

L1) Spiritual, Moral and Social Education in Steiner / Waldorf Schools.

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In this module we will be exploring Steiner's ideas about spiritual, moral and social education. This connects onto what is commonly called "Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education" (SMSC) together with "Personal, Social, Health & Economics Education" (PSHE) and Citizenship Education". We will focus on Steiner's original philosophy of these types of topics and the practical consequences for their teaching in Steiner / Waldorf settings.

In mainstream settings, it is acknowledged that these three areas have much to do with each other and they have a good degree of overlap in their concerns. Arguably, this is also the case in Steiner schools and settings. The following slide give a very brief glimpse of the themes covered in these subjects:

SMSC Focal Themes	PSHE Focal Themes	Citizenship Focal Themes
<p>Compassion; Forgiveness; Freedom; Justice; Love; Loyalty; Peace; Respect; Service; Tolerance</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing Relationships Living in the Wider World including economics</p>	<p>Democracy and Autocracy Co-operation and Conflict Equality and Diversity Fairness, Justice, The Rule of Law Rules, Law and Human Rights Freedom and Order Individual and Community Power and Authority Rights and Responsibilities</p>

Most of these topics can be found in Steiner's views on education especially in his discussions about what we will simply call "spiritual, moral and social education". Many of these topics have been discussed in module 4 in terms of teacher self-development. If you can recall, Steiner / Waldorf education is rooted in the idea of the teacher being an example, a model, or an exemplifying guide, to the young students. In which case, most of the previous slide is "educated" through the example of the teacher. If you would like to refresh your memory on these, please re-read the lectures from module 4.

It has to be noted that in most settings, moral and social education are integrated into the subjects taught as discussed in previous modules. With the possible exception of the so-called "religion" lesson, there isn't usually a separate lesson comprising the spiritual and moral topics, they are normally a part of the other main lessons. Even with religion, this can often be found in a lesson per week rather than as a main lesson block. Having said that, there is no principle reason as to why the moral, spiritual and social aspects of the curriculum couldn't be a main lesson.

In this module, we will be considering, amongst others, moral principles and the social principles of freedom, equality and solidarity (called "brotherhood" in Steiner texts) in relation to cultural, political and economic education and their correlated in general society. To begin with, we will explore Steiner's views on moral education.

L1) Steiner's Views on Spiritual and Moral Education

One of the central questions of Steiner / Waldorf Education concerns its philosophy of spiritual and moral education. Sometimes the former of these is framed as “religious education”, however, as we will see, this has many different meanings in Steiner contexts, likewise in modern spiritual education research it is much more akin to moral education (cf *The International Journal for Children's Spirituality*). This in turn needs some explanation as it is not to do with one “spiritual or moral school of thought”, but a set of principles and virtues that enable the young student to grow healthily into the social life in a free and independent way.

For further reading for this module:

Steiner, R (1921/2): Soul Economy, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner R (1922): Education and the Moral Life, in Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, chapter 4, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner R (1923): The Child's Changing Consciousness, Chapter VI, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R (1919-22): Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner , R (1922-24): Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, Anthroposophic Press.

Steiner, R (1922): The Spiritual Ground of Education, Anthroposophic Press.

Page numbers are given in the quotes within this pdf.

Religion Education

Steiner's original idea for religion education was to respect the religion of the family. This was to be done by inviting "pastors" or religious educators to the school to give lessons to groups of children from specific faiths or denominations. There was even a provision for children of families of no particular faith, or possibly even atheists:

Dr. Steiner... My advice would be for the child to take instruction in the **family** religion. We can leave those children who are not taking any religious instruction alone, but we can certainly inquire as to why they should not have any. We should attempt to determine that in each case. In doing so, we may be able to bring one or another to take instruction in the family religion or possibly to come to the anthroposophic instruction. We should certainly do something there, since we do not want to just allow children to grow up without any religious instruction at all. Steiner, R (1919-22): Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press, p. 17. (My bold)

Within the original Waldorf school were also so-called “anthroposophical families” which had the wish to introduce their children to religion from an anthroposophical perspective:

[Lesson plan for the **independent anthroposophical religious** instruction for children:]
“Dr. Steiner: We should give this instruction in two stages. If you want to go into anthroposophical instruction with a religious goal, then you must certainly take the concept of religion much more seriously than usual. Generally, all kinds of worldviews that do not belong there mix into religion and the concept of religion. Thus, the religious tradition brings things from one age over into another, and we do not want to continue to develop that. It retains views from an older perspective alongside more developed views of the world.” Steiner, R (1919-22): Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press, p. 41 (pdf version). (My bold)

There is more about this in the above referenced text that is worth reading for those interested, you might like to explore pages 41-48 of the above text. For now, the following main points can be found:

Outline of *Independent Anthroposophical Religious Education*:

[Not to be confused with religion education for other family denominations]

- 1) Two stages: classes 1 to 4 and classes 4 to 8.

Stage 1:

- 1) Approach was to be through religious **feeling** not worldview concepts embedded in religion.
- 2) Through stories, discuss the human soul.
- 3) Using imaginative stories: introduce immortality through descriptions of nature like the caterpillar - butterfly metamorphosis. Arouse interest for the Divine in Nature.

Stage 2:

- 1) Stories that introduce fate and destiny.
- 2) Stories that outline inheritance and gifts from previous lives.
- 3) Stories that imaginatively introduce Angels, Archangels and Time Spirits (Archai).
- 4) Introduce Christianity through stories derived from the New Testament.

In the contemporary World, with the growth of Waldorf Schools globally, it is important to take these principles into consideration: Steiner proposed that religion education is into that of the **family concerned**. Today, this would mean that religion education should respect the family, culture and society wherever schooling occurs in the World. This would mean all forms of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism and so on, even atheism and anthroposophical, so long they are of the family concerned. This is one of the reasons why Steiner / Waldorf Education has become globally spread: it respects the religion of the family and the land of origin.

Today, in a globalised World where religions of every kind can be found in most countries, there may be a case for having some classes related to the world religions for all children. In this, every child may be enabled to have a cultural feeling and understanding of other religions in the world and of their friends. A small step here is made towards mutual social tolerance.

The Significance of the Moral in Steiner Waldorf Education

It is without doubt that moral education played **the most important role** in Steiner's views on education:

“What matters is that we tackle this most important and topical human problem by looking closely at our contemporary education, and in particular at the **moral** factor in education. Coming to terms with it is of great import, not only from the educational point of view, but for the entire **social** life. When all is said and done, the **moral education of the human being is the crown of all education and teaching.**”


Steiner, R (1922-24): Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, Anthroposophic Press, p. 85)

Clearly, in this example, the level of significance of moral education could be no higher. As we will see next, the guiding principle for this is respecting the freedom of the children. The question is: what does this mean in this context?

Freedom as the Primary Quality in Spiritual and Moral Education

Steiner himself linked the spiritual and the moral but in the opposite way to what is conventionally thought. For him, rather than the spiritual or religious conditioning moral education, it is the reverse:

“This twofold way of experiencing and judging our human task on earth colours all the many divisions with regard to moral and religious issues. If we wish to understand the ethical and moral aims of humankind, we must first free ourselves from prejudice.... **The anthroposophic worldview itself is intended to help people, wherever they live on earth, toward knowledge that is beyond all limits of race or national language....** Once we have a better understanding of what was just said, we will see how little can be accomplished in moral and religious education as long as we introduce religious dogmas and fixed moral concepts to children. **At best we can teach them to become Christians, Jews, Roman Catholics, or Protestants, according to their own religious beliefs.** But we must eradicate from a true art of education any attempt to indoctrinate young people into our own particular ideology. A specific problem in education may help illustrate this point and also help us respect matters of **human freedom** when dealing with children”. Steiner, R (1921/2): Soul Economy, Anthroposophic Press p. 272. (My bold and italics).



The other side of this question of freedom is that in order for children to develop into their own morality, teachers need to be selfless and not impose their own moral values onto the children:

“However, with regard to moral education, yet another difficulty has to be overcome—that is, an individual’s sense of morality can only be appealed to through full inner freedom and with full inner cooperation... This requires that educators approach moral teaching so that, when later in life the students have passed the age of formal education, they can feel free as individuals in every respect. What teachers must never do is to pass on to developing students the relics of their own brand of morality or anything derived from personal sympathies or antipathies in the moral realm... Such respect and tolerance truly demand a great deal of selflessness from educators, and a renunciation of any self-interest.” Steiner, R (1924/96): Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, p. 64.

For Steiner, then, the primary goal of education is that of **Freedom**. In this context, this means that the aim of his view of education is to enable young people to grow into their own choice of morality, religion or spirituality in a free way. The requirement for this is that teachers first free themselves from the desire to indoctrinate children into their own spiritual convictions; thereafter to help the children evolve into their own. **Clearly, for Steiner, moral education is the primary focus over and above any *specific* form of spiritual or religious education.** For him, the latter is also up to the free activity of individuals: education should not be an indoctrination into a specific form of religion or spirituality.

Moral Development and the Social Life

But Steiner went further, he also intended that this “educating in and for freedom” should enable people to work **socially**:

“When dealing with the moral and religious aspects of education, we cannot draw material from existing ideologies, religious institutions, or established ethics. Our task is to reach the students’ inner being so that, in keeping with their destinies, they will be able to work **freely** with others in the **social sphere**. Consequently, we do not begin teaching by appealing to their conceptual faculties. Although knowledge provides meaning, it does not make it possible to go into the intimate regions of the soul in a living way. When imparting knowledge - and we are bound to do this in our school - when addressing the faculty of **thinking** as one of the three soul faculties, we must realize that thinking, too, must be channelled toward **ethical aims**. However, when dealing with the **moral and religious** aspects of education, we must appeal first and foremost to the **feeling** life of students. We cannot address the **will** directly, because human activities immediately connect people socially, and social activities are determined largely by the prevailing conditions and demands of the social milieu.”
Steiner, R (1921/2): Soul Economy, Anthroposophic Press p. 274. (My bold)

In addition to this, Steiner made the case that the three “soul faculties” of thinking, feeling and willing (indirectly) need to play a role in moral education.

Three Fundamental Virtues in Moral Education

Steiner went on to identify particular kinds of moral qualities or virtues for moral education:

“Thus, a feeling of **gratitude** is the first quality within the three human soul faculties that leads into the *moral and religious* sphere and that we must cultivate in young people. **Gratitude itself includes a certain quality of knowing**, since we must understand why we are grateful. It is characteristic of this feeling that it is closely related to our powers of comprehension... Experiencing them as ourselves, then something begins to develop in our *feeling life that we call love* in the true sense of this word. Love is the second mood of soul that needs to be nurtured in moral and religious life, the kind of love we can nurture at school by doing whatever we can to help students love one another...

Thus we know that our true humanity remains alive in the domain of the will. What are we doing when we allow will impulses to enter the world so that, right down to the level of instincts, people recognize a true human being in us? By developing a **feeling for our own humanity, which we pour into our will impulses and activities**, we reveal the third of the three soul moods. There is no word in German for this third element. So, to make my meaning clear, I have to borrow a word from English—the word **duty**”. Steiner, R (1921/2): Soul Economy, Anthroposophic Press p. 276-8. (My bold and italics).

The three moral qualities of gratitude, love and duty he considers the fundamental ones for moral education and he relates them to the three soul forces:

Gratitude: Knowing / Thinking

Love : Feeling

Duty: Will



Additionally, for moral education Steiner intended that it is taught within each subject rather than being a main lesson of its own:

“Nor is there, as is the case in all other subject matters, the opportunity of treating morality as a subject in its own right; as such, it would be very unfruitful. The moral element must be allowed to pervade all of one’s teaching.” Steiner, R (1924/96): Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, Anthroposophic Press, p. 64.

The aim then is that moral education was intended to happen within each of the main lessons we have discussed so far and to be part and parcel of every part of the curriculum and pedagogy.

The School Ethos: Teachers, Children, Parents

Moral education in Steiner Waldorf settings is not just seen as belonging to the classroom, it is meant to be the most significant element of the **whole** educational context. The school ethos then is a moral one in which the whole embracing milieu includes the totality of the teachers, parents and persons otherwise involved in the education: “In these staff meetings, it is not the principles that are most important, but the willingness of teachers to live together in goodwill and the avoidance any form of competition. It is most significant that if one teacher makes a suggestion to another, it helps only when it involves the love of each individual child. And by this I do not mean the kind of love that is usually spoken of, but the love of an artistic teacher”. Steiner, R (1922): *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, Anthroposophic Press, p. 97.

The teacher's own moral status is, of course, of pivotal importance. This works right down to the way they work with the children:

“Inner dishonesty in teachers also has a very harmful effect on children, even after their second dentition. Falsehoods can take on many different guises, such as insincerity or hypocritical piety, or establishing a moral code for the children that the adults would not dream of applying to themselves. In such cases the element of untruth weaves and lives in the words spoken, and in what unfolds in front of the child. An adult may remain totally oblivious to it, but children will take it in through the teachers' gestures.”

Steiner, R (1923): *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, Anthroposophic Press., p. 169.

In the complex set of relationships that occur in an educational setting, honesty and truthfulness interweave between all parties concerned, whether that be between teachers and children, or between teachers, or teachers and parents or parents and children. For Steiner, by implication, it is honesty and truthfulness that needs to be in play here.

Again, freedom is a crucial moral quality in the education. This plays into the three sub-phases of child development we have discussed:

“We must not force moral judgment on children; we merely lay the foundation so that, when children awaken at puberty, they can form their own moral judgments by observing life. The least effective way to attain this is by giving children finite commands. Rather, we work through examples or by presenting images to their imagination—say, through biographies or descriptions of good or bad people; or by inventing circumstances that present a picture of goodness to their mind.” Steiner, R (1923): *The Child’s Changing Consciousness*, Anthroposophic Press Steiner , p. 58/9.

The intention in Steiner settings is then to introduce moral education through the other subjects by embedding moral elements within them. One could, for example, in teaching English literacy through an imaginative story bring in a moral component. This could be true of any other languages, biographies, or even fictitious creations. This may also be done in other subjects such as history or geography, or any other subject for that matter.

Other moral qualities also come into play. The inner relationship a teacher has with the children as well as the subject is of vital importance:

“In a Waldorf school, *who the teachers are is far more* important than any technical ability they may have acquired intellectually. It is important that teachers not only **love the children**, but also **love the whole procedure** they use. It is not enough for teachers to love the children; they must also love teaching, and love it with objectivity. This constitutes the spiritual foundation of spiritual, moral, and physical education. If we can acquire this love for teaching, we will be able to develop children up to the age of puberty so that, when that time arrives, we will be able to hand them over to the freedom and the use of their own intelligence. Steiner, R (1922): *The Spiritual Ground of Education*, Anthroposophic Press., p. 62.

This love of the children may seem self evident, but loving the teaching takes the whole question of moral education to another level. One may add to that the love of the subject, for this also has an effect not just in terms of the children’s moral education, but also their ability to absorb the subject at hand.

Child Development and the Phases of Moral Development

In this section, we will discuss the relationship the different phases have to the primary moral virtues advocated by Steiner. As will be seen in the coming text, the question of the moral development of the children is not just the case of imposing moral rules on them, but in the first instance the teachers' cultivation of them in themselves. The moral status of the teachers is then the first condition for the moral development of the children. In other words it is up to the teachers to realise moral qualities within themselves in order for the children then to develop them. Steiner was of the view that you shouldn't expect of the children what you yourself don't have. More expansively, the teachers, parents and carers of children need to become the prime moral examples for the children to follow.

Earlier we considered briefly the three main moral virtues recommended by Steiner. In the Following quote these take on different nuance:


“Here we need to consider three human virtues—concerning, on the one hand, the child’s own development, and on the other hand, what is seen in relation to society in general. They are three fundamental virtues. The first concerns everything that can live in **will to gratitude**; the second, everything that can live in the **will to love**; and third, everything that can live in the **will to duty**. Fundamentally, these are the three principal human virtues and, to a certain extent, encompass all other virtues...” Steiner, R (1923): The Child’s Changing Consciousness, Anthroposophic Press, p. 124-129. (My bold)

In the first part of the quote Steiner refers to the “will to ...”. As human beings, we are not necessarily gifted with the level of these moral qualities that may be desirable for a teacher. Consequently, Steiner notes that it is the “will to...” cultivate these as a first condition for the moral development of the teachers. If this is possible, then the children, according to Steiner, will follow. This also of course depends on the whole context of the child’s life such as the home and social context.

Elsewhere, Steiner connects these moral qualities to moral conditions throughout the developmental phases in relationship to body, soul and spirit:

“If the moral example acts strongly and intensely on the child during the **first period** of childhood, then a **moral fortitude** develops [0-7 yrs]. If children, from the change of teeth until puberty [7-14 years], can properly take hold of the forces of **sympathy** and **antipathy** for good and against evil, then later they will have the proper **moral stance** regarding the uncertainties that might keep them from doing what is morally necessary. Through imitation, children will develop within their organism what their souls need, so that their moral feelings and perceptions, their sympathies and antipathies, can properly develop during the second period of childhood. The capacity for **intellectual moral judgment** awakens in the **third period** of the child’s development, which is oriented toward the spirit. This occurs as surely as the plant in the light of the Sun blossoms and fruits. Morality can only take firm root in the **spirit** if the **body** and **soul** have been properly prepared. It can then freely awaken to life, just as the blossom and fruit freely awaken in the plant in the light of the Sun.” Steiner, R (1922-24): Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, Anthroposophic Press, p. 16. (My bold).

We will now consider each of the three phases in turn in relationship to moral education. The following slide gives a brief overview so far:

Phase 1 (0-7)	Phase 2 (7-14)	Phase 3 (14-21)
Moral Fortitude	Moral Stance	Moral Judgement
		
Moral Will	Moral Perceptions & Sympathies - Antipathies	Moral Thought
Body	Soul	Spirit

Phase 1 (0-7 yrs)

As we saw from module 3, all education in this phase, for Steiner is to be done through “Imitation”. What this consists in is the relationship between perception of environmental realities, their internalisation and then the enactment in the World. In terms of moral education, this means that the surrounding environment becomes crucial. Steiner was of the view that making injunctions to children that they “be good” is of little use. Far more important is that the teachers, parents and carers be “good examples” for the moral education of the children:

“The best educators of children under the age of seven do not just outwardly act in a way that is all right for the child to imitate— they **do** not even allow themselves any emotions or **feelings**, not even **thoughts**, other than what the child may imitate without being harmed.” Steiner, R (1922-24): Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2, Anthroposophic Press,, p. 135” (My bold)

This principle of imitation has particular significance for the moral quality of gratitude:

“All that flows, with devotion and love, from a child’s inner being toward whatever comes from the periphery through the parents or other educators—and everything expressed outwardly in the child’s imitation—will be permeated with a natural mood of **gratitude**. **We only have to act in ways that are worthy of the child’s gratitude** and it will flow toward us, especially during the first period of life... It would be very incorrect to remind children constantly to be thankful for whatever comes from their surroundings. On the contrary, an atmosphere of gratitude should **grow naturally** in children through merely **witnessing the gratitude** that their **elders feel** as they receive what is freely given by their fellow human beings, and in how they express their gratitude. In this situation, one would also cultivate the habit of feeling grateful by allowing the child to imitate what is done in the surroundings.” Steiner, R (1923): *The Child’s Changing Consciousness*, Anthroposophic Press, p. 125/6. (My bold).

For Steiner, the primary point in this phase of development is the actual witnessing (perceiving) something good in the environment. For him, the demanding of moral behaviour of such young children was of little effect, rather that the human environment needs to be one where gratitude is given, not just as a deed, but also is genuinely felt.

Phase 2 (7 to 14 yrs)

At this point it might be worth re-reading module 3 and chapters 1a, 1b & 1c from module 5. In the second phase of child development, the key educational methods are to work with “Memory and Imagination” and “Feeling”. This has a particular influence on the way moral education is brought to the children. In the Context of Moral Education it is the teacher’s task to:

- Bring verbal pictures of good and bad
- Express subtle nuances of sympathy and antipathy
- These grow into the child’s:

Moral Perception

Moral Feeling

Moral Judgement (later)

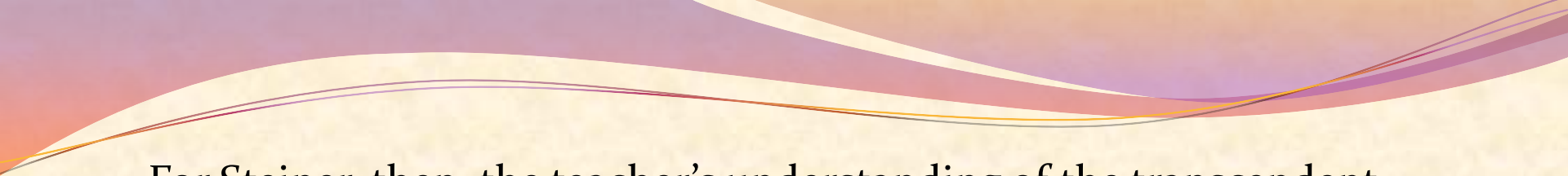
These are based on the “*natural* authority” of the educator. But natural authority must not be confused with the outer type of authority. For Steiner, natural authority is not enforced upon the children, but is rooted in their innate respect for adults who are worthy of it. Which means, this type of authority requires the teacher to have acquired the moral qualities that are genuinely worthy of admiration. This leads to a form of natural authority which cannot be asserted or assumed, it only happens if the adult is worthy. For this age phase, one quality that is admirable is love of teaching:

“Then we come to the part of a child’s development based primarily on the rhythmic system. As we have seen, here we must **work artistically in teaching**. And we shall never accomplish this unless we can join an attitude of reverence toward the child with a love of our educational activity; we must saturate our teaching with love. **While children are between the change of teeth and puberty, all our teaching must be done out of love for teaching itself**, otherwise it will have no good effect on them. We must tell ourselves that, no matter how clever a teacher may be, the lives of children reveal infinitely significant spiritual divine matters. But, for our part, our love must surround our spiritual efforts toward children in education. Consequently, no pedagogy should be purely intellectual; the only guidance we should engage is that which helps us teach with **loving enthusiasm**.” Steiner, R (1922): The Spiritual Ground of Education, Anthroposophic Press., p. 62. (My bold)

As we have seen in module 3, the primary mode of teaching & learning in the 7 to 14 age phase is to work artistically in all areas of the curriculum. To make this possible though, Steiner recommend that teaching out of love is an essential accompaniment to the process. In this sense, a moral quality becomes the vital atmosphere to learning and the child’s being.

But there is more to the importance of love in teaching. In an attempt to transcend the narrow understanding of love in Freudianism, Steiner argues that love is more than just sexual, but a transcendent emotion that can be in relationship to everything in the World:

“We have already seen that, in the years between the child’s change of teeth and the coming of puberty, the development of a sense for the authority of the teacher is both natural and essential. The second fundamental virtue, which is love, then grows from that when the child is in the process of also developing the physical basis of love. But one must see love in its true light, for, because of the prevailing materialistic attitudes of our time, the concept of love has become very one-sided and narrow; and because a materialistic outlook tends to see love only in terms of sexual love, it generally traces all manifestations of love back to a hidden sexuality... **To balance such an attitude, the teacher must have acquired at least some degree of appreciation for the universal nature of love; for sexual love is not the only thing that begins to develop between the child’s second dentition and puberty, but also love in its fullest sense, love for everything in the world.** Sexual love is only one aspect of love that develops at this time of life. At that age one can see how love of nature and love for fellow human beings awaken in the child, and the teacher needs to have a strong view of how sexual love represents only one facet, one single chapter in life’s book of love.” Steiner R (1923): The Child’s Changing Consciousness, Anthroposophic Press , p. 128/9. (My bold)



For Steiner, then, the teacher's understanding of the transcendent character of love is crucial. For children in this age phase having a “natural authority” who loves teaching as both method and content, can become a primary example for life. In the process of internalisation, or enhancement of “love for everything in the World” the children develop the most important moral emotional quality. This can lead later in life to moral action.

Phase 3

Here, the main developmental shift is the emergence of the independent psyché or soul as Steiner phrased it. This means the coming into being of the young person's independent thinking, feeling and willing. The key educational method for phase 3 (14 years plus) is cultivation of "independent judgement". Clearly in this context, the primary focus is on the development of independent **moral** judgement. In contrast to the earlier phases of development, where imitation of moral phenomena is central (Phase 1) or the feelings and imagination based on natural moral authority of the adults (phase 2), in this phase it is the cultivation of independent thinking in relationship to moral concepts and phenomena that is the main mode of teaching and learning. This is based on the notion of the teacher as a kind of "guide" or "role model" to the young adults:

"While the child during the first seven years imitates naturally, the teenager does so consciously." Steiner, R (1921): Education for Adolescents, Anthroposophic Press, p. 81.

This what may be called "conscious imitation" requires of the teacher that they act a guide into the world generally, but in this context a moral guide that helps the young person to develop their own independent moral judgment (thinking) in freedom. The teacher here needs good self control and not impose their own views of morality on the adolescent.

But moral development in this age is more than just the cultivation of moral judgement. It also involves the cultivation of love to another level, namely that of “love of work” or “love of doing”:

“love for everything human is developed as the foundation for an individual sense of morality. If now the **adolescent** is enabled to observe other people’s **activities** properly, **love of work** will develop. While gratitude must be allowed to grow, and love must be awakened, what needs to evolve now must appear with the young person’s full inner awareness. We must have enabled the young person to enter this new phase of development **after puberty with full inner awareness**, so that in a certain way the **adolescent comes to find the self**. Then love of work will develop. This love of work has to grow freely on the strength of what has already been attained. This is love of work in general and also love for what one does oneself. At the moment when an understanding for the activities of other people awakens as a complementary image, a conscious attitude toward love of work, a **love of “doing”** must arise. In this way, during the intervening stages, the child’s early play has become transmuted into the proper view of work, and this is what we must aim for in our society today.”

Steiner R (1923): The Child’s Changing Consciousness, Anthroposophic Press, p. 140. (My bold)

One could ask what the teacher's task is in this:

“What part do teachers and educators have to play in all of this?.. If they can make a firm resolve to stand in the school as **selflessly** as possible, to obliterate not only their own sympathies and antipathies, but also their personal ambitions, in order to dedicate themselves to whatever comes from the students... Every education is self-education, and as teachers we can only provide the environment for children's self-education. Steiner, R (1923): The Child's Changing Consciousness, Anthroposophic Press , p. 141

Clearly then, the teacher in Steiner Waldorf settings aims to create learning spaces for the young adult to develop their own thinking, feeling and willing in relationship to the moral life as well as other things.

Summary of the three Phases

Steiner unified the three moral qualities introduced in the preceding pages, he called them the “Golden Rules”:

“The golden rules that must be embraced by a teacher’s **whole being**, not as theory, are these: first, **reverent gratitude** toward the world for the child we contemplate every day, for every child presents a problem given us by divine worlds; second, **gratitude to the universe and love for what we have to do with a child**; and third, **respect for the child’s freedom**, which we must not endanger, since it is this freedom to which we must direct our teaching efforts, so that the child may one day stand at our side in freedom in the world.” Steiner, R (1922): The Spiritual Ground of Education, Anthroposophic Press., p. 63. (My bold)

As can be seen, Steiner intended these Golden Rules to be **lived realities** within the teacher. For him, a theoretical approach to moral principles was insufficient, they needed to be embedded in the whole being of the teacher and life context of the child. It is only then, that the learning of these moral principles can begin in the children and lead to their moral development. In other words, the moral wholeness of the teacher, as well as the parents, can become the moral wholeness of the children under the umbrella or freedom through self-education.

For a consideration of moral development for the age range 21 plus, read chapter 2 from module 4 on “Ethical Individualism”. The following image only names the primary concepts of the now four stages of moral development:

Summary of Steiner's Views on the Phases of Moral Development



Human Development	Phase 1 Physical Body 0 - 7	Phase 2 Life Body 7 - 14	Phase 3 Soul 14 - 21	Phase 4 I / Spirit 21 - 28
Pedagogical Principles	Imitation – Perception to Action	Imagination and Memory	Independent Thinking and Soul	Self – Activated
Moral Education: 1) Moral Capacity. 2) Teacher / Pupil Virtue.	1) Moral Perception and Moral Will. 2) Will to gratitude towards the whole World.	1) Moral Imagination and Moral Emotion. 2) Will to love all that exists.	1) Moral Judgement. 2) Respect of pupil freedom. 3) Student's self-determined ideal.	1) Ethical Individualism. 2) Mutual tolerance.

Or more concisely:

