

Mentor's Energizer

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Trust is Sustainable

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Above pictures are from the First National Conference on Universal Human Values, April 2014

Please send your photos for inclusion in the Energizer.
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There is a lot of talk globally about "sustainability". Generally, this sustainability refers to the environment, society or the economy. How can we preserve and protect our environment so that the planet stays healthy now and in future? How can all people maintain a degree of economic security today and tomorrow? Sustainability, in the modern world, also refers to governments working together to keep the peace. All of these economic and institutional frameworks require a reexamination of the relationships, which sustain society: between nation-states, within and among communities, between individuals and institutions and between humanity and the natural environment. "Sustainable development" assumes a relationship between present and future generations—a relationship that is defined by both geography and time. A key ingredient in the structuring and maintenance of these relationships is trust. Trust is a basic universal human value. Trust enables each person to function at his/her highest potential, knowing that the things that other people say and do are honest and have the best interests of all at heart. Sustainable modes of production and consumption, education and resource management, healthcare for people and the planet, all require trust. And, beyond the need and ability to trust others and to be trustworthy ourselves is an overarching concept of "trusteeship—the idea that each one of us enters the world as a trust of the whole and each has a measure of responsibility for the welfare of all. Trusteeship is larger than global cooperation between nations. It is a principle that implies the need for an intergenerational perspective in which the well-being of future generations is taken into account at all levels of decision making. In our classrooms of universal human values, we are planting the seeds of this future pattern of development and promoting a vision for a sustainable future, which is both spiritually and materially prosperous. What a contribution!

2nd National Conference on "Universal Human Values"

Sat. 30th - Sun. 31st May- 2015

ORGANIZED BY THE BAHÁ'Í ACADEMY, SHIVAJINAGAR, PANCHGANI, IN ASSOCIATION WITH DEPTT. OF EDUCATION & EXTENSION, SAVITRIBAI PHULE PUNE UNIVERSITY, PUNE

The Conference will be inaugurated at the hands of Prof. M. M. Salunkhe, the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik, Maharashtra.

The Valedictory Function will be in the Presence of Dr. A. S. Bhoite, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Shivaji University, Kolhapur, and Dr. P. Palande, the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, Bihar.

A galaxy of distinguished personalities will deliver keynote addresses at various sessions. Papers presented, will be published in the Conference Souvenir with ISSN Number and distributed among various institutions of higher learning. Papers are invited on themes:

The Main Theme: "Universal Human Values"

The Sub Themes:

- A) 'The Need For Education In Universal Human Values From Environmental Perspective'
- B) 'The Need For Education In Universal Human Values From Scientific And Technological Perspectives'
- C) 'The Need For Education In Universal Human Values From Economical Perspectives'
- D) 'The Need For Education In Universal Human Values From Social And Political Perspectives'
- E) 'Approaches and Policies Pertaining to Values Education'
- F) 'Values Based Teaching Learning Methodologies'

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Visit www.bahaiacademy.org for further details.



Other trust building games:

Trust Lean: In groups of 8, a person in the middle closes his/her eyes, does a "trust lean" and is "passed around" the group. It requires good facilitation and fairly mature group.

Comfortable up Close: Have people in pairs stand facing each a comfortable distance apart. Then ask people to move a little closer and feel what it's like. Then ask people to increase the distance apart and notice how it changes one's feelings. You then converse about the differences in comfort zones.

Games that Build Trust

When you take away one of the senses, you have to rely on the other four to get along. In the following game, trust is built, because the sense of sight is taken away. Not only does the participant have to rely on his/her other senses, but he/she has to rely on a helper to avoid the pitfalls of the obstacle course.

Trust Walk—You'll need the blindfolds and calming music -- like classical or harp music -- something quiet. While the break is on, set up the obstacles in the room. These can be chairs upright or lying down, the rope tied between two objects, cones, cardboard boxes, balloons, the hula hoops, etc. You need to make an obstacle course. You choose how difficult you want it to be. Two or three pairs of participants can do the activity at once. The objective should be that they have to walk around, over or through five objects. If they touch an object, they have to start over.

Explain that the guides are responsible for their partner's safety. They should spin their partner 3 times and after that they don't touch the person. They use verbal cues to help the person through the course without touching anything. They can say things like, "In three more steps, you have to turn left to go around the chair." Or "Now lift your right leg and step over the rope." When they reach the other side of the room, the guide can hold the partner's hand to bring him/her back to the starting place. Then, they can trade roles.

After the activity, you can ask the students what they learned from the experience.

1. What do you think was the purpose of this activity?
2. What was it like to be blindfolded?
3. What was it like to be the guide?
4. How did it feel when you trusted each other and worked together to accomplish something challenging?

Clean up the obstacles.

Back issues of the Mentor Energizer and the full Energizer Compilation are available on the website. If you've missed an issue, please feel free to download it at www.bahaiacademy.org

How do we create a classroom environment based on trust?

You can count on a trustworthy person, because he/she demonstrates high-mindedness and resolve. A trustworthy person is reliable. You are confident that he/she will do what he/she promised. As mentors, we promise a classroom, which offers all the equal opportunity to grow and develop praiseworthy talents and capacities. Here are some ways that we promote a classroom environment based on trust.

Participation- Share your conviction that all students can not only benefit from a materially and spiritually prosperous society, but also have the obligation to participate in its construction. For our classrooms to be effective, we must promote the participation of all the students in processing the coursework and deciding on the service learning activities. By analyzing specific problems, attaining higher degrees of understanding on the issues and exploring possible courses of action, the students are learning to make both individual and collective decisions. Our students are very fortunate to have mentors who believe that men and women, young and old, rich and poor—all have value and their voices need to be heard.

Unifying framework- For progress to be made, it must take place within a framework that promotes the attainment of progressively higher degrees of unity of vision and action among its participants. Each forward step becomes part of the collective process of learning. Promote the concept that ideas and suggestions do not belong to a single person, nor does the ultimate success of a project raise an individual's status. Rather, proposals and insights belong to the group, which adopts, revises and discards them as needed.

Frank and open discussion- The issues facing the villages and communities that our students come from or serve are highly complex. Imposing a simple solution is rarely sustainable. Though it might be tempting to solve problems before consulting with the parties involved, it's important for us, as mentors, to lead students through the process of consultation with community representatives before starting service learning activities. What is needed is an effective process for exploring issues and making decisions that promotes genuine participation and facilitates collective and sustainable action that will continue after the students have graduated and left the villages on their own. Happy Hippo Show offers a principle-based approach that allows for input from all parties involved.

Bonds of affection- When we create bonds of affection, trust and mutual care, we provide an environment where students believe in themselves and trust that they will be allowed to offer their ideas. Allowing students to interact in various ways, maintaining a warm and inviting atmosphere and appreciating the contributions of all, will continually build the friendships and the trust of the students with each other and with you, their mentor.

Next month: How do we create deeper conversations, which lead to greater growth?