

# Understanding Montessori

*The Kids Talk Way*



## **Begin With the End in Mind**

January 31, 2010

*Finis origina pendet. The end depends on the beginning.*  
- From the movie, *The Emperor's Club*

A favorite book is *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey. One habit that I encourage parents to develop is "Begin with the end in mind". What kind of person do you want your child to become? What qualities of character do you want your child to possess? How can you make it happen?

Becoming a conscious parent was a slow process for me. (And an on-going process, I must add!) I remember an exhausting day when the enormity of parenting engulfed me, much like the feet of snow that had left us homebound for a week while my husband was out of town. My daughters were one-and-a-half and three, and with my patience almost gone, I

thought, "Three years down and rest of our lives to go!" It was a very sobering moment. Since then I've noticed that "parenting reality" sets in during this third year and a new determination to become a better parent appears.

Around age three, coinciding with our new parenting perspective, children become more expressive and independent. As their curiosity and activity levels increase, we are challenged on how to deal with our children, along with jobs, marriages and everything else. We can meet these challenges more effectively if we have a clear picture of where we are headed. Begin with the end in mind.

Years ago in a group dynamics class, our professor asked us to make a list of our ten most important values in ten minutes. It was a tough exercise.

"How many of you have ever made a values list?" Dr. Ward asked as we compared our lists.

Nobody answered.

"Most of us haven't," he continued. "We wouldn't dream of building a house without blueprints. How can we live a life without knowing what we value and how to develop and protect those qualities?" Now I understand Dr. Ward was telling us that the end depends on the beginning.

Wayne Dyer in his book, *What Do You Really Want For Your Children?*, surveyed parents with surprising results. He expected parents to be concerned about their children becoming rich and famous, but instead discovered these ten desires:

*"I want my children to have the ability to enjoy life; to value themselves; to be risk takers; to be self-reliant; to be free from stress and anxiety; to have peaceful lives; to celebrate peaceful moments; to experience a lifetime of wellness; to be creative; to fulfill their higher needs and to feel a sense of purpose."*

Once we develop our big picture, we can then focus on the important details to give to our children. We need to begin with the end in mind. Take some time to consider and write down those values you cherish and want to develop in your family. How you are going to ensure that these values and strengths are developed? Focusing on what you consider critical will allow you to make decisions using this question: *Does this action support my values?* If the answer is no, it should be easier to stop and reconsider goals, habits and behaviors.

*Finis origina pendet.* The ancient Romans knew it. The end depends on the beginning. Begin with the end in mind. Know the values you'll take with you on this adventure called life.

**Next Week:** How To Know When Development Is Going Awry