



# SAFletter

Newsletter of the Sensory Awareness Foundation

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## Child Rearing – A Great Misunderstanding

by Jeanine Buol Hug



The photos of the adventurous little Maria are by Marian Reismann, courtesy Jeanine Buol Hug.

The healthy child is born with the full potential to develop into an independent human being – a person who can also skillfully handle the achievements of our culture. But we think we *need to rear* our children in order for them to develop. We bring up our children the way we have been brought up: we show them how to do things, we help them, praise and punish them – we interfere with the children's explorations of themselves and their environment. We interfere because we don't trust human nature, because we don't know about our "natural equipment" (biologische Ausrüstung), as Jacoby called it; we interfere because we are out of touch with ourselves and don't recognize what is necessary and useful.

However, these little human beings are in full touch with themselves (their weight) and in constant interplay with their environment (the ground and gravity). When a child falls, he gets up again, he falls again and gets up once more..., until his legs and feet become balanced and stable, until this stage of his development is completed. Only then will he take the next step in his development – and not a moment earlier – because that's when he is ready for the next step. To stand without outside help and support – that's what it means to be independent (the German word for independent is *selbständig*, to stand on one's own). Children are guided by a 'sense for what

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Our two most recent publications:

### Waking Up

#### The Work of Charlotte Selver

by William C. Littlewood with Mary Alice Roche.

Talks about Sensory Awareness, Reports, Experiments, and Exchanges with Her Students.

### Every Moment is a Moment

A Journal with Words of Charlotte Selver from her 102 years of living and over 75 years of offering the work of Sensory Awareness.

(For ordering information see page 9.)

## Dancing in the Dharma

### The Life and Teachings of Ruth Denison

Excerpts from a new book by Sandy Boucher, published by Beacon Press, Boston.

Before Ruth Denison became the first Buddhist teacher to lead an all-women's retreat, she survived years of horror in Nazi and post-war Germany. Once a friend of Alan Watts, Aldous Huxley, and Timothy Leary, and a student of Charlotte Selver, Denison was also the first teacher to use movement and dance to instruct her students in mindfulness. Eighty-three-year-old Denison still leads retreats at Dhamma Dena Meditation Center and feeds the coyotes near her home in the Mojave desert.

Now in *Dancing in the Dharma*, Sandy Boucher celebrates the life and accomplishments of "one of the pioneer teachers of Buddhism in the West." Drawing on

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works' and they can fully trust this sense – until we interfere with our good intentions and try to educate them. Once education has kicked in, they soon lose touch with this sense.

When a child can develop *autonomously*, then he can *feel* whether or not his little feet, his legs, his muscles,



his skeleton are ready and capable of standing and walking. If not, he will try and try – he will trust this *inner knowing* – until 'it works'. Left alone, the child will not be discouraged. Pushing a child into

doing things he *cannot yet* do, because he is not in this stage of development, will lead him to feeling discouraged: discouragement is a reaction to our attitude, to our expectations. This pushing a child is the beginning of 'doing' and straining – of dependency: the child loses touch with himself, with primal and natural ease.



*Dr. phil. Jeanine Buol Hug studied psychology, philosophy, and religious history, at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. From 1960 until his death in 1964, she studied with Heinrich Jacoby. She continued her explorations after Jacoby's death in the Study Group (Arbeitskreis) of Dr. med. Ruth Matter, Zurich.*

*For many years, Jeanine Buol Hug has been offering workshop in the field of Heinrich Jacoby's research. She is the current president of the Arbeitskreis Heinrich Jacoby / Elsa Gindler in Switzerland.*

"In the beginning was education": We don't know what harm we do to our children, when we raise them according to current trends of education. [...] I see it as an important part of our work that we point to these things. We all could live more peacefully, we could make better use of our gifts and function more smoothly, if we would trust our own 'nature' and 'natural equipment'.

So what kind of an environment do children need in order to develop according to their 'natural equipment'? The more independent we grown-ups are, the more aware we are of our own actions (which includes realizing when we interfere unnecessarily with a child's developmental processes), the more we are in touch with ourselves, the better for our children.



When we are in touch with ourselves we can also remain calmer, and when we are calmer we are more receptive to information from within and without. We need to develop a receptivity that allows us 'trip' over our own mistakes, as



Jacoby used to say. We need to become **conscious** of our own condition and conduct.

Being in touch with oneself is crucial and has an immediate effect on the child's behavior. Not *what* we say to our child but *how* we are when we say it is the guiding light for our children. Only then can things change. This is the great challenge we are facing and also our responsibility.

*Translation by Stefan Laeng-Gilliatt*

## Soccer Mom Needs A Break

by Hannes Zahner

Part 1:

**Baby Einstein™**

or

**What Heinrich Jacoby Couldn't Know**

**A post-existential fairy tale**

After Soccer Mom had picked up her child from 'yoga for kids' in her new Prius, she took her to violin lessons. The violin had just been resealed with hypoallergenic beeswax, which filled the air in the car with a soothing sent. The little girl was chewing on a handful of organic wheat free crackers from Whole Foods while Soccer Mom was thinking about the recent consultation with the biofeedback counselor. The preschool teacher had suggested they see one, because the girl seemed to

have separation anxiety. He recommended expressive painting for her child. This will also help her creative expression, Soccer Mom thought, which should get a boost anyway through the constitutional homeopathic remedy, with which their naturopath is currently treating her daughter. (No, she's fine but it will help her development.)

And thus the child's creativity was unfolding wonderfully, which was confirmed by the recent Hellinger Family Constellation workshop. Before we forget: we should also mention the expressive dance classes her daughter was taking. They really unlocked her inner potential. However, some questions remained. Recently, when the parents had had a crisis over the question of whether it would be better for their daughter to take eurhythmic lessons or stay with tai chi, Soccer Mom started wondering about the Montessori compatibility of

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