

RSF quarterly

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1002 O'Reilly Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94129
415.561.3900



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「What is the
future value of
education?」

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LETTER FROM DON

Working From Love and a Spirit of Service

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year and Best Wishes to all!!

I hope you enjoy our Winter newsletter focused on Education and the Arts. One important theme in this issue is how one generation learns from the next in formal education and family life. Our *Clients in Conversation* has two thoughtful parents sharing how they have helped their children learn about money. Rose Feerick talks about how valuable it was to bring her 11-year-old and 8-year-old children to RSF to open their investment accounts. The physical act of investing money, connecting with the place itself and the people who are responsible for stewarding the funds, was a formative event for them. Rose also talks with her kids about the different types of financial transactions: purchase, loan, and gift. Owen Brown's children are older so his comments touch on more worldly and philosophical approaches. Both strike me as very healthy and real conversations to be having with children.

Mike Gabriel, RSF Lending Manager, writes about how the Waldorf School of Pittsburgh recently created a sense of community in securing their loan from us: 34 people associated with the school opened investment accounts with us at the time the loan was made. We have always felt that this kind of participation in the lending process creates a sense of sustainability for the project and a healthy awareness about money overall.

Joan Calderera, in her *Guest Essay*, points out that a good education brings out the moral capacities children already have within them. In particular, she stresses that "tomorrow's innovators and entrepreneurs" are much more likely to emerge from an approach that recognizes the value of the arts and the intention of the teacher as a critical part of the educational process.

John Bloom's *Insights* propose looking at education with fresh eyes as a way to prepare students for the new economy. One example of this is Kelley Buhles' *Case Study* which looks at Brightening Brightmoor, a project of the Detroit Community High School. What began as a cultural and artistic activity transformed into a social enterprise that supports re-enlivening of the community itself.

I am reminded of a phrase we have used at RSF over the past few years: Money, at its very best, is a form of energy used to connect human beings in relationships of service. You will find in these pages an affirmation of how we are trying to bring more love and a spirit of service into the world through our work in financing the field of Education and the Arts.

All my best,

Don Shaffer
President & CEO



Don with his wife
Jennifer and their
children, Samuel
and Sabine.



 INSIGHTS

Educating for a New Economy


By John Bloom, Director of Organizational Culture

I recently noticed a banner on which the message was simple: Support public education, our future depends on it. I started wondering why a graphic statement of the obvious would need such bold advocacy. The answer is painfully clear when you look at how education is devalued in budget cutting. Of course access to education is absolutely critical to the future. The essential question, however, is what should that education look like? Have we moved on yet from producing workers for the industrial-technological age? What are our assumptions about the purposes of education, and what it is preparing students for? Working backwards from an imagination of a new economy—one rich with social enterprise and environmental restoration—educating for a deep practice of interdependence is essential. Learning in context that includes integrated cultural, political, and economic facets, or systems thinking is rarely found, and desperately needed. Central to this holistic approach is a focus on self-knowledge as it is reflected through practice in the world, coupled with a real interest in others through collaborative and co-creative processes.

The capacities that each individual brings to the world are profoundly renewable and need to be looked at in a way that lifts work beyond labor, production beyond the efficiencies of technology and division of labor, and education beyond standardized outcomes and the factory-like strictures of the classroom. From an economic standpoint, this wealth of human resources can form a sustainable and sustaining system that contains intelligence for self-renewal along with a capacity to meet others material needs in a context of real human values.

Education is the process by which new ideas, social and economic innovation, and cultural renewal stream into life. Each generation has the privilege to teach

the next, to pass along its lessons learned. What has changed in recent years is that the next generation, aware of how broken the economic, political and cultural systems are, is taking on the responsibility of asking the prior generation for something other than the old modality of received learning. Prince Peter Kropotkin's oft-quoted advice to students, given nearly a century ago, seems to ring more true than ever, especially in light of Occupy Wall Street. He said, "Think about the kind of world you want to live and work in. What do you need to know to build that world? Demand that your teachers teach you that." As a result of this generational shift toward self-directed learning, long-standing assumptions about what constitutes an education no longer hold. The teacher and the required curriculum have ceased to be sole authority and guide. Peer learning through practical and socially beneficial activity—whether green jobs, community farming, or environmental activism—is where the next generation is finding its path to a meaningful life.

Unless one perceives oneself as a free and independent individual with particular gifts to bring in service to the world, it is virtually impossible to imagine how one could come to an understanding of the reality of economic interdependence. Much of our educational time is focused on the development of the individual, in preparation for a competitive world. This bias for self-interested behavior is but one unaddressed assumption driving educational thinking. The balancing capacity is awakening to and behaving out of community interest, the stepping-stone to interdependence. Cultivating this sense of systemic interdependence, baking it deep in the structure of new educational forms and processes is essential if we listen to what the next generation is asking, and if our current Western economic conditions are to be transformed into working for people and the planet. 


 GUEST ESSAY

Morality in the Sphere of Education

by Joan Calderera

“Ethics concerns no small matter, but how we ought to live.”

—Socrates (in Plato’s Republic)

No matter what our vocation or direction in life, how we are educated helps to condition our responses to the world and our capacity to live in a good and meaningful way. Socrates’ dictum about ethics is reflected in John Dewey’s philosophy of education, essentially that education is a process of enhancing quality of life, through meaningful activity, thoughtful conduct, and open communication and interaction with others. For Dewey, the freedom to be a thinking individual in society was paramount. Because he saw all ideas as moral, for him, the very possibility of conceiving and expressing ideas was in itself a moral issue. Many other philosophers of education would put it differently, but if they are true to an ethical conception of education, then they share in the goal of helping students develop a sense of direction that humanity might take in facing the problems of our dwelling together on one planet—the moral direction toward greater justice, freedom, and meaning in human life.

This is the challenge for education as it resides between the life of community and the fulfillment of the individual, especially, it seems, in America. When Alexis de Tocqueville wrote his description of American culture in 1830, he warned that the spiritual and republican influences on the establishment of our free institutions were necessary to the sustainability of those institutions. In other words, he saw even then that excessive individualism could undermine freedom, even as Ralph Waldo Emerson began

extolling the virtue of self-reliance. With the growth of industrialization, the American family was losing its former intimacy with a stable community, and becoming more and more isolated into what would later be known as “the nuclear family.” With this heightened sense of separateness, the growth of individualism would force emerging adults more and more to see community as something apart from them, and gradually as something to which they might not have much responsibility.

Today the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre and others point to a breakdown in community life leading to rootlessness for the individual. This situation of non-cooperation between the individual

“This situation of non-cooperation between the individual and society is reflected in the narrowing of goals for public education”

and society is reflected in the narrowing of goals for public education, that is, there is scant attention given to moral or community life. The British moral philosopher Iris Murdoch sees the current state of moral chaos arising from the fragmentation of the modern scientific outlook and the subsequent loss of a shared, public idea of moral good. Like Dewey, she notes that harmony comes from the individual striving for the good within a good society, and that human capacities need the context of community in order to flourish.

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, while pointing to the “malaises” of modern society, also suggests that there is a moral upside to emphasis on the self, which he calls the “ethic of authenticity.” Perhaps, he says, self-fulfillment masks a moral ideal, that of being true to oneself. I like to imagine the “authentic” individual feeling a responsibility for the common

good of the community in which he or she lives. The moral life, then, would combine both inner and outer motivations. How can we educate toward such a vision? What are our responsibilities to others, to ourselves, to the local community, to society at large?

Premises on Art and Morality

In his *Republic*, Plato laid the ground for a reverent feeling toward art in its moral, educational, and political significance. Within this traditional viewpoint are many modern thinkers, including the late novelist John Gardner, who claimed that art is essentially and primarily moral and life-giving, both in its process and in what it says:

True art is *by its nature* moral. We recognize true art by its careful, thoroughly honest search for and analysis of values. It is not didactic because, instead of teaching by authority and force, it explores, open-mindedly, to learn what it should teach...moral art tests values and rouses trustworthy feelings about the better and the worse in human action.

Here Gardner echoes Dewey and foreshadows thinkers like educational philosopher John Rethorst. Quoting Iris Murdoch, who says that “teaching art is teaching morals,” John Rethorst builds a case that both art and morals are “good for the soul,” and, furthermore, that both are fundamentally enterprises of the imagination. It is the fully engaged, imaginative student who receives the best moral education, simply by taking both an active role in understanding, and also responsibility for self-education.

Art and morality are a necessary dual presence in education, and imagination is the vehicle of artistic work and of the appreciation of art. Out of open-ended imaginative processes and the ambiguity that characterize art come the possibility for the parallel understanding of morality. The artistic frame of mind is fundamentally a moral one. It depends upon a deep-seated feeling for the truth, a commitment to justice, and trust in one’s inner capacities, encompassing the ideals of imaginative thinking, heart-warmed feeling, and moral action.

Waldorf: Values-Based Education as a Process of Self Development

The same commitment can be seen in a Waldorf School, the home of a values-based education. Chief among the values Waldorf Education espouses are those of reverence, trust, and faith in the gradual unfolding of the developing human being. Moral

growth is as essential as physical and intellectual growth, and is nurtured in everything, from the smallest consciously-formed gesture (watch a kindergarten teacher carefully folding a cloth) to the grandest idea elegantly stated (hear a high school teacher describe the flowerlike pattern formed by tracing the arcs of the orbit of Venus.) The moral component lies in the reverence, whether for things like play-cloths or for scientific truths.

To begin to understand the development of children it is necessary to note the central place of love in their growth, especially their moral growth. When the child is very young, she receives the world and all its gifts with open arms. The world is good to the young child as she basks in the love of her parents, in the care she

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JOAN CALDARERA

is a high school humanities instructor at San Francisco Waldorf School (SFWS), where she has served in the past at every level of teaching—early childhood, grade school, high school English and drama—and in the administration as both High School Chair and Head of Administration. A founding parent of the school in 1979, she is the mother of four alumni, two of whom were graduated from the high school, which opened in 1997. She was a long-time delegate from SFWS to the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, and was representative from Northern California on that group’s Leadership Council for 5 years. Ms. Caldarera is currently conducting research towards a doctorate in education through a joint program of University of California Davis and Sonoma State University called Capital Area North Doctorate in Educational Leadership. Her dissertation is entitled, “Through the Lives of the Teachers: How Waldorf Class Teachers Think about Morality, Waldorf Education, and the Arts in the 21st Century.”



CLIENTS IN CONVERSATION

Rose Feerick and Owen Brown

Interview with Jillian McCoy, Communications Associate

SIF investors Rose Feerick and Owen Brown share something very special in common—both have opened investment accounts at RSF for their children. I recently sat down with them to learn more about why they made that decision and what a financial education looks like in their families.

Jillian: What is your personal money story — how did you come to be an RSF investor?

Owen: RSF was a client of mine a number of years ago when the organization was interested in exploring the development of private bonds. I was so taken by Mark Finser and RSF's lending principles that I decided to become a client at that time.

My children, who all attended the San Francisco Waldorf School, are now in college and beyond. I decided earlier this year to put a little bit of money for each of them into RSF investment accounts, because I wanted them to understand that the benefits of the Waldorf education that they received should also be made available to other children. I also wanted them to have clearer insight and connection to enterprises and organizations that I feel akin to and I felt that they would, as well.

Rose: I inherited a financial portfolio when I was 21, and that got me into seeking a way to invest money that I felt good about.



Owen Brown with his wife Alison and their children — Aaron, Hannah, and Jacob.

The first step of that was discovering that I didn't feel good about a lot of what was in my financial portfolio.

I also sit as director of an organization that asks, "How can money be aligned with our Christian faith?" Through this work, I got to know RSF. What I was drawn to was that RSF also is looking for the connections between money and spiritual transformation.

I invested some money from my own personal savings. I've also invested some money for my young children, who are 11 and 8. We actually made a date and went up to the office to open their accounts together. That was a lot of fun.

Jillian: Rose, when you brought your children in that day, did they understand what they were coming in for?

Rose: I brought them in on a vacation day. I said, "On Monday, mom's setting the agenda, and we're going to go to the city, and we're going to invest some of your college savings." On the drive up, I took some time to explain to them what we were doing.

They know that my work involves money, and they know that I'm very critical of a lot of what happens as normal in our culture. In my life, I have found some places where money can do some really wonderful stuff in the world, and I think that's where God is. I told them, "That's what I feel like this investment is, and here are the kinds of businesses it supports."

Jillian: What have been your approaches to teaching your children about money?

Owen: I showed them what our family expenses were, and what it cost to live in San Francisco—to make the mortgage, car payments, and so forth. I tried to inculcate in them that cost is different from value, that many wonderful things have no cost, that they should be very



Rose Feerick on vacation in Yellowstone with her sons Ian and Roddy.

aware that it's quite easy to be enslaved by your possessions, and to be careful of that.

Rose: I work in the whole area of opening conversations about money. In my family I try to have money be an open conversation; I like to demystify it. Once a year, I set our family budget.

Then the family budget is on the bulletin board in the middle of the living room, right there for everybody to see.

I don't know what they actually understand. I try to keep it open, and if they have questions, then we can just talk about it.

This year, I increased their allowance another dollar, and now we're working on saving and giving money.

Owen: I really agree with that. I think it's really good to encourage your children to give money away. It lightens the heart.

Rose: My younger son likes to go to the store and get something that costs more than he has. So we work it out and talk about loans. I let him do that, because I feel like he's living in a world where credit will be a part of his life.

Jillian: Do these conversations about money change as children get older?

Rose: Definitely. It's obviously age-appropriate as they move up. I think the basic values they're getting now are a little boy version of what will come later. Part of what I really want to teach them next is how they use money: that there are ways to use money in a way that does not bring life, and there are also ways to use money in a way that does.

Owen: From our own experience, it wasn't until they were in high school that they became thinly aware that the private schools and the things around our house actually cost something. So then we began to have those types of conversations. I guess that we still wanted to prepare them to live in the world and understand the various tradeoffs that one must make without feeling overly burdened by them. That is our goal in all things. And it has guided us as they became older and more aware.

My wife and I are much less concerned about their material wealth and more concerned about their spiritual and experiential wealth.

We noticed, that as our children grew older, they became more attracted to things in which money did not play a big part — cello or oboe lessons, or

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OWEN BROWN

and his wife Alison live in San Francisco, in the same house in which they brought up their three children. Owen has been founder or served in senior management positions in businesses as varied as software, banking, and product certification. He is on board committees for Free the Slaves, Playworks, Or Shalom, and the I and G Charitable Foundation. Owen is currently Managing Director of 4128 Associates, a boutique management consulting firm. An accomplished writer and painter, he wishes he were a better pianist, as do those instrumentalists whom he has attempted to accompany.

ROSE FEERICK

is the Director of Harvest Time, an ecumenical Christian ministry that invites wealthy Christians to engage with questions of money as a doorway to spiritual transformation. Rose grew up in an Irish Catholic family that emphasized kindness, ethics, integrity, and generosity. As a young adult, she inherited a substantial financial portfolio. Since then, she has been searching for ways that money can move through her life as an instrument of love and justice. Rose is also a mother who enjoys chanting with monks in monasteries, visiting with friends in taverns and riding rollercoasters with her sons. She lives in Half Moon Bay, CA.



CASE STUDY

Crafting Renewed Community in Detroit

By Kelley Buhles, Program Manager, Philanthropic Services

In Brightmoor, a neighborhood in northwest Detroit, an abundance of community spirit is brewing in a high school summer program. During the summer of 2009, in partnership with several community groups, administrators of the Detroit Community High School (DCH), an RSF grantee and former borrower, began a series of public art projects that have profoundly impacted Brightmoor.

The most recent project was the Johannes Tree Dome Park. Designed by internationally recognized landscape artist Johannes Matthiessen, students cleared out five abandoned lots in the neighborhood to create a listening space in the shape of an ear. As part of a previous art installation, students carved sandstone sculptures, while working on the neighborhood streets. As they worked, neighbors came by to see what was going on; then students and administrators began giving neighbors short lessons on stone carving. Eventually, over the course of the summer, all kinds of people who were not directly linked to the school got involved. It became apparent that a new community was being built around this very public art project. Together all participants were given a forum for discussing the identity of their community. In trying to determine what to carve for the art installation the group found themselves asking, “What does this mean? Who does it stand for?”



This project was not only transformational for the city spaces, but also for the students. One of the youth said, “While working at the Johannes Tree Dome Park, I learned the true meaning of fulfilling a person’s dream. Now I can say ‘WOW’, I helped make this possible. I have just transformed this disgrace into a beautiful place.”

During the cleanup project, students found an empty garage on one of the abandoned lots and with neighborhood support, they transformed it into a workshop. Students brought in work benches and cut holes in the walls to let in light. In this workshop, the students started to carve and install wood signs for the Tree Dome Park. Soon neighbors and other community organizations began requesting signs as well—a business opportunity became clear. The students named themselves the Brightmoor Woodworkers and turned an after-school program into a growing business.

Bart Eddy, Director of School/Community Partnerships at DCH, describes the project as, “Curbside entrepreneurship; it is entrepreneurship from the streets.” This new business has reinvigorated the neighborhood. One local neighbor who runs a day care has found that the sign has brought her more business, and more important, it has reconnected her to her community.

In addition to these projects, the students also supported a children’s art program, created a memorial garden in honor of a deceased classmate, launched another business using bicycle trailers, created gardens, and decorated local abandoned houses with art. As a whole, these projects are an inspiring demonstration of the economic and community renewal that can be created through a combination of art and enterprise. ♻️

A local college student partnering with DCH students in the workshop at the Johannes Tree Dome Park .



CASE STUDY

A Profound Guarantee

By Mike Gabriel, Lending Manager

RSF's relationship with the the Waldorf School of Pittsburgh began several years ago when they purchased their current campus. At that time, the school chose a local commercial bank for financing, but we maintained contact over the years. When the school decided to refinance its existing loan in February 2011, they chose RSF given our strong mission alignment and track record financing Waldorf Schools.

Through the underwriting process, we identified a need to support the loan with additional collateral given current housing and property market conditions. At the same time, we challenged ourselves and the school to go beyond a conventional guarantee. Through our experience working with Waldorf Schools we have learned that from a financial standpoint, a school is only as strong as its community.

We discussed the idea of creating a guarantee community with the school's management and board. This guarantee could come in the form of individual investments for as little as \$1,000 in RSF's Social Investment Fund, and represent a fraction of the total loan amount. What was more important for RSF was not the actual dollar amount of the guarantees but the number of people who participated. Participation rate is one important indicator of a community's strength and carries a lot of weight in the credit and underwriting process.

The school was initially skeptical about asking for guarantees due to potential overlaps with its annual fundraising efforts, but also open to trying new ways of strengthening its community. Historically, guarantee communities take some time to cultivate but the Waldorf School of Pittsburgh was able to raise a total of \$50,000 to support the loan from 34 individuals in under two months. This exceeded all of our expectations and what the school realized was that its community was much stronger than it initially thought.

"The refinancing of our school was truly a transformational event and brought our community together in ways that have even surprised our board and leadership team," said Russ Sabo, Treasurer and Board Member. "Through our interactions with the RSF team, we reinforced a desire to bring the values of a Waldorf education



The school raised \$50,000 through 34 new accounts in the RSF Social Investment Fund.

to the broader Pittsburgh community." The guarantee community to support the loan was a new way for people to become engaged while also supporting other high impact social enterprises through RSF's Social Investment Fund.

The impact at RSF was just as profound. We welcomed 34 new individuals to join us in our mission to change how the world works with money. The more mission-aligned investors RSF welcomes, the stronger our community becomes and ultimately the more positive impact we have.

On a personal level, it was inspiring for me to really get to know the people we were lending to. The school's Business Manager was gracious enough to host Ted Levinson and me at her home during our visit. We shared meals and stories with her family; this relationship ultimately helped make the "financial transaction" more meaningful. Prior to RSF, I worked in the microfinance sector and did not always get a chance to develop close relationships with people on the other side of the deal because clients were half way around the world. Working with the the Waldorf School of Pittsburgh helped me understand why we strive to engage in financial transactions that are direct, transparent, personal, and based on long-term relationships. 🌀

“Morality in the Sphere of Education”

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must receive, unable as she is to begin with, to care for herself. As the young child grows through the first seven or so years, a foundation for life is firmly laid if she can be filled with a mood of gratitude, toward, for example, the light of the sun, the fruits of the earth, or the nurturing of the adults around her.


In the middle part of childhood, this thankfulness gives rise to love. Gratitude does not disappear, just as the roots remain even when the stem grows from them, and it must continue to be cultivated, but the “stem and leaves” of the growing child’s moral life are now ready to be tended. When he visited grade school classes in the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Rudolf Steiner reportedly asked the children, “Do you love your teachers?” If they answered with an enthusiastic yes, then he was sure the education was proceeding as he hoped, for it is out of love that children from around seven to fourteen learn. One of the things they learn is to love learning, and another is to seek and love beauty in the world, in all its forms.

Out of love grows the blossom of adolescence: responsibility. Responsibility to oneself, to others, and to the world manifests in the heartwarming idealism of youth. If our young people feel it is their duty to right the wrongs they see around them as they seek the truth, then they have discovered duty. The great German man of letters, Johann Goethe, defined duty as what arises “when one loves what one commands oneself.” When the point is reached that the young person can say he loves what he commands himself, then his moral education has blossomed into fruition. Gratitude-Love-Duty. In this metamorphosis, love is the center, the turning point.

In this way, children learn holistically in the Waldorf Schools—through the path of inner development. Effective long-term learning occurs when the topics presented resonate with the students’ need to know, and when that knowledge builds upon memory, experience, and active engagement with increasing sophistication. The imaginative and eminently practical play encouraged in the kindergarten is transformed through the twelve-year curriculum to the imaginative, disciplined, and practical thinking of the high school

graduate. Just as the love of language and stimulation of imagination are the building blocks for reading and self-expression in the kindergarten, imaginative learning in the grade school leads to understanding and connecting to the world in the high school. I am reminded of the oft-quoted phrase of Rudolf Steiner’s that many Waldorf schools use to describe their 12-year mission: “Receive them in reverence, educate them with love, let them go forth in freedom.”

The task of a good education is to invite into the world the capacities that children seem to have within them. That is to say that a bad education assumes the value of impressing or imposing the superior values of the current order of things. This latter assumption is what guides standardized testing, as all that can be asked by the current body of authority is to recapitulate what is—one cannot “test” for the not-yet-known. And yet, virtually every educator trusts in the long-term pedagogical value of discovery, of learning through experimentation, experience, and even failure. In the end, whether a child is at play in the kindergarten, a grade schooler is writing a poem, or a high school student is exploring quantum physics, it is the process “owned” by the student in its wholeness, the capacity for bringing an imagination, an idea, or an ideal into the discipline and gristmill of reality, regardless of outcome, that holds the key for life-long learning and inspiration. These capacities are the building blocks of tomorrow’s innovators and entrepreneurs.

The key elements of Waldorf education can reframe the questions and broaden the conversation among educators and parents in the wider community about how we educate children to become more fully human, that is, more morally secure, in today’s high tech world. At the essence is a more integrated way of viewing children, teachers, and schools. A socially just world requires that its citizens have flexibility of thinking to respect the capacities and freedom of each individual, and understands that true equality is essential in governing and in the creation of policies and laws. The economic world will be sustaining when self-interested behavior is transformed into a more altruistic—more moral—practice. 

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dress-making lessons — so that they could actually be satisfied with an activity from their own initiative. We tried to make it more values based without ignoring the fact that we do live in a world of finance and exchange.

Jillian: What kinds of challenges have you encountered?

Rose: One of the challenges that I work through with my children is they go to a private Catholic school in a very affluent neighborhood. What they see day-in and day-out is a pretty affluent lifestyle. Our own day-to-day family situation is different than that.

Naturally, they want some of the things that they see. I like to drive used cars, because I feel like it’s a good thing for the environment, and it’s much more cost-effective, etc. And yet, that’s really hard for them, the car that I drive. So that issue is starting to arise.

Sometimes when comparing themselves to their peers they’ll ask “Well, how come we don’t get that?” These kinds of little kid questions are hard for me. I do my best, but I’d be really curious to hear how other parents answer those questions.

Owen: The issue is to separate the individual from their possessions. That is the big deal. I tell my kids, “Okay, we entered this world naked, and that’s how we’re leaving it.” It’s what you do in between that’s important, not what you amass.

Rose: We were on a vacation one time and my kids wanted to go to an amusement park, which would’ve taken up a huge chunk of that vacation budget. They said, “Can we do this?” And I said, “Well, we have to think about what the budget is.”

My older son got very upset. He said, “Every time we want to do something, you talk about the budget.” I started trying to defend my position, and then he said, “I just need to tell you what it feels like for me.” He just wanted me to listen. So now we’re learning how to have the conversation about feelings about money. There’s the number reality, and then there are the emotional realities.

Owen: Feelings really are important, the issue is really, “How do we control our own emotions, our image, and try to have valuable and helpful thoughts, rather than ones that are self-harmful and belittling?” With the first we widen our hearts, and with the other we lose our souls.

It’s a constant struggle to put money in its place. In most instances, it’s a transfer of financial value, not anything more or less than that.

Rose: I agree with you that money can definitely go to the worst of human urges. I also feel like it can do the other, too. That brings us back to RSF for me, because I felt like part of why I took my children up there that day was because I wanted them to see with their own eyes that there are things you can do with your money that are really consistent with your values.


Jillian: So if you had to write a short letter to your child advising them about money and their future, what would you say?

Owen: I want to teach them that they are money’s master, not the other way around. It all comes down to this simple thing: Who’s going to run your life? You or your possessions? If you have a lot of possessions and you’re fearful about them, then you’re prone to despondency and unskillful emotions. But, if you are not fearful about your possessions, then you’re in a better place and more able to receive and give a gift that God gave to us, which is responding to the other, whoever that may be, and honoring them.

So don’t let money put an opaque wall between you and that response. Realize that it’s great to have, but beyond a certain point it can be a device of discord and disharmony, if you do not look at it consciously enough, objectively. So that’s what I hope for them. And in truth it’s their lives.

Rose: What I want to teach them first of all, is that money always carries with it a certain spirit, and it can be a spirit of fear and greed, or it can be a spirit of hope and love; and that whenever possible, that they can choose the latter.

I want to encourage them to allow money to flow not just from the spirit of God, which is how we talk about it in our family, but also to support the movement of their own spirit in the world. So almost to ask the question first, “What is it that their life is about? And then how can the resources flow to support that?” — the money serves their call, not their call serves the money.

I would also want them to know that money is like connective tissue in our culture. I hope they would see that there is a connection between any money that moves through their lives and other human beings. 

Join Us at These Events

For the latest on RSF's participation in conferences and events, check out our "Where We'll Be" page at rfsocialfinance.org/about/where-we'll-be

Sustainable Food Summit

1/17/12–1/19/12
San Francisco, CA
www.sustainablefoodssummit.com

Confluence Philanthropy Conference 2012 (sponsor)

1/24/12–1/26/12
Sausalito, CA
www.confluencephilanthropy.org

Good Food Chicago (sponsor)

3/15/12–3/17/12
Chicago, IL
www.goodfoodfestivals.com

PlayBIG (sponsor)

3/22/12–3/25/12
Sausalito, CA
playbig.ca

WHAT'S AHEAD

The next *RSF Quarterly* will be published in April 2012 and will focus on Social Finance. We like hearing from you! Please send comments on this issue or ideas for the next to jillian.mccoy@rfsocialfinance.org, call 415.561.6156 or



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