

Our Youth Are Being Shortchanged

by Liz Gibbons

In cultures where doing is emphasized, the idea of just being is not tolerated. You are frittering away time. One just can't *be*.

When we are born we are helpless and need someone to meet our needs. Childhood is a time of exploration, of learning to live on this earthly plane, of discovering who we are, what our interests are. But society shortchanges children, especially today when they are not allowed to just be kids. They are seldom allowed to play with no direction. Unsupervised play is a necessary part of childhood. Their play involves fantasy, imagination and imitation. It allows children to express themselves, explore, discover, and gain understanding of the world. Instead they are shuttled from one activity to another and constantly told what to do. School takes up their days and they are saddled with so much homework that they have little free time. Instead of playing outside most children spend their free time inside, perhaps playing video games or interacting with a tablet or cell phone. When with a group of other kids, usually each one is looking at their cell phone, and there is little interaction among them. Whereas when we were kids we played outside, made up games to play, were creative, and were allowed to explore nature and the environment in which we lived.

How has the life of youth changed so much in a generation or two? You can come up with many possibilities. Regardless of the reasons it boils down to the fact that humanity does not live in harmony with nature's design, according to Joseph Chilton Pearce in his book *Magical Child*. He indicates that Western society's childbirth, parenting and education practices damage our children. The hospital birth process is completely unnatural. It used to be that mothers were often drugged during childbirth, and the baby was whisked away to the nursery. The important bonding process of the first hour after birth was delayed. In countries where children are born at home, they are carried on the mother from birth on, able to nurse at will, and able to be aware of their surroundings. They are not isolated in a crib in a darkened quiet room. Connection with the Mother is important until seven years old when they enter another phase in their development. With children often now starting school in pre-kindergarten programs, they are being denied the necessary time and environment to develop naturally. When children are allowed to develop as nature intended then they are able to fulfill their potential.

When it is said the youth is wasted on the young, probably this is incorrect. Perhaps it should be that "The essence and real purpose of life has been wasted by humanity" or some thought along that line. In Western societies we think we are smarter than Mother Nature and have to outsmart it. **Sadly**, we are not aware of the natural guidance which is inborn.