



Questions Asked by Students at Methow Valley Elementary

KIDS' QUOTES

Dr. Jana Mohr Lone

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This year I facilitated weekly philosophy sessions with a multi-age class of third and fourth grade students at a public school in Winthrop, Washington. Early in the school year, I read the story *The Three Questions* by Jon J. Muth (2002) to the students. This is a story based upon Tolstoy's short story of the same name, published in 1903. In Muth's story, the main character, a boy named Nikolai, tells his friends that he believes that if he can find the answers to his three questions, he "would always know what to do." The three questions are: When is the best time to do things? Who is the most important one? What is the right thing to do? The story describes Nikolai's search for the answers to these questions.

After reading the story to the class, I asked them what they thought of Nikolai's three questions, and whether they thought that these three questions are the most significant questions in life. After discussing this for a while, I asked the students if they had other questions that they thought were also important questions in life.

Each student has a philosophy journal, in which he or she writes each week, and I asked the class to illustrate their philosophy journals with questions they had. The result of this discussion and exercise are the students' questions and illustrations that are interspersed throughout this issue.

Informed Children Ought to Have a Voice in Government

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dren voting. Those who tend to mature later may not be able to make a wise decision. It may hurt their feelings if their friends can vote and they cannot. Therefore, some people think that it would be better if children do not vote.

It is the child's duty to understand the issue and strive for the best result if they want to have their voice. It is the child's fault if he or she does not put in enough effort. It is not fair for the diligent children if they cannot vote just because of worrying about other children's feelings. Children are generally less informed and have little or no interest in public affairs. Many issues are beyond a child's experience and hard for them to understand. Even if children are well informed about the issue, they still may not be capable enough to make the right decision. If a result disserves the general public, the decision could easily harm the society. Anyone can make mistakes. Although children might make more mistakes, that does not mean that adults make no mistakes. No one is perfect. We learn from our mistakes. Many young children react in a mature and positive way that can be valued by our community. We should not generalize children in one perspective.

Another argument is that children cannot generate income. Therefore, they have no ability to pay taxes. If children cannot pay taxes, they should have no say to the end result. It is just like saying if you do not give, then you do not receive. If children do not pay the taxes, they should not receive the right to vote. People who can contribute should be able to determine the fate of the society.

Because children do not generate income, that does not mean they sit



"Do dragons exist?"

By Colton Skelton, Grade 4

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around slothfully. They have school to attend as well as other duties to perform. Therefore, they cannot work during the day. However, attending school and learning other life experiences are the fundamental of a great human being. Children will in turn contribute the most, including paying taxes, to the society when they grow up.

I think that a person can take a test to find out if he or she is eligible to vote on certain topics. The test should be in an essay format and consist of several questions that test if someone understands the issue. The government should be responsible to hire independent third party people to review the test. If the person qualified, then he or she should automatically be signed up for voting regardless of age.

I think that even those who are currently allowed to vote should take the test as well. If they fail, they should be excluded to vote. If children need to have certain criteria to vote, then the same rules should apply to adults. If they fail to understand the issue as a result of their formal education or training, they must take the consequences. They have the equal amount of opportunity as anyone else does.

I think that the government ought to consider this issue again. The society will realize that children are unique in their own ways, especially in thought. Just like how adults have different perspectives, we, as children, have various perceptions that can benefit the community and country as a whole.

Why are there rules?

Why do we have names?



The Meaning of Life (Continued)

ETHICS

Don't Lie

By Gordon Liu, Grade 6

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Lying. Most people would look at this word and think of it as something extremely bad. The truth is, however, we do it all the time. Whether doing it for a good reason, a bad reason, or for no reason at all, lying is something we can be better off without. Although the truth can sometimes be painful or hurtful to know, it is always better to know the truth than a lie.

In this paper, I will argue that lying is something that does not have to be done. Even white lies, lies that supposedly help others feel better, do not have to be said. The definition for a lie to me is something someone said that is false and wrong, and that someone knows that the thing he said was false and wrong.

It is easier to tell the truth than a lie, because in order to lie, you have to make sure that your lie makes sense, does not contradict with anything you said, and you have to make sure the person you are lying to does not find out that you lied.

Lies that are meant to hurt or deceive should not be done at all. Even if someone lies but is never found out, it is still wrong. To put it a different way, if you shoot someone and are found out, would that be bad? Yes. If you shoot someone and are not found out, would that still be bad? Yes.

Anyone who lies all the time would not be trusted. It is always good to act like you are very trustworthy. For example, I will show you a possible scenario. Person 1 is known for being a liar, while Person 2 acts like a trustworthy person. They both try to borrow money from their friends. Person 1 gets no money, while Person 2 is the one that receives money. We can agree

that it would be better to be Person 2.

A reason you should not tell a white lie is if the person you lied to found out you lied to her/him. For example, someone named Bob asked you if you thought he was smart. You say yes, even though you thought that he was dumb. While having a conversation with a friend that turns into talking about how stupid Bob was, Bob overhears you two talking about him. He would feel betrayed and would feel worse than if you just told him he wasn't exactly very bright.

One could argue that white lies sometimes have to be said. They could say something along the lines of: What if your friend asks you if she/he was fat and you really did think that she/he was overweight? You don't want to say she/he was fat, because you don't want to hurt her/his feelings. Friends shouldn't hurt each other's feelings. My response to this is that you actually should tell her she was overweight. Do not say it in an insulting manner though, because that would be very rude and mean. However, don't just point it out that she/he is fat; also try to help her/him lose weight. Losing weight is probably a difficult thing to do, and I think she/he would appreciate it if you helped her/him with it somehow.

One could also say the white lies are needed to be said if someone important (like your boss) asks you what you thought of her/him. If you thought your boss was a brat, it would not be smart to tell her/him that, because she/he could fire you.

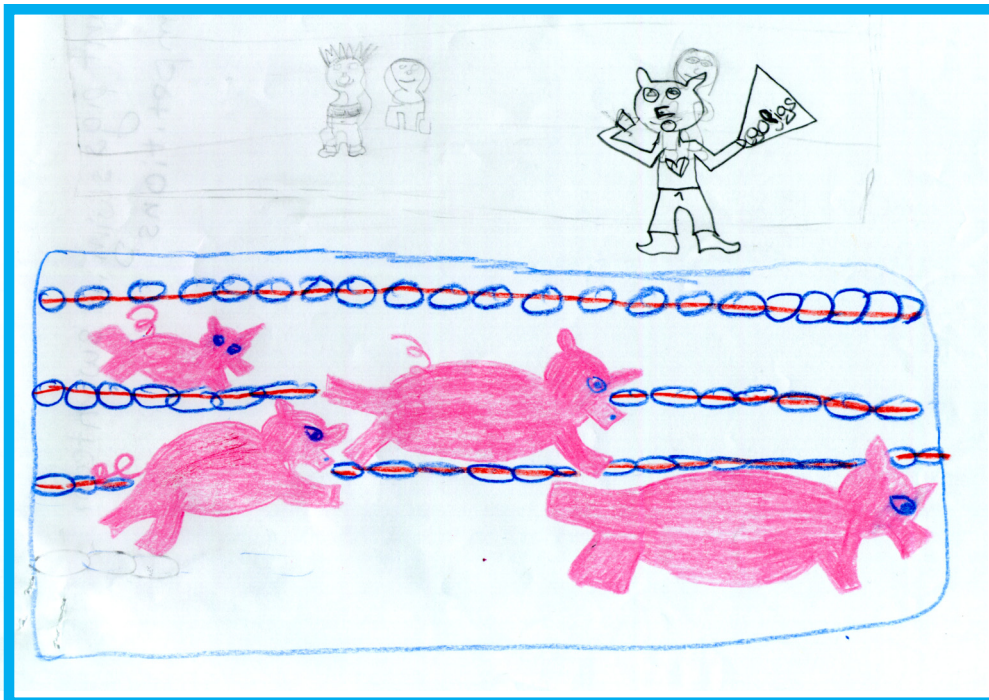
Instead of pointing out that your boss was a brat, you could focus on one of your boss's good traits. For example, if you thought your boss was obnoxious, but also manages time and money very well, instead of telling your boss that he/she was obnoxious, you could tell her/him she/he manages time and money very well.

Another argument is if you have to tell a lie in order to save a person's life, would you do it? A famous example is that the secret police come to your house where you are hiding your friend in the basement. They ask you, "Do you know where your friend is hiding?" If you tell the truth, your friend will be captured and killed. Do you still tell the truth?

I would still tell the truth. The only reason my friend would be hiding in my house is if he/she did something wrong. He/she is most likely trying to hide from the police, which means that he/she must have done something unlawful. So yes, I would tell the secret police where my friend is hiding. But if the secret police were bad, and my friend was innocent, I would tell the police that I did not know where my friend is. This is not a lie, however, because it is only false, but not ethically wrong.

There are two ways lies are supposed to help. One is to make you look better. You could say that you were great at all sports, but when someone asks you to play basketball, you have to make another lie, like you broke your wrist. Then if someone asks you when you broke your wrist, you would have to lie again.

If you make just one mistake in one of your lies, people would know everything you said about yourself was not true. It is much better to actually try and achieve things instead of just lying. So obviously, lying to make yourself look better does not help you. The second is telling a white lie. As I said before, instead of lying, you could actually help the person you are white-lying to. Doing this would build a stronger friendship. My conclusion is that there is no excuse for you to lie.



"Why can't pigs swim in swim team competitions?"

By Ariana Watson, Grade 4