

Blessing the Young

Christina Pivarnik: It's always a pleasure to be together. Yesterday was Earth Day, a time set apart to celebrate and take care of this beautiful planet where we live. Almost 200 countries participated in various activities. Launched in 1970, it's considered the largest secular observance in the world with around a billion people participating, all with a focus on the earth. Think of that—a billion people, all focusing on nurturing and taking care of the earth. I find that very significant. In addition, national parks and many state parks offered a day without fees.

Earth Day also launched National Park Week across this country. This year the national park staff is asking participants to share their park stories on social media. Again, this is another way to celebrate the wilderness and the wild places of our natural world—a time for humans to forget about themselves, for a little while anyway, and take care of our glorious planet.

Being a huge lover of national parks, one of my favorite programs they offer is the Junior Ranger program. To become a Junior Ranger, kids from ages five to thirteen complete a series of activities when they visit a national park with their family. They memorize the Junior Ranger motto and take an oath to protect and learn more about parks. Once accomplished, the park ranger gives them their own official Junior Ranger patch and certificate.

I've had the joyful experience of watching kids receive this, of seeing the immense pride on their faces when they officially shake hands with the staff ranger and they receive their patch and certificate. It's quite a touching experience to watch! Remarkably, this program has been around for decades—it was begun in the 1930s.

I bring this to our attention today because it provides an excellent example of our kids learning about stewardship of this magnificent planet that we call home. And that's prompted more thinking about what is being offered by us in encompassment and life education for children.

When we look around the screen here, we're all of a certain age. Some of us have kids ourselves. Perhaps they have their own children, giving us opportunities to spend time with our grandchildren. Maybe you're in touch with kids regularly, or some not as much. Either way, we have a younger generation who is also responsible for the divine work we're doing in restoration of this planet to the One Most High. It begs the question of how and what we are doing to encompass these young ones. This is the focus of what Pamela, Steve and I would like to consider with you today.

I invite you to think of an experience you've had of holding a newborn infant—perhaps your own, your grandchild, maybe a friend or relative's baby. Hold the thought of that experience for a moment. How did you feel? My guess is it evoked feelings of joy, awe, wonder, maybe even reverence in a sense, for the magnificent power of life—of new life.

My most recent experience was holding my newborn granddaughter. There was such a rush of emotions, and my cup literally runneth over in tears of joy spilling down my cheeks. Perhaps you've had a similar experience.

But it's more than just holding a beautiful baby, isn't it? Here is this newly born little human, with its life ahead of it, but we know it's far more than that. This is a moment of welcoming an incarnating angel, an ancient, cosmic being that our inner selves recognize and remember. This is someone we've known, loved and worked with in spiritual ways for eternity. Of course, we're thrilled to meet this one again! There's a sense of protection to make this transition into human form easier for the little one with an enormous love for this baby.

A friend once said that we have an innate memory of when we were just about ready to be born and offered a prayer, "Dear God, please let me remember." Yes, thankfully, all of us gathered here DO remember.

There's quite a movement these days about the first five years of a child's life being vitally important. Catherine, Princess of Wales, in the UK, launched a new campaign earlier this year to highlight the importance of early childhood. She called it the *Shaping Us* project and it's received global attention. It emphasizes that these early years are essential in allowing children to become balanced adults by building a supportive, loving and nurturing world for them and why it matters.

Obviously, we understand this, and we know why it matters. But here we are now, older, with most of us not parenting young children. So, how do we encompass these young ones and include them in our vibrational surround? Not everyone has a natural yearning or calling to be with children, but for those who do, there is definitely work to be done. They are younger angelic partners in human form, with us in our mission here on earth.

For the past eight years, I've been going into our local primary school every Friday to work with second graders. I've been participating in a program called *Read to Rover*, where these students read to dogs.

It's such an amazing experience to watch these young readers grow through the school year, to answer their myriad questions about what they're reading, and to share in their lives for the time we're together. I'm so deeply appreciative of the opportunity! It's a seemingly small volunteer job, but I find it to be a trifecta of joy with three things I love very much—kids,

dogs and reading. Here is time every week to touch into this young generation of angels, to provide loving support and a vibrational surround for all the kids in the library with us and those throughout the school.

With that, I'd like to invite Pamela to share some of her experiences of working with children in the school system.

Pamela Gray: Christina, thank you for your spirit of joy that comes into the world and blesses it no matter the age. Whether or not we have children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews, our interest in focusing on children and young adults today is for this collective to vibrationally and consciously hold our younger population in a safe embrace. This is so they can be inspired to do the job of fulfilling their reason for being: their commissions on earth. That's why I teach. This is my creative field.

Over the years, I've always felt privileged to play a deliberate, influential part in hundreds of children's lives. Lake Elsinore has fourteen public elementary schools, and I've worked in most of them in one capacity or another. I'm also so grateful to work in a school district where noble character, as well as statistical state academic standing, is recognized.

In the school district where I've taught, and now substitute teach, the "Six Pillars of Character," from the book authored by Michael Josephson in 1992 with a group of educators, are the core ethical values taught in our weekly assemblies on Fridays. *Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship* are not just platitudes, but are values brought into discussions, and sometimes role-playing, in the classroom.

Students are recognized for their exemplary behavior as well as for their academic achievements. Insofar as academics go, for years our public schools have been "teaching to the test." Our school principals and teachers are accountable for how each school performs on the state standardized tests. This practice of teaching to the test can lead to rote thinking. The amount of memorization that's required for these tests often leads to a lazy and uninspired mind; it doesn't require real thinking.

I've been reading about the insidious ways that Artificial Intelligence is already infiltrating our educational systems. Many young minds look for an easy way out (in this case, classwork, assignments, or essays), and AI appears to be the perfect answer. But students really shouldn't be blamed. My question is: Who are the gatekeepers? Parents, presumably, are the gatekeepers for spiritual and ethical values, as well as teaching personal responsibility in life at home. In the classroom, teachers are the responsible gatekeepers for well-rounded teaching—education that inspires real thinking and not just rote learning.

I'm seeing something new and exciting today. I see a new wave of young teachers coming in, of various ethnic backgrounds, highly educated, qualified, and passionate about teaching. Of course, they adhere to what's required, but surrounding that they're bringing compassion, caring, and are creating learning environments for diverse learning styles and the whole spectrum of learning abilities. They're doing an amazing job. My role is, and has always been, that of a light bearer. I see each child and young person as a special being who incarnated to play their part in these particular times. My job is to provide a spark that ignites inspired thought; it's a catalyst for inspiration to land.

Last summer I was hired to teach students in a 5th grade literacy camp. It was based in the STEM approach—Science, Technology, Engineering and Math—and includes scientific experiments, hypotheses, and so on. In the mornings, I would put an inspirational quote on the board to invite conversation. You can appreciate that obviously at first, a quotation from a president or scientist might be a stretch for a ten-year-old to apply to themselves. I gave them leads to decipher meaning and application. Also, I always find it really helps understanding land when I offer my own experience.

What I love about young people, such as 5th graders, is that they're at an age of beginning to really think. Adults might be a bit intimidated to engage with them because of their demeanor. They can sit there half hidden in their hoodies, preoccupied with their phones, seemingly uninterested in conversation. You have to break through that with genuine interest. I find asking them questions that won't settle for a yes or no answer starts to engage them. Asking deep questions primes the pump. For example, "What do you think about the homeless population around here? What would you do about it if you were the mayor?" They see homelessness all around our area. They have ideas. Ask them. Be interested!

Albert Einstein said this to teachers, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."

Here are a few more examples of his wisdom imparted to children: "There are two ways to live. You can live as though nothing is a miracle or you can live as if everything is a miracle." He also said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."

Spiritual education might not be provided at home, but I find there's almost always a window into the minds of children and young adults that's open to illumination. I am aware that my presence and atmosphere bring light into their lives. This coherent light may connect at deeper levels of being to awaken remembrance of divine purpose. And doesn't everybody want to be truly seen? Certainly, children do!

Having taken Dr. Steve Ventola's online class on Conscious Healthy Aging, I'm excited to have Steve share what he's about to launch now involving our younger population.

Steve Ventola: Pamela and Christina, what a great way to begin our time. I feel aligned with both of you and I'm sure others here do as well in providing a surround for the younger population. Yes, I have been spearheading a Conscious Healthy Aging program. The idea sprung up when looking at all of us one Sunday: seeing the gray hair, being older in years, and the realization that we need to be around to provide something, to impart something, so there is continuity. Pamela spoke about intelligence, thinking. It reminds me of Bill Isaacs' talk a month ago when he spoke about thinking. He mentioned how "thinking involves translating invisible energy and design into form" and how it relates to sensemaking, to explaining, to perceiving context, to creating context. In regard to my thinking in perceiving and creating context, I have been turning my attention to how we as elders can provide a sound influence to the younger population.

(Steve showed three slides)

Slide 1: A drawing of an older man mentoring a younger man along with words from Psalm 71:18.

I like the phrasing here from Psalm 71 and this drawing that Robert Kaufman did for my *Healing Verses of the Psalms* book.

"Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come."

The word aging comes from an ancient word meaning vital force. "...thy power to every one that is to come" is to have that sensing of the vital force that needs to emanate from us to those that are younger, those that we can mentor.

Slide 2: A picture of local high school students during Career Week.

I had a chance to present at Cross Keys High School a couple weeks ago, during Career Week, to five different classes. This is one of them and I talked about our values as our compass. Children, teens and young adults need to have that awareness of how important it is to navigate through life with values that are clear in their heart.

I presented this to the class and Chenee (pictured with her arm around her friend) raised her hand and asked, "Are you speaking of the All of Truth?" That really struck me and took me aback. I didn't know how to respond to that. I said, "Wow, Chenee, what a wonderful question. We'll have to talk about that later when we can." I noticed that when I present to

people, usually there's a focus of response in the group, and Chenee was the one who provided that during this class as well as in another class she attended. I looked up her name and it relates to “optimistic souls who have a genuine enthusiasm about life and the living of it.” I thought that perfectly epitomized her spirit.

Slide 3: A picture of the local Rotary meeting attendees.

A week later, I had a chance to present to the Rotary Club about the essences of the presentation I had given to the students. I wanted to share my vision to help engage those in the Rotary Club to consider how it could be offered to children. They already do a lot of service for the public, but I wanted to share my interest and see about engaging them. One of the women provided a focus of response. It turns out she manages a program called, The Laws of Life Essay Contest for high school students in Georgia. It's a contest where kids choose a maxim of truth. They describe their experience about that, their living experience, to illustrate how that truth plays out in their life. The woman noted that what I had to say is very much in line with her program and she had some ideas about interfacing with her organization.

As we hear the call of love, it allows steps to be taken, and vision to be known. I came across this quote from David Barnes' recent post on Great Cosmic Story. The quote is by Uranda, “The ability to perceive in the outworking of things the natural sequences essential to our own points of responsibility...is Vision. God is not requiring us to do something about which we do not yet know, but with respect to the phases of the Father’s Being about which we do know....”

What's being received in my consciousness is to act on the vision that I know now. I don't have to think about things that I don't know about, I can just act on what I do know. So that was striking.

I think back to what Bill Isaacs cited about playing our part. “I'm shining my light, you might say I'm playing my part, but is it aligned with a larger, coherent pattern? In other words, is it united with the tone that is already coherent and organizing everything everywhere with others who carry a similar understanding? It's an interesting question to consider. How must I function in order to allow that greater coherence to be present?” We act on our vision, but we learn how to act in that vision in an integrated way.

Those are the thoughts that are striking me in terms of providing a sound influence for younger individuals. Each of us acts on the vision we know, it might be with children, but it might be in other areas, and we find how we can coordinate that together. It's been a pleasure coordinating with Pamela and Christina during this time. We had two great meetings in

preparation for this time, of finding agreement, of discovering that smooth way of integrating and providing something.

Following Comments...

Christina Pivarnik: I've loved our collective creative thinking today—the opportunity to be light bearers in our worlds and to offer a surround of blessing to the young people we touch in our lives.

Steve Ventola: To add to the comments about how we perceive and create context by recognizing we are creators, I was considering that thinking should be prompted from divine intelligence, from love and understanding from purity, from giving. Old ways are prompted from shame, from hate, from anger. That's the contrast to where our thinking process needs to spring from, so we are creative thinkers. What are we giving? What are we offering? I like what was said about providing a surround, an atmosphere. We move along those lines so our own thinking is integrated with our mission to bring light into this world, so this world actually becomes a light-filled world.

Pamela Gray: We are thinking together creatively in a time like this—letting something new be radiantly created. What is created is bathed in coherent light that the disoriented human mental mechanism does not understand but it goes straight to an open heart. Received in a pure heart, open minds can then share understanding. This is how it works with children and with people of all ages as we let it be real in the genuine spirit of love. To close, Terry Kaufman sent this YouTube video of children offering us guileless advice. Enjoy! [Link to video](#)

April 23, 2023

Christina Pivarnik: christina@pivarnik.com

Pamela Gray: pamela.gray1@gmail.com

Steve Ventola: drsteveventola@mindspring.com-

Pre-Service Music

Dolly, Op. 56: 1. Berceuse, 2. Mi-A-Ou and 4. Kitty-Valse

Composed by Gabriel Fauré and performed by Katia & Marielle Labèque

What a Wonderful World—Performed by Louis Armstrong