

Some excerpts from:
STAR CHILDREN:
UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN WHO SET US SPECIAL TASKS AND CHALLENGES
by Georg Kühlewind

“For roughly the past twenty years now (and occasionally well before that) more and more children are being born who are different—different from what parents and teachers are used to seeing and expect to see. For a long while these children were considered, and treated, as special cases, strange aberrations from ‘normal’ children. By the larger and ever-growing numbers we see today, it is clearly not a matter of individual cases, but that a new generation of souls we have never met before is coming to earth—children who have great maturity, are dissatisfied with the adult world as it is today, and are coming to earth with a powerful spiritual impulse. We cannot close our eyes to this even any longer.”

“And the look these new children give you is not the look of a baby but of a mature, self-aware and wise person... And we can see not only self-awareness in it but also dignity.”

“‘Seeing through’ things is a capacity all babies have, but with star children an adult can perceive this ability in the child’s look.”

“Right from the start these children have their own individual character which they champion very strongly—they know who they are... They also, at a very early age, say what they want and what they don’t want. You cannot simply order them about but have to talk to them about what you intend. If you don’t do this, they will put up stubborn resistance—they want to be treated with respect. If you want them to do something, you have to talk it all over with them. A discussion is appropriate even if they are too young to have any understanding of what is being discussed, for in this case too it makes them feel appreciated and respected. And if there is a possible lack of ‘intellectual’ understanding this is often (also with retarded people) replaced, as is well known, by a feeling understanding.”

“We ought right from the beginning to treat these children differently, according to their maturity—mature but not precocious. Once the beginning has been spoiled and the environment or the teacher stick to their usual, conventional ‘methods’, it will become more and more difficult later on to deal with the growing child.”

“Where these children are concerned there exists no such thing as an authority depending on position (as parent or teacher)—and right from the start this is so, whilst they are still very small... They disapprove of any proceedings done as a habit or ritual, and find new, usually more effective, ways to learn or proceed. You cannot punish them, for the punishment doesn’t help, and leads at most to their rejecting from then on the person who set the punishment; it is taken as a sign of weakness, and incapacity to deal with them—which in fact it is. You cannot arouse a guilty conscience in them or a feeling of shame—not from outside—as an ‘educational’ tool.”

“In actual fact, though, they only pay attention to something that really interests them, but then they can become strongly engrossed in it. If something doesn't interest them they easily become bored and get restless. It depends on their environment, on their teachers, whether an interest can be awakened in them for the subject or theme.”

“These children are usually highly intelligent... They are very sensitive as well, in both directions: both concerning themselves and with regard to their fellows. If they have not already been ‘spoilt’ by the environment they show sincere compassion, and their actions are prompted by love—this is particularly noticeable... If they are not understood they withdraw, and are indignant if someone obviously acts without love... Every hidden intention and every secret thought lies open to these children... They want to change the world through their spiritual impulses, give it forms springing from compassion and love. This will not succeed if the adult world, which they will inevitably come into contact with, does not change accordingly. Without inner change, though our inner lack of understanding, and misunderstanding, we shall make the star children into broken people, shattered in their innermost being with regard to the mission with which they came to earth—we can hinder them in their mission to turn the world into a better place, rob them of the meaning of their existence.”

“Nowadays intense spirituality on the one side and the intense practice (not theory) of materialism on the other are clashing with one another. The result is such a rapid and complex increase in the number of ‘difficult’ children that the ‘experts’ can hardly keep up with analyzing the various typologies and syndromes.”

“The scene in families, kindergartens, schools and therapeutic education institutions today can be looked at as a **protest of the human soul**... The majority [of children] today will perhaps accommodate themselves to the normal world of adults by adjusting, through outer or inner pressure (to avoid isolation and to obtain love from the environment); in the not far distant future this may well succeed less often and with greater difficulty. **And this is our hope**... The question is: Who will understand the protest?”

“Small children ‘imitate’. People should understand this thoroughly and take it deeply to heart; then it will point a way that adults can take in their constant work on themselves, a way to a steady transformation. Children ‘imitate’ what we **are** not what we think we are or would like to be, and they are formed purely by what we are. Fortunately this is done with individual selectiveness. And this is more marked in the case of star children than ‘normal’ ones. But adults would do well to be deeply convinced that every child comes into this world with a general orientation to do the Good, and in addition, with a totally individual mission. The difference between ‘normal’ children and star children is solely that with regard to both these impulses the latter are more conscious, more self-aware.”

“We must not understand the term ‘star children’ in any sense as a new category or as a typological stamp, for in reality we find a continuous spectrum of children without there being any sharp dividing line. Star children exist just as darkness and light exist without our being able to specify a sharp boundary between them.”

“Children are human beings, individuals, and come to earth with very considerable capacities which adults have lost. There is no reason to look down on them and feel superior to them. We are confronting a whole person, to whom we owe **respect**. It is worth looking back each evening at the way we have treated the child during the day. The main aspects are respect and honesty. Dishonesty makes no sense: children see through us, feel into us. Respect means not forcing anything on the children, any habit or standard practice, without explaining it or—if it is something more general—having their consent. They will consent to anything that is right, once it is understood. If the children are still too small for this, we should ‘discuss’ it with them all the same, unilaterally, in which case they will certainly feel your good intentions. If the child can already speak it should be allowed to take an active part in any decisions that concern it. We can let the children themselves make suggestions with regard to discipline, hygiene, habits and the agenda for the day. Always give them the chance to choose, and if at all feasible don’t tell them to do something without giving them the possibility of choice. The reason should always be explained.”

“We have to set limits to the children’s activities; but they themselves should set these boundaries or help us to do so. Star children need a great deal of space for their bubbling energy—let **them** plan and limit this space.”

“Watch them especially when they are together with other children, or when they are in the company of star children. If they become rebellious, arrogant, aggressive, this is a sign that they need new, more demanding tasks. It is particularly important to notice this in a class setting; the teacher can save herself a lot of trouble if she constantly gives the star children tasks which stretch them to their limit. New tasks, new limits—every child wants **precise**, not confused limits. Indulgence on the part of parents or teachers is of course the worst of choices.”

“The best way to go about things in school is to decide on the regulations, the arranging of the day and general conduct, in fact everything belonging to the life of the class, together with the children right from the beginning (class one in fact), avoiding if possible the forbidding of anything.”

“That teachers can achieve anything merely on the strength of authority inherent in their position as teacher, is an illusion today. What has an effect is solely what they are as a human being.”

“With regard to star children we can assume, for our inner orientation, that they are older than we are—we often even have this feeling consciously; it will be our surest guide, or at least protect us from disparaging them, or thinking of them in that way.