for its own reason and oneself. Through humility, we discover that our spiritual vitality can be enhanced through passing away the false self and embracing what is really our true nature and true spirit.

*‘The strength of humility is an inner knowing that the pot is never full and however much we believe we are right, we may be wrong’,* as quoted by Andrew So-Kwok, opens doors to the clear realisation that, with humility and honesty, that no-one is perfect and that we are all learners.

Humility ‘tapino-fro-ssini’ in Greek from the adjective ‘tapin’ meaning ‘humble’ and ‘frin’ meaning ‘mind’ invites in the quality of being humble in character and behaviour.

In broader terms, humility can be viewed from the level of societies’ perceptions as an attitude to life, an inner perspective and wishing to go deeper into understanding. Yet wisely, it was Parker Palmer who stated that:

~  
*“Putting either perception forward knowingly ‘on show’ defeats its virtue, as it can only be shown through its subtle action beyond the judicious flattery of show.”*  
~

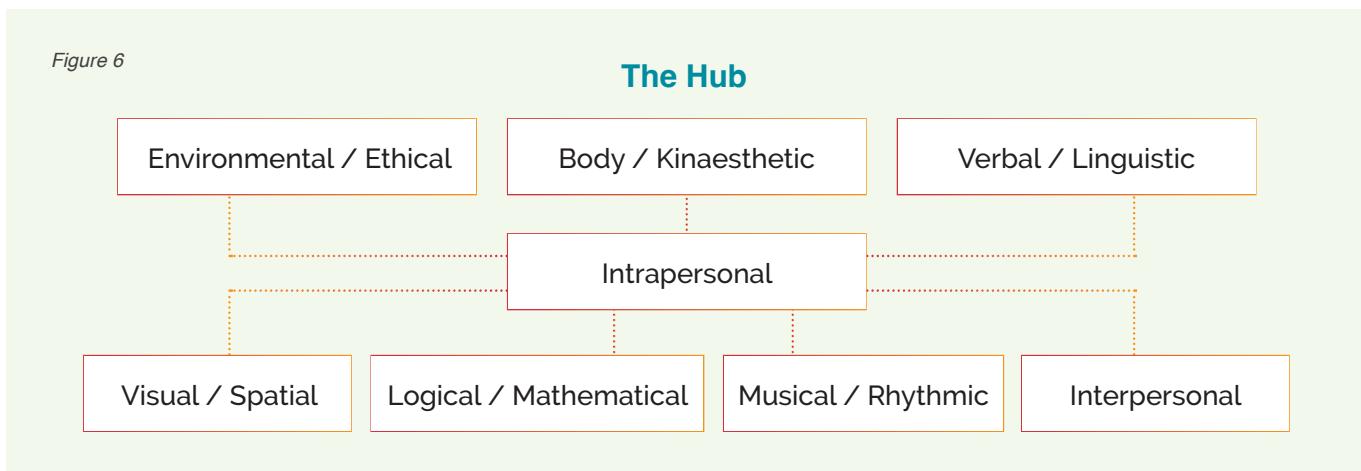
Deep within the soul and heart of all is:

- the call to be oneself,
- to be guardian of ourselves
- to give with a sense of connection
- to nurture and care for who and what we are, and
- to nurture and care for what we are becoming.

In schools every day, this is activated by returning to the honesty of our inner world of thoughts feelings, emotions and intuition.

Remembering that humility attracts and authority repels adds power to the strength of humility. Humility

Figure 6



keeps us together. We need to recognise it, appreciate it and take full benefit from it. Great leaders and great learners lead and learn with humility. In relationships, they keep the role behind them as the role can reduce the nearness. How often do we say something and then regret saying it in hindsight, for example, saying something to a leader what you think what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear!

Humility brings and gives equality of acceptance and attracts the inner beauty, lightness, laughter, love and warmth in all. All great and effective leaders give unconditionally and know when to invite and when to 'draw out' with a purity of intention that flows from it and is drawn to it.

The same applies to educators. Humility is one of the secrets of their craft.

## 11. Educating and Modelling Expectations in a Values-based Way

Most schools thrive on continuous activity, sense of progress, rewards and consequences, an 'automated' way of learning to conform with convention, and authentic expectations to enrich and extend learning.

Values-based schools use all of these conventions yet also seek to achieve insight, fulfilment, knowing oneself and higher consciousness by way of modelling the expectations. It is not a forced order but a naturalness beyond the order of hierarchy that lives in our presence.

Knowing yourself – 'auto-gnossi-a' – in Greek – means 'the precise knowing of the physical, intellectual and psychical qualities'.

*"The most difficult thing in life  
is to know yourself"*

It was Thales who stated: 'The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself' echoing one key question that is rarely asked in education today – 'Who are you?'

Aristotle believed that: 'knowing ourselves is the beginning of human wisdom' and Plato stated that: "The man who asks to know ourselves, urges us to know our soul."

These quotations return us, once again, to the meaning of presence, that according to Ierakas is 'the soul energy which is expressed through the body'.

Values-based schools, using a model (figure 6) adapted from Howard Gardner's '*Frames of Mind*' with regard to multiple intelligences, help to unlock one's potential from the hub, the intrapersonal at the very heart of learning from the 'atmos' dot inside out.

Empowering the heart of the learner invites in values-based educators to educate beyond the compulsion that focuses solely on 'one way' towards approaches and methodologies that:

- 'Teaches the child' rather than teaching the subject'.
- Acknowledges a first step rather than knowing it all.
- Adopts humility to want to learn, and
- Sets a foundation to be properly learned with values and ethics rather than learned with information.

This takes:

- patience,
- the duty to overcome criticism in a constructive way,
- seeking information before opinions, and
- genuinely adopting creativity as well as conforming to norms.

Where there is no judgement and no criticism, the spirit within becomes uplifted and willing and awake to its possibility. Its success then serves itself. When that is done, we learn to move forward with our presence and lead by example. It creates positive atmosphere in action. ✦



# MY OWN UNDERSTANDING: VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE



From India –  
Megha Gupta, LVE Distance  
Trained Facilitator and Mentor

VbA is an environment that we first create within ourselves by adapting our way of life to live by the Living Values.

Once we are able to do that, we can help others create it too by setting ourselves as an example and also providing them an atmosphere of love, respect, value, understanding and safety. It is only from this environment can any long lasting change be effective. It could be considered as the place from which Cause can be addressed, not just a mind dealing with Effect.

## Where is it found?

It is found with us after we become aware, nurture and live by the 12 values. When we are able to sufficiently develop these values within us, we are able to inspire others to make these values their way of life too.

## How does it work?

Once we are able to find these value within ourselves, nurture these values and then by living through these values every day, we become the living example that holds the dynamics to attract to us those who would from the same place, like to share in this Living Values as a ‘Way of Life’. We have to actually become the “Values-based Atmosphere” we are seeking to create!

## What is it for?

It is for nurturing an environment within us by making these values as our way of life and to ultimately inspiring others to do the same.

## How we connect to it?

By creating an environment based on love, respect, being valued, being understood and feeling safe around us.

## How do I engage it?

By first becoming aware of the values, understanding them, nurturing them within ourselves with the aim of making them our way of life. Some tools for creating value based atmosphere include: active listening; collaborative rule making; quiet signals that create silence, focus, feelings of peace or respect; conflict resolution; and values-based discipline.

## How can it change my life?

If we make these values our way of life, our life will change in every possible way. Within ourselves, we will respect ourselves more, love ourselves more and hence believe in ourselves more, our mind body and soul will be at peace and therefore we will become better at decision making, by leading a simple life not only we will enhance the quality of our life but of our planet's. And once we become the vessel of VbA, just by being ourselves, we can change others' lives just like how ours changed.

## Can it be extended?

Of course. That's the whole aim. **The beauty is that once we are able to create the Value based Atmosphere within ourselves, we can extend it just by being ourselves.** ♦



## BRINGING THE VALUES-BASED ATMOSPHERE ALIVE

### How to become involved

As the accounts of Living Values Education people in many countries have testified, this 'magic ingredient', the 'Values-based Atmosphere' is not exclusive; transcending boundaries and cultures, ages and gender, it is available to all humanity.

We can all see it, feel it and are drawn to it daily in the people we meet, everywhere hearts are open.

Living Values Education is simply about bringing this awakening alive in us. To achieve this internationally in over 40 countries we bring people together to find 'Values-based Atmosphere' in themselves which then can be shared with others. We do this through workshops, webinars, online courses, in school classrooms, gatherings of parents, in business, and families at home.

If you feel drawn to being part of this global awakening, first, by bringing your 'Values-based Atmosphere' alive in your own life you can do so, no matter where you live. **We offer this free;** you can attend an LVE workshop, join one of our online gatherings or, simply in your own home at your own pace.

Our website has a vast library of resources to explore to awaken you to your values, or simply join our free 12 week online course, the LVE Distance Facilitator Training.

You are most welcome.  
[www.livingvalues.net](http://www.livingvalues.net)



# The Living Values Education Vision

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## *Why Values?*

*Values are a defining feature of our identity as human beings and, in guiding our choices and priorities, they set the compass for the trajectory of our life, drive human, social and economic development and the transition to a better world for all.*

*Adopting and living by values such as peace, love, respect, honesty, responsibility, kindness and cooperation gives meaning to and fulfilment in life, reinforces awareness of human worth and promotes the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.*

