

Often, we talk about the ideas of a community. You all know this, and it is nothing new for you. I mention this fact because I want to tell you about an observation I made in this connection. Let us assume that the whole community life seems to work out beautifully. Everyone works well in his school office; everyone suppresses his egotistical tendencies; all individuals form one big community. Yet, no good community spirit need exist. The most important thing may still be lacking: the real link that binds us, which is the trust and respect we have for each other. If these vital factors are missing, every person here remains a lonely, self-centered individual.

Very simple everyday observations may prove what kind of community spirit exists. I see the manner in which the student, whose job is to act as waiter, is asked to get the food. Not always, but often, the tone of the customer's voice has a sound which frightens me, for it is cold and impersonal. He is hungry: that is the main issue. It does not seem to matter that the waiter's food is getting colder and colder. The customer does not care. But the waiter is a friend of the customer's. Has the customer forgotten that, or did he never know it?

Sometimes, I overhear conversations about the weakness of another person, a clear, hard, sharp judgment; that is all right. But sometimes, I hear something which makes me sad because there is the same shocking, selfish, cold attitude I noticed at the dinner table, caused by lack of friendship.

In the assembly I listen to the way announcements are being made. Often, I notice that though the announcements are unpleasant, they are made with real interest and friendship for the student concerned. It also happens that the announcements are made in a completely cold and disinterested way. In this case, the impersonalness causes a feeling of "not belonging together".

I have often heard people discussing the Windsor Mountain School. You may criticize the school. You may criticize sharply. But, when a person from the school discusses the place, one should feel that his roots are there. I need not add more examples to demonstrate to you that though we have a well-organized community life, some of you have not as yet fully understood what we mean by community spirit.

What is this community spirit? How does it manifest itself? At first, I want to tell you what it is not. I often mention the word kindness. By that I do not mean only ordinary politeness. That is just a matter of form which has nothing to do with genuine community spirit. Neither do I mean the try-to-understand-everything attitude, nor the all-forgiving and all-loving attitude. No; there can be a spirit of real friendship, and still a clear, definite, and if necessary critical attitude. To have a community spirit does not mean to give up one's own personality and to exist only for other people. This is impossible for ordinary human

beings. Our feelings would be insincere if we were to call that community spirit.

It is easier to outline the negative rather than the positive attitude of community life, but I will now try to give you the positive side of it. An attitude is required which does not see only the outer appearance of people and things. By nature our eyes can only see the surface; they cannot pierce through men and things. But we do not see only with the eye. We also see with our heart which can pierce the surface. If your eye is the governing factor and your heart is subordinate, then you will never be able to achieve real community spirit. Only in cases where your heart is the governing factor and your eye the subordinate one, can you have the basis for acquiring the right attitude. Your eye must obey your heart.

Sometimes you do let your eye obey your heart but at other times you let your heart obey your eye. Just observe yourself. Pretend there are two people doing the same thing. One of them you like and the other one does not mean anything to you.

If the one you like does a thoughtless deed, you simply say: "Well, he did not mean it. It was just carelessness on his part."

The other person will be judged harshly because you looked at him with your eye and not with your heart; you simply judge the outer appearance of his deed.

All of us, young and old, can misjudge people. It can happen in a teacher's group and in your group in the school. When you know people better you look "into them" deeper. When they are not so well known to you, you are likely to judge them too quickly, and only by outer appearances.

These are some examples to help you see the difference between surface seeing and seeing in depth. Many of us lack the ability to have deeper insight into people. Often, we become egotistic; we think only of ourselves. The forces of our hearts exhaust themselves by looking after the ego. We block ourselves in this way. We hinder our development into fuller personalities. To have a deeper insight into life, to see with the heart, to see with the impulse of love, cannot be ordered, but I think that a basis for these feelings can be created, it can be exercised in the small examples I mentioned.

You can think of similar circumstances yourself. Hardly an incident passes in your life which does not give you the opportunity to fight the attitude of looking only at the surface of life. If you succeed in acquiring a deeper insight into matters, then a first and vital step has been taken. Though it is a step which cannot be omitted, it is only the first step. Perhaps, we can thus create a basis for increased friendliness among human beings.

A SECOND SUNDAY MORNING SPEECH

Years ago, in one of my speeches about bravery, I ended my speech with the following words: "Even if a great feeling of loneliness should come upon you, with the realization of your insignificance in this immense world, or, if with a friend's death you suddenly become aware of the shortness of man's life; then you realize that one must face forces against which one is too small to compete, then bravery will be required of you.

But do you have the strength to face the apparently cold and relentlessness of nature? No single human being can generate enough courage from his own strength or with his own will. However, if he manages to lead an harmonious life or if he accomplishes the seemingly impossible tasks, he might feel a power which he respects.

Whatever you call this power doesn't matter. It is only important that you feel it. Only from a respect for this power do we derive the strength to be brave. I think that only one who recognizes and accepts the mystery of reality can be brave. We use the word 'pious' to describe this idea. Only a pious person can be brave."

Today I would like to invert this sentence and say: only the brave can be pious; for those who want to be seriously pious must have the courage and inner force to recognize something which is very hard for us to accept today, an idea somewhat in contrast to attitudes developed through the past 400 years.

In the past 400 years, we have grown to believe that basically our fate depends upon ourselves; on our willpower and abilities. We feel that we can master our own destiny and that failure is a sign of weakness. We think that we can understand the meaning of life and the world, and, through reason alone, events are understandable to us.

The mysteriousness of birth, death and nature are repressed. The most important events in life play a subordinate role to man's consciousness. The man who feels himself to be the center of the world denies mystery. In order to be pious, one must have the courage to see the world as it really is. Man does not stand in the center of the world nor do human laws rule it. Man's will is meager compared to the universe. The world is not structured in relation to man's understanding. It cannot be understood from a human point of view alone. Fate, chance, birth and death are signs of a power which has nothing to do with human reason.

Today, a person needs a great deal of courage to admit that one is exposed to strange powers. It is still harder to resist the temptation of minimizing the strangeness by calling it weird or devilish.

The only thing that can be said about it is that with human standards and values, little can be understood about it.

I think you need a great deal of courage not only to understand this theoretically, but also to make it a part of your life. For contemporary man to have this attitude tests whether he is at all capable of feeling the sources of religious experiences. I think there are only a few who can do that today, but no one who seeks a fuller view can escape this.

Even the most courageous would find this unbearable were it not for another important human experience, the recognition that one expression of this incomprehensible power is the creation of love in the world of human beings.

The impulse of love is as inexplicable as death or birth. The fight for existence, the survival of the fittest, the emancipation of slave labor, these things we find logical and explicable. Therefore, we are capable of understanding them.

From where does the impulse of love come? Is it not contradictory to those principles of life? How can we logically fit the impulse of love into an existence requiring struggle? We cannot understand it. There is the same strange problem too difficult to comprehend, the same mystery. Only if we have the courage to experience this mystery can we understand this impulse of love that is so far apart from human rational thinking.

We must experience it that way if we want to experience it at all. We must leave it in its essential incomprehensibility. Some of us have tried to make it more understandable by making it an absolute quality, declaring that the world is not ruled by hatred but by love. This also is the type of statement which comes from anthropomorphic understanding and therefore is unreal.

There is no human being whose actions are prompted by love alone. To say that man acts from love would be as untrue, as impious, as to recognize only selfishness. We must recognize love as an inexplicable addition to our fight for existence. Giving of one's self is the necessary supplement of our self-assertion. This is what man is really like. He is neither angel nor beast.

Whenever you start being concerned over the meaning of religion, think of these two facts: The mystery of reality and the impulse of love.

EXCERPTS FROM THE MORNING SPEECH AT THE FALL FESTIVAL - NOVEMBER 1931

I am glad to see such a great number of former members of our school community here today. It means so much in this time when any journey is expensive. Nevertheless, you came in great number.

I recognize your coming as a warm attachment to us here and to the atmosphere of Marienau. It is, indeed, a great reward for us.

It shows that our relations are firm and lasting. But, is it enough to state that? I must answer with an unequivocal "no". We are pleased by your attachment to us, and that you want to stay with us for a few days. This should not be the only reward for a great expenditure of work. We would like more. I would feel that we have failed if nothing else would come out of it other than a "fine feeling" among former friends; nothing else but the remembrance of the time in Marienau.

There should be more than this to justify the existence of Marienau. All who have been educated here must be aware that they have a task, a task for which they are especially trained.

It would indeed be bad if the former members of our school community would live in seclusion, despise the way of life of the "others" and only look forward to the time when they again can be together for some days in Marienau among like-minded people.

No, you, the former members of Marienau, must integrate into the community of the nation. You must not show yourselves to be better than the others, only better educated. This better education is giving you today special and definite tasks; tasks which you have to accomplish because you are able to accomplish them.

We see the standard of the German youth continually declining. His way of thinking gets more and more dependent. One rarely meets a critical, educated individual any more.

Here starts our task. We have to emphasize individuality, our own thinking, our independent judgment, our personal style against the growing mob. Because of our life in this community, we are on the other side rather safe from the excrescence of individualism. We have, by living for years in this community, learned how important the idea of collectivism is. It was always an important aim of our education to create independent individuals. Today it is the most urgent necessity.

We are observing with fear the decline of the thinking and acting of the majority of the German students into the thinking and acting of mobs. The present public school system seems to be unable to

counteract the mob spirit efficiently. Here our duty starts. We and communities like ours are able to counteract the decline of the educational standard. You might ask, however, how you, outside of the community will be able to give practical help? First, you will be able to help just by being independent and civilized in your thinking and acting. This attitude will show in your faces. Your faces alone will be able to make an impression. The mob somehow will feel that the man with an independent face is on a higher level.

Men thinking independently will not fall into radicalism; they will be able to work without being affected by any action of the mob. Today, the independent thinker is needed more than ever.

I don't want to say categorically that you should not become members of radical parties - the national socialistic or the communistic party, for I am convinced that men educated here will not make it easy for those parties, because people so educated have learned to think independently and to test whatever is offered to them. They will not fall for mental primitivity, even though they emphasize simplicity highly.

Seen from the other side, you will take a position against radicalism, a mental attitude believing everything can completely be solved by rational thinking or by any kind of theory.

You will demonstrate that one can live, work and behave correctly without any support of this kind.

By understanding that, your present get-together has still another meaning. It is not only good "being together" with old friends, a revisiting of the place one grew up in and is attached to; it is more. It is a coming back from a life which tries to level everyone, which wants to make everyone a member of the mob.

No, you have returned to an atmosphere which will make clear to you your special task. Our meetings will have more meaning if they are always used to awaken our conscience to our task.

Your visit here then will not be a flight to a place where you can relax, but a journey to a place where you can gain new strength to replace the strength you lost outside and which you will need again.

Therefore, I do believe that at our next meeting we shall have to speak about the difficulties of our future outside work. Some of you must tell us about your work outside, and we together must think about possibilities of helping each other in the fulfillment of our task. That is my wish for the next meeting.

SHOWING OFF

Some days ago, I observed a group of very loud students among you, every single one of whom tried to make more noise than his neighbor. It was not the usual noise of young people who had real pleasure in talking or singing very loudly. It was something else.

There was a certain tension in the noise, something not very pleasant. I discovered that in the group were some newcomers, students who had been in our school for only several days. That was the reason for the behavior of the group: they had to show the newcomers that they were real fellows.

That was no surprise to me. I know that at a certain age, boys and girls must show off. If you are 14, 15, or 16 years old, you wish to be grown-up. How can you show that you are an adult? There are many possibilities. You can, for instance, show that you are sure of yourselves (as you think the grown-ups are), and you express your confidence in the strength of your voice. If you talk loudly, you think you make an impression and people will think you are a big shot. Or, you utter a firm opinion about other persons or things which ask for a deep knowledge of the subject.

Certainly, the others will think I am grown-up if I have such tremendous knowledge. We heard a very famous symphony of Beethoven and one of you said, "I do not like that; the first part is an imitation of Bach, and the second is stolen from Wagner." Oughtn't we be deeply impressed with that profound knowledge? Surely the others will admire me if I know so many names of composers.

Or, what a wonderfully grown-up person I must be if I talk only with two or three people, because all the others are average, uninteresting fellows who do not do their own thinking. Am I not grand if the others are small? And will not the others take me as a leader, admire me?

It will be one of the disappointments in your life, when you realize that it is a mistake, a real error of yours, that you can impress others in that way. Perhaps people of your own age will be impressed for a short time, but you will see that it is only for a short time.

I must tell you: the grown-up, and especially the grown-up whose esteem and love you want to get, will not even for a short time, not even for a moment, be impressed; on the contrary, he feels immediately that there is something artificial, something that is not genuine, only show, but not real.

If he is an inexperienced educator, he will think this young fellow is ridiculous. He will not take him seriously, therefore the opposite of the desired effect is reached. If he is an experienced educator, he will judge it a typical sign of adolescence. (Poor boy, you do not want to be an adolescent, you want to be grown-up.)

It is the wrong way to achieve the love and admiration of others. You should stop showing off. I think every young one will come to the point where he is doubtful of whether showing off is the right way: However some will not be strong enough, not understand enough, to stop. They will continue on even when out of the adolescent stage, into physical maturity.

This is the start of serious danger: if showing off is only a passing phase it does not matter too much; however if you become so accustomed to it that you keep it up in your adult life, it will seriously hamper your relationship with others. People will find you unpleasant, ridiculous, superficial, unsure of yourself. They will lose interest in you. You will feel isolated and nothing will make you more unhappy than the feeling of loneliness. Believe me: that is what makes the problem of showing off so immensely important.

But, you will ask, "What shall I do if showing off is wrong?"

That is a good question, for I know that showing off is not a pleasure in itself. It has the purpose of getting away from the feeling of insecurity; it has the purpose of winning other people.

How can we rid ourselves of the feeling of insecurity? The answer to that hits the central point of our life here. That is exactly what we want to do. We want to give you confidence in yourselves. We want to create an atmosphere in which you feel secure. We want to have an atmosphere of friendliness. For if you feel secure, you need not show off. You show only what you really are, nothing more. That is more than enough, for it gives you exactly what you wanted by showing off.

It is hard to explain, but if you feel secure and show such security, then you will attract other people as a personality in your own right. It is a strange thing, but you do not need a specialty in order to please, to attract, to get love and friendship; you do not need to show that you are especially strong, or especially beautiful. You need only to feel secure, to have confidence in yourselves.

I know that you cannot, with your brains, decide to feel secure. That is, for many, a long process. It depends often upon the experiences you had as a very young child. You know that showing off is certainly the wrong way to feel secure. Try to suppress it the moment it arises in you. You will know when it comes, for it is connected with a sort of unpleasant feeling in yourselves. Do not neglect this feeling, do not destroy it, it is a stop signal.

Instead of showing off, try to listen to others. This is a hard job which many grown-ups have never learned. If you are able to listen, people will listen to you, too. That is one way, (though not the only way) to become secure.

"THE WAVE OF THE PAST" (A discussion of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's book,
The Wave of the Future)

A big boarding school has a festival, the highlight of which is the reading of Mrs. Lindbergh's new book, The Wave of the Future. The youngsters are fascinated and deeply stirred. A new road seems to open, a new faith to be announced.

For 20 years it has been my task to educate young people; therefore I feel it important to give something inspiring to them. I myself have read the book with great care and became more and more disappointed with it. As an educator, it is my duty to call it corrupt and dangerous. I shall prove why this is so.

The aim of the book is not so dangerous as the method she uses to try to achieve it. Mrs. Lindbergh doesn't rely on inspiration but on the lack of criticism of her readers. She wants to give "personal confessions to help to clear the mind" - an admirable - but a pedagogical task! Does she accomplish it? How can one clear the mind? By very clear presentations of unequivocal comprehensions; therefore, I looked for clear ideas in her book.

I didn't find any. It says neither what the old were, nor what the new are, or what future ideas will be. There are only slogans and no facts at all.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN FACTS AND GENERALIZATIONS

I believe the real educational task is to show young people the difference between an opinion based on facts and one based on slogans which through their generalizations not only are unable to prove anything, but are even more confusing than the issue.

It is not my own malicious statement; there is not one clear idea in the whole book. It is even the opinion of the author herself and more: there is her intention to avoid clear ideas. She herself writes that she intends to represent "faith"; what she writes about is more "dream" than "reality". She attacks whoever dares to ask for clear ideas