

Human Tendencies

Human Tendencies are what makes us human, they are natural and unchanging drives, pushing us to satisfy needs in successful and creative ways. They are innate, universal, result of human evolution, unchangeable, enacted throughout life, direct us to interact with our environment. These characteristics assist humans in adapting to both the physical and social conditions (or environments) in which they live. There can be slight differences of opinion about what the human tendencies are (below is the list presented by Laurie, definitions by other resources).

Ten Human Tendencies

1. To orient - this tendency is the ability to orient oneself in new situations. For a child it means that s/he needs to know where and how s/he fits into a particular time or environment and how to adapt. As educators, we must give the child the freedom and the information necessary to his/her orientation without too much guidance.
2. To explore - this tendency is the curiosity leading to explore and the desire to understand. It renders living better materially and spiritually. We are all potential explorers with a tremendous desire to learn, research, read and travel. As educators, we can easily see that children are the best explorers and they must have the freedom to explore as rich an environment as possible.
3. To order - the tendency for order helps in the understanding of one's surroundings. For a child it means s/he has the need for predictable events in her/his life; for example, an ordered environment where everything has a certain place. As educators, we provide an ordered environment with things in a well-defined place.
4. To abstract - it is the ability to reason beyond the limits of the concrete as well as to generalize and interpret. This tendency will not develop in a child unless s/he has had enough concrete experience. As educators, we must allow concrete experiences through the materials in order for these to provide a solid understanding of the concepts intended.
5. To imagine - imagination is the ability to create, form and modify concepts within the mind, without a link to the concrete. Whilst its importance and uses are widely acknowledged, it is vital to consider that imagination does not develop in the child under three years of age. As with abstraction, it is a further step of cognitive development and it requires a solid grounding in the environment, in order to develop into a positive and productive trait. For this reason, it is unproductive and potentially harmful to attempt to introduce concepts such as imaginative play or storytelling to very young children.
6. To calculate - is the tendency to, well, calculate - to plan, scheme, judge, evaluate, analyse. It's the baby concentrating to put its foot in its mouth. It's the child judging how far they can climb, jump or run. It's the idea, the plan we have of our day, of our lives, of our choices. Children who could develop their tendency to calculate can plan well enough for their ideas and situations. They can gather information to make decisions, judge the likelihood of success, plan ahead and analyse the past to do better. They also happen to like Maths.
7. To work - the tendency to work is related to the tendencies of activity and manipulation. It is the ability to put into reality what the imagination suggests. It enables independence and dignity as well as a feeling of rest. As educators, we realize the child's need for his/her self-construction and we must therefore never judge or stop a child's work, realizing that his/her goals are different than ours. We must also give the child the freedom to work at her/his own pace in a stimulating and appropriate environment.
8. To be exact: repeat – (repeat) this tendency is the ability to do over and over again an exercise in order to reach perfection and to experience the joy of increased control and understanding of one's world. When a child is not satisfied with her/his performance in one activity or does not get any joy from it, s/he will repeat the same exercise several times. As educators, we must provide materials that are easily accessible and allowable to be used over and over again. (Exact) it is the desire to be precise and constant so that things are objective. It is a necessary tendency to survive (to maintain stability and prevent accidents). As educators, we give the child the freedom to repeat an activity until it reaches a point of exactness. He/she is shown exactly how to properly use the materials.
9. To perfect oneself - It is the development of the person to a point that is satisfying to the person himself. As educators, it is the aim of the Montessori teacher to teach the children so that they can control themselves and this is done through the environment itself.
10. To communicate and associate with others - this tendency is the ability for living beings to understand each other as well as to be understood. This takes the three forms of speaking, writing and reading. As educators, freedom of speech, listening, and story telling help enable speaking. Research and creative writing help to develop writing. Reading by the child is nurtured through reading to the child by the adult, as well as preparatory exercises in the classroom.