

Getting Started with The Satya Method

Having traveled through five chapters, reading about the full spectrum of teaching meditation to children, after all this, you might wonder, do I now have to learn a method? Not at all. At every step, through every chapter of this book, you have been reading about the Satya Method. Now you need only review what you already know and feel.

One of the seven principles of the Satya Method says, “Experience first, then define.” In keeping with this principle, now that you have experienced the Satya Method for yourself, this chapter describes it. What’s more, this new method of teaching applies to most learning situations, including teaching children how to meditate, teaching high school students about science, teaching your own children how to consider other people’s feelings, and teaching yourself how to create happiness.

What is The Satya Method?

Satya is Sanskrit, which is the classical language of India and used in early Hindu texts. In sum Satya means “truth.” In detail, as an adjective, Satya translates as “real, genuine, serious, valid, effective, faithful, honest, and good.” As a noun it translates as

“reality, truth, true character, sincerity, vow, promise, and oath.” Mohandas Gandhi used the word *satya* to name his self-sufficiency movement, Satyagraha, which translates to “truth action.”

I named my education philosophy the “Satya Method” because of the truth and authenticity the word Satya is associated with. The Satya Method demonstrates a way of educating - a genuine approach based on sincerity. Furthermore, if the word *satya* is good enough for Gandhi, it is good enough for me!

Since the Satya Method encourages educators to be honest, this truthful approach to teaching is an effective way for teachers and students to learn and grow together. The Satya Method inspires us to respect our students and form a partnership with them, which allows both the teacher and student to literally transform through their learning experience.

The Satya Method is based on these concepts:

- Partnership between adult and child
- Creating a space where the child feels safe and inspired
- Learning through experience
- Addressing the practical use for what is being taught
- Including parents so they can use the method at home.

Who uses the Satya Method?

The Satya Method is used by meditation teachers, parents and counselors to teach children how to meditate. This philosophy is

also used to facilitate other kinds of learning. The Satya Method is an effective way to teach uncommon practices such as meditation because its accepting and open approach allows for even the most intimidating subjects to be inviting. The Satya Method is ideal for teaching ordinary topics as well because it transforms the mundane into intriguing journeys of discovery. This new paradigm in education is used by school teachers, counselors, parents and individuals endeavoring to teach and learn about the world.

Attention Parents

Since the Satya Method offers techniques for successful communication, parents can integrate its principles into their parenting style. The following information refers to the relationship between *facilitators* and *children* and between *teachers* and *students*. Despite this terminology, parents equally benefit from using these principles. After all, parents are educators. Parents teach their children techniques and ideas such as how to take care of their bodies, how to communicate within the family, how to resolve conflict and how to clean their rooms. But most of all, parents teach their children what they have come to believe is the best way to do things. If you are a parent, replace the terms *facilitator* and *teacher* with *parent*. And remember, as a parent, you facilitate experience and teach volumes of knowledge to your child – in many cases, more than any other influence your child will encounter.

Parents will be interested in the Satya Method's de-emphasis on lecturing and increased focus on facilitating learning experiences. Its partnership approach to learning is also an essential part of parenting and will add to any existing family dynamic. Furthermore, parents will be amazed by how well their children

respond to art projects that support what they learn. And most enlightening of all, the self transformative experiences gained while using the Satya Method are not limited to teachers. These self discoveries are also experienced by parents who incorporate Satya Method principles into their parenting style.

The Satya Method, is not meant to replace parenting books and techniques. There are other wonderful books available that help parents handle the challenges of parenting. The Satya Method is designed to compliment these resources.

Teaching vs. Facilitating

This chapter often refers to the traditional *teacher* role as the *facilitator*. This word supports the new paradigm in education the Satya Method embodies. Using the Satya Method, learning is facilitated rather than instructed. The definition of the word “facilitate” is *to make easier*. Facilitating is the art of offering resources that inspire students to experience learning. Inspiration always makes learning easier. Resources for this inspiration include attitude, partnership, spontaneity, suggestion, discussion, provoking of curiosity and more. These are covered later in this chapter.

The best way to determine whether you are *facilitating* or *instructing*, is to consider who is doing the most talking. If the students are speaking and sharing more than the teacher, then the teacher is facilitating. The facilitator's goal is to inspire experience and thus learning. If the students are busy experiencing and sharing their experience with others, then they are being inspired to learn by their facilitator.

Teaching is one of the most important roles in human experience. Because of the importance of this role and the impact on society, I encourage teachers to facilitate more than instruct. Instruction limits the child to learn from someone else's perspective. A facilitator gives students the opportunity to learn from their own experience.

Processing and Learning

Processing our experience is fundamental to our learning. When we process our experience we sort out our thoughts on both a conscious and unconscious level. On a conscious level we contemplate events that have occurred. The mind readjusts to accommodate this new information. Imagine your dinner table set for four people then three more people show up. In order to add more plates and silverware to the table, you need to make adjustments. You shift existing place settings over to make room for new ones. The new people and place settings are integrated into the existing set table. Likewise, our new experience is integrated into our consciousness because a shift takes place. This shift is transforming since new perspectives are incorporated, thus learning takes place.

Processing is how we transform an abstract experience into a concrete idea. The Satya Method calls for facilitating a learning experience for the child. Like any experience, this learning experience is somewhat abstract. The experience may be difficult to put into words immediately after it happens. It must be processed first. Our unconscious mind sorts through the feelings and thoughts in the same way we sort through a stack of papers, filing each one in its designated folder. For example, the *warm feeling I felt during my meditation* goes into the “Things that make me

happy” folder. The *overwhelming sense of awe* I experienced goes into the “Things I need to spend more time thinking about” folder.

While this sorting continues, we begin to understand our experience. We answer questions about it. We learn because we are transforming. We invite a change in perspective and integrate a transformation of an intangible experience into actual thought.

The Seven Principles

The seven principles of the Satya Method work together to create a passionate learning environment. However, you do not need to use all the principles. Each principle brings its own unique perspective to the learning process. If you are painting a picture, you might have several different paint brushes. Some brushes are long and skinny while others are short and wide. Each brush creates a unique stroke on your painting. Think of the principles as a set of brushes. Just as you would try out all the different brushes, experiment with the principles and see what creates the picture perfect learning experience. You might decide that using all seven, produces a successful inspiring experience for the child. Or maybe you will only integrate a few into your existing routine.

Principle 1:

Creating a Space for Growth Through Partnership

Facilitators create partnerships with their students. Facilitators are shown how to see their own qualities reflected back to them through their students. Welcoming this awareness allows the facilitator to grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually. At the same time, this creates a healthy growing and educational atmosphere for the students.

This first principle is five fold. (1) The facilitator needs to recognize that *children reflect who we are*, and be ready to learn along side the child. (2) The facilitator also needs to become aware of the true transformational qualities of learning and understand *learning is growth*. (3) It is also important that the facilitator experience the *duality of the teacher/student relationship* and (4) the *partnership* that can be nurtured between the teacher and student. And lastly, (5) the facilitator ought to see how *authentic experience* strengthens this partnership. The following describes each.

Children Reflect Who We Are

Children look at the world through bright clear eyes, seeing the truth among us. The innocence of children allows them to look past what is not genuine. Always eager to enhance their experience, children seek out what is inspiring. All of us strive to be this innocence and wish for something genuine to inspire us to find truth. Therefore, children are a perfect reflection of who we are.

Have you ever heard the metaphysical principle *we are all one*? What does this assumption really mean? Does it mean *the world is one being, and we are all a part of it*? Or, does it mean *we are one yet separate with distinct roles and responsibilities*? We are one because we are a reflection of one another. Have you ever heard someone say *we can only see in others what we see in ourselves*? When we notice kindness in our neighbor, we acknowledge our own kindness. More appropriately, we see in others what is difficult for us to see in ourselves. Children are our reflection. When a child brings us joy, he brings about our expressed or repressed joy. Likewise, the frustrated tantrum-throwing child mirrors the fiery spirit within us who so desperately wants to explode when we don't get what

we want. The trick is trusting that even though some of us have never thought of ourselves as fiery, explosive and easily disappointed, we are all these emotions deep down inside. We are one because the world around us reflects who we are, and many of these reflections are what lies beyond our awareness.

This concept is sometimes more easily accepted when observing others. Have you ever noticed a friend or family member completely miss the obvious? For example, if only your friend, David, *could see how much potential he has*. David is the first to point out how talented *you* are because he easily observes the potential in others but fails to see his own. Ironically, the potential he sees in you is a reflection of his own potential.

If only your sister, Margaret, *could understand that a vacation would relax her*. Margaret feels a button pushed when *you* go on vacation because she sees her need for relaxation reflected back to her through your actions. Unfortunately, when she looks at herself she does not see a woman who needs a break, however, when she sees someone else take a break a part of her screams, "Relax, relax, relax!" When this surfaces in her conscious mind, she is irritated by other people relaxing.

David and Margaret are not seeing their own potential and needs. Nevertheless, their world reflects back to them potential and needs everyday. They shield themselves from seeing their true selves. All of us have ways of obstructing ourselves from seeing our own truths.

Inner Growth for the Facilitator

When we become conscious of these false perceptions our lives are transformed. We become a little bit more conscious every

time we take a journey of self-discovery, revealing a new part of ourselves. All experiences are opportunities for transformation. Teaching is one of my favorite paths to self discovery. Facilitators are encouraged to welcome inner growth by asking *What can I learn from my students? What is he reflecting to me? What is she showing me about myself?*

Inspired Learning

Every time we learn something we transform in some way. Most people would shy away from someone forcing them to transform. Therefore, learning should be inspired rather than forced. The facilitator sets the foundation for their student so she can experience a transformation, if she wishes. The facilitator may offer ideas and spark curiosity, inspiring the child to change her perspective, raise her level of understanding, and transform her current knowledge base through the experience of learning.

The Duality of Teaching – We are both Teacher and Student

The cliché, *we are all teachers, and we are all students* poignantly illustrates the dynamic between a teacher and her student. A teacher who fails to be conscious of this partnership passes up an opportunity to enhance her own experience with the help of a child's inherent truth and genuine nature. Again, *we are all teachers, and we are all students*. This relationship plays out in our lives with someone everyday – no matter where we are or who we are with. It may express itself as parent and child, husband and wife, two friends or any two beings who experience life together, if only for a moment. The teacher and student archetypes are equally important. We experience both of them simultaneously.

The teacher/student dynamic is an excellent example of a *duality*. Life is full of such dualities. For example, the study of light shows us a red flower is both red and green, both colors opposite to each other on the color wheel. Moreover, since green is a mixture of blue and yellow, a red flower is all colors because red, blue and yellow make up the full spectrum of colors. When full spectrum sunlight is cast on a red flower, red light reflects off the flower and green light is absorbed. *What color is a red flower?* The flower is a duality of red and green. The flower is all colors.

Teaching is the same. The child appears to be the student because of the role she plays, however, she is also a teacher. The child shows us what makes us happy, what frustrates us, what we are good at, and what we could do better. The child teaches us about ourselves, which enhances other aspects of our lives. Similarly, the facilitator teaches the child meditation techniques or whatever the subject is at hand, which enhances the child's life. The child is a duality of *teacher and student*, as is the facilitator.

Partnership between Teacher and Student

This duality aspect of teaching brings us to the partnership of teaching. Because the facilitator and child both encompass the dichotomy of teacher and student, the facilitator and child are in partnership. Interestingly, Webster's dictionary refers to partners as two people who dance together. Like dance partners, a facilitator and child dance together cooperatively. In this dance, the teacher and student look to each other for inspiration, co-creating their experience.

Preparation

When we teach from this dancing perspective, we allow the education to take place organically. Teaching and learning is an

evolving dance. The teacher prepares the first step of the lesson and allows the student to bring the teacher to unforeseen places – topics and perspectives the teacher has not prepared for.

Like any partnership, the teacher and student are each others' stepping stones to a higher level of being. It is impossible to know in advance where the child will take us. Rarely can one prepare for the unknown. So, you could say, *be prepared to be unprepared*. With the Satya Method, *education* is both structured and organic. Consider our natural surrounding: a plant has the structural framework to grow roots and branches, yet it naturally spreads its leaves in unique directions.

Authentic Experience

Good teachers and good stand-up comics have much in common. They are prepared yet they can spontaneously respond to the energy of their audience. Being *open* encourages unthinkable adventures in learning, and being *prepared* brings forth integrity.

In a business partnership, business partners depend on each others' experience to reach their mutual goals. The relationship between facilitator and child is similar. The child relies on the facilitator's abilities and know-how to achieve. In this way, the *authentic experience* the facilitator has to offer affects the learning experience of the child.

Have you ever heard a presenter who truly knew his subject? He walked it, breathed it and quite obviously knew the ins and outs. This presenter almost always conveys authentic experience because he practices daily what he teaches, whether it be computer technology, leadership or meditation.

We can also prepare for a lesson by having authentic experience. Before bringing students through any process, we must thoroughly experience this process for ourselves. Believe it or not, if we are not authentic, students will know it. The flow of the lesson will probably be un-exciting and confusing.

In Summary

Creating a space for growth is one of the most integral aspects of the Satya Method. The facilitator is a catalyst for growth for herself as well as the child. The facilitator experiences her own learning and transformation when she notices what the child is mirroring to the facilitator about the facilitator; *children reflect who we are*. Likewise, once the facilitator understands that *learning is growth* and transformation, a stage is set for the child's learning. Furthermore, after the facilitator opens to her own transformation by seeing herself in the mirror of her students, she can easily experience the duality she lives as both teacher and student.

This duality naturally offers a strong *partnership* between the facilitator and child. Like any strong partnership, teaching and growing is pleasant and inspiring when we are open to fully experiencing it. Teaching is empowering when we are honest with ourselves, sincere with our students and respectful toward the qualities our students reflect back to us. Lastly, the child's respect for his facilitator is essential. It is earned when the facilitator has *authentic experience* with the techniques being shared.

Principle 2

Setting a Tone for Fun

Students learn more when fears are overcome and exciting activities are used to inspire learning.

A primary factor in determining a child's openness to experiencing new ideas is the climate of the learning space. Whether you refer to this as the tone, atmosphere, vibe, or mood, the facilitator makes choices that create this environment and lay the foundation for the child's learning experience. First the facilitator makes choices about the class space. Is it inside or outside, light or dim, colorful or simple, large or small?

The facilitator must also make decisions about the non-physical atmosphere. Qualities that children and adults both crave while learning include safety, variety, stimulation, challenge, and inspiration. There is one atmosphere a facilitator can create that fulfills all of these cravings. *Fun*. Setting a joyful mood will help the child feel *safe* about venturing into new realms of understanding. Moreover, fun activities are *stimulating* and *inspire* the child to take a step in a new direction. Joyful games are *challenging* because they encourage a child to be spontaneous. And lastly, since games and fun are unpredictable, any number of outcomes takes place, offering *variety*. Simply stated, fun makes learning easy.

One day, I heard a mother read a flyer about my meditation class to her son. Her son replied, "That sounds boring." The Satya Method suggests that facilitators set a fun climate right off the bat. This way, the child is immediately put at ease and interested. When done effectively, the fun vibe lasts throughout the lesson, offering many positive possibilities. When fun is felt in the class

space, the child asks questions more candidly, trusts his own abilities, and respects the intentions of the facilitator, which heightens his overall experience. I stepped out to talk to the mother and her son. I reassured him my class is far from boring and rumor has it – my class is lots of fun.

Choose large areas so the child can run around and lead fun songs. Participating in the excitement and games enhances the tone of the class. The spirit of the lesson is more enjoyable this way. Laugh. Dance. And if your fun activity is relevant to the lesson, great. But if it does not directly support the lesson, use it anyway. If it is fun, it is relevant to the experience.

Some children and groups of children may be energetic when you begin. Their excitement might be hard to redirect after playing a game. Use your own discretion to offer the best activities at the most appropriate times.

Principle 3 Teaching Through Experiential Learning

Facilitators guide students to fully experienced the concepts taught, and then introduce terms defining abstract meanings of lessons.

Understanding a Child's Experience

As adults, most of us have forgotten what it is like to be a child. A child's perception of the world is much different than our own. However, we can use meditation to remember what it was like to be a child. In meditation we can look through the eyes of a child and see how he might experience the concept we plan to teach him.

The following meditation exercise allows us to be better educators because we see how a child *needs* to learn a particular subject. For example, Juan hoped to teach his four year old daughter, Shawna how to clean her room. During meditation he imagined being a little girl his daughter's age. He was overwhelmed standing in the middle of a messy room similar to his daughter's. In this room there was a big red ball. While looking at the ball he noticed he could only focus on one toy or piece of clothing at a time.

A timer ticked in the background. Juan felt pressured with each tick and realized the ticking made it impossible for him to clean anything in the room. After the meditation, it was clear to him he needed to focus on one area of his daughter's room at a time when helping Shawna pick up. In the past Juan set a timer for his daughter but now he knows this is a hindrance more than an aid. Now when Juan asks Shawna to clean one area of her room at a time. He also offers a check list they complete together instead of a timer.

Exercise 7: Experiencing Yourself As a Child to Design an Effective Lesson

Choose a topic you wish to teach. For example, gratitude. Close your eyes, take three calming breaths and imagine yourself as a child. You do not need to imagine you are *your child* nor do you need to imagine you are *yourself* as a child. You simply need to imagine you are a child of the age you will be teaching.

Visualize thinking and doing as this child does. See what this child sees, hear what this child hears, and feel what this child feels. Allow yourself to follow the moves of this child until you encounter a situation involving your topic. For example, if you chose gratitude, you might see a beautifully wrapped gift placed in front of you. Then notice how you handle the situation. See what this child sees, hear what this child hears, notice what this child thinks and feels.

Immediately after your meditation, write down your experience and make notes about how you believe you can best teach this subject to the child based on your meditation experience.

Facilitating a Child's Experience

After you become familiar with how a child experiences the topic, you are ready to guide the child through experiencing this concept for himself. Children learn best from their own personal experience. No matter what is taught, the facilitator can create a way for the child to personally experience the concept. As a facilitator, you can do this with one or more of the following:

- Journey into the imagination (guided meditation)
- An enticing story
- Discussion
- Game
- Role Play
- Art Project
- Walk outdoors

If you are teaching meditation to children, you will use meditation as your primary method of facilitating his experience, and others as secondary. However, if you are teaching any other subject, you will use whatever method is most appropriate. This is important. **IF YOU ARE NOT TEACHING MEDITATION – YOU DO NOT NEED TO USE MEDITATION AS A MEANS OF FACILITATING EXPERIENCE FOR THE CHILD.**

No matter which method you choose, ask questions, lots of questions. Questions are the best tool you have to inspire your students. Guide your student into the mystery your lesson solves, piquing her interest. When a child is curious, teaching becomes effortless and learning becomes fun. For example, when teaching *surrender*, the facilitator might ask, “What do you do when you get scared? What helps you feel better when you are afraid?” Now you have piqued the child’s curiosity and he is interested in following you through a journey to discover a new way to feel better when he is afraid.

The following shows how a parent uses meditation to come up with an effective and inspiring plan for teaching her child *surrender*.

It has been difficult for Shannon’s seven year old daughter Savannah to “go with the flow”. Savannah is easily upset when it is time to leave her house or give a toy back to a classmate. Shannon believes teaching her how to surrender will help Savannah through these transitions. Shannon meditates to help her know how to best approach this subject with her daughter.

Shannon closes her eyes and takes three deep breaths. She allows her mind to let go of distracting thoughts. When Shannon trusts her meditation process she begins to see herself as a seven year old girl asleep in her bed. Within her meditation,

Shannon realizes she is dreaming about a scary, beastly creature chasing her through her school. She wakes up scared wondering if the beast is underneath her bed. Part of her knows this is impossible; however, part of her wonders if the beast is truly there.

Still experiencing herself as the scared little girl,

Shannon wants to stay awake to make sure she does not return to the dream and the beast. She looks on top of her dresser and sees a princess fairy doll. The fairy doll looks over at her as though she knows every thought she is thinking. Shannon surrenders her fears of the beast to the princess fairy. She asks the doll to watch over her while she goes back into dreamland and to come into her dream if she meets the beast again.

After meditating, Shannon has a better understanding of how a girl her daughter’s age might experience surrender. Next, Shannon facilitates an experience for her daughter that teaches her how to surrender her fears. She begins by asking Savannah, “Is there anything you sometimes feel afraid of?” Then she asks “Is there anyone or anything in your life that you trust to help you feel less afraid? Including yourself?” Savannah confides in her mother that she is afraid of forgetting her homework at school. She also shares that she trusts her cat, Sam, with the things she is afraid of. Shannon leads her daughter through a meditation during which Savannah asks her cat, Sam, to help her not be afraid.

Even though it was Savannah's challenge with transition that originally prompted Shannon to teach her daughter about surrender, in her meditation exercise, Shannon saw a child experience surrender in a completely different situation. This is the purpose of the exercise. When we allow our higher-self to assist us, we often find a more appropriate and effective angle to take. In Savannah's case, teaching her how to let go of her fear about forgetting her homework, will help her let go of her resistance to change.

Experience First, Then Define

By this point Shannon's daughter, Savannah, has thoroughly experienced *surrender* without her mother giving a lecture or even uttering the word *surrender*. Naming the experience is not the same as living it. When we experience something, we are not listening to a lecture, we are truly experiencing. Savannah experienced surrender during a guided meditation.

While traditional teachers focus on instruction, the Satya Method is based on personal experience. Instruction often involves a verbal explanation of the material being covered. While facilitating personal experience, does not need to be set up with definitions and explanations. Although the Satya Method does not promote excluding verbal elements. The difference is, the Satya Method encourages facilitators to use verbal explanations *after* most of the learning has taken place as a means of offering closure to what is being taught.

You might think it odd that the Satya Method is defined at the end of this book rather than the beginning. During my workshops, I introduce the formal description of the seven

principles of the Satya Method at the end of the course. By this time, my students have already experienced each principle. I save the formal definition of the Satya Method for the end after students gain personal experience via the exercises and other activities. Since you have already *experienced* the previous chapters, these formal definitions of the Satya Method (in this chapter) should be less *abstract* and more *tangible*. Now you can integrate its meaning with the thoughts and feelings you experienced while reading the previous chapters.

Children, naturally want to jump in and experience before learning the words to explain their experience. Introducing a verbal explanation after facilitating an experience gives the child closure. The language neatly wraps up the emotions and thoughts that were generated during the class activities. The child also gains more confidence because he listens to the facilitator formally speak about what he has already learned, understood and personally experienced. He knows for sure he has mastered the material because he can reflect upon his own profound experience while listening to the formal definitions.

Savannah enjoys the surrender meditation her mother guides her through. She is thrilled to tell her mother about the happy feelings she felt after giving her fears to her cat, Sam, all wrapped up in a pink box with a purple ribbon. Shannon explains to her daughter that giving her fears to her cat wrapped in a pretty box, is called "surrendering" her fears. She explains that when we surrender something it doesn't mean we give up. It means we leave it with someone we trust and we *trust* not to worry about it.

If Shannon had shared this explanation before her daughter experienced the meditation, it might not have been as interesting to Savannah. Also, Shannon is able to use terms Savannah used (i.e. *box* and *cat*) to explain the definition of surrender.

Principle 4 **Sharing Personal Experiences with One Another**

Facilitators encourage each student to tell the group what he or she experienced during the activity. In doing this, students learn from their peers and facilitators better understand how students experienced the lesson, guiding the facilitator to new depths.

Why Sharing is Important

When students listen to the experiences of their peers, they become aware of perspectives not considered before, including new interpretations of what was taught and alternative ways of applying these techniques. Most of all, listening to peers' personal experiences introduces realms of experience to explore later.

Moreover, since personal experience can be very abstract, communicating it to others gives the child an opportunity to articulate these abstract thoughts. Similar to writing in a journal, verbalizing our experience offers another chance to process the experience. The more we process our experience the more we learn about ourselves and appreciate our ways. In addition, when we speak to others, we hold our experience in our consciousness longer, which helps us remember parts of our experience we might have otherwise forgotten. These insights are usually the answers we are looking for.

The following story helps illustrate how group sharing enhances a child's overall experience.

Donovan, ten years old, attends his first meditation class. His child meditation facilitator guides the students through a meditation during which Donovan imagines sending healing energy to his grandmother. Afterwards, while the other students share what they saw in their meditation, Donovan hears a classmate tell the group she saw her energy as sparks, while another child saw cartoon characters. Donovan realizes people can see healing energy in a number of ways during meditation.

Donovan waits patiently while excited to share his own experience with the group. He knows his classmates will enjoy hearing about the liquid energy he gave to his grandmother. Finally it is Donovan's turn to share. He watches his peer's eyes light up when he describes how his healing energy was made of chocolate milk.

How to Encourage Children Talk About their Experience

After your child connects with a personal experience pertaining to the lesson, encourage him to communicate his experience to you or someone else. If you are working with a group of children, ask each child after the activity, "So what was that like for you? What happened?" If the child is not interested in talking about his experience, then move on to another child. After others have shared, you might find the child who was initially shy has much to say later.

Encourage your students to share what they experience after guided meditations or other facilitated activities. Their expression usually comes straight from the heart, allowing them to articulate

important personal events with others. Fellow students often show interest in their classmate's descriptions. It is beautiful to see a student basking in the support of his fellow students. This propels him into higher levels of confidence and awareness.

Feeling Safe

To ensure the success of this sharing time, the child needs to feel safe and be able to freely express himself in front of who ever is in the room. To create a safe environment, the facilitator can discourage other children and adults from interrupting the child. This includes not giving advice while sharing is going on. Children usually do not interject these types of comments; therefore, the adults need to consciously refrain from sharing advice. This is a time for expressing what the child felt, not a time for instruction.

Creating a space in which children trust their teacher, peers and themselves is an important aspect of facilitating. Setting a tone for fun gets you half way there; however, other factors are involved. For example, facilitators need to be sensitive to the child's needs. Some quiet children need someone to encourage them to speak in front of the group. Some active children need to know there are boundaries. Some children need challenge while others need hugs. On the other hand, the facilitator's role is not to limit a child to a particular behavior pattern. Instead, it is to tune into a child minute by minute. His needs may change quickly. The more you remain open to the child's character, the more the child can change and grow. This is the primary purpose of the facilitator - to help a child evolve on his own course, in this same way water and earth assist a plant to grow in its own direction.

Here are some tips for creating feelings of safety:

- Make eye contact
- Learn and use your students' names.
- Avoid commands such as "Sit down," "Be quiet."
- Give parents the opportunity to observe.
- If parents are observing, keep a good distance between children and parents so the child feels independent.
- Be open to all comments. Refrain from judging children's comments as either right or wrong.
- Avoid having people come in and out of the room, especially people not involved in the activity.
- Inspire the child to participate instead of forcing him to.
- Be open to the outcome of the lesson plan. Do not hold on to a preconceived notion of how the lesson will unfold. This will help children feel safe to explore lessons in their own way.
- Make it fun. When we have a good time, we feel safe.

When teaching, avoid right and wrong whenever possible. Avoid telling a child that his answer is incorrect. Avoid emphasizing the answer is right. We want to create a safe environment for the child - an environment where he feels no hesitation about freely expressing his thoughts. Some children are less likely to share answers and ideas if they believe they might be told their answer is wrong. Also discourage children in the class from telling other children they are wrong. And frankly, in many cases, who are we to tell them they are wrong. Keeping to this guideline is fairly easy when teaching meditation, because meditation is a field of self exploration. In other subjects avoiding right and wrong is

more challenging. Remember that you are facilitating *experience*. The child's experience is his own and therefore right and wrong do not exist. And lastly, children share many original thoughts. Keep an open mind. Simply because *you* haven't thought of it doesn't mean it is wrong.

Encouraging the child to share his personal experience benefits not only the child, but also benefits the facilitator. Educators sometimes talk about the term *assessment*. They use assessment to determine whether the child has learned the concepts to the standard the teacher has set. Hopefully the teacher also uses the assessment to determine the effectiveness of her teaching. When the facilitator listens to the personal accounts of her students, she can use the child's perspective to enhance her teaching. For example, in the healing energy meditation, the facilitator might ask her students to see their healing energy as colored light. One day, one of her student's shares that instead of colored light, he saw pictures floating by. Another student reports he saw nothing at all, but instead felt warmth in his heart. Because the facilitator encouraged her students to talk about their experience, she now knows that her students sometimes *see* healing energy as something other than what she suggests. Going forward the facilitator will mention during her guided meditations that the child may see his healing energy as anything he wishes, or he may *feel* the energy instead of seeing it.

Hearing how the students have experienced the activity is also valuable for the facilitator to help determine if her method of facilitation led her students in the direction she anticipated. If the students' experiences were not supportive of the lesson at hand, then the facilitator may reevaluate her plan for next time.

In conclusion, listening to the experience of others opens us to new perspectives. Any practice that allows us to see another's point of view is beneficial because it adds depth to our own views and experience.

Principle 5 **Addressing the Practical Use of Each Lesson**

Facilitators show students how to choose a specific situation in their lives when the lesson learned will be useful. Facilitators and students explore together What did we do that for? *and* When can I use this?

After a child has personally experienced the technique or lesson the facilitator is sharing, the child then needs to intellectually understand the true purpose of the lesson. Begin by asking, *What did we do that for?* This simple question prompts the child to explore the practical use of the information and experience he gained. For example, if the child learned how to bring warm energy, bright colors and happy feeling into his body through his crown chakra, he might answer, "We did that so when we are sad we can feel better." The facilitator's opinion of the accuracy of the answer is not important. However, the child's ability to come up with his own reason is imperative. If he has a hard time coming up with a reason why the lesson is helpful in his life, the facilitator may ask additional questions to guide him. For example, you could ask, "How did the meditation make you feel?" "Did you like it?" or "What did you like about it?"

Identifying a Specific Situation

It is important for the child to determine a *specific* time when he can use the techniques after the class is over. It is far more

valuable for the child to find specific situations to apply new skills as opposed to the facilitator suggesting circumstances.

For example, after a healing meditation, during which a child brings into his mind and body warm energy, bright colors and happy feelings, the facilitator might ask the child “When can you use this technique outside of class?” The child might answer, “When I am sad.” This is a good answer, naturally, because when we bring happiness into our being when we are sad, we often feel better. However, the facilitator should encourage the child to go deeper and share a more specific example. You might follow up with “What is an example of a time when you feel sad”? The child might respond “When my Dad gets ready to leave on a long trip.” Now you have a precise example when the child can apply the knowledge he has gained.

It is paramount for the child to access *his own* situation. He is the most qualified person to decide when he will most benefit from the technique. He knows his life experience better than anyone else. However, if the child has difficulty imagining an instance when he would benefit from the lesson, then the facilitator might prompt him with guiding questions.

Moreover, guiding the child to recall *specific* scenarios as opposed to *general* possibilities allows the child to more likely apply what he has learned. The child will look forward to the specific happening so he can use his newly acquired wisdom. Or he might be reminded of the technique when he finds himself in the situation. Of course, he can apply his knowledge in other situations as well.

Principle 6

Using Art, Music and Writing to Reinforce Ideas

Facilitators offer art projects, creative writing ideas and music activities to create a space for students to explore their lesson further. When students participate in these activities they are able to hold their experience in their consciousness for additional time, which helps students remember aspects of the lesson.

Consider the last time you had a deep experience that inspired you to create. Perhaps you were on a retreat when you made an arts and crafts piece in conjunction with a lecture. Or maybe you had something significant happen to you that inspired you to write a poem. Or you might have written a journal entry at the end of a your day. No matter the circumstance, the creative endeavor probably allowed you to more deeply process your experience.

It is human nature to create after experience. Throughout history artists have created masterpieces following personal or public events. This art, whether music, writing or craft, has helped us as a human race heal from tragedy and celebrate beauty. A child using a crayon to draw a picture of something he saw in his meditation is equally as momentous as Michaelangelo’s painting the Creation of Man with plaster and paint on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Both are examples of man celebrating his experience upon earth.

Creating Art

Here is how a facilitator brings art into her class.

Andree, leads her class through a guided meditation. Then each child shares his or her experience with the group. Next, Andree guides her students to see the practicality of the

technique being taught. Finally, she offers the children a chance to draw a picture of their experiences. She gives the children crayons and paper. And, if there is time, she encourages each child to show and explain to the group what he or she has drawn.

Crayons and paper are simple and children love them. However, in one visit to an art store you can find many other appropriate enticing mediums. For example, stickers, water colors, glitter and glue, feathers and other collage items. Older children like to go inward and write about their experience. Whether you are musically inclined or not, encouraging the child to sing or dance is also a wonderful way for him to integrate his experience into his life.

Creative projects reinforce the learning experience. While the child sits and stares at a blank piece of paper, he accesses memories of his experience. During this time he remembers aspects of his experience he might not have become consciously aware of otherwise. Accessing and processing these memories helps him see the beauty in the lesson and allows him to own his experience. While he transforms his experience into an expression of art, he empowers himself by making it even more personal. In a sense, he physically touches his experience when he creates a physical piece of art. A written poem, dance or song also helps him feel like the master of his experience.

Sharing Art

Encouraging the child to share his art with his peers is also helpful if time allows and the child still has interest. By the end of the art project, younger children often have processed fully and have no need to participate in more activities supporting the

lesson. They have moved on to bigger and better things. However, if students are still engaged in the lesson, have them share their work with the group. This adds to their full experience because they articulate their experience even more, which allows for more processing. Likewise, since art provokes our thoughts, the students in the audience process their *own* experience more deeply while viewing the art of their peers. For example, when tourists enter the Sistine Chapel to view Michaelangelo's *Creation of Man*, they contemplate their *own* coming to being, even if subconsciously.

Principle 7 Including Parents

Facilitators give students enough space to experience independently, while creating a space nearby for parents to observe.

Parents enjoy many advantages when they observe their child experience learning with the Satya Method. Parents witness the facilitator creating a space for growth and a partnership with her students. To ensure that parents adequately hear what the teacher and students are saying, the facilitator needs to speak up and repeat aloud what is said by soft-spoken students.

When Satya Method facilitators exemplify the duality of being both teacher and student, those observing can easily see the partnership between the facilitator and the child. Parents can see the dance between child and teacher and begin to dance a similar number at home (*principle 1*).

Moreover, when parents watch their children play games before the lesson they see how fun activities alleviates anxiety about the unknown, quickening and heightening their children's learning process (*principle 2*). Parents can also reevaluate their communication techniques with their children when they see the value in down-playing the abstract intellectual meaning and up-playing their child's personal experience (*principle 3*).

Ideally, parents will better understand how we learn from one another when we talk about our personal experiences (*principle 4*) and will encourage their children to come up with practical uses for the rules set at home (*principle 5*). In addition, parents discover that incorporating art, writing and music brings a new level of self awareness we might not have found otherwise (*principle 6*).

Inviting parent to observe your class is not always possible. And in private sessions with a child it is not always helpful. In these situations, consider giving parents an information sheet, which summarizes your philosophy and provides suggestions they can follow at home.

When parents learn from the model of their child's facilitator, they can integrate these techniques into their own parenting style. Furthermore, the child will experience a consistency between home and their outside learning environments, which promotes feelings of safety, security and trust.