The twentieth century has not been good for the soul. Through horrendous wars, holocaust, violence, and environmental degradation, life itself seems to have lost its vital essence. In particular, a mechanized approach to living has contributed to the loss of soul. We have adopted a machine-like approach to living and the "bottom line" dominates our lives. In education we constantly hear the mantra of how education must make a nation, any nation, globally competitive. Thus, the schools' main role is to produce consumers and producers. We rarely hear from a government official that education might help in the development of human beings and the human spirit.

Our language is also filled with mechanistic metaphors. For example, in Ontario a Royal Commission on Education released a major report in January of 1995. At the end of report the Commission made its recommendations and said the Province should focus on "four engines of change." The metaphor of engine again arises from our machine-like approach to education. Our language betrays us.

Without soul our society seems to lack a basic vitality or energy. Except for the energy in consuming and producing, the way many people feel is summed up by a cover of Newsweek that showed a man's tired face with the title: "Exhausted." People on the streets, subways, in the shopping malls often look exhausted, disgruntled, or angry. As result, people seek fulfillment in alcohol, drugs, work, and a variety of other addictions. The pace of life itself is soulless. We all seem in a mad rush to acquire and consume with little time for simple pleasures. We are not satisfied with just feeling fresh air on our cheeks or watching children at play. We crave possessions and entertainment and we seem never to get enough.

The machine has been a principal metaphor for the last 300 years. In 1747 the French philosopher Julien de La Mettrie declared, "Let us then conclude boldly that man is a machine, and that the whole universe consists only of a single substance [matter] subjected to different modifications" (cited in Shlain, p. 85). Today efficiency and numbers rule. Business for years was run by MBO (Management by Objectives) while educators developed behavioral objectives. It is possible to view outcomes-based

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1 The four engines of change include 1) a new kind of school-community alliance, 2) early childhood education, 3) teachers, and 4) information technology.
education as another machine-like approach to education with the emphasis is on production and results rather than the process of learning.

We are told now that we live in the information age where the computer is the prototype for most activity. Computer based models are used to construct and shape reality. Children seem to see the world only through computer games, television and videos. In most rural cultures children and adolescents developed a relationship to the natural world; for example, in indigenous cultures the vision quest was based in nature. In the last century Emerson complained at the beginning of his first book, Nature, that humans had lost their original relationship to the universe. If this was true in the nineteenth century I wonder what Emerson would say today when the media and institutions determine our reality and industrialization seems bent on destroying the natural world. (Jones, 1966, p. 27) Clearly, when we have lost our original relationship to the universe we have also lost soul.

In fact, we have tended to see the universe and the Earth as inanimate and without purpose. Again, La Mettrie in the eighteenth century saw everything, including the human being, as soulless:

The term "soul" is therefore an empty one, to which nobody attaches any conception, and which an enlightened man should employ solely to refer to those parts of our bodies which do the thinking. Given only a source of motion, animated bodies will possess all they require in order to move feel, think, repent—in brief, in order to behave, alike in the physical realm and in the moral realm which depends on it. (Cited in Shlain, p. 84f.)

Matthew Fox (1994) has discussed some the essential elements of the machine world view. For example, the Earth is seen as inert and events are seen as determined. The universe itself is seen as a machine and all experience is secularized; from this perspective we look to the Earth for resources. Scientific materialism predominates with an emphasis on objectivity, rationality and efficiency. Society reflects a bias toward a masculine world view with hierarchical organizations. Fox concludes: "Souls have shrunk terribly due to this machine cosmology" (p. 259).

Education has also adopted the machine metaphor. Schools can be likened to factories. Like the assembly line, students sit in rows where they learn how to conform to expectations set by business and government. The product is success on a standardized test whose results are often compared to other schools or even other countries. Results on these tests are compared to economic data between these countries and various attributions are made regarding how the education system relates to economic productivity. Despite supposed reforms in education, students often fill out worksheets and memorize textbooks. With the emphasis on textbooks and tests there is little room for soul in our schools. Although most subjects have a soulful quality, the arts, which in
many ways are the most conducive to the soul's development, are often made a marginal part of the education program and are sometimes removed entirely from the curriculum.

Education has often been made to conform to "scientific principles." In the 1920's, Franklin Bobbit thought that the "backward" institution of education could be improved by employing the "scientific management" techniques used in industry. Bobbitt (1912) argued that "Education is a shaping process as much as the manufacture of steel rails" (p. 11). He compares the process of teaching to making industrial products; therefore, in his opinion, education must focus on creating a product—the student's mind—which should be shaped according to uniform standards. What was needed was to develop and introduce appropriate standards. In fact, Bobbitt suggested that business and industry set these standards for education. Tanner and Tanner (1980) contend that "the trend of education catering to the demands of business has been a continuing trend in American education" (p. 329). An example of this phenomenon in recent times can be found in the 1960's, when school systems turned to businesses to develop "performance contracts" in order to improve pupil performance in the schools. Today various school districts such as Hartford and Baltimore are turning their schools over to private industry.

Other examples of mechanization of the curriculum include outcomes based education which is currently in favor in North America. For example, in Ontario the curriculum policy for Grades 1 to 9 entitled The Common Curriculum is an outcomes based document. There are hundreds of outcomes that teachers must achieve in four main areas—the arts, language, mathematics, science and technology, and personal and social studies: Self and society. I believe that outcomes-based education is based on a false premise in that all students are expected to achieve all these outcomes. Supposedly students can achieve the outcomes at the different rates and in different ways but what about unexpected outcomes? Is human behavior really so predictable as outcome based advocates argue? Some of the most powerful moments in teaching and learning are the spontaneous moments of insight which are beyond any system or set of specific expectations. In short, in outcomes based education there is no balance between the planned and the spontaneous. Spontaneity is essential the realization of soul.

The accountability movement is another example of mechanization in the curriculum. Teachers are expected to be constantly testing students so that the public is satisfied with the what is going on in the classrooms. Unfortunately, the tests focus on a very limited portion of the curriculum and ignore the important areas such as personal and social development. These tests tend to stress information that will be soon be forgotten by the student. The student begins to see school as a game where succeeding is based on passing tests that seem to have no relevance to anything except what we might call useless knowledge. When school is seen as a game, there is no vitality. Classrooms become lifeless places where students focus on achievement in a narrow and competitive manner. A curriculum of meaningless tests is another example of education without soul.

The results of all this are summarized by Robert Sardello (1992):
Education instead has become an institution whose purpose in the modern world is not to make culture, not to serve the living cosmos, but to harness humankind to the dead forces of materialism. Education as we know it, from preschool through graduate school, damages the soul. (p. 50)

We can reclaim our souls. Instead of denying and oppressing the soul we can learn to let the soul manifest itself in the world. Instead of confining the soul we can learn to celebrate soul. By reclaiming soul we find that the classroom, or any educational encounter, takes on a new vitality and purpose. Students and teachers no longer go through the motions, but instead feel alive and nourished in what they do. In a word, learning becomes soulful.

The Nature of the Soul

Before discussing education and how it can be more soulful, I think it is important to discuss the nacre of the soul.

1) Soul is not an entity or thing, but animating energy or process. Consider Emerson's definition:

   All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect and the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie, —an immensity not possessed and that cannot be possessed. (p. 174)

As a source of energy we can sometimes feel the soul expand. A beautiful piece of music can make our souls feel expansive; likewise, in a threatening or fearful situation, we can feel our souls contract or shrink. A soulful curriculum would provide a nourishing environment for the soul's expansion and animation.
We can recognize soul in people when we see their eyes light up, when their speech is animated, when their body moves with grace and energy. Sophia Hawthorne saw this quality in Emerson as he walked the streets of Concord:

It became one of my happiest experiences to pass Emerson upon the street. . . . I realized that he always had something to smile FOR, if not to smile AT; and that a cheerful countenance is heroic. By and by I learned that he always could find something to smile at also; for he tells us, 'The best of all jokes is the sympathetic contemplation of things.' (Holmes, 1885, 1980, pp.238-9)

Soulful energy is not just energy, but loving energy. I will have more to say about this shortly.

2) In the soul lie our deepest feelings and longings. When we realize these longings and are able to manifest and work with them we begin to feel deeply fulfilled. In part, we can see life's journey as an attempt to discover and realize these deep longings. One of our deepest longings is to find soulful work. Fox (1994) states:

Our souls, that is, our awareness and our passions, our ecstasies and our pain are not tidy and small. We, like the rest of the universe, are expanding and are great in size—"magnanimous," Thomas Aquinas calls us, which means literally, "large souled." There is great dignity to our being, great dignity to our work of exploring that inner being and expressing it. (p.129)

I believe that much of career education is misguided as often career is viewed as some sort of rational choice. Rationality is part of the process but the soul gradually finds its way in the world and attunes itself to what it feels its life work might be. This often happens through fits and starts as the individual may not find his or her life fulfilling work until mid-life or even later. Thomas Moore (1992) comments:

We like to think that we have chosen our work, but it could be more accurate to say that our work has found us. Most people can tell fate-filled stories of how they happen to be in their current "occupation." These stories tell how the work came to occupy them, to take residence. Work is a vocation: we are
called to it. . . . finding the right work is like discovering your own soul in the world. (p. 272-3, 279)

3) The soul seeks love. With regard to love the soul seeks union with other souls (e.g., soulmate). This can take the form of romantic love, love of kin, universal love, or love of the divine.

Romantic love in our culture has been trivialized through soap operas and Harelequin romances, or is the target of cynicism. Yet romantic love can teach us a great deal. When we fall in love we see the angelic nature of the beloved. Some say this is a romantic illusion, but perhaps we see the others true nature, that is, the person's divinity. Through love the soul touches the eternal, the divine. Through wisdom and lovingkindness we can begin to see the angelic nature not only in our beloved but in all beings. We attempt to connect to this inner core of goodness and decency in others.

This is what Nelson Mandela recognized during his 27 years in prison. Although his guards could often be cruel and unfeeling, suddenly he would see an act of kindness that would reveal the more gentle side of the person. Mandela (1994) comments:

I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished. (p. 542)

The loving soul attempts to express its joy through music and song. Sardello (1992) comments:

Soul learning does not consist of the internalization of knowledge, the determination of right meaning, the achievement of accuracy, but is to be found in what sounds right. That the soul sings was understood by the ancient psychology of the soul of the world—the singing of soul was known as the music of the spheres. (p. 63)
The world could use more singing souls. The loving/singing soul feels attunement with the Tao, or the flow of the universe.

Love also motivates us to help the make the world a more beautiful place. Theodore Roszak (1992) states that ecologists are motivated by love for the planet and its beauty, rather than by guilt. Action motivated by guilt, no matter how valid, can produce more guilt.

4) The soul dwells in paradox and does not approach life in a linear manner. Although the soul seeks the light of love it also has its shadow side. We know the phrase the "dark night of the soul" as the soul must deal with loss, grief, and pain which are an inevitable part of life. If the soul tries to ignore pain, such as the loss of a loved one, then important soul work is being ignored. In North America we are not comfortable with pain and we usually seek relief in alcohol, TV, movies, and even fundamentalism. Yet the cost to our souls is enormous as the soul seeks to be in touch with the basic realities of life which includes suffering and death as much as love and joy.

Thus, we must give room for the way of the soul. By listening to the soul we can be sensitive to its ways and needs. One way that we can listen to the soul is through contemplation. Robert Sardello (1995) suggests that soul logic "synthesizes rather than analyzes" (p. xx). According to Sardello, unlike cognitive logic which seeks the right answer, soul logic seeks the healthy answer which serves the whole being. Sardello states: "Illness occurs when something partial is taken to be the whole" (p. xx).

Fragmented approaches to reasoning have been at the root of much of the sickness and alienation in our culture. Because we have either refused or been unable to see the interdependence of things, there has been social alienation and environmental decay.

The soul can spend long periods incubating over a problem or conflict. On the surface nothing appears to be happening in relation to the resolution of the problem, but the soul often does not conform to our expectations of time. It has its own timetable. Eventually, however, if allowed to work in its own way, the soul will find a solution.

Contemplation and soulful knowing are characterized by non-duality. We become that which we contemplate. Consider Emerson's view of contemplation:

We live on different planes or platforms. There is an external life, which is educated at school, taught to read, write, cipher and trade; taught to grasp all the boy can get, urging him to put himself forward, to make himself useful and agreeable in the world, to ride, run, argue and contend, unfold his talents, shine, conquer and possess.
But the inner life sits at home, and does not learn to do things nor values these feats at all. 'Tis quiet, wise perception. It loves truth, because it is itself real; it loves right, it knows nothing else; but it makes no progress; was as wise in our first memory of it as now; is just the same now in maturity and hereafter in age, as it was in youth. We have grown to manhood and womanhood; we have powers, connection, children, reputations, professions: this makes no account of them all. It lives in the great present; it makes the present great. This tranquil, well founded, wide-seeing soul is no express-rider, no attorney, no magistrate: it lies in the sun and broods on the world. (Cited in Geldard, p. 172)

Contemplation, which is the soul's main form of learning and knowing, is hardly every encouraged in education. Instead we are taught to find the right answer or develop the right argument. By ignoring or denying contemplation the soul is also denied. The soul hides while our minds analyze, memorize, and categorize.

**Soulful Learning**

I believe it is possible to have soulful learning in our schools. Education then becomes vital and alive. Soulful learning involves both inner and outer work. With regard to inner work I agree with Matthew Fox that "We need a massive investment of talent and discipline in our inner lives" (p. 22). Education has virtually ignored the inner life of students and teachers, but I believe it is possible to develop a curriculum for the inner life which includes guided imagery, meditation, dreamwork, and journal writing.

Second, the arts is essential to soulful learning as all the arts can provide nourishment for the soul. Finally, studying the Earth in a way which acknowledges its sacred qualities can also help the soul, particularly linking the soul with the Earth soul, or Gaia.

**A Curriculum for the Inner Life.**

There are a number of ways to stimulate and nourish the inner life of the student. I believe that with TV and videos there is little opportunity for today's children to use their imaginations. When I was growing up I listened to the radio and I remember going to my room and listening to it sometimes with the lights turned out. As the story was told I would create pictures in my own mind. Before the radio there was storytelling around the hearth or campfire and the story would also call on our imaginations. Today very little calls on our imagination. Instead, images from TV and magazines have taken over our consciousness.
Guided imagery or visualization is one tool that can activate the inner life of the student. Guided imagery is simply picturing an object or set of event's in the mind's eye. I will describe a few ways that visualization can be used in a soulful manner. One way is simply to have students close their eyes and imagine a story as it is being read or told. This can be done in language arts or even history as students can see themselves as a person in a certain historical period or event. In science students can also visualize activities, such as the water cycle, after they have studied the cycle. By visualizing becoming the water and going through the evaporation and condensation the students connects his or her inner life with abstract subject matter. One of the most creative ways of using guided imagery is to have students visualize a set of events (e.g., going underwater or into space) and then have students write a story about what they saw. They can also draw a picture. Many visualizations use symbols from nature such as the sun, mountains, and water to help in the process of personal integration and nourishing the soul.

Meditation is not used as frequently as visualization but I believe it can have a role in the curriculum. The noted philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch (1992) wrote, "Teach meditation in schools" (p. 337) so that students can learn to quiet their own minds. Gina Levete (1995), associated with the Interlink Trust in England, has written a document entitled "Presenting the case of meditation in primary and secondary schools." By encouraging students to sit quietly they gain access to their inner life and begin to see their own thoughts. Some forms of meditation, such as the lovingkindness meditation, encourage the development of compassion for all beings on the planet. Meditation, can nourish the students' souls and their relationship with other forms of life.

Another tool which can be used is dreamwork. A graduate student (Quattrocchi, 1995) has written a thesis on how she used dreamwork at the secondary level. She had students keep journals about the dreams over the course of a year. She found that by working with the dreams the student gained nourishing insights. All the students who participated in her study commented positively about the experience and some indicated that the dreamwork had enhanced their creativity.

Another part of a curriculum for the inner life is keeping a journal. Journal writing is already included in the curriculum of many schools, particularly those approaching language instruction through whole language. Here I am suggesting that students keep a private journal where they record their deepest feelings and desires. Keeping a journal for a writing class is usually some sort of reflective journal that contains ideas that can lead to further writing or the completion of an essay. Alternatively, the student can keep a "soul journal" where the student explores his or her deepest feelings. Of course this journal is not for public viewing.

The Arts

The arts can provide extensive nourishment for the soul. One of the arts, music, was at one time specifically designed for the soul's development. Pythagoras believed that music could heal the soul and even align the soul with the cosmos itself so that the
soul was in harmony with the music of the spheres. Plato continued this theme, as James (1993) summarizes:

Yet for the present purpose, the important point, setting aside all ethical considerations, is that for Plato, and thus for the Western intellectual tradition that was to follow, music was the key to the human soul, the most potent instrument available to man for enlightenment. (p.59)

Unfortunately, music and the other arts are relegated to the fringe of the school curriculum. Unless there are specialists to teach the arts, the regular classroom teacher avoids them. Here is where Waldorf education has so much to offer the public school and particularly how we train teachers. Waldorf teacher training is suffused with arts so that eventually the new Waldorf teacher is not afraid to present his or her art on the chalkboard. In most Waldorf classrooms the teacher has drawn some beautiful picture that is related to the main theme being studied. More importantly, the teacher brings an artistic sense to everything that he or she does. M.C. Richards makes this point:

It is an intuitive seeing, which comes about as a result of exercising and experiencing one's physical senses imaginatively, wholeheartedly, and whole soulfully. This is why artistic practice is so important in all learning and education. This is why neglect of the artist in each person is so impoverishing to society. Without this spiritual sense organ, this way of seeing the formative forces at work in a physical process, we are blind and duped by appearances. (p. 73)

Earth Connections

Another approach that could be helpful to the soul is to awaken our connection to the Earth and its processes. Some forms of environmental education can be helpful here, particularly those described in the Holistic Education Review (1989, 1993). These programs do not just focus on recycling cans and bottles, but bring the student to the outdoors where they can become ecologically literate. They can learn to answer questions such as:

1. What soil series are you standing on?
2. When was the last time a fire burned your area?

3. Name five native edible plants in your region and their seasons of availability.

4. From what direction do winter storms generally come in your region?

5. Where does your garbage go?

6. How long is the growing season where you live?

7. Name five grasses in your area. Are any of them native?

8. Name five resident and five migratory birds in your area.

9. What primary geological event or processes influenced the land from where you live?

10. What species have become extinct in your area?

11. What are the major plant associations in your region?


Another approach that is helpful is to read indigenous peoples' literature about the Earth. A particularly good collection of such literature can be found the book Earth Prayers. One example from the collection:

Grandfather,

Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones
Who are divided
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion, and honor
That we may heal the Earth
And heal each other

(p. 95)

Finally the students can study the *The Universe Story* (Swimme and Berry, 1992) to gain a deep sense of awe and reverence for the universe itself. As we awaken our relationship to the universe and the Earth the soul gains a sense of wholeness and connectedness; it gains a sense of place.

**The Soulful Teacher**

Although I have mentioned certain subjects and approaches that help nurture the soul, I believe that any subject can be taught soulfully. If the teacher brings his or her own soul to the classroom then the subject being taught takes on a vital energy. In the soulful teacher's class the students can sense the teacher's commitment to learning.

Two qualities that the soulful teacher can usually bring to the classroom are presence and caring. Presence arises from mindfulness where the teacher is capable of listening deeply. In my own work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/UofT, I encourage teachers to bring mindfulness, or moment-to-moment awareness, to the classroom and their interactions with students. Below is a statement by one teacher who is able to bring this awareness to the classrooms.
As a teacher, I have become more aware of my students and their feelings in the class. Instead of rushing through the day’s events I take the time to enjoy our day's experiences and opportune moments. The students have commented that I seem happier. I do tend to laugh more and I think it is because I am more aware, alert and "present," instead of thinking about what I still need to do.

(Miller, 1995, p.22)

Closely related to presence is caring. The caring teacher relates the subject to the needs and interests of the students. Nel Noddings (1984) who has written extensively about caring suggests that when this happens the student "may respond by free, vigorous, and happy immersion in his own projects" (p. 181). When the teacher demonstrates caring, community can develop in the classroom. Marcia Umland, an elementary school teacher, talks about how this can happen:

When I wanted to spend all that time with those little people in class, I found that the intimacy I had shared with my peers in college in the sixties was carried over into my classroom. I cared about the students and couldn't stand to sit in the teachers' lounge where they were gossiping about their students. . .

I get exhausted, but not burned out. Sometimes I'm dropping my dream for a day or two, but most days I'm on, and stunned by the kids. Lately I've realized that in setting up in a classroom at last I've given myself permission to form a society I'd like to live in. (Macrorie, 1984, pp. 155-61)

I think it is important that teachers nurture their own souls through meditation practice. Since 1988 I have made meditation a requirement in the courses I teach at the graduate level. Most of my students are experienced teachers. Over 600 students have been exposed to the practice in the course and the vast majority find the practice an important, and often vital, process in the nourishment of their own souls. Again I cite the comments from one of these teachers:

My meditation practice this summer has reconnected me to the importance of resting in "that place" so that my spirit can be renourished to continue with hope and joy. Certainly, as teachers, our students crave connection with the best of our spirits. "Connectedness" is what they crave. Connectedness is
what we all crave, really! Through meditation, I have been able to reconnect with the life within me. I know that continued practice will enable me to replenish my soul so that what once was the "drain" of teaching will become life-giving. (Miller, 1995, p. 22)

The time has come for soulful learning. We have had enough of machine-like approaches to education which deaden the human spirit. The present trends of outcomes based education and accountability drain the vitality from our classrooms. The pressure for quantifying all learning without concern for quality represses the student's soul. Instead, we can learn to bring onto the Earth an education of deep joy where the soul once again learns to sing. Soulful learning nurtures the inner life of the student and connects it to the outer life and the environment. It acknowledges and gives priority to the human spirit rather than the simply producing individuals who can "compete in the global economy." Restoring the soul to education is not a new vision. It is vision articulated by the Greeks and various indigenous people for centuries. It is found in Taoism and the teachings of Christ and the Buddha. Why should aspire to less than our ancestors? Education has lost its way; we need to look to the soul to recover and remember our "original relationship to the universe".
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Education and the Soul


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