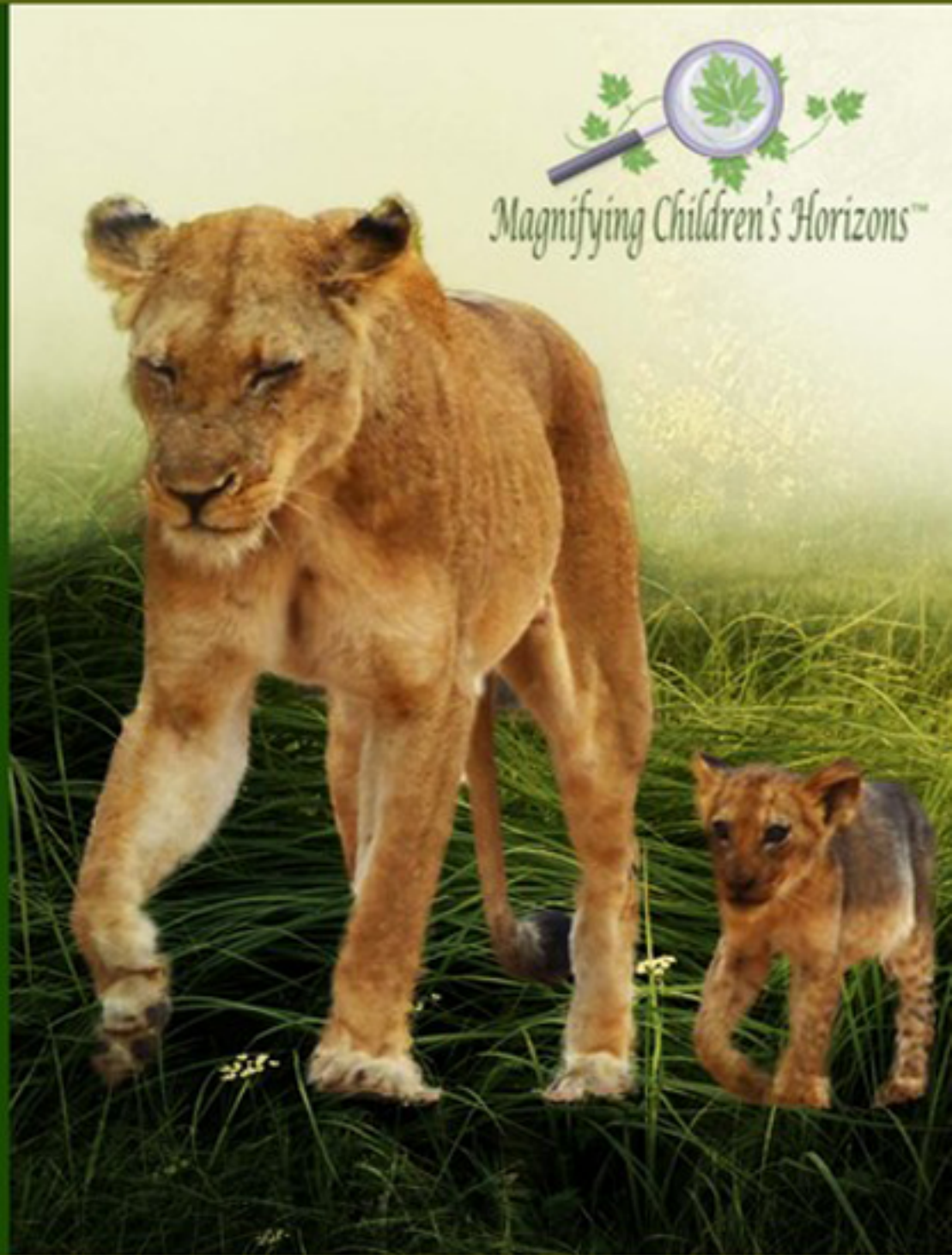


Parenting With Nature

Nature
and the
Natural
Laws
as a
Beneficial
Tool for
Parents



Magnifying Children's Horizons

Parenting with Nature:

Nature and the Natural Laws as a Beneficial Tool for Parents

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“There’s No Parenting Manual”

When Invest in Kids¹ conducted a national survey of Canadian parents (2002), they found that 95% of parents believed that parenthood was the most important role they could ever have. However, most parents also felt unsupported in this task, and many stated that they embarked on this new role with little training, learning “on the job.” Parents “reported that they do not feel confident in their knowledge about child development and parenting children.”²

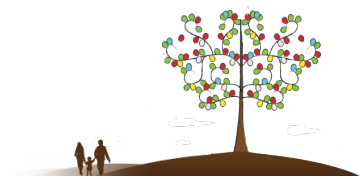
These findings are not surprising, and we suspect that, even over a decade later, today’s parents would feel very much the same. Parenting is one of the most challenging tasks there is. To be responsible for a little person can scare

even the most daring of us! How many times have we parents uttered (usually in frustration), “There’s no parenting manual to follow!” To a certain extent, this is true. There *is* no one parenting manual because each child is different. Geography, culture, socio-economic status, individual personality, family dynamics . . . all these factors (and more) can influence what parenting technique(s) parents use.

But what if we told you that parenting can be less challenging once the universal laws that govern our existence are known and followed? These laws enable us to provide the right environment for any child such that they remain a source of joy and happiness to us as parents, caregivers, teachers, and guardians.

This ebook focuses on these universal laws and how the knowledge and application of them can help develop positive character traits in children.

“The same set of rules used for one child may be totally ineffective when used for another—even within the same family.”



¹ a national charitable organization dedicated to promoting the healthy, social, emotional, and intellectual development of children (it closed in 2010) <http://www.parents2parents.ca/>

² Invest in Kids Parent Survey (2002)

Character Traits: A New Perspective

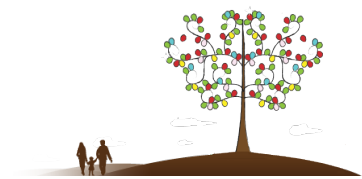
As parents, caretakers, and guardians, we are responsible for both the physical and not-so-physical needs of our children. Physical needs include anything pertaining to the child's physical well-being (e.g., food, shelter, clothing). Not-so-physical needs are those values that need to be developed within the child to enable him/her to become what we have termed "socially acceptable." They are nonquantifiable, intangible, and emanate from words, thoughts, and deeds. Together, they form what we describe as *character traits* (e.g., self esteem, confidence, resiliency, respect, empathy, responsibility). Character traits come from within—they make the individual the person he/she is. These traits transcend the physical, but they work together with physical attributes to form the person.

Character traits always stem from the much deeper concept of values—so much so, that we like to call them *spiritual values*. They are not part of the physical body but part of the spirit within the body. When properly understood and applied, these values become a part of the child that makes him/her either functional or dysfunctional in society. Therefore, it is a huge responsibility of the parent or caretaker to nurture and develop the positive values within the child in order to ensure that he/she can function appropriately as a true human being.

Each child is different. Even within the same family, children possess unique traits. So, how do children become the people they are? How much does hereditary come into play? How about those children who bear no resemblance in character to either parent? Or the child who is adopted but shares character traits with one or both of the adoptive parents?

Why does Child A exhibit many negative character traits of Parent B, while Child B demonstrates mostly positive traits of Parent A? What about that extra trait—the one that cannot be attributed to either parent? Where did that come from? Is it from a grandparent or great grandparent?

Nothing arbitrary happens in creation.



The Law of Attraction: Start Looking at Your Child in a New Light

Each child comes to each parent as a result of one of the natural laws: The Law of Attraction. This law is a spiritual law that is woven intricately into our whole existence (it is often spoken of in terms of wealth and self-contentment), and it plays a huge part in everything including the type of child that comes to be.

As parents, we are given a child that we attract.

It's as simple as that. As a result of this law, children come with their own inherent temperament based on their purpose in life. These temperaments are always beneficial, both to the child and to their families, enabling not just the child, but also the the parent and other family members to develop themselves. Yes, genes do factor in; however, even the physical follows the natural Law of Attraction since nothing is arbitrary in creation.

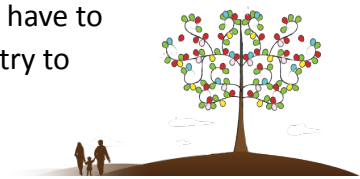
The Law of Reciprocal Action: “You Learn From Your Child”

Every action has a reciprocal effect (cause and effect). Each child that comes to us gives us the opportunity to harvest the fruit of a prior action and ties us to the consequences of the action (i.e., the harvest). This harvest, when used properly, enables parents and caretakers to learn and develop ourselves.

The saying “you learn from your child” accurately describes the two-way street of parenting: The guidance that comes *from* the parent/caretaker to the child and the learning experiences that comes *to* the parent/caretaker from the child. Both are equally important.

We've talked to parents who, in their journey to become a good parent, are able to develop certain character traits that have inevitably made them feel like better parents and better people as a whole. These parents realize that their children are there to help them. They show us our weaknesses and where we have to work on ourselves, just as much as we see their weaknesses and try to help them. Hence the adage, “in giving, do you receive!”

The temperaments children exhibit from an early age have a direct correlation to the traits they may develop later on in life.



These traits can then be nurtured and modified by the appropriate environmental stimuli, and what better stimuli is there than nature?

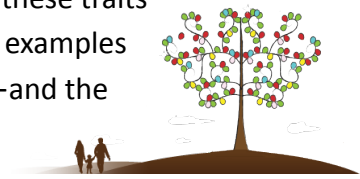
Researchers from the Child Development Institute³ have identified childhood temperaments as follows:

- **Activity level:** Is the child quiet or active?
- **Distractibility:** Is the child easily distracted or focused?
- **Sensitivity:** Is the child easily upset or slow to upset?
- **Predictability:** Is the child predictable or unpredictable in his/her anticipations? (e.g., hunger, sleep)
- **Extrovert/Introvert:** Is the child outgoing or shy?
- **Adaptable:** Is the child quick or slow to adapt to various situations/routines?
- **Persistence:** Is the child able to continue with activities in the face of obstacles? Is the child patient or impatient?
- **Mood:** Is the child happy-go-lucky or serious?

Nature provides all kinds of opportunities to nurture, develop, and modify each of the temperaments above from an early age. For example, a seemingly quiet child, when exposed to the sensory richness of nature, may not become so noticeably active; however, when guided and observed, will be stimulated in such a way that he/she will ultimately find what excites him/her in a unique way. Or, a more intuitive activity may yield more creative results not normally seen when the child is indoors.

Influence desirable character traits before your child is born

As alluded to, the Law of Attraction plays a huge part in the character traits children bring with them. As parents, there is a lot we can do to influence these traits even before the child is born. You're likely already aware of some examples of this— such as playing music or speaking to your unborn child—and the subsequent positive ramifications. Everything is subject to the influence of energetic vibrations, down to the smallest thing.



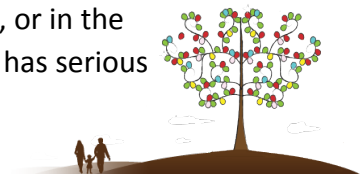
³ http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/child-development/temperament_and_your_child/temp2/

Even your cells vibrate at a certain frequency.⁴ This energy is magnetic. Think about the sun: We can feel the effects of the energy of the sun; however, we cannot see this energy or touch it.

Our energetic surroundings influence everything, including the type of children we attract.

During conception, pregnancy, and birth, parents usually provide for the unborn child's physical needs (e.g., prenatal care, healthy food, exercise, vitamins), but parents can also protect the child, energetically. The energetic needs of an unborn child relates to what character traits the child will have. Parents (especially mothers) should become highly conscious of the traits they display while carrying their child, including who they associate with. While the behaviour of the mother during the whole period of pregnancy is very important, the opportunity for influencing a child's character arises mainly before the spirit of the child animates the growing body—i.e., before the mother feels the first strong movements of the child (midway through pregnancy). So, in these first few months of pregnancy, it is key for the parents to surround themselves with reminders of the traits they desire in the child (e.g., love, peace, positive thoughts and words). When we strive to also display these traits, then we ultimately attract children who will have these traits inside them, waiting to be nurtured and developed when they arrive.

In ancient traditions, it was customary for pregnant women to *energetically protect* their fetus in different ways, demonstrating knowledge that they could influence the choice of child that would be born to them. For example, expectant mothers were not allowed to go out at night because it was believed that evil was more prevalent at night and could have a negative impact on the approaching child. In ancient Greece, pregnant women withdrew from active social life for these same reasons. Nowadays, the western world would consign this belief to the world of fantasy and superstition. However, think deeply for a moment. If you want a healthy child, you abstain from unhealthy practices; why not use the same ideology for the character traits you desire in the child? Exposing a growing fetus to a conundrum of negative vibrations— be it in the form of thoughts or words used, or in the environment and people the expectant mother finds herself in— has serious negative impacts on the type of child coming into the world.



⁴ If you want to know more about this, research ancient healing traditions – Chinese and other cultures.

We always get what we put out in the Law of Attraction. So, if you have consciously made choices to be in a predominantly negative atmosphere, you are liable to attract and be tied to the consequences of such actions, resulting in a predominately negative child. It's as simple as that.

Unfortunately, many parents attract and hold fast to the types of souls with negative traits and almost zero virtues. This happens because of an increasing focus on the physical over the energetic.

A child's personality and energetic vibrations are often felt by parents' sensitivity to energy, after the animation of the growing body. Many mothers often tell of how they feel uplifted and joyful after they feel the first movements of the child growing within, but some mothers will also feel gloomy and heavy. This sensing by the mother is often related to the energy given off by the type of personality or character traits the child is bringing with it.

Adoptive parents can also use the Law of Attraction before the birth of their child by setting an intention before the adoption process. For the intention to yield a positive outcome, the prevailing reason must be for the benefit of the child, and the words, thoughts, and deeds coming from the prospective parents must be genuine. Once the intention is genuine, the Law of Attraction works in a positive way. However, if the intention is not, then the law also works accordingly and attracts back what is sent out.

Nature: A Parent's First Tool to Develop a Child's Character

As previously stated, a child consists of both physical and non-physical traits. A parent who takes into account his/her child's character traits may not praise a physical trait such as the child's academic performance (e.g., Straight As) in an intellectually gifted child because the development of the intellect may come at the

“In developing these non-physical traits in a positive manner, the right atmosphere for developing the physical is attracted and implemented.

detriment of the child's whole character. The child's whole being must be considered, so one particular trait should not be developed above all others. In today's society, there's already a



huge focus on physical traits (e.g., intellect), and, often, there is built-in help to develop these (e.g., school). Parents should focus on ensuring their child becomes well rounded, physically and non-physically. That same parent may emphasize developing such traits as confidence, perseverance, knowledge of nature, and how to be introspective and use intuition. These traits can apply to anything children desire to do.

So, how does nature come into this? Children are predominantly animistic⁵ when they are born. We can trace this quality back to the gradual formation of their bodies in utero. The foetus first develops as a mollusc—then a fish, an amphibian, and, finally, a mammal. After this stage, which occurs midway through pregnancy, the spirit can animate the body, and then it becomes a human being (during this time, the mother feels the first movements of the fetus).⁶ The development of the body continues post birth, during which time, the child’s inherent qualities are still very childlike and animistic—hence, their closeness to nature.

Even though we try to stimulate the child with human-made toys, nature contains all the child needs for self stimulation at this early age. Nature complements the most natural qualities in the child and provides examples that the child can easily understand.

“Full blossoming of a child both physically and non-physically can only take place when he/she is exposed to nature at an early age.

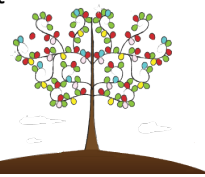
If adoptive parents were not able to consciously influence the type of child that came to them (through genuine intention), they can tap into nature’s wisdom to build the characters and values the child needs once the child arrives. Every child, adopted or biological, will always gain from nature’s promptings.

The more a child is allowed to run free in nature, the more he/she experiences and knows the world it will grow up in, and— with guidance from parents—the more he/she develops the positive character traits and values needed to live in the world.

The intellectual one-sided development of children today has made it almost impossible for them to appreciate and observe how nature functions.

⁵ where non-human entities (animals, plants, and inanimate objects/phenomena) possess a spiritual essence

⁶ This carries on through life until it leaves the body again and the body ceases to move



True meanings of values and concepts like *love, responsibility, patience, and confidence* are all skewed because of the intellectual definitions accorded them. When a child is guided through nature and observes and experiences it, the true meanings of these concepts become crystal clear and can then be used as a foundation for growth.

For example, children are able to understand the real concept of *respect* when they are in nature. They can observe the work that goes into planting a flower, and then, nature's role in effortlessly producing a meadow full of different types

of flowers. When they experience how differently a flower petal feels compared to the bark of tree, they learn to respect the interrelationship of all these elements that come together to form the softness of the petal, the cragginess of the tree, and the meadow full of flowers. They will then be able to relate even more to that word *respect* when it is required of them in relation to their own daily activities, as well as those of others.

“ To allow children to discover nature is to enable them to learn the language of creation so that they can be in harmony with themselves and with the world in which they live. This language makes itself known in the laws of nature.

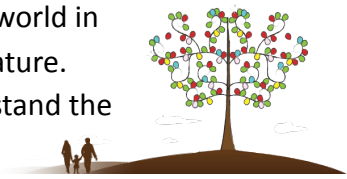
Develop positive character traits using the laws of nature

Nature follows established laws, hence its consistency. If these laws are observed and acknowledged, then everything functions seamlessly. However, if the laws are not observed, then a state of confusion exists, and a picture arises where nothing seems right. Everything physical and non-physical revolves around these laws, which can be found in physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, and art.

Children must first learn to understand the language of their parents in order to understand and live with them in harmony. It's the same with understanding nature.

To allow children to discover nature is to enable them to learn the language of creation so that they can be harmony in themselves and with the world in which they live. This language makes itself known in the laws of nature.

When children are in nature, they first start to observe and understand the world into which they are born. They then understand the laws under which nature functions and, subsequently, start to understand



their place in nature. They understand the repercussions of disobeying these laws, and, as a natural consequence, they consciously form their values and character according to these laws.

Law	Description	Character Trait
The Law of Reciprocal Action	What you sow, you reap	Integrity Responsibility Independence Honesty Confidence
The Law of Homogeneity	Attraction of similar species	Self Awareness Empathy Alertness Intuitiveness
The Law of Balance	Everything strives to achieve a state of equilibrium	Patience Respect Creativity Strength

Positive character traits: The first step to the development of the spirit

When children are allowed to be in nature, that opportunity provides a depth of inner experiencing that is comparable to nothing else. It tugs on the innermost recesses of a child’s imagination, which enables further thought and questioning. You know the feeling of stepping into that good book you love to read—feeling, touching, smelling, and actually experiencing what you read? Nothing beats that!

The same goes with children and nature. The process of *self discovery* is enhanced, and children start to discover themselves and their place in this large magnificent world. As a result, their lives will no longer be dominated by the accumulation of

“Exposure to nature helps a child develop into a *deep thinking adult* rather than the shallow superficial adults who abound on earth today.

material things or defined by external influences. Instead, their lives will be influenced by their own guidance discovered in, and taught by, nature.

This, in turn, translates automatically into a knowledge of genuine and proper living and

results in a variety of positive, unique, and influential additions to the world in which they live.



Nature allows the child the *time to listen within* and *discover his/her intuition*. Once a child reaches this stage, it is one of the most rewarding times of being a parent. You can observe the full blossoming of the child from one stage of self discovery to the next. Then, the character- building process moves from one of showing and teaching on the part of the parent, to one of full discovery on the part of the child. The child's *spirit is infused* with discovery, which then becomes one and the same with his/her character and values. It's important to know that these types of values can never be learned. They are discovered, and they ultimately become the child and the ensuing adult.

A parent marvelled to us how her pre- teen son paused after riding his bike up and down different paths behind the wooded trails near his home. He stated breathlessly, "Nature is so big, mum, I feel so small." This parent immediately realized the first stirrings of humility and respect within her son (both complex concepts for a pre- teen), and she used it as a learning/teaching experience. She explained that what he was feeling showed him that nature is much bigger than himself, and he is but a small part of it. The realization that the world does not revolve around him, and the gradual appreciation of his place in it, comes with this first awareness of the bigness of, and respect for, nature at this age.

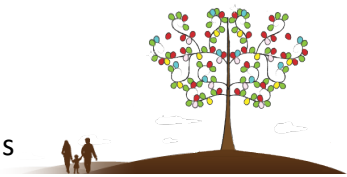
"Nature is the biggest help ever.

When a child asks a deep question about nature like, "who made all this and gave it to me to play in?" or "why do we have

all this to play in?", a parent should be ready with a good answer. We often recommend throwing a question back to the child to create a meaningful discussion. Try something like, "Can you give away one third of what you own to your cousin to play with?" Now, that's a good character building conversation starter! (In this particular case, it provides a great foundation for understanding why sharing is always better than being selfish). If appropriate, the conversation could also bring the awareness of the Great Love that provided nature to him/her as a gift to play with and relate it back to examples of the various displays of love in the child's life— two character building examples in one!

Nature: The "All Round Provider"

Being a parent or a guardian is hard work. We are sowing the seeds of posterity, and in the children we raise, we contribute to our progress and that of an evolving world. This type of responsibility always



Parenting with Nature

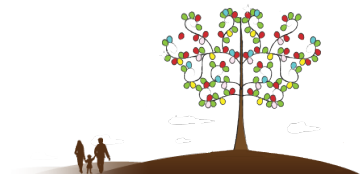
comes with a huge amount of help. The bigger the job, the bigger the help. Just like we look to nature to provide us with our tangible needs like food and drink, medicine, cosmetics, shelter, energy, etc., nature also provides us with our intangible needs like the help we need to raise our children properly.

A child's experience of nature brings home a deeper appreciation of the world he/she lives in, the laws at play, and the impact of his/her actions. Nature provides compelling experiences, which enables the discovery and development of positive character traits. If you are on that discovery path with your child, you can use time in nature to help him/her develop his/her character accordingly and show why it also has to be in alignment with the laws of nature for him/her to live a harmonious and fulfilling life.

And essentially through connecting with Nature, we learn more about who we can and should be as humans.



Check out our upcoming e-book *Developing Character in Children: Examples from Nature*. Learn about all the positive character traits, and read direct examples from nature of how these positive traits can be stimulated in children



About the Author and Magnifying Children's Horizons founder, Tolu Okudolo

With a deep and abiding love for her Creator, a strong conviction in the values of holistic living, an MBA, and a background in education, people management, and the non-profit sector, Tolu shares her discoveries that holistic living can encompass all aspects of life, and can be applied not only to health, diet, and products used, but also to the way children are brought up, so as to positively impact choices they make.

Tolu's discoveries have been acquired from a strong spiritual foundation, being a mother of 3, and through the multi-cultural experiences gained from living and working with children in Africa, Europe, and North America. She founded Magnifying Children's Horizons in 2011 out of a passion for sharing her discoveries and helping to support parents and guardians balance the societal shift towards the one-sided intellectual development of children today.

Through Magnifying Children's Horizons, Tolu shares experiences and knowledge, writing children's books and parenting guides with a focus on the benefits of nature as one of the best character development tools for use by parents, guardians, and others who help to guide, nurture, and shape the character of children.

"Helping to develop a child's character and guiding them on that path of self discovery, for me, is the most important responsibility I continue to have as a parent and mother. I am my children's FIRST teacher. Introducing my children, and those under my care, to the knowledge of the workings of creation and observing how they put it into action in their daily lives, how they hone it to their own specific needs with guidance discovered by themselves, is one of the most uplifting and humbling experiences I am forever grateful for, because...it continually adds to my own discovery of, and development in, creation.

~ Tolu Okudolo, Founder, Magnifying Children's Horizons

<http://magnifyinghorizons.com/>

