

## **“A True Instinct for the Beautiful”**

By: Rachel Carson

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that the true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood.

I should ask that a gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unflinching skill against the boredom and disenchantments of banal or responsibility filled adult years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the source of our strength.

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Parents often have struggle when confronted, on the one hand, with the eager, sensitive mind of a child and on the other, with a world of complexity – inhabited by a life so various and unfamiliar that it seems hopeless to reduce it to order and knowledge.

I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to *know* as to *feel*. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then emotions are the soil in which the seeds must grow.

The years of early childhood are the time to cultivate and connect emotions, knowledge and beauty. Once the emotions have been aroused – a sense of beauty, excitement, sympathy, pity, admiration or love – then we wish for knowledge about the object of our emotional response. Once found, felt, then understood, it has lasting meaning.

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