

Letter of Motivation

No great person in the known history of the human kind did underestimate the power of knowledge and that of education. Even from the ancient times, there were people who amazed the world with their knowledge and willingness to address the needs of their civilizations through education; for example, Confucius, whose works and thinking system was at some point mandatory to be known by those who lived in the eastern asian communities and societies. Time went by and generations after generations left us with an incredible cultural, educational and even spiritual heritage, where nowadays societies and modern world can find a lot of answers and inspiration in front of the complex problems and situations that our species is confronted with and will be confronted with.

There were times when a lot of remarkable human beings had to make the ultimate sacrifice only because they were not willing to confess against the truth that they came to know; take for instance the example of Galileo Galilei who preferred to die rather than accept the line of the dogmatic thinking. Indeed, there is something that we can call miraculous: why would someone prefer to die, rather than accept something, even if that particular thing is away from the truth? It seems to me that maybe Galilei had a much wider perspective than only his own life: maybe he came to understand that his acceptance of confessing against the truth would have implications for the entire future of our species, implications that maybe he was not able to withstand and so he acted as he did. Is that something about courage there? Is there something about values? Maybe both, but it comes to me there is even something more relevant and important: responsibility of your own actions and beliefs; that view that tells you that your actions, beliefs, words, do not have an impact only on your life and on yourself, but rather have a way bigger impact, on so many lives. In a way, through his act, Galilei still continues to educate us; he educated so many generations, through a manner of action, in the spirit of truth, responsibility, determination and dignity.

Education can be provided also through the power of example, by learning through observation. Etimologically speaking, education means "to bring out", "to reveal" the potential that one has in itself and to portray it in front of the world.

Is it really what our educational system does nowadays? Does it really help our children to become conscious about their potentials, abilities? Does it widen the world and the perspective of our children? Do we encourage them to think big? Do we keep on telling them that having possibilities is a luxury? Do we teach them that you have to be perseverent in following your own desires? Do we teach them to be high on frustration tolerance? Is our system helpful in order to help them build a powerful value system? Is our system good enough in order to portray the importance of a value system?

For sure, regarding those questions, there are a lot of "no" answers, at least regarding romanian educational system. Sometimes it seems like this system is going on blind, having no direction, no sustainable strategy, no purpose. The cost: generations of human beings that will not be able to self-actualize their potential and who would leave behind a world far more poor in heritage than it could have been.

Besides being a clinical psychologist and a cognitive-behavioral therapist, I am also a school counselor and a teacher. I do believe that in order to talk pertinently on a subject or issue, you have to have lived on your own skin the conditions of the subject that you express an opinion on. All that I have done and I am doing in my life was and is set under a simple, but I guess powerful purpose: to know that there where I have been is even a bit better than it was before me arriving there. As it is written in the song "I was here": the hearts I have touched is the proof that I lived; indeed it is, at least for me personally. There were no few times when I was during the break in school, looking at the children playing and thinking what is the future of these children? What do I really do in order to know that they will get the chance they deserve? Because, as Rita Pierson says: every child deserves a champion, an adult that will never give up on them and who will insist that he or she becomes the very best he or she can be. That is why I chose to write this letter of motivation for a position in the Standing Committee of Psychology in Education of the European Federation of Psychological Associations.

If you are a person that is trying to be as conscious as possible of the importance and responsibility that you have, whatever you are doing, it can be a blessing, but also a burden. Being a teacher, being conscious of the importance of my actions in the lifes of the children that I get the chance to work with, fills me with joy, but also puts me under a burden, because there are many times when you do ask yourself: is it/was it enough today? Did I offer what I need and what they, the children, were in need of?

At the moment, I work as a teacher, school counselor and also I have my private practice in clinical psychology, CBT psychotherapy and Gottman couples therapy; recently I found out that I have been accepted for a master programme in neuroscience at Kings College, London, United Kingdom, starting this september. Besides this, during the last couple of years I tried to address the value of education through different personal projects, and not only, initiating a conference held in Arad, in december 2017 where I have put in discussion the importance and the future of the teacher; the same conference was held in Timișoara, in May 2018; also at the moment I am coordinating a project for high-school students where monthly we gather and discuss about different subjects such as: values, time as a resource, sufference, freedom and its meanings, etc.,

Besides being a romanian citizen, I am also a european one, and being so I do believe that my interest should not only be in my own country regarding education, but also in the european educational systems, because being part of the European Union means we have to address the needs of all its citizens. I would like to point out that being a european citizen does not mean we have only a lot of rights and benefits, but we have also responsibilities and duties to each other; that is the real european spirit or the one it was dreamed of when it was thought as a project. Maybe this is one thing we should provide our students and college students with: a wider perspective, the real meaning of what it means to be a european union citizen, both regarding rights and duties. So, being part of the Standing Committee for Psychology in Education could offer me the chance to widen my perspective, to initiate projects, to understand the state of the art in many educational systems in different european countries, to debate valuable ideas, to provide schools with a better approach regarding particular issues, to engage in a movement that could really benefit a lot of children, college students and teachers all around the European Union. It is a work that I am willing to put, that I am ready to engage in.

Such a Committee of Psychology in Education could come up with all the best that psychology can offer in order to impact in a good way the educational process, the educational policies and the well-being of those that pursue an educational path. A lot of things are to be done, for sure; a lot of issues are to be addressed, a lot of lifes need someone to stand up and to reach out; a lot of people need to be offered with the chance of education, and through the work of this Committee we could be closer to achieve these.

Regarding the nowadays world, there are a lot of problems that we as a species are confronted with: climate change, massive advances in artificial intelligence, poverty, forced work for children, corruption, discrimination on sexual, religious or racial criteria, etc.. What is the best mean through which we can confront these realities and also, being efficient in doing so? I strongly believe education is the answer. Through the power of education we build bridges between cultures and societies; because of education we reached to such important moments, as the one we witnessed these days: the travel of the Pope in Saudi Arabia, holding a mess on the stadium, in an islamic country and signing a document of historical value by people that are at the lead of two important religions: islam and christianity. Also, due to education we know all the mistakes that we as a species did during time, and due to education we can prevent those same mistakes from being repeted. Due to education we can inspire ourselves from the stories of those who lived before us and who left us with an immense treasure: the work of their lifes. We are never to forget the sacrificies that were made before, by so many people in order for us to live in the world we live in today; and this is something we ought to pass on to the future generations: the story of how we came to live in the world we live today, for they are never to forget it.

Because education did and does so much, psychology as a field has to support with all it has the mission of education in the world, and that mission I am ready to support with all I can, for I believe that only by doing so we can prevent the coming into reality of those taugh words that Julien Benda wrote some decades ago in his book "The betrayal of the intellectuals": "And history will smile at the thought that Socrates and Jesus Christ died for this species"; may we, the grownups, will never betrayal our children, our college students and our teachers, for they are the best hope we have for that brighter future we are all willing for. May so it be!