

Sarah Fripp  
202 - Methods I  
Essay 1 - Montessori and Peace

Peace might be the single most important reason I was drawn to the Montessori approach. Peace in the classroom, peace towards the child and teaching peace. Sadly, in my own experience and from what I've seen with friends and their children, this is not the case in most families and schools.

I should start with my own childhood experiences. I watched my brother be bullied by peers and adults, he was an outcast because of his differences. He was never treated with respect, this eventually took a major toll on him. He was a peaceful kid in the beginning, but later became angry and resentful towards most people. He stopped caring about school or his future. He joined the "skater/druggy" crowd because they were the only people who didn't bully him. My brother did not finish highschool and spent too much time in and out of jail. I think of what might have been if he had gone to a Montessori school. My brother was great at math and loved playing the trumpet. If only he had a peaceful school experience and caring adults, he could've done anything he wanted to.

I also had my own negative experiences as a child. I remember them and try to do better for my own children. I want them to know respect for themselves and to learn what peace means. It means to respect everyone's differences so that they will respect yours in return. It means to not encroach on others because you would never want someone to do the same to you. Being peaceful is finding ways to solve problems without causing harm to you or someone else. To be peaceful is also to know what makes you happy and building on yourself, working on yourself, but never comparing yourself to another.

Peace and love are one and the same. Maria Montessori (1995) talks about love and it is no different for peace:

Love is permanent in mankind, and its consequences are felt outside the individual's life. For, what is the social organization which goes on extending till the whole of humanity is embraced by it, if not the consequence of a love which others have felt in the centuries past?

If nature bestows this energy for exact purposes, if she measures it out so accurately to other forms of life, the generosity she shows to man cannot be purposeless.

If in all its aspects this energy leads to salvation, it is inevitable that when ignored it should lead to destruction...

By its means man, also, will be able to hold together all that he creates with his hands and with his intelligence. Without it, all he creates will turn (as so often it has) to the bringing of disorder and destruction. Without it, with the growth of his own powers, nothing of his can last, all will collapse. (pp.294-295)

With all of this being said, there is a great importance to teach and model peace and love to our children. They are our future and they will change the world. They will have a chance to live a happy fulfilling life if they are armed with the right tools to navigate this world. These children will do no harm to others because they are different. They will not harm helpless animals. They will be the answers to this world's problems. My own childhood was not all negative, there were some key individuals that showed me glimpses of peace and love. This is how I know how powerful those forces are and why I know that I want that for my children. It's also how I know that I want to be part of the solution.

**References**

Montessori, M. (1995). *The absorbent mind*. Henry Holt and Company, LLC