

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

Doing Things Slowly In a Fast World

I STILL REMEMBER WHEN HANNAH, who is now a high-performing high school student, was four years old and labored over each rectangle that she cut, making each about four inches long. She asked me to tape them carefully on her shoulder blades, using the right amount of masking tape so they wouldn't fall off. Hannah said they were her angel wings.

Soon several children gathered around, asking the little girl if she would make them angel wings too. Without hesitation, she earnestly embarked on cutting and taping rectangles for all the takers. Each pair of wings received Hannah's full attention—beautifully shaped papers that allowed her friends to fly.

Her dedication to the quality of each creation reminded me of the helpfulness of doing things slowly in a fast world, especially when we demonstrate a task to children.

In preschool, when we show students how to use a piece of Montessori equipment, teachers present each detail as if in slow motion. In elementary school, the same care goes into demonstrating how to write a letter of the alphabet or write out a multiplication problem.

If we want children to be detail-oriented, we have to notice when they approach things slowly and carefully, and explain the ways we do that ourselves. "I have to be very careful when I make this recipe. If I go too fast, I may leave something out."

When adults or children race through life, important details and the extra care that allows us to do things well get lost. In the new year, let's remember all the times it behooves us to learn to slow down.

January 17, 2017

© 2017 The Meher Schools