

On Nurturing  
from  
Strange Loops and Gestures of creation

by

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“A humankind abandoned in its earliest formative stage,  
becomes its own greatest threat to its survival.”

Maria Montessori, M.D

Precisely as Maria Montessori warns, we were so immediately absorbed in surviving the results of our own reactive patterns – brought on by failure of nurturing – that we had no time, energy or interest to reflect on how or what happened, or was happening, to us. This is our condition today, where such loss and projection onto others “out there” of the causes of such loss, has been replicated age by age. Our survival concerns have greatly expanded and changed with the times, since the sharper this new intellect of ours, the deeper our crisis.

And we *are* getting correspondingly smarter intellectually while less intelligent. *Intellect*, a head-based operation incorporating ever more complex variations and applications, each needing further explications and qualifications, has become separated from *intelligence* – the automatic and natural state of the heart which brings coherence.

*The Cultural Counterfeits*

A counterfeit is a duplication of an original, from crude resemblance to those so nearly exact as to defy all but the trained observer. But no matter how apparently perfect the counterfeit is, minor, near-insignificant differences are always present, and will eventually bring ever greater problems in application. *Meanwhile, the most minor miss in the fit multiplies into a major one through continual use.*

To grind on this a bit, failure to nurture expresses in such a myriad of constantly branching critical problems that all objectivity suggesting a possible cause is lost in the mounting dysfunction. This leaves us aware only of the dysfunction, which by then is considered natural, or “the human condition.” I spelled this out in the chapter “Time-Bomb in the Delivery Room” in my 1977 book, *Magical Child*. This effort did nothing to counter the effects of that delivery room, or time-bomb, years down the road, culture being the power it is.

The importance and significance of nurturing as a survival response has, on its loss, brought in its place a mass of cultural *counterfeits* of nurturing. These counterfeits are “head-based” intellectual conclusions bringing roughly approximate solutions for the missing intelligence; consequently the inevitable problems inherent in counterfeits eventually appear and absorb our attention. Origins are forgotten.

Pleasure, Pain and the Developing Brain  
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And, though these counterfeits continually betray us, we are constantly seduced by them because of our fundamental needs for nurturing, with which these counterfeits have some vague resonance.

Virtual reality, in its myriad of current expressions such as television, computers, and electronic stimuli of endless variety, has almost completely replaced reality as the state of live, direct biological awareness and experience as developed over millennia.

Caught up in trying to make these counterfeits work, such attempts sustain and increase the counterfeit incentives and their power. And those counterfeits, products of our ever-new and ever-sharper intellect, can border on genius itself, although always causing problems at some point, spinning our webs of error and production of counterfeits ever tighter.

Even if these counterfeit structures are analyzed and brought to light, such analyses can only be interpreted through our cultural mind-set. This mind-set automatically counters any possible conflict *to itself* by its own cultural counterfeit of the analysis itself. This is a largely non-conscious response on our part, simply our mind-set interpreting the information – as it must, in order to maintain itself. We, with a sigh of relief, thankfully accept our culture's counterfeit as the obvious solution for us, thus nullifying any threat of change to the culture or to our mind-set, while locking us into ever-deeper disaster. In just such ways, culture is a self-sustaining field-effect with our rationale at its service.

Continually lost in making corrections in our counterfeit world, we can't regain that benevolence-driven mind-set which was and is our greatest survival asset and most important feature of being human. In our compulsion to right a fundamentally flawed logical world-view, we lose our connections with and ability to open to the intelligence called for – which is heart-based, not head-based. Long repetitive usage of a flawed logical approach can change brain organization to the point we can become neurally insufficient to the task of seeing the errors in our preoccupation with our counterfeits. Losing access to intelligence, we are left with plenty of "smarts" to maintain the counterfeits, none for opening to the intelligence that could reveal them for what they are.

Our razor-sharp intellect can create and build atom bombs and destroy the very atmosphere of our earth, but the basic intelligence needed to grasp this fundamental problem of loss of nurturing is *gained only by brain-heart development itself*. And brain-heart development is a major thrust of the nurturing function itself, which is, in turn, dependent on brain-heart development. In this reciprocal and recursive movement, we find a "strange loop" in which nurturing and brain-heart give rise to each other.

Nurturing should have opened ever-new evolutionary pathways – and still could. Instead, we have locked into a survival mode which is now considered to be not just the norm, but the "human condition" and/or "human nature."

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Around and through our automatic survival response we invent an incredibly complex and non-viable environment we must then attend with our whole being, both to survive in such environment individually, and to *maintain that very counterfeit environment itself*, whose loss is sensed as a major threat to that world-view we share as our cultural basis, trapping ourselves at every turn.