



Questions about ourselves

When talking to students, and even amongst ourselves as teachers, we use a shorthand phrase to refer to our philosophical approach: “the questions of the school.” For our own clarity of thought, it is good to slow down and patiently unravel what exactly these are! Of course, as educators, we have a whole universe of questions at CFL—questions to do with the meditative mind, social structures and the art of teaching itself. What follows is one set of questions that we have with regard to learning about our psychological lives. On a different day, or with a different individual, the set may vary somewhat!

These questions are not verbal. They are intended as a pause. A stepping back. A dialogue starter with oneself or another, or with many. Can these questions enlighten us and lighten us? Can we ask them without necessarily even expecting answers? Sometimes just asking is enough.

How can I meet life intelligently?

Often the term “intelligence” is equated to intellect or grades

on an exam. This is not the intelligence I refer to here. Nor is it street-smartness. This is something else altogether. It seems to me to mean that I die to every moment, that is, see each moment afresh, as if I have never seen it before. It is the most rewarding experience; for that moment, drop the memories of the past and the projections into the future. To relate to the world as it is now. It is not inevitable that I get into the same patterns of relating to my spouse, colleagues, children and so on. If I see each moment with them afresh, whole new worlds of relating are possible. What is it to live life deliberately, to respond to the immediate and not through all my built-up images or future projections?

Why am I so concerned about protecting my self-image?

There appears to be no way in this world that I can ensure that everyone I know, or at least, value in my life, has the “correct” picture of me, the image that I want them to have. And I am not even sure I know the image I want each person to have of me! Why then is so much of my mental energy spent on worrying about what others think of me? From, “I

hope my guests like what I have cooked for lunch” or, “What will my relatives think of me if I don’t perform that ritual?” to, “What if my colleagues misunderstood my question or intentions?” Instead, would it be possible to really feel, “I don’t mind what people think of me”, and drop the pre- and post-interaction analysis? What am I really trying to protect anyway?

Can I be aware and attentive?

To live life intelligently, do I not need to be aware of what is going on in the central processing unit? The brain is abuzz with thoughts, memories and knowledge, filtering my relationships with the world. Most of the time I am unaware that I am relating to people and events through all the knowledge of the past and perhaps, at times, through projections of my future relationship with them or what I may want that to be. Am I really looking, listening in the now? Can I be aware of my inattention? In that awareness there can be a dropping of the filters through which I see the relationship. And in this awareness and attention, kindness, sensitivity and care can emerge, because I am seeing a person or event in the present. Can we experience the beauty and freedom of attention in, to borrow a line from Pico Iyer, “the ever-fleeting NOW?”

How are fear and insecurity guiding my actions?

There seems to me a direct link between the beasts of fear and insecurity and my inability to live life intelligently. Fear, insecurity and of course other so-called “negative” emotions like anger, hurt and jealousy, distort my present. They distort my relating to you right now, my relating to events around me right now. They may put me in auto-pilot mode where, rather than responding to the immediate, I am responding through a myriad filters each in its own sphere, sometimes overlapping like a Venn diagram, causing even more mental chaos. The “mischief of the mind”, a phrase used by Pema Chodron, can be endless!

These questions are of deep relevance and importance in the field of education; in fact they are a response to the chaos of the world into which we are sending our young people. Subjects can and will be learned; they are taught, but of utmost importance to us are the pauses that we encourage in each other and ourselves, to reflect. So when we ask young people at CFL whether they are interested in the questions of the school, we are asking them rather paradoxically, whether they are interested in their own happiness and well-being. I say paradoxically because living life intelligently, without





question pervades all aspects of our lives and requires an intelligent meeting of life, without filters and with attention and awareness of the moment. It is relevant in my lifestyle choice, at the workplace, at home, in relationship and in my mental and emotional spaces. It is not mere navel gazing or narcissism. It is not just relevant to life at this small school. These questions are a response to the ills of the world, not just today but throughout human history. And this bubble in which we are asking them of each other is a microcosm of society.

It is abundantly clear that the social and environmental chaos in the world

fear and insecurity requires a lack of self-centredness and self-absorption. And here we are asking them to be interested in their own happiness and well-being which can be seen as encouraging self-centeredness and self-absorption!

At CFL, these questions can potentially be woven into any part of the day during any activity or class. At lunchtime am I paying attention to washing my plate so that it is clean for the next person? During a discussion am I aware of having 'spaced out' or having been inattentive? Why am I competing with a colleague for the attention of students? Is my competitiveness and aggression emerging on the sports field? How is self-comparison with peers playing out in a student's mind? Why are the children dividing into sub-groups within their already small groups? Are parents thinking only of their child and not the whole group or school in their approach? These questions will hopefully lead us to pause and realise that there is nothing inevitable about what is happening, that there are other ways of being. We want to be able to ask these questions of each other, whatever our identity (parent, teacher or student), from an equal footing, with an interest in travelling together, mentally roughing it out, if you will.

Evolutionarily, we seem programmed to be fearful and wary. It makes sense to protect the physical self, the body. And for that protection, perhaps wariness is required. However, humans have taken this to unimaginable proportions. Our imaginations have cast so much fear into our lives that we are constantly trying to protect ourselves against some future unpleasant imagined eventuality. Alternatively we may be imagining beautiful futures for ourselves while the present moment escapes us. Much of the time, we are not living; we are merely going through the motions of everyday life in a habitual and mechanical manner.

How am I to live responsibly with all this at play? This

throughout history is due to *Homo sapiens'* inability to see that there is an alternative to our self-centred, punitive, greedy and divisive responses to the world. We are doctorates in divisiveness with the ability to divide ourselves into smaller and smaller groups, pitting one against the other until there is no one and nothing left to conquer. And sadly nothing much has changed. One need only open a newspaper from the last century and one from yesterday to know that conflict has been and continues to be rife. And this conflict is not "out *there* between *those* people". Its seed is in each of us. And we make up this society with all its insanities.

Yet we are compassionate and empathetic beings. We do care for each other and the planet. So why is the world in such a state? Why are there such disparities all around me? On every continent there is conflict which, if we peel away at the layers, stems from a fundamental insecurity: insecurity over image, identity, property, present and future wealth and so on. How am I responsible and what am I going to do about it? Am I any different and what is my homework, not just outwardly but inwardly?

These questions may give a sense that there is a well-defined individual inside each of us, and it is our task as individuals to improve ourselves, be more aware and so on. Actually, Krishnamurti, in his general philosophical writings as well as his writing on education, often stressed the intelligence of "living life without a centre." This intelligence he hinted at is profoundly impersonal and has nothing to do with self-improvement, which on the face of it seems very paradoxical. Nevertheless, our educational journey is actually sparked off by questions about individuality and the contradictions this powerful sense brews. Living life without a centre may have the most powerful consequences for the health of the planet as a whole.

Remembering Leela Garady (1951 - 2016)

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.* –William Blake

Leela and I joined Valley School in the same year, 1984. In no time at all, I discovered what a multifaceted person she was and to every manifestation of her talents, she brought an extraordinary passion. Astronomy, craft, language and literature, drama, a great love for nature and a feisty temperament. She often spoke of her childhood years spent in a rural setting, where she would wander off on her own and sit for hours in quiet contemplation of the natural scenery around. Her father nurtured her questioning mind with varied readings and books. But much of Leela's thinking and action came from her own observation and reflection.

Her husband Murthy, in her words, was her rock and she ever appreciated that he let her bloom. Her children and grandchildren reflect many of her traits. She was always close to them but never shied away from speaking her mind to them.

She was a valued member of "Patara," a group formed in the late 1980s to bring books alive to children. Here is how one member of our group described her presence there. "I will never forget how a bare room would light up and explode with the colourful animated lifelike actions and dialogues of her incredible puppets. Her calm and peaceful exterior belied a furiously creative and ticking mind that made Patara the force it was."

It was always amazing to me that impeccably dressed in a sari as she always was, she would clamber up rocks and rough terrain in her chappals with such ease and much enjoyment!

In recent years, she collaborated extensively with the Parag Initiative, an arm of Tata Trusts, to bring about active libraries all over the country. With her mastery over both Kannada and Hindi, and more crucially, her intrinsic feel for the material, she translated many readings for the benefit of library educators. They all feel a great sense of indebtedness to her and have shared their feelings of loss.



Four years ago, she and I started the Varadenhalli Village Library. She personally selected and bought books which could appeal to young and old. Her husband Murthy made the bookshelves and she started us off with a story telling session. As her health deteriorated, her visits became rarer but the children all remember her vividly and she continues to be the driving force of the library. All the money she earned from her writings and translations came to the library, usually wrapped in an old envelope and thrust into my hands!

Leela was always drawn to the writings of J. Krishnamurti. However in recent years, this interest turned into a fierce intensity and she would download, listen, read,

and watch K talks. But she would also then urgently wish to have a dialogue around them resulting in many meetings, phone calls and emails. At the very end she shared her insights which echoed the lines by William Blake quoted above.

We miss her every day. Her readiness to listen and help, her humility about her abilities, her passion and enthusiasm, and above all the affectionate bonds she had with us—these memories will never fade.

Usha Mukunda

*Though my soul may set in darkness,
it will rise in perfect light;
I have loved the stars too fondly to
be fearful of the night.* –"The Old Astronomer", by Sarah Williams

Leela Garady was someone very special to me. For her, suffering has ended but for us who were close to her, it's a learning situation about death, friendship and the importance we give to the self.

Some of us have often met at her house to read, discuss and share our understanding of what Krishnaji spoke about life and various aspects of our relationships. There was always serious enquiry and dialogue.

A love of the Kannada language, its literature and Krishnaji's teachings were her passions. Just before she passed away she completed dictating a Kannada play. Her mind was sharp to the end!

Kamala Subramaniam

Most parents of CFL students have appreciated the books that help their children learn Kannada. They find them extremely innovative and usually say, “I wish I had learnt it this way”. But they have not met or known about the person who over many years developed the language programme at CFL and earlier at The Valley School. Leela Garady had long withdrawn from day to day interaction, though she remained involved till the end.

Leela’s life trajectory was conventional but her living of it was not, and she always acknowledged her family’s support in all that she tried. In particular, she said her husband Murthy was “her rock”. She started a play school because she disagreed with what his school was asking of her son and withdrew him from it. She said she was too young to be frightened!

She loved languages and tried to change the way they were taught. Inspired by Dr. Suess, she brought the same playful, alliterative use of words to her lessons. She wouldn’t / couldn’t coin nonsense words though! She brought breadth and depth to the Kannada and Hindi programme. She never made it easy but made sure it was fun and challenging. She wrote plays, composed songs, made puppets, designed backdrops, properties, and costumes, all with an unerring eye for design. She continued this engagement till the end, her last play for school being a Hindi translation of a ‘Life of Buddha’ based on ‘The Light of Asia’. All this was her working life and she challenged her students and colleagues to rise to meet her standards. Challenge is the wrong word; she expected that we could all meet it and was impatient when we hesitated or were diffident. I still can hear her students rolling out sonorous Kannada and Hindi passages. I owe the fact that I have read really interesting books to her refusal to start me off on easy texts. Her artistic eye was also seen in the clothes she wore, beautiful cotton sarees with elaborate blouses. The food in her house was simple but colourful, nicely arranged and delicious.

This was her life, but the breath of it was the philosophy of Krishnamurti and the Vachanakaras, particularly Allama Prabhu. She translated many of Krishnamurti’s books into Kannada and was inspired to write a play on Allama Prabhu.

During the recent past, when we saw her, she was still beautifully dressed and her dark eyes were still bright and sparkling. At first sight, she looked shockingly fragile, but as the conversation continued, all one was left with was the sparkling eyes and the passionate discussion.

Yasmin Jayathirtha



Hindi and Kannada at CFL

The journey of teaching second and third languages at CFL has been long, challenging and exciting.

English is often the common spoken and ‘thinking’ language in a cosmopolitan community in middle class India. If anyone comes to our campus, the conversations heard will largely be in English. With this backdrop, bringing Kannada and Hindi into children’s lives in a meaningful manner is the work we have tried to do in the past 27 years.

Initially, our ambitions were high and we felt it possible to give the students a taste of high-calibre literary Kannada and Hindi. We began without textbooks, developed material ourselves to make the learning an interesting experience. We followed this model for several years.

We faced resistance from the students; perhaps because they did not see the relevance of learning these languages, even though we were in Karnataka! It was clear that the students were not active participants in their own learning.

Today, the goal of our Kannada and Hindi programmes is to enable students to converse in both the languages, and to have some knowledge of reading and writing. The emphasis is primarily on listening and speaking, followed by reading, and finally, writing.

So how does this translate in our classes?

In the six to nine year age group, the classes are mainly conversational. We read stories, teach poems and songs and children may perform these in the school assembly. Many language games are played, such as dumb charades, word

building and story building. Playful activities are incorporated. Necklaces are made with flowers or seeds, pictures using leaves or wool, or students learn colour names using flowers, or go to the pottery shed to work with clay. Each activity lends itself to learning a wide range of vocabulary.

Reading and writing in Kannada and Hindi is introduced through picture word books in the second and third year of schooling, respectively. Books from the library are issued. In the latter years, students are encouraged to choose a novel or non-fiction book. At times we read a book together.

For students aged between nine and thirteen, reading and writing plays a larger role and stories, poems, language games and hands-on activities continue. Textbooks are used as supplementary material.

To provide a challenge, projects are introduced. Some themes stem from discussions with the group, and some from individual interests. Themes have included: poets, rivers, clothes, food, festivals and historical places. These projects can involve field trips, interviews, reference work, and translations. Often these are compiled in a book form and become a part of the library. Projects are shared through presentations to the rest of the school. As they are mostly initiated by the children, there is a lot of interest and enthusiasm. Students may also translate and illustrate English story books to Kannada or Hindi. A certain set of words or a sentence is given to the students from which they are free to create and write a story, poem, or an essay. The response is often enthusiastic.

We also use visual media in the classes. These are then used to have role-play sessions, or discussion of a character, or a critique of the film. Sometimes we recommend movies or documentaries which the children can watch at home with their parents.

At times we have parent volunteers helping us in Kannada and Hindi conversation classes as well as workshops.

The response to our efforts continues to be mixed. Often, younger children are enthusiastic but by middle-school, some turn to questioning the need to learn Hindi or Kannada, presumably after seeing that English is the main language in their immediate environment.

This is where our challenge lies as teachers and parents: to keep communication open, to have conversations about the importance of native languages or, in fact, any language! Such discussions help them to see different perspectives. We also recommend that parents have conversations with their children in their native language. At school too, we attempt to do the same.

This article would be incomplete without mentioning the late Leela Garady. She was equally proficient in both languages and guided the development of the programme, taking a keen interest in overseeing its implementation even when she could not be present in school. She created the material as and when needed, wrote textbooks and plays for all age groups. Her contribution to the program is truly immeasurable.





The story of a tree

In our last newsletter, we wrote about the importance of cultivating a familiarity with, as well as a love for, nature in our community of students and adults. We feel this is important both from the point of view of the daily experience of the individual as well as from a global environmental perspective.

Last year, our *mela* was on the theme of trees; specifically, we called it *The story of a tree*. We wanted to become intimately familiar with one particular tree on campus and its surroundings. We did this by spending many hours in a particular habitat in school—almost a hundred hours over two terms! The juniors were clustered around a *Pongamia pinnata* (honge), the middle schoolers were observing a *Ficus benghalensis* (banyan), the high school students studied an *Acacia leucophloea* and the seniors studied an *Albizia odoratissima*.

We learnt to be quiet and still around our particular tree, to observe it and all the creatures around it and on

it, to become friendly with the space. We climbed our particular tree often. We built tree platforms (*machaans*) and spent nights on them feeling like we were aboard leafy ships on wind-blown seas. To see the moon and stars rise and set among the branches was a profound experience. We studied barks, lichen, creepers, ants, birds, soil composition, colours and soundscapes. We produced sketches and artwork and puppet forms inspired by the life around us. We constructed walkways and hammocks in the branches. In some subtle ways, our minds were changed by this hundred-hour encounter. For that space of time, our habitual world—saturated by social dynamics and the media—retreated just a bit, and a leafy consciousness, a bird-and-insect-consciousness, became possible.

It was not always comfortable going, of course. Heat and sunlight, insect bites, uncomfortable seating spaces: given our predominantly indoor-oriented lives, these were significant challenges,

particularly for the young. But these discomforts became a part of our learning as well. We did not expect, and did not get, endless entertainment. Rather, we aimed for an understanding that was more real, grounded, and hopefully we all got a taste of it.

On the *mela* day, we invited the parents of the school to walk around our specific trees and groves, while the students presented their understanding of the theme in a variety of ways: interactive sessions, talks, plays and art-work. It was a very different kind of *mela* day, quiet and introspective and yet full of feeling and colour.

The story of a tree was ultimately an experiment in attention. We learnt to wonder about how to pay attention to a tree in all its glorious complexity. In the process, we also inevitably began observing, again, our inner worlds of enjoyment and resistance, in all their glorious complexity. This is really the heart of our educational venture.

Comings and goings

Rohan D'Souza is leaving us after six years of working at CFL. We will miss him, particularly on the games field, and we wish him all the best in his future plans.

We would like to welcome Prabhat Jain to CFL, and we look forward to working with him. He will work primarily in the areas of mathematics and physics in the middle and senior school, but will of course dabble in other areas too! Chandan has joined the CFL community and he works mainly in the area of campus management.

The CFL library was active with visitors this past year. In particular, Sujata Noronha (from the Bookworm trust in Goa) along with fourteen librarians from the Tibetan Department of Education schools visited us for two days in October. Their visit was in the nature of an exposure to round off intensive library sessions they have had over the year with Sujata and Usha. They were a part of library periods, held their own learning sessions and explored our Open Library space. We appreciate the dances they taught the whole school!

Several old friends visited us over the past year and interacted with the place and students. Gerard Bayle was with us in the second term for several weeks. As usual he threw himself enthusiastically into working with many groups on theatre. A senior group worked with him on Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and we hope to put up the performance soon. He also worked with middle-schoolers on

a play about the Buddha, as well as junior school on theatre activities and movement. The teachers and staff had a special treat this year as some of us had a few sessions with Gerard as well! We look forward to Gerard's theatre activities as well as his unique energy and enthusiasm every year. Derek Hook, who has been entertaining us with his story-telling for many years, visited (with new instruments to accompany his tales!) and we had a wonderful session with him one morning assembly. Maggie and Andrew Alexander, former teachers at Brockwood Park, also came and stayed on campus for some days, having conversations with us about education. We are happy that they have been able to visit CFL fairly regularly, enabling these discussions. Raman Patel and Wendy Smith, also former teachers at Brockwood, visited briefly with Nasser and Mina from Brockwood Park to discuss CFL's approach to education.

Other visitors: Eva Dumitrescu, a visitor from Romania with an interest in starting her own school, was part of the CFL community for a term, as was Pranav Jain, a student at Ashoka University also with an interest in education. Eva worked with junior school mela classes, doing some sense-based activities with them (and climbed trees with them as well!); she also worked with middle school library classes and helped children create a picture book based on an old Romanian folk-tale, among other things. Pranav helped out with the junior school mela and with long walks, again with the juniors. Jaya Grady, a former student from Brockwood Park, spent a couple of weeks with us interacting with stu-

Last year, our seniors went on an excursion to Gujarat; they were fortunate to visit the Little Rann of Kutch. This was one of many exciting and meaningful adventures we all had on our excursions.



dents and getting a feel of the place. Bhaskar Bhate, a young student from Mumbai with an interest in community life, spent almost two months with us. Sabika Abbas, a Masters' history student with an interest in poetry, spent some days in June interacting with student groups on the subjects of her interest. Ramana Balachandran, a young student doing his IGCSEs, gave a fantastic *veena* concert in our library, which we appreciated very much. Yen, a visitor from Vietnam, was with us for a few days and spoke with some groups about her country and its history. Ana Gomes and Izaro visited for a couple of days and helped out with art work in the *mela*.

Sindhu Radhakrishna and her student Anindya Chaudhuri continued their study of the slender loris on the CFL campus over this past year. As a community we have all learnt quite a lot about lorises thanks to their patience and good humour!

Our neighbour, Kirtana Kumar, who runs theatre workshops, generously invited the entire CFL community to watch two plays on her campus: "How Cow Now Cow" and "Park." We enjoyed these immensely.

We would like to thank two individuals who were generous with their time and energy, helping us learn in our *mela*. Suhel Quader from the Nature Conservation Foundation spoke to us over an extended morning assembly about the importance of trees in the ecosystem, and we were truly gripped and inspired by his talk. Roshan Sahi spent several hours with us over many days exploring ways in which we could artistically represent what we saw and learned in the *mela*.

Tarun Abhichandani, a market research professional with wide ranging experience in the industry, spoke during the senior school media literacy course, opening our eyes to the many ways media influences and accesses our lives. Raj Andagere, an architect and neighbour, spoke to the whole school about his fascinating solo ride on a Honda CRF250L motorbike from Melbourne to Magadi!

We would like to thank Good Earth Architects for providing our carpentry shed with an excellent supply of good quality wood. And on the topic of wood, thanks to Ajith Andagere for providing sawdust from his architectural workshop nearby for our dry pit latrines!

We would like to of course acknowledge and thank all the parents who have contributed their time and expertise in areas as diverse as the senior school general studies programme, to the kitchen, fundraising, storytelling and the sports programme.

The library software (Koha) team spent hundreds of hours configuring an open access software for our library. Their efforts will ensure that other small schools in the country that enjoy working with the Open Library philosophy can have an easy-to-use software for free. A big thank you to Krishna Kumari, Aparna Swamy and Naveen Chitram. Thanks also to our former student Badri for his initial work on the new software.



Being a coordinator

In CFL we use the term ‘coordinator’ for a teacher who is in charge of a group of students. Even though there is a collective feeling among the teacher body of being responsible for all children, we feel there must be an adult closely following each group lest everybody’s responsibility becomes the responsibility of none!

As a coordinator, you always feel a curiosity about the children you will be working intimately with. There is an eagerness to learn about them—to find out how they will respond to you, their particular quirks, what excites them, their response to academic demands, their relationship with one another and so on. You tend to watch them closely from wanting to understand them and work effectively with them. As you spend time with them during the year, there are specific aspects of the children’s lives that you begin to think about. You closely examine and actively think about the multitudinous learning areas that the children engage in.

We strongly feel the learning and care should come from observing the students and feeling responsible for them rather than from a need for self-fulfillment and the ambition to be the best coordinator ever! In this context, a few guiding questions come to mind:



Are the children acquiring a sense of examining their inner worlds?

Is there curiosity and excitement in daily learning?

How do they relate with one another? What is their relationship with the community?

How are they responding to the current programme? Are they engaging in creative ways? Are there any concerns?

How are they processing the larger world and society and what are their questions?

Is there a need for something to be altered or changed in their programme?

Or is there a need for something completely new in their routine?

Engaging with these questions needs keen observation and a dispassionate understanding of the children. These questions cannot always be examined independently in distinct or fragmented compartments; they are often interconnected. They cannot be treated as a checklist to be ticked off one after another; rather, they emerge from an understanding of the school’s intent and an earnest commitment to educating the young.

Being a coordinator means that the group of children occupy your mind space in certain ways. However, that does not mean that you need to live in perpetual anxiety about them. A coordinator needs to be approachable yet dissuasive of dependence; she needs to challenge students but also be mindful of likely frustration and cynicism; she should be concerned about their well-being without becoming overly protective, and address genuine concerns they may have without giving in to their self-indulgent demands! While this is the endeavour of any teacher and not just a coordinator, the coordinator perhaps is



most likely and more frequently present to provide the children with support.

The students do regard their coordinator with a certain specialness, albeit unstated. Naturally, this can cause a warm fuzzy feeling in the adult. Precisely during such moments, it would be wise to remind yourself that this 'specialness' shifts from one coordinator to the next! It does not imply that the children are not genuine in the affection they show. It simply points to the transient nature of feelings! Here, you can be wary of taking children's responses personally.

When you work closely with a group of children, you also work intensely with their parents. Parents generally confer with the coordinator in matters concerning their child, curriculum, and with regards to questions and feedback or suggestions they may have. There is contact with parents not only in the context of bringing up children together but also in the sphere of adults thinking together on pertinent aspects of our lives. Further, it becomes the

responsibility of the coordinator to be in touch with the parents, to engage in conversations that bring transparency to our perceptions of one another. Such contact between the coordinator and the parents is essential for working together.

Entwined with the role of a coordinator are likely certain psychological movements that you can observe. We all accept that there is a fundamental tendency that drives us: there is a strong sense of self that is at play in our daily lives. Now embellished with the role of a coordinator, the self with all its complexities comes with fascinating psychological movements of fear, insecurity, desire and comparison! These elements have great propensity to show up in one's relationship with colleagues and the children.

I could become needy of children's acceptance. I could feel insecure when the children comment on the goodness of their previous coordinator. I could exert control over the contact the children have with other adults. *My colleague*

seems to get everything right... He is talented too... You really have no clue... The children trust me more... She is able to build rapport with children so easily... You have it easy with this bunch of children... I would not have done it that way... So the children after all do like my company...

This repetitive chatter combined with the mechanical momentum of the day can propel our actions in precarious ways and yet seem benign! Knowing that these are my creations, bringing these deep-seated psychological movements into view seems fundamental to the rigorous examination of the self.

Lastly, it is important to see that being a coordinator is not the cachet of a good teacher! It is, however, a capacity that you can nurture and grow into. A willing and interested teacher, with valuable support from colleagues, can learn the ropes of being a coordinator. Observing other teachers in this role, being involved in discussions with them and partnering with a teacher to coordinate a group, go a long way towards learning the skills.





Deficit budget calling upon the Friends of CFL!

Regular readers of our newsletter are perhaps aware that CFL has consciously chosen to work with a 'deficit budget'. What do we mean by this? Each year we offer unlimited and uncapped scholarships to all our students. This model perforce creates a gap between the annual running costs of the school and the annual contribution from parents.

You might wonder why have we consciously chosen to do so. This is to make CFL accessible to any parent who is serious about a different kind of education and wishes to join us in our philosophical exploration. We are very glad that this model has worked well all these years.

So, how do we make up the deficit? We have two sources to do so: the income from our corpus (endowment fund) and generous donations from well wishers of CFL we receive each year. Again, we are very happy to report that so far we have managed to meet our deficits each year quite successfully, thanks to considerable time and energy spent by several individuals in the community (parents, alumni and teachers).

We would like to reintroduce our micro-charity fund-raising idea to our readers: the "Friends of CFL" programme. Micro-charity involves a large number of donors who each make a small donation. For example, we anticipate that after the contribution from our corpus, we need to raise a sum of Rs 15 lakhs (US \$ 24,000) in the financial year 2017-18. If we have 300 "Friends of CFL" each donating a sum of Rs 5,000 (US \$ 80), we can easily cover our deficit.

We appeal to you to become a "Friend of CFL" and help us meet our annual deficit.

Donor information: Centre For Learning is a registered charitable society. Donations to the society are exempt from Income Tax to the extent provided for under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961. If you wish to avail tax exemption in the USA, please email us for details. For more information, please visit <https://cfl.in/support-us/how-can-i-help-cfl/>

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