

Listen, Watch and Wonder

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I've recently come back from a three-months trip to Poland, Spain and Israel, followed by a trip to New Zealand.

In all these places, I have encountered 'the world after covid' among Suzuki families and friends.

It is a different world, beyond any doubt. This pandemic has changed the world. It has created a stir in human psyche. People everywhere act and behave differently. The ramifications of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, climate disasters and more are partially known to us and more is being revealed as we go forward.

The Suzuki spirit has proven its strength and unity during these challenging times. We continued teaching online, gathered around the fire of Zoom in parents' talks, teachers' meetings, professional development sessions and teacher training courses. We had concerts and recitals online and we preserved the music and Suzuki kinship above all.

Many studios around the world donated money to our friends in Ukraine. Suzuki Association of NSW invited Ukrainian teachers to take part in 2022 professional development (free of charge). In Poland I had Ukrainian piano teachers in my training. They shared and told how supported and loved they were by the International Suzuki Community.

We made the best we could under the circumstances, and all this time we kept the music going. Now, when we start to see each other in person, reminded of the unique experience of human live connection, it is a good time to look at the past and see how we can learn from it.

"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

Winston Churchill.

Changes in the world and in life will continue to occur and accelerate. Since it is difficult to keep up with the pace of change, it might be a good idea to re-evaluate and learn what is important to keep and what we could let go of.

Meeting children and parents in different countries, re-informed and confirmed for me the important things in life.

Shinichi Suzuki's vision throughout his life was *"to get education changed from mere instruction to education in the real sense of the word."* He sought to educate the heart and soul of a child, of all children in the world, through music. Now, as always, his words are potent and continue to inspire all of us, parents and teachers.

In these changing times, we need to ask ourselves:

- What are the things that are beyond fad?
- What are the values that humanity could not survive without?
- What is in the core of being human?

In the words of Rumi, the thirteenth-century Persian poet and scholar:

*"Love is the vital core of the soul.
And of all you see, only love is infinite."*

Children and adults alike cannot live without love. The need to love and be loved is existential.

In Suzuki's words:

"Where love is deep much can be accomplished."

Children love to learn; this too is an existential need. To survive we need to learn.

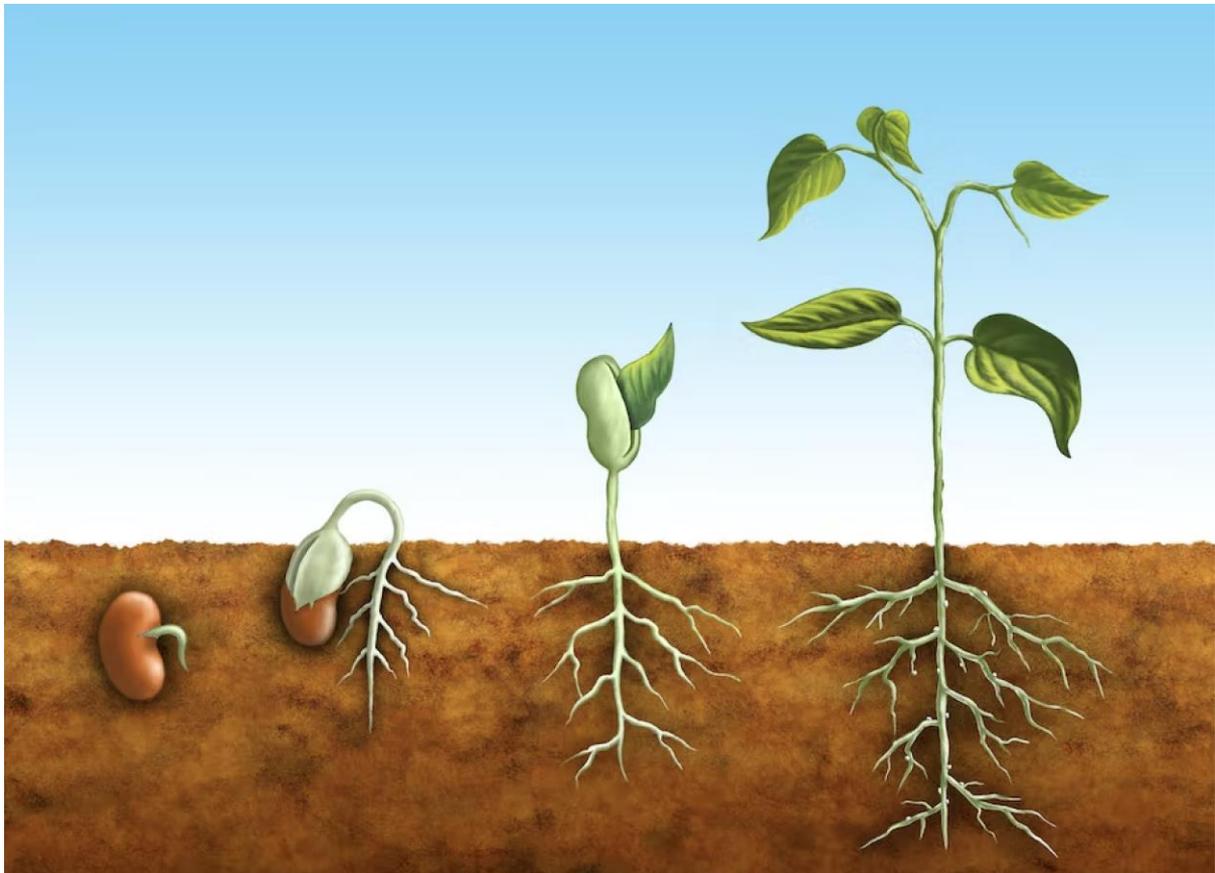
The Talent Education movement advocates developing the whole child THROUGH music.

As Suzuki once said:

*"Teaching music is not my main purpose.
I want to make good citizens, noble human beings.
If a child hears fine music from the day of his birth, and learns to play it himself,
he develops sensitivity, discipline and endurance. He gets a beautiful heart."*

When I look into the eyes of a child, I see a world waiting to be discovered. I hope we make sure we do not destroy this pure desire of children to learn and grow.

*“A seed is planted in the earth.
We don’t see when the germination begins.
That is the doing of Mother Nature. We have to wait patiently.
We cannot dig up the seed to see whether it is really growing; to do so would
be to destroy everything.
Suddenly a bud appears. What a joy and pleasure to watch it grow!
At the same time the root, unseen in the ground, is getting stronger and has
the power to produce a big, sturdy tree.”
-Shinichi Suzuki, *_Nurtured by Love_**



The spark in the eyes of a child, the desire to learn, is there from the beginning. We have to nurture it with love and care.

Like the seed in the earth, we don’t know what the future holds for our children. We can dream for them and with them. We can wish and hope. And

the best tools we can give them is love and nurture. All of us feel loved when we are seen and listened to.

You chose Suzuki Talent Education instead of “just” learning to play the instrument because you knew that making music with your child is invaluable.

- ♥ Your children feel seen, when you appreciate them for the effort and commitment they show.
- ♥ Your children feel listened to, when you spend this precious time with them while they play.
- ♥ Your children feel understood and valued, when you meet them where they are (not where YOU want them to be) .

I would like to leave you with a friendly suggestion. Try a few times in a week to not see practice as a chore. Don't even call it 'PRACTICE'. How about calling it 'Playing Time', or 'Time Together'? Try not to look at your watch. Do not try to squeeze many things that you feel you should do into one sitting. Just come to it as “let's make music together.” And your contribution might “just” be sitting there with your child with your full presence and love not demanding anything, just appreciating the fact that they make music, that you two make music. Whether it is just a moment or two – it is still valuable. You are putting the seed into the ground and you know that it will grow into the most beautiful flower, a unique one that no other will be exactly the same.

Nourish it. Love it. Listen to it. See it. AND WONDER.

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