

unfolding human potential



Bringing it all together

A way to become a professional human

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(day 2, transcript by Maartje Janssens)

All the dimensions of our life

I would like to bring us back to the quote that Shanti has been talking about. It's the one about children experiencing their world holistically, through physical, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions.

So I want us to pause for a moment. See if you can sit more upright with your feet on the floor. And then look towards the light. We had the light all around us. I've been told by brain researchers that that is stimulating to our brains and relaxes us. Don't strain yourself but just come back into this moment and look easily. Take three breaths, as deeply and as fully as you can. And when you've taken those three breaths, you just look around. Look at the people in the room: who we've been together, who we are in this moment. We do that for our children all the time. Sometimes we forget to do it for ourselves.

My point here is that we really have to be vigilant. If we talk about holistic, then we have to be vigilant about bringing in all of the dimensions of our life, in whatever setting we are. I know that many of us feel really full at this moment. And it's worth considering what it is that you need at this moment. Is it just a moment of reflection? Or do you need to take a walk by yourself? Consider individually what you might need for that digestive process of this fullness that you have. And now I just like to fill up a few more spaces.

On purpose, congruency, learning holistically, curiosity and humanity

One of the things that we've heard about is the importance of listening, asking good questions, reflecting. And all of those are capacities that we have as human beings. With *Learning for Well-being*, we've identified some basic capacities that we as human beings all have, including listening, reflecting, using the imagination, subtle sensing, paying attention to our bodies, and so forth.

I would like to mention some of the threads that I've noticed throughout our time together.

One is on purpose: what do we put at the center of whatever we're doing? That varies from time to time. But it's an important question to always ask ourselves. The other thing that I've heard a lot was the one of congruency. I heard people talk about structures and processes. There's often a tension between the two. But it is important to have both. One provides stability, the other provides flexibility. And together they allow us to move and to act.

Furthermore, we spoke about certain qualities that are important. The qualities that I particularly paid attention to were the qualities of learning, being a constant learner. One of the challenges that I would offer is learning holistically: physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. It's learning in all of those ways.

Next, we discussed the importance of curiosity. That goes with learning, but it's not the same as learning. We're really trying to cultivate our curiosity, in ourselves as well as our children. We also spoke about remembering our humanity. We heard a lot about vulnerability and about, being in a sense humble about what we know. I often joke that I really don't believe in experts. I only believe in expertise. Because we're all experts at something. And so it's taking the position of expertise rather than experts.

The narrative of becoming, more finally and deeply human

The last thing I would like to mention is our discussion about narratives. In most cases we talked about personal narratives, our biography, who we are as individuals, what we bring to this moment in time. And I think that links to the film *Down to Earth*. Because what we are aspiring to is a paraphrase of something that Albert Schweitzer supposedly said: '*Our only task is to ever more be more finally and deeply human*'. So what does that mean for each of us, and what does that mean for what we can bring to our children?

It's that narrative that's like the big narrative. One of the people at our table today was talking about the importance of archetypes, and there is kind of an archetype. We saw that in the wisdom keepers. They represent something that is a kind of a mastery about being human in a holistic sense. So I would like to come back to the core practices, the core capacities of listening, inquiry, subtle sensing, imagining – all of those are capacities that we have as human beings. And we can take those more and more until we become masters at being human beings. Luis Manuel Pinto joked to me recently and said: I was an amateur – that's something else. And I started liking that phrase: *an amateur human*. Because it conveys in some sense that there is a way to become *a professional human*. And I think that's what we were seeing in the wisdom keepers: that there's a commitment to that professional humanity.