



The Absorbent Mind *All quotes, translated from Italian, are Maria Montessori's own words.*

We are excited to be offering another opportunity to read a book and discuss it together! We want to make it clear that people who are interested but unable to read or complete the book by September 14, are still more than welcome to attend the Q&A discussion at the barn!

While we encourage people to find alternate childcare, if someone needs to bring their child in order to attend, we will provide some supplemental supervision, but please know that if it is disruptive to the conversation, we ask that you take over and either rejoin when you are able or catch up with someone who is able to participate.

This book is a very different read than our previous (*Last Child in the Woods*) and is not a casual read. *The Absorbent Mind* came out over 70 years ago and was written for a very different audience, which makes its continued relevance very interesting. There is much in these pages that is dated, but much more that makes it an important take on what is truly going on in the minds of children under 6.

For those of you who do take it up, we encourage you to keep reading, as the second half delves into some of the most problematic misunderstandings between our adult mentality and the utterly different mental stage of young children. **"It is clear that nature includes among the missions she has entrusted to the child, the mission of arousing us adults to reach a higher level!"**

"The path of education should follow that of evolution, to walk and to enjoy ever wider horizons."

"We serve the future by protecting the present. The more fully the needs of one period are met, the greater will be the success of the next."

Upon rereading this book, we have been emboldened in Pisgah Collective's approach to the early childhood experience.

As our first round of three-year students graduate kindergarten, and we prepare to send the second, we are continuing to see the benefits of not only our outdoor, but also child-centered and positive disciplined programming and look forward to continuing to grow a community that understands the importance of this intentional approach.

It is our hope that reading and discussing this book will help clear up some of the more confusing concepts in Montessori pedagogy: such as the relationships between freedom and discipline, will and obedience, as well as others.

The following quotes could easily be read as contradictory, but they are not at all when explained:

"To let the child do as they like, when they have not yet developed any powers of control, is to betray the idea of freedom."

"The child is the spiritual builder of mankind, and obstacles to his free development are the stones in the wall by which the soul of man has become imprisoned."

We know that obedience is something most parents desire, but contrary to how many often attempt to acquire this trait in their children, obedience is actually the last stage of a developed Will.

Consider that the willing sublimation of an individual's will actually requires a developed will. When we expect, or even demand, obedience, without offering the developing will an opportunity to be involved or try again, we are actually hindering the development of an independent will that can eventually be capable of enlightened obedience.

Often, adults are exasperated by children's lack of awareness of their own self-interest, of which they are not yet capable. We then disrupt and prolong the process by which an individual can gain this awareness and even expand it to include the interests of others.

"If the child is not yet master of their actions, if they cannot obey even their own will, so much the less can they obey the will of someone else."

"Children under these conditions can use their will power, both for the purposes of action and of restraint from action."

"The child has to acquire physical independence by being self-sufficient; they must become of independent will by using freedom in their own power of choice; they must become capable of independent thought by working alone without interruption...We have to help the child to act, will, and think for themself."

We are inspired all the time by our students with this view towards their independence in mind. We see the value of these insights and trust that our students are well prepared for their futures.



Book Chat and Q&A!

We are excited to host a book chat and Q&A this fall on **Wednesday, September 14 from 5:15-6:30** at the barn! This will be a great chance to delve into the *Absorbent Mind* as well as talk about how we apply these principles in our programming.

We understand that people may not have a chance to complete the book but hope that anyone who is interested will be able to attend! If there is enough interest, we will be able to have another chance to discuss it in the future.

Many previous issues of this newsletter touch on our approach to Montessori pedagogy and would be useful to read (or re-read) prior to our discussion!

<https://www.pisgahcollective.com/the-absorbent-observer>

We hope to see you there!

Important Dates

- Fall Open House
Monday, Aug. 22 | 9:30-10:30
- First Day of Fall Mornings
Tuesday, August 23
- CLOSED: Labor Day
September 5
- First Day of Fall Afternoons
Tuesday, September 6
- Book Chat Q&A
Wed, Sept. 14 | 5:15 - 6:30
- CLOSED: Fall Break
October 10-14
- Last Day of Fall Semester
Afternoons: Thursday, Nov 17
Mornings: Friday, Dec 16

Fall Payment #1 Due:
Wednesday, August 24
Fall Payment #2 Due:
Wednesday, Sept 14

(morning sprouts & afternoon seedlings)