

Letters to Our Children

By **Simon Kuttner**

Introduction to the Letters

These letters were inspired by my therapeutic meetings with all the children I have tried to help over the years, and especially by the impact on children of the events of the last two years. The content of the letters comes not from what children have told me in words but from the deeper non-verbal regions of the child's consciousness where they seek so desperately to communicate with us adults and to express to us what they truly need. These letters are addressed to children, but on another level are actually written for adults, to remind us once more of the child-like qualities (not to be confused with *childish* qualities) that we, as adults, so often lack in these times, and that we so desperately need in order to bring healing to the world.

LETTER 1

Dear children,

I apologise in the name of the adult world. You came into this world from a place full of spontaneity, from a place full of infinite dance and flowing movement, from a place of playfulness filled with warmth and joy. You brought with you to this world these forces, and here in this world you mourn their disappearance.

The greatest sin of the adult world is that it forces upon you its past so that when you grow up, you will be imprisoned in the patterns of the

adult world of the past, instead of being imbued with your own future forces, revolutionary forces of transformation, forces that most adults have no idea about.

Children, I apologise in the name of all the adults who deny you your forces of transformation and revolution because of their fear, selfishness, laziness and delusory expectation for complete certainty.

Children, you are a future force that comes to shake up the adult world of the past and to transform it. You came into this world to melt away the patterns of the past and to bring healing to the stuck and fixed adult world. Like an artist, you have come to shape a new work of art from the clay that has dried out and become rigidified.

Every day I feel your future forces demanding to come to expression and to shake the foundations of this world to the core. I hear your desperate plea – you came from a world filled with spontaneity and a revolutionary force that flourishes in the playfulness of uncertainty, and you landed into a world of rigidity, fixation and the need for security at all costs. This scares you and makes you anxious because you do not find a sign in this adult world of those future forces.

But I want you to know that among us adults, there are some who you can meet who have kept hold of these future forces, that there are those among us who will try at all costs to allow you to experience your healing forces of spontaneity,

courage and delight in the face of the uncertain and unknown. In contrast to many adults today, we will fight to the death to allow you a future that is all yours, and that is not founded on the fears and fixations of a world whose time is past.

LETTER 4

Dear children,

Adults have this funny thing that they need to know everything, or pretend that they know everything. This makes you laugh a lot because you know that this is simply not possible, and even not a good thing. But then, the adults continue to pretend that they know everything, and then you start to fear that they are not doing it as a joke. And then you get anxious because they want you also to believe it is possible to know everything! I know all this because I meet you every week when you come to me for help. I hear your anxieties – the fear that if adults need to know everything, then you need to know everything, otherwise something bad will happen, or everything will fall apart. And then you are so sad because you need to give up on your childhood and act like adults – to pretend to know everything.

And then I look you in the eyes and smile – and I give you permission to not know everything. How do I do it? I show you (not usually in words) that I myself don't know everything, and sometimes I know very little about not much. And I am okay with this. I am relaxed about this, with falling into the unknown with a smile. And you breathe a deep sigh of relief because you have found an adult who understands to your hearts, someone who understands the essence of the childlike force in you. You have received permission to go back to play – because in play it is impossible to truly play if you know everything. And because I don't know much, we can play and create magic and make impossible things that are not possible when we 'know everything'. You know very well what adults have forgotten – that the experience of wonder is only possible when we let go of all we know; otherwise, how could we ever be surprised?!

Children, part of adults needing to know everything is related to the fact that many adults are sick today with the need to give you explanations about everything. But you children have a real allergy to explanations. And quite rightly so. Because you know that the adult explanations are actually not for you but for the adults themselves, it is all part of their 'knowing everything'. And that's why I don't explain anything to you. Instead, I experience with you somersaults and shining stars and endless magic (this last sentence, adults will not understand). In your world, the experience IS the explanation. (One day, adults will remember this again.)

There are also the 'know it all' adults who explain to your parents that you won't be able enter the school grounds without the 'know it alls' knowing first that you are healthy. These 'know it alls' will not relent, because the 'know it all' illness is a 24-hour business, non-stop doing, because there is always something more to know. It is like your dog who keeps chasing its tail. It never ends (or succeeds). What the 'know it alls' have forgotten is the secret that they are so terrified of – that in your world that is free of explanations and free of complete certainty, there is the world that is the pure experience of vitality and playfulness. And in that world is true health. There, *you don't need to know that you are healthy – you experience it.*

Children, one day, your world will be returned to you. Until then, we will continue to fight for it.

About the contributor

Simon Kuttner is a child and adult clinical psychologist currently working in Israel, specialising in the treatment of anxiety. In addition, he is a lecturer on child development and psychology courses at Waldorf education colleges and anthroposophical psychotherapy institutions. Simon completed his Ph.D. and clinical psychology training in New Zealand, where he also worked as a clinical psychologist. Simon is also a Waldorf teacher, and worked for five years as a researcher and lecturer in the Waldorf teacher training in Stuttgart, Germany.