



A Conversation With Annemarie Roeper: A View From the Self

Almost immediately in meeting Annemarie Roeper, your eyes are drawn to a distinctive silver necklace that she wears. The necklace depicts an adult who seems to be gently supporting the arms of a child as the child takes beginning steps. Clearly, this piece of jewelry is a symbolic expression of Annemarie's child-centered philosophy of education, or as she prefers, philosophy of life. Encircled by the protective arms that provide emotional and spiritual safety, the supported child is able to take his place as a citizen of the world through self-actualization and interdependence.

At the core of Annemarie's beliefs is the unwavering conviction that emotional understanding is the key to the complex inner world of the child. Ultimately, with a learning community that fosters empathy, compassion and appreciation for diversity, the child will flourish in a holistic manner.

The genesis of the Roeper philosophy comes from her parents, progressive educators who began a school in Germany. From her father, Annemarie came to know the importance of community and from her mother (a Freudian psychoanalyst) she learned the importance of the inner world. Her future husband, George, was a student at her parents' school and was similarly imbued with these ideas.

Forced to leave Nazi Germany, the family eventually emigrated to America. Shortly thereafter, Annemarie and George were married. In 1941, Annemarie and George moved to Michigan and co-founded the Roeper School, which is still in existence. The underlying principle of the school was based on a model of participatory democracy. This was in stark contrast to the repression that they had fled and the school was a visible and viable reminder of how compassion, concern and empathy could replace the hatred and fear that they left behind. The schools that the family started in Germany, Switzerland, and the United States are beautifully documented in a new film entitled *Across Time and Space* (Golden, 2002).

In 1956, the Roeper School began a transition to a school for gifted children. With the help of eminent experts in the field under the direction of Harry Passow, a plan was developed with a "cooperative, nonhierarchical philosophy and system of education" at its core. Innovative ideas such as a child-centered curriculum that allowed for student choice, multi-age and nongraded classes along with an open classroom design were the norm. Additionally, the Roeper School was one of the first private schools to become integrated and actively looked for students and staff with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds to become part of the school community.

The environment of emotional and psychological safety was the foundation for preparing gifted children to accept social responsibility and it allowed for their heightened sensitivities and intensities to be nurtured and acknowledged. This was also the environment in which George and Annemarie raised their

three children, Tom, Peter and Karen. The atmosphere of respect that they created for their immediate family was one that they shared with the whole school community.

Both during her time at Roeper School and beyond, Annemarie continued her work with gifted children in multiple ways. She felt that it was important that her work go outside the walls of Roeper School. The author of over one hundred articles and two books—*Educating Children for Life: The Modern Learning Community* (1990) and *Annemarie Roeper: Selected Writings and Speeches* (1995)—she continued sharing her ideas through her writings. Currently, she is writing a third book, *The I of the Beholder*, which describes her theories about the mystery of the Self.

Probably one of the most visible means of linking to the outside world was through the co-founding by George and Annemarie of the *Roeper Review*. A well-respected journal in the field of gifted education, the *Roeper Review* is now celebrating its 26th year. It was created as an independent journal that would express differing points of view and so it remains.

The Global Awareness Division of the National Association for Gifted Children was co-founded by Annemarie along with Linda Silverman and Constance Smith. The role of this division is to provide understanding and maintain connections as global citizens and to foster respect for the planet and each other. Annemarie was recognized by the Division as one of their Ambassadors of Peace.

At age 85, Annemarie still maintains her private practice and consultation service in California. She works with parent groups and consults with schools along with her individual work with children. Another current project is the Annemarie Roeper Method of Qualitative Assessment, which she describes as "a method of assessment that incorporates the emotional and spiritual aspects of children into a deeper understanding of who they are." A certification process is being developed to advance this methodology, which builds on establishing a personal relationship with a child and learning about the child's inner agenda.

Michele Kane



Michele Kane is currently a doctoral student at Loyola University, Chicago in the Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Psychology program. Her educational interests have been on child-centered gifted programs that emphasize the affective needs of children. This interest is planned to culminate in a life history of Annemarie Roeper for her dissertation. Currently she is also Gifted Coordinator, Antioch District #34, Antioch, IL; Adjunct Faculty, Northeastern Illinois University, Master of Arts in Gifted Education Program and a career counselor at College of Lake County, Grayslake, IL. Michele is also the co-chair of the Global Awareness Division of NAGC and secretary of the Illinois Association of Gifted Children. She has been a presenter at national and state conferences. Along with her husband Dan, she is the parent of a blended family of six gifted children, which provides plenty of experiences to better understand the emotional lives of gifted individuals. E-mail: mkane@DIST34.LAKE.K12.IL US.

The accomplishments of Annemarie have not gone unnoticed. She was recently awarded the Humanitarian Award in the Service of Victims of Trauma by the International Center for Psychosocial Trauma for her work in the prevention of trauma in children. In 1999, the National Association for Gifted Children presented her with its Distinguished Service Award for her fifty years as a force in gifted education. These awards were given for her lifework of advocacy on behalf of children.

Life stories have been described as having four major functions, "bringing us into accord with ourselves, with others, with the mystery of life and with the universe around us" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 122). There is no story more compelling, no story that presents each of these elements so distinctly, no story that so carefully weaves each with the other as the sacred story of Annemarie Roeper.

Kane: Annemarie, I wonder if we can begin by discussing how your ideas about gifted education originated? Could you start by talking about some of the earliest memories you have of gifted education and your experiences in the field?

Roeper: Well, actually I need to think about this in a framework larger than gifted education in itself. For me, gifted education is one part of my and my family's whole philosophy of life and what has driven us to do the work that we have done. I see education in general as a way of helping children fulfill their own goals in life and how to help them integrate their own goals with that of society as a whole. I believe that gifted children are the advance guard of the evolutionary process that continues on this Earth, and that the gifted show us where we are heading – to what evolution.

Kane: Certainly, as you developed your ideas, there have been people who have influenced your thinking, either major people in the field or other major thinkers, philosophers, or psychologists. Who might those people have been and how did they influence your thinking?

Roeper: Majorly, each of my parents in a different way. They came together and from different points of view. My mother was a psychoanalyst. My father was originally an art historian. He was a soldier in the First World War on the German side, and he came out of that experience with an impassioned desire to make this world a better place. He realized that the only way you can do that is through educating children. My mother came to this from the point of view of having studied with Freud, knowing of the unconscious motivation for behavior and for growth. She came from a different way to the same conclusions, namely that you have to help the child to fulfill his own agenda and also to learn how to deal with everything that comes from the outside. She was dealing with the soul and my father was dealing with the community in which the soul needs to thrive. So they created this boarding school in Germany in which I grew up, against the background of both of their philosophies. I feel that what I have gotten from them was the basis of both my educational life (my philosophy) and my personal growth.

Another very powerful influence in my life was Sig-

mund Freud, who was my mother's idol and professor. In those days, (this is hard to make come alive today) psychoanalysis was like a religion in my circles. It opened up totally new insights into the inner world because he made me aware of the existence of the unconscious and the role it plays in human behavior. I feel I have personally gone through many changes in my life and in my attitudes and yet I still feel I have not basically changed at all. I still feel that the insights that I got from Freud, the way in which he helped me understand human behavior, allowed me to become observant, almost from the day I was born, and understand other people in terms of who they are and not only in terms of what they do or achieve.

I became aware of Freud's theories, probably while I was nursing at my mother's breast, because there were all these psychoanalysts who were her friends and visitors at our house. Understanding people from their point of view was something that I learned very early. I have felt through my long life that this is something that has served me always and it's truly different from many other people. One of the important things I've learned is that we have difficulties dissociating our own inner agenda from that of others. I believe that I have understood people's motivation for their actions actually in a more objective way than one usually does, but it is subjective objectivity because I understand them, I feel who they are, and am able to leave out my own needs and biases. Or, I can also recognize the moment when I don't. This is what has helped in my work with children and adults all through my life and it helps me now with the work I'm doing today – the assessment of gifted children. I am now trying to teach other people a method of assessment which is different from the IQ test, that somehow allows me to try and teach others the basic philosophy on which my whole life has been founded.

Kane: Could you also tell us a little bit more about your own education and the kinds of things you did to educate yourself? I know that most of the education you have are those things that you have been able to choose for yourself. What is interesting to me is that you have been able to live the educational life that you espouse for children.

Roeper: I actually feel that I had a very good education, because I did not have to follow the expectations of the world around me. I educated myself. I read everything, probably, that existed about gifted education as well as psychoanalysis and most of my education, I think, happened because I was an apprentice to life. I was learning everything. I learned so much about running a school as well as about theoretical knowledge about gifted education as well as about psychoanalysis and other areas.

Even though my process of education was unusual, others honored it. For example, in Michigan, it is a law that you cannot be allowed to teach, even in a private school, if you don't have a teacher's certificate. So I was considering leaving the school for long enough to get a teacher's certificate and communicated with the authorities in Lansing. The response I got from the Michigan Board of Education essentially

was that it would be a waste of time if I had to go to get a teaching certificate and the children at Roeper School would be deprived of my presence for that amount of time. I was permitted to teach without a certificate. The official paper was burnt along with everything else we owned when George and I had to flee from the fire in Oakland that destroyed our home. (This was the third time in my life that I had to flee leaving everything else behind; first from my parents' school in Germany, then from Austria, and then the fire in Oakland.)

Maybe I should also mention that last year was the 60th Anniversary of the Roeper School and I got 12 commendations from all different government agencies congratulating either me, personally or the school for having founded it and brought this whole new element of educational philosophy into Michigan as well as the United States. The one that I am the proudest of, actually, is from Senator Carl Levin. Because I felt he understood me better than most of the other commendations, it meant a great deal. There were different ones from government employees, from senators, from the Michigan Board of Education, from the United States Secretary of Education; they came from all sides.

Kane: I wonder if you could elaborate more on your educational background and your training in medicine and most specifically, about the relationship you had with Sigmund and Anna Freud. You are one of a very few who could share a personal story.

Roeper: As I said before, Freud has been in the center of my emotional life from the very beginning, but I also had several personal experiences with him, which were very important. It was my interest in psychoanalysis that led me to study medicine. I studied medicine in 1938 in Vienna, which was interrupted by the Nazis arriving in Vienna and my having to flee a second time. I had two semesters of education in medicine and my purpose was to become a psychoanalyst. During that time I had a 2-hour interview with Sigmund Freud and his daughter, Anna. The reason for this interview was that she was going to teach a course in psychoanalysis for children beginning the following March, which was for people who had a solid background in psychoanalysis. One of the conditions was that you had to be at least 21 to take this course, to have the necessary maturity. I had this interview with Sigmund and Anna in his study where they were asking me about my own background in psychoanalysis and my understanding of it in order to determine that they could make an exception and have me take the course at 19. It was a very, very exciting and emotional interview for me, and at the end of it they accepted me into this course. The course never happened, just as my becoming a doctor never happened because the Nazis moved in and both the Freuds and I had to immediately flee the country.

Kane: In your writings you have also described the profound influence that psychoanalysis has had on your thinking. The whole notion of the development of the Self is a topic that has held your interest over your lifetime.

Is that correct?

Roeper: It is, and the reason why it has held my interest is because I truly feel that the motivation, the impetus for action in human beings' lives, comes from their own inner agenda. And that if we want to change the world (and we know the world is not going where everybody hopes it will go) we need to understand the underlying motivation of people's behavior. So my interest when you ask me about gifted children, my interest in gifted children is deeply embedded in my interest in the world, and in the hopes of curing the world. This also goes back (I have explained where my original influences come from) to the greatest impact on my life, which has only served to confirm this philosophy. It comes from personally experiencing my adolescent years during the Nazi period in Germany and learning how to cope with this unbelievable threat to the Self. We know that it's been a threat to the body of millions of people, but it's also been an unbelievable threat to the individual Self. And how we dealt with it could be a very powerful lesson for the people of the world.

Kane: You have shared that your response to Nazism and the way that you dealt with it was to start a school. Could you talk more about that?

Roeper: Yes. I met my husband George as a student in my parents' school at around the age of seven and he was fifteen. We had this enormous bond to each other and knew that we were going to eventually be married and continue the work of my parents. We both were deeply imbued with that. When we had to emigrate to the United States, our self-esteem, our Selves as it were, had to live through this enormous shock of being seen as so worthless that it would have been better for the world to extinguish the Selves than to allow them to grow. That is almost impossible to describe to those who haven't experienced it. When we hear about the Nazis and about the cruelty and the terrible concentration camps and everything else, we never hear about the death of all these Selves. That, I think, is probably the purpose of my life and of my whole existence. To put an understandable image around the experience of the Nazis, the enormous threat to the individual Self, is probably the purpose for my life.

When we came to America and decided to start a school I remember that to me it seemed mostly a self-healing process, a process to heal my Self and everybody's around me...George's too. Of course his Self wasn't injured like mine because he was my savior. He was helping my Self. But for me starting a school (the Roeper School), educating children in a way that allowed them to be who they were, was the only cure for me that I could think of that in a way fulfilled that purpose. Then having my own children and seeing them grow, realizing that I could create new Selves, and especially when my third child was a daughter and I had somebody who was going to be understanding of what I experienced as a woman, it all helped for my Self to be healed.

But it's still not healed, and anytime somebody acts as

though it wasn't worthy of attention, the whole original pain comes back. Now that I am almost 85, I think I am probably 90% cured. [There are] many people, some in particular, to whom I'm most indebted because of that, and people who in my later years helped me resurrect my own Self. I am thinking that my education was the healing of my Self in all of these ways and that, then, allowed me to use my native abilities to work with thousands of children and adults to open their Selves to them.

Kane: I feel that it is so important that people understand the personal healing aspects that you connect with beginning Roeper School. What other aspects do you remember as important in the creation of Roeper School?

Roeper: The school was originally not a school for gifted children. It was a school that was supposed to allow people to really be themselves. It was a school based on a principle to which I gave a name much later on, but which was functioning all the way through, which I called Self-Actualization and Interdependence (SAI). The goal of education was to help the child to become who he was, which included all the academic work and everything that was needed to help this particular person. It is a mistake to think that if you think about the Soul, academic work is not part of it. It is a very important part of it, but the goal is a different one. The goal is to help the Soul rather than to get into college. So we tried to create the kind of school that allowed children to do that. We realized that one of the basic concepts was the community aspect, that the feeling of being embedded in a supportive community for the Self was most important. That implied many, many ways of working together. That implied, actually, a participatory democracy. As time went on we learned more and more that it wasn't going to work for us to be the benevolent dictators. We needed a group that worked with each other, and that was the staff as well as the children. That was really the basis.

It was actually my husband George who became interested in gifted education when there was a series of articles in the New York Times. There was a real interest in the gifted, and it struck him that the work that we were doing, which always in the end was trying to help save the world, would be more understood by gifted people. Also, that we would be able to understand the gifted and that their need for self-fulfillment was different and maybe stronger, than many others and that we would help them because we needed them to help the World. And so, I think early in the 1950's we began to be interested in gifted education. It was at this time that George met Harry Passow, and Harry put a group of experts together to design a program for gifted children. We spent a week at our school in Michigan just designing this program.

As it worked out, it was a very exciting approach to education, which in actuality we were never able to carry out. The idea was that the first three years like 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade would be skill learning and children would learn everything in terms of mathematical skills and reading skills very intensively, so that all the skills would be taken care of early in the

lives of these children. Then later on we could spend our time to really develop the creative abilities and the needs of the gifted. We never did carry it out and it never was something that you could do in reality. But it was a very interesting vision. Instead, I started with the nursery school - that was my original interest. When I became in charge of the lower school, I created my own approach to gifted education and to education. It was actually different from most other schools because it was community-based. This would have been for nursery school through the first five or six grades. It was a non-graded program, so that ages were mixed. It was a program that included (and it still functions like that) many choices for children, because we felt that one of the things that people need to have is an active involvement in their destiny. We felt that they could, at certain times of the day, choose between music and art and French and math and reading and library, and dance and many other things. These choices changed over the years, and learning what made a good choice was not easy. It really was a totally different approach, and it did include the greater opportunities that gifted children need.

Kane: When you were developing the Roeper School were there any times when you think that maybe you took a wrong turn or headed in the wrong direction?

Roeper: Actually, I think that I am passionately and rigidly devoted to our original ideas. I don't think I took wrong turns, but there were times when my own Self and inner strength weren't there to carry out the mission. In fact, I still feel it's not fulfilled. Because I didn't have enough trust in myself. But as I got older I developed more and more real trust in myself and a real belief that I did know the right direction, even if I couldn't make other people see it and understand it. I also feel that there is a really interesting thing that has been happening to me in my later years. I have the personal support of so many people, so many parents and so many close co-workers and so many friends who trust me even if they don't quite grasp what I am trying to do or even if they can't translate it into their own world.

Kane: You mention that you are clear about your direction. What about the direction of gifted education right now? Are there any areas of research that you think have been misinterpreted or areas that you think should receive more attention than they are receiving?

Roeper: What is research? I feel I have to define it in my own way. Research in terms of gifted education is finding out what is the reality for this child. What I have found to be true more and more is that we are looking in the wrong direction when we concentrate on the cognitive. Gifted children are emotionally very different, and the way you find out is through empathetic listening, leaving out your own agenda. This is what I've done. I feel that I've done enormous research. I've seen hundreds of children. I have looked into the souls of hundreds of children, and I have drawn some very important conclusions from that. How to translate that into the language of research the way it's usually defined is an enormous problem because

much of it is feeling; it is understanding the complexity of emotions and it is very complex. I've hesitated to use Freudian terms because there is so much misunderstanding of them. I remember, actually, when their relevance was displaced by Behaviorism, which by its very definition doesn't touch on how you feel about the world, but how I expect you to react to it.

The world of emotions and the individual is directly connected with their unconscious and from here you can go in different directions. One of them is my strong belief that even though we have a Self, we have enormous connections not only with other Selves, but also with the unknown, with the Universe. And this is what the new gifted children know. When they talk to me they talk about this. It takes the form of talking about death and life, which is not just their fear of dying but also their fear of trying to understand how they can find a place in this indefinable world. The only way we can define it is by including the unknown in our definition, and by also understanding the whole depth of the unconscious.

I had one child a number of years ago who drew a picture and said "The difficulty is that the world in my head and the world in my heart is as big as that which is outside, and I can't explain it to people, and nobody understands it, and that's how I get in trouble." And he drew a picture of a head where flames were coming out of all sides. The only thing that could come out was passion, feelings, and behavior. But what made it happen was not clear to him or anybody else. We never will understand another person totally. It is impossible. But we can know much more about the emotions than is generally known. I know a great deal about the emotions of gifted children. I know what makes them tick, so to say. And I also know that because people don't understand the gifted, they confuse giftedness with pathology and give them pills instead of understanding.

Kane: It seems that each time we talk that you bring the conversation back to the emotions. With everything that you know about the emotional lives of gifted children, how well have you been able to translate these ideas and how much support have you gotten in translating your ideas?

Roeper: I have felt the greatest difficulty in my life is to translate this into the kinds of words that most people would be able to, again, emotionally take in. It is difficult, anyway, to express emotions in words understandable to others. I have often been told that you can do it through music or art or dance or many other ways. I know that's true, but it still doesn't give you the cognitive answer that you need. I am feeling that particularly in the world of gifted education there is a general assumption that gifted children are cognitively different from others. I feel that actually there is not that much difference, no real difference, between cognition and emotions. I think they belong together, but the separation, trying to understand the gifted cognitively only leaves out in my opinion, the soul of the child. Probably in the last twenty years I have found a whole group of people who have supported me, mostly as a person, and a belief in my philosophy. Even

though we may not always completely understand each other, they have given me the feeling that I am not alone in this. This was particularly important when we developed the Qualitative Assessment approach, and there is now a core group who are helping me with this. It has been part of the healing process of my own soul.

Kane: Annemarie, there are three major areas of outreach that you have been involved with during your work in gifted education. One of those has to do with the creation of the Roeper Review. Another has to do with your co-founding the Global Awareness Division of NAGC and the last one has to do with the last twenty years that you have been involved with consultation work, including working with schools and families.

I wonder if you might discuss each one of those areas of outreach and how they are connected to your main goals of working with gifted children and their families. Let's begin by discussing Roeper Review.

Roeper: The Roeper Review was a natural outgrowth, really, of the Roeper School and of our commitment to our philosophy. We always felt that our work was not simply restricted to running the school, but also to try to interact with the world outside of the school and to impact it in whatever way possible. So the Roeper Review was a natural outgrowth of that and became, really, our arm into the outside world, our connection with other people involved in gifted education, other people involved in education and, finally, other people involved in the overall concerns of humankind. The Roeper Review originally, in practical terms, grew out of the journal we had published for several years before. It was at first a communication among the parents of the school. I seem to remember a day when Ruthan [Brodsky], who was doing that, who was involved in that type of outreach already several years before the beginning of the Roeper Review suggested to George and me that there was a need for a journal that would go beyond the school that would include our feelings and thoughts and experiences with gifted education but also be open to opinions and experiences other than Roeper. It was the three of us who worked together very closely. At first, George and I read every article that went into the Review. I think it was together that we created the structure of an advisory board and the annual meetings of this board. And it followed kind of logically that there would be a small conference connected with it for teachers and parents and later on other school districts and private schools which were in the area. The purpose was a multiple one; one to spread the Roeper philosophy, the Roeper ideas, but also to create an interchange of practices beyond the school itself.

It was carefully worked out that the Roeper Review should be as interesting as possible. It was, on purpose, not under the board's responsibility, so that it would not be exposed to internal trends and practices such as enrollment trends and other waves of experience. I think I have said before that we at first participated in reading all the material. George and I participated in the board meetings long after we had retired from the school and we never officially, never at all

became more meaningful to us because we did not give up that activity. Ruthan created the structure of editors including the contributing editors and the whole point of view.

Kane: Please share more about what the experience was like for you in the creation of this journal and how you experienced your own creativity coming through on these pages for so many years? What contributions did you make personally to Roeper Review?

Roeper: It created a powerful extension to our life's work at Roeper School, and after we left Roeper it became even more meaningful to us. All of my contributions to the journal were connected with the emotions of gifted children. The high point for me in my relationship to the *Roeper Review* probably is the publication of Volume 20, Number 3, in February, 1998 where Sharon Lind and I were the guest editors. It was about perspectives on the Self of the gifted. We collected articles from different people about the Self of the gifted child. To me, it was quite a wonderful edition which dealt with those things that we have always been most concerned about. Almost every article in it depicts a respectful point of view of the Self and I am looking at it right now feeling that I wish we could someday reprint some of the most important articles in it. I suppose this edition more than anything else allowed me to continue to express and describe all we knew about gifted children.

Kane: How about other researchers right now in the field? What topics do you think researchers should be focusing their attention on? Where do you see research headed?

Roeper: That's a big question. First of all, I would like to define research differently than most people. I think observation from an unbiased place is the basic research, and that is the kind of research I have done all my life. I think what is really needed is research into the unconscious motivation for people's actions. I should like to say that differently. I have this image of enormous hostilities floating around the world and coming down onto it whenever the clouds break. To me, what is happening in the world now, which is all that hostility, all those wars, all the terrible injuries that people do to each other, are like an emotional thunderstorm that is breaking out in different places at different times. It's that area where I feel research is needed, but in order to do that there needs to be a mutual understanding that research is only useful if it can be helpful. I think that there needs to be a basis of understanding. What do we feel is missing in this world and how can we achieve a change? I should say that at this point, in spite of everything, I am feeling more hopeful than I have all of my life and that is because I feel that there is enormous evolution happening and that there are gifted children today whose purpose truly is to create a better world. My purpose at this moment is to try to create a basis for them to truly grow in.

Kane: Many people are unaware of all of the consulting work in gifted educations and work in private practice

that you have done since you moved to California after retiring from Roeper School. How would you describe the work you have done since that time?

Roeper: Since I retired from Roeper School, I have worked with so many more gifted children, probably more than most people because I always had a direct contact with them. There are between probably 500 and 1000 individual children whom I have seen. I have drawn many conclusions and written much about it. I am also in the process of writing a book called *The I of the Beholder*, which will share many of these case histories and will show the trends which go through the new developments in a gifted child's education, a gifted child's experience, and a gifted child's personal growth.

In my work after I left Roeper I opened the Roeper Consultation Service. There I developed my own method of evaluation which followed my whole philosophy of gifted children and of education and understanding. I worked closely with parents and children and the whole process is based on observation and empathy and creating a bond of trust. Through this method I learned that I could, in a short period of time, find out a great deal about these children who are usually eager to share their experiences with me. It takes a few minutes to actually go through a counter-evaluation where I have to pass a rigid emotional test. When that's over it's almost as though the floodgates open, because there is nothing I have to do but listen, and listen with a third ear, which is another way of doing research. I have learned so much from these children because I have had so much hands-on personal experience. I have been able to draw many general and psychological conclusions from this work, which I published in *Roeper Review* and other journals and hopefully will still continue.

One of the results of my work was that parents learned to look at their children from the point of view of the child's own inner agenda and they almost always felt they learned a great deal, simply from the evaluation. The evaluation also gives me a rather accurate IQ, very close to test results. So there was an immediate positive consequence of the evaluation, but it also gave me the opportunity, then, to communicate this to teachers and give teachers a point of view in terms of understanding gifted children and all children. There has been more and more interest in this method. Over the last three or four years we have crystallized this into something called Qualitative Assessment which I am now in the process of training other people to do. So that is a kind of outreach from the original Roeper School work.

Kane: Talking about a new book makes me think of an earlier book you wrote which is called Educating Children for Life. I suppose that your writing is another means of outreach. What were the main ideas that you wanted to share in that work?

Roeper: I believe that the purpose of education is to allow the person to develop in the direction in which they are going, to fulfill their own inner agenda. And that is why I called the book *Educating Children for Life*, in contrast to education for college. I think that children

(it's actually not a choice) are driven to fulfill their own agenda, and when we impose other agendas on them it only results in their bumping their emotional heads against the demands that are made of them. And that, then, gives them a headache.

Kane: And the last area of outreach is your co-founding of the Global Awareness Division of NAGC. I know that this was an important accomplishment for you. Could you describe your experiences in that regard?

*Roeper: Yes. Initially, there were three people involved. Besides me there were Linda Silverman and Constance Smith. We all felt that to understand and really help gifted children we needed to know about the world in which they live and in which they grow up. The task included helping these children to grow and to do the things they needed to do, but the task also included preparing a world for them which would receive them with respect. The term Global Awareness is not simply a geographic term. It really means that we need to understand the environment of the child as well as the child in relation to it. I believe the global awareness aspect to be more important today than ever before. The reason I feel that way is because I also feel that there are many more gifted children today and that these gifted children see where the world is lacking. Almost every child I speak to has some idea of how they are able to make the world a little better or how they are understanding what is wrong with the world. I also would like to explain global awareness in other terms which probably have not often been brought up, mainly "global" in terms of going beyond academics. In order to really give gifted children the support they need, we need to be globally aware of who they are, what they need, their creativity, their physical ability, their artistic ability, their musical interests, their movements, theater, and all the other areas which in my mind are a part of global awareness. This I am hoping to see much more represented in the *Roeper Review*.*

Kane: We are sitting here, and it is twilight; the sun is starting to go down. We have a beautiful vista as far as the eye can see. There is a great expanse of water, mountains and clouds. As you look out over this grand vista, I wonder if you could share what you would like your legacy to be and how you would like to be remembered.

Roeper: First of all, thank you, because this great vista is part of my whole worldview. This is a vista that I have from my living room. I have realized that I have to do my work, my creative output, and even my work with children and parents in front of this view because it is also part of global awareness. It shows that we are one world and that we need to understand all the interdependence we have and how to work within it, protecting the integrity of each individual and at the same time protecting the integrity of the world. That is much easier said than done, because human relations are so complex.

My legacy is unchanged from the day that we started the school. My legacy is to put the spotlight on the Soul of the human being so that we can stop hurting and diminishing it and avoiding it. I am hoping that there will be schools that follow the Roeper School philosophy. It is my hope that this legacy will, as time goes on, become a new point of view in education and that many new approaches will develop from it. Although this is a philosophy that my family has developed there are many people the world over who live by the same ideas. I want to stress that there are many other people who have been directly involved in supporting me personally and the work that I am doing. Those who have recently been most involved are Anne Beneventi, Linda Silverman, Michael Piechowski, Ellen Fiedler, Betty Meckstroth, Betty Maxwell, and Michele Kane. I apologize for leaving out others. There is much, much more to learn about this approach to education. Once it becomes a familiar approach then its complexity and far-reaching consequences will become apparent.

Kane: Thank you so much. We've come full circle. We've come all the way back to the beginnings.

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