

## Imparting Human Values through Communication: An Emphasis on Role Play

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*Abstract: Today majority of places have adopted a holistic approach towards education. Attention is towards experiential learning and the significance that it places on relationships and primary human values within learning environment. The tenet 'I hear and I forget I see and I remember, I do and I understand' is very applicable here.*

*Human values are abstract. No doubts these values are inextricably woven into our language but it is difficult to impart such values.*

*The process of communication is very important. It includes verbal and non-verbal communication. Therefore human values can be imparted through communication. The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, the paper exposes some human values that are instrumental in creating a holistic personality and the second part of the paper moves towards the importance of role play as a medium to communicate human values. Whenever we project into the future in a kind of 'what if' scenario, we indulge in a role play which can effectively communicate human values verbally and non-verbally.*

*Role play is of great pedagogical value. It can be given a proper direction as well as a purpose by performing it in the form of a one act play. The second part further includes the study of a one act play, "The Refund" by Fritz Karinthy as an illustration of a role play with a purpose.*

### Introduction:

Education is a process that moulds the personality of a person.

Consolidating the views of the eminent scholars, we may characterise 'total education' as- 'the system of teaching, learning and initiation of knowledge which leads to complete self-reliance, excellent development of personality and continuous evolution of virtuous tendencies.' (Sharma, Acharya, 255)

To give a holistic approach towards education emphasis is being laid on incorporating human values in order to have complete self-reliance.

These values are abstract and there are no set rules or principles to impart them. If we try to teach such values and morals to people by simply giving lectures on it, it is always taken as a moral preaching, which very few can value. On the other hand, if we adopt an indirect method i.e. learning through mistakes, it can surely leave some impact because once a person commits a mistake, then he can very well visualize what the right way to check this mistake is. As substantiated in the following lines:

In studying the great characters the world has produced, I dare say, in the vast majority of cases it would be found that it was misery that taught more than happiness, it was poverty that taught more than wealth, it was blows that brought out the inner fire more than praise. (Karma Yoga, p-2).

In the same context a person learns from mistakes. Therefore mistakes can act as a learning experience too.

The major concern comes when one has to find out ways as to how to actually provide a platform where people can visualize or observe some mistakes or some wrong doings. To accomplish such a task, the process of communication is taken into consideration as-

We may see that sound symbols play a prominent part in the drama of human life. I am talking to you, I am not touching you, the pulsations of the air caused by my speaking go into your ear, they touch your nerves and produce effects in your mind. (Karma Yoga, p-69).

Therefore verbal communication is very effective but at the same time non-verbal aspect of communication cannot be also ignored as it accounts to.....% of total communication.

This paper has taken into consideration "Role Play" as a medium of communication to impart human values. "Role Play is a highly verbalized procedure". (Morry Van Ments, p-19). Role play includes both verbal and non-verbal communication.

The incentive to take part in a role play is high and by taking part, one is using language and other ways of communicating so that learning is an integral part of the task. (Morey Van Ments, p-19).

And in order to follow the strategy of "learning through mistakes", it has taken a one act play-"The Refund" by Fritz Karinthy in which the protagonist is an object of wrong doings and he commits all sorts of mistakes and finally has to give up in the hands of the principal and the professors. His mistakes act like a learning ground for the viewers and even the role players.

For the beginner it gives a logical sequence which ensures that each point is considered before too many assumptions are made. (Morey Van Ments, p-29).

**Abode to Human Values:**

Human values are of the highest consciousness state which are inextricably woven into our language. These values are ingrained in a human being from the very childhood. Basically values are there in a person but there are various factors that mould them into good or bad virtues. It's only the human mind which is real abode of such values. As substantiated in the words of Karma Yoga:

The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton and studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them.... All knowledge therefore, secular or spiritual is in the human mind. (P-2, 3).

If human mind is the abode then no matter whatever values are contained in a soul, it is certain that outside world can surely leave some impact into our minds and influence or modify our values.

By this continuous reflex of good thought good impressions moving over the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong and as a result we feel able to control the Indriayas (the sense organs, the nerve centres.) ( Karma Yoga, p-40).

**Some Human Values:**

Human values are ideals that define or give meaning to our lives. Education is incomplete if we ignore the part played by such values. We read in the Bhagwat Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly.

All work is by nature composed of good and evil.... Good action will entail upon us good effect, bad action, bad. (Karma Yoga, p-38).

There is a chain of such values which are more or less connected. Love, truth and unselfishness, when we compare these values with hatred, lie and selfishness, then only one will get the real essence of these values.

Love, truth and selfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideals, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. (Karma Yoga, p-9).

Honesty is another value which is of utmost importance otherwise nobody can rely on you or trust you. "Honesty is a clear conscious, before myself and before my fellow human beings." (Karma Yoga, p-16).

Honesty can further make a person pure and thus give birth to another value that is purity.

Meet a truly pure soul and they can walk right through you leaving no mark at all only a sense of light and optimism. (Inner Beauty, p-38).

Honesty and purity walk hand in hand as an honest person is always pure at heart and vice versa.

Further when a person is pure and honest, then he always shows respect to others. As substantiated:

Respect is never catching anyone out, never pulling at their short comings so that they become a target for laughter. (Inner Beauty, p-61).

Now respect for others can only be there in a person if he has values of tolerance and contentment in him. A person who cannot sustain endurance can never be satisfied and so:

A tolerant person is like a tree with an abundance of fruits. (Living Values, p- 45).

The value of tolerance and contentment teaches patience. "Sometimes patience makes you persist, to go on with, something you'd rather see finished." (Inner Beauty, p-54). And this value of patience will definitely lead to self control. "This self control will tend to produce a mighty will or character which makes a Christ or a Bhuddha". (Karma Yoga, p-10).

All these values form a courageous being.

They say less and do more and they never make promises for the courage in them knows that together with a high aim there has to be an intelligent mind that is able to move quietly one step at a time. (Inner Beauty, p-23).

If a person is courageous, he has abundance of self-confidence.

"Even areas of weakness don't shake the mind because they are already under demolition". (Inner Beauty, p-65). With confidence at its best, a person will surely have the virtue of accuracy which implies sharpness in everything. As Substantiated:

As accuracy is being in the right place at the right time, in moving from a position of quiet to a position of speech at the right time, moving from participation to withdrawal. (Inner Beauty, p-9).

And if a person is accurate, he knows it very well that he needs to co-operate with others, therefore the virtue of co-operation inevitably grows in a person. This accuracy also teaches him to be obedient as well as wise.

**Communication of values:**

If we examine our daily life, we will become aware that everything we do is an act of communication. We are sending messages, or, receiving them all day long. ([www.love.in.human.nature.org](http://www.love.in.human.nature.org))

Communication is a two way process which implies that the message sent from the sender to the receiver will be incomplete, unless or until it has not received any active feedback. Therefore when it comes to communication of human values, communication here too will be incomplete if the person has not actually felt the values. In other words human values that are communicated should be effective enough that they find some place within the human mind.

**How can this be done?**

Role Play as a medium of communication is the best reply to it.

Provided that the role play is well organized and operated, the participants invariably enjoy it, become involved in it and remember it long after they have forgotten much of the learning which they obtained in other ways. (Morry Van Ments, p-15).

Nowadays, most of the learning is being done with the help of activity based method. Teaching of morals directly are taken as moral lectures only and so Role Play is an activity where various aspects of the behaviours such as developing human values can be taken care of.

The major advantage of role play is the one it shares with all stimulating and gaming activities in that it is highly motivating and gives students simple, direct and rapid feedback on the effects of their actions. (Morry Van ments, p-15).

To impart such values one needs set direction or a sequence so that one role enacted leads to the other and then to the next fixed role so that audiences or the role players are not left on to their own selves to draw conclusions . In this way the negative thoughts will not approach.

**Advantages of one act play:**

1. Role playing can become ineffective if people are unclear about what they are supposed to do. Any muddy thinking will have consequences. Be clear about the purpose. If you are assessing skills in a certain situation then the brief must reflect this. Now when it comes to other activities and situation where there are lots of technical details it provides a bolt hole for people who are skilled and pre-occupied in technicalities, when they should be focusing on structure, or process or behaviour. The exercise will keep its point and value if it avoids technical distractions.
2. If our purpose is to teach human values, our purpose is defined. Now it is a pre-requisite in a role play activity to assign enough information so that the entire communication

process leads to a believable and relevant conversation. If the information is too little- there won't be enough to sustain a conversation and too much will surely make people swamped with information, most of which they either won't need or won't remember. Therefore one act play will suit best for the situation where our purpose is defined i.e. teaching human values.

3. It's also observed that when people are given role play activities to perform individually, the candidates generally indulge into his or her personal thoughts which at times can produce harmful effects but if we take the help of one act play, here we have chain of events and there is no link to one particular thing, and there is not a general anger at everything. If role players are given open licence to just be angry or wicket, there needs to be a reason for it. Personal anger might create some personal attachment to such anger but when one act play takes place this anger is defined and linked with the chain of events. A well written brief will help to keep the role play focused and on the track.
4. When one's peer group is involved in the role play activity, it becomes more like a shared, facilitative exercise and rather than a battle- which in turn will also defuse fears and tension. One act play has an advantage of confinement of time and therefore it is easier for everyone to know the play easily and then share feelings.
5. Generally forced teaching is taken as a moral lecture but when we have to impart human values, one act play can serve as highly beneficial learning activity where not only the participants but also the observers give their comments afterwards.
6. It is also observed that a role play activity should not contain subjective judgements or comments based on personal knowledge or assumptions. Feedback should be meaningful and specific- something that the role player can act on. One act play also satisfies this principle.
7. At times it is observed that individual role playing act had caused negative impact on the minds of the youth especially when they were assigned the roles of Vampire or a Magician as they find pleasures in the same. One act play has very successfully overcome this problem. Role play feedback isn't helpful if it suggests that the role player should get a new personality or be nicer. We have a theme and the story line which is linked up with the series of event and so people act and involve oneself in the learning process.

#### **Some illustrations from The Refund a one act play by Fritz Karinthy:**

The Refund comprises only a few characters i.e. the principal, the mathematics, physics, history and geography masters and the protagonist, Wasserkopf .In order to communicate human values in this role play activity of one act play Wasserkopf mistakes act as a learning ground.

## Mistake 1:

*“The Principal- He’s waiting outside. He wants to be re-examined .He says he learned nothing. He says a re-examination will prove it.”* (Agarwal, 352)

Wasserkopf has a negative value i.e. determination but in doing wrong things.He is ready to do anything just to prove that his school has taught him nothing and his knowledge is negligible.

## Mistake 2:

*“Wasserkopf: Who the hell are you? Sit down, you loafers!”* (Agarwal, 353)

The protagonist’s address to his masters shows to the role players and the viewers that how important the values of respect and accuracy are. No doubts viewers especially students will laugh on such utterance but ultimately as the play advances further, this behaviour is mere mockery over the pupils who are always ready to blame others and the system. The mistake committed thus is linked up with the chain of events which finally leads to a moral teaching.

## Mistake 3:

*“Wasserkopf: You’d better brush up your wits if you think you’re going to put one over on me.”* (Agarwal, 353)

Here the protagonist considers himself to be very wise. But in reality it is his mistake .True wisdom is shown in the form of the masters. They are insulted at the hands of this pupil as he addresses them as ‘old stick-in-the-mud, cannibal. Hypocrite, nitwit, ass etc but they show patience and self control in teaching him a lesson.

## Mistake four:

*Wasserkopf: How long did the thirty years war last? Was that the question?*

*The History Master: Yes, yes*

*Wasserkopf: [grinning] I know exactly seven meters.....*

*The History Master: Seven meters?Right ! Your answer is excellent ...!”*(Agarwal, 353)

The accuracy of masters is shown in accepting all the wrong answers as the correct ones. It’s just to teach this ex-pupil a lesson that if can lie and tell the wrong answers and thus outsmart them, and then the masters also have brain.

## Mistake 5:

*“Wasserkopf- I was never serious in my life. Treat me wrong here and I’ll go straight to the ministry of education and complain about you! You took my money and you taught me nothing. Now I’m no good for anything, and I can’t do the things I should have learned at school.!”* (Agarwal, 353)

These words will straight away leave an impact on the minds of the viewers that it is very easy to blame others. Wasserkopf never worked hard and he is fired from his job because of the same reason i.e. his inability to work hard.

Mistake 6:

*“Wasserkopf- Grand total: 6,450 crowns 50 hellers. Knock off  
The heller and call it crowns”* (Agarwal, 353)

Well in the end of the play it is ultimately proved that no doubts this ex-pupil tried to prove that his school taught him nothing, but it's only his education which made him capable enough to calculate the correct sum in a systematic way. Therefore Wasserkopf had to suffer due to his lies and corrupt values.

### Conclusion

This paper has taken into consideration “Role Play” as a medium of communication to impart human values. “Role Play is a highly verbalized procedure”. (Ments, 19). Role play includes both verbal and non-verbal communication.

*The incentive to take part in a role play is high and by taking part, one is using language and other ways of communicating so that learning is an integral part of the task.* (Ments, 19).

And in order to follow the strategy of “learning through mistakes”, it has taken a one act play- “The Refund” by Fritz Karinthy in which the protagonist is an object of wrong doings and he commits all sorts of mistakes and finally has to give up in the hands of the principal and the professors. His mistakes act like a learning ground for the viewers and even the role players. It's just like if one will do or act like this, one will surely suffer.

For the beginner it gives a logical sequence which ensures that each point is considered before too many assumptions are made. (Ments, 29).

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