

"The Will"

The Advanced Montessori Method I formerly *Spontaneous Activity in Education* Chapter 7

"The will manifests itself through movement, indeed the powers of will are established through exercise". (P. 135). The opposite motor forces of *impulse* and *inhibition* are elements of the psychic embryo that are exercised by the will.

The balance of impulse and inhibition must be **"undertaken at the age when the will is in the process of formation."** (P. 137)

The balance of impulse and inhibition takes place **"at the margin of consciousness..."** (P. 135)

The smallest details of the child's activity in the classroom form a continuous flow in the exercise of the will and the balance of impulse and inhibition. The will decides and performs the conscious direction of movement. The exercises of the will **"prepare the way for the habits of social life."** (P. 135)

The habits of social life, the courtesies, are manifestations of the will that balance impulse with inhibition in social settings. More fundamentally these early exercises of the will lay the foundation for the qualities of constancy and persistence which are characteristics of the personality. These characteristics are developed by the will in early activities of daily living.

Constancy and persistence are qualities of the adult personality that develop in the young child as the child balances impulse and inhibition. Constancy and persistence in the adult are the foundations for the family and productive work. Constancy allows for permanence within the family structure; persistence allows for productive work in the large community.

Constancy and persistence are qualities of the will that are expressed in the world as the adult makes decision among choices. The decisions made by the will assume actions in the world.

Decisions, large and small, are made on a daily basis. **"The stronger we are in such exercises (decision-making), the more independent we shall be of others. Clarity of ideas, the mechanism of the habit of decisions, gives us a sense of liberty."** (P. 141)

"Persistent work, clarity of ideas, the habit of sifting conflicting motives in the consciousness, even in the minutest actions of life, decisions taken every moment on the smallest things, the gradual mastery over one's actions, the power of self-direction increasing by degrees in the sum of successively repeated acts, these are the stout little stones on which the strong structure of personality is built up" (P. 141)

Pamela Rigg 3/30/06

Education for a New World:

"Will is that primal energy without which psychic life cannot exist." (P. 50)