

The Importance of People

Column Editor: Peggy Brogan

In a World of Arrangers

RONNIE HAS BEEN concerned with problems of arrangement for some time now. Even as an infant, he soon learned that he was living in a world that did not have to stay as he found it. Shaking the sides of his crib added noise to the scheme of things. Crying or calling brought his mother, his bottle or perhaps a scolding. Throwing unwelcome cereal from his high chair temporarily removed it from his immediate world.

Somewhere along the line his learnings began to include the fact that other people too were occupied with arranging—that he was an arranger living in a world of arrangers. And as would be expected, Ronnie frequently found himself involved in problems when his ways for arranging did not please others or theirs did not please him. His mother's way for having dinner come just when he was in the midst of playing with a friend, for example, was to him an unsatisfactory way for using time—quite as unsatisfactory as his habit of not coming on time was to his mother. His way for arranging his room was not always well received by others. Nor was his way for arranging the letters in his name, writing from right to left.

But many of his arrangements brought special words of praise from others—the way he set the table, the way he used color and space and ideas

to paint a picture at his new easel, the way he dictated words in a letter to his daddy overseas.

And many of his arrangements were in interaction with others—*our* arrangements so to speak. This was how it was when he and Fred built a hut in the back yard and when he and Jack and Katie and the twins made a pond for minnows. In many ways this together kind of arranging was hard, Ronnie knew. But all the knotty problems of working things out when more than one person has ideas as to how it should be done, were well worth the effort. No lone arranger could come up with half the ideas or create half the projects that a couple of pals or a gang could!

Arranging People

Ronnie's problems with regard to arranging concerned people in another way—the arranging of people themselves. Shoving his little brother Jack off his tricycle, for example, was a successful way for getting what he wanted. At least it was successful until Jack complained to their mother and Ronnie was made to feel that this wasn't the best possible way. Arguing with his mother about who would get the first helping of dessert or the first story at night, the last bath or the last turn to sweep the floor, Ronnie began important investigations about the meaning

of arranging the stuff of his world in terms of basic beliefs about people. Are some people the givers, others the receivers, in the best arranged world? Do some perform the hardest jobs, others enjoy the keenest pleasure? Should some people be worth more than others—should arrangements confirm superiority?

In Ronnie's family there is a basic belief about people which forms a framework for problems of arranging. It was in his parents' deliberate planning that Ronnie had his window sill for storing treasures, his own chest of drawers and the closet hook for his snowsuit. But it was also in their planning that, when the time was right, he and Jack would be faced with the problem of sharing a room. It was in their plan that Ronnie would have his story first at night; but also it was in their plan that when the time was right Ronnie would learn that his world was not threatened if Jack or Sally had the story first — that all three children would learn the fun of family stories where individuals do not have their special choice. It was in their plan that Ronnie would learn that he could come first without having to push others out of the way, just as it was in their plan that he would learn that he could come last without the anxiety of being left out.

Framework Arranging

Yes, arranging in Ronnie's family is *framework* arranging. It is based on a belief that in this group no one need wait anxiously on the outside until membership has been approved. Differences of individual members, as well

as their mistakes and need for improving, are all a part of membership in good standing, just as special accomplishments and happiness are.

Ronnie has many other experiences in framework arranging in store for him—as a member of a classroom, a whole school, various teams and gangs and clubs with peers, a neighborhood, a community, a society. Arranging in terms of beliefs with regard to his own group will extend to include beliefs with regard to members of other groups, even including the difficult decision of whether or not *they* are outside of *our* framework, whether or not our framework needs changing. And, as he did when he was a young child and threw his cereal to the floor, Ronnie will continue to have the feeling that just any arrangements are not acceptable in his world—that they are always a matter of basic beliefs with regard to individuals in a social framework.

One of the most challenging opportunities for Ronnie and his grownups to engage in creative arranging is on the current agenda. Color is no longer an accepted basis for arranging children with regard to opportunities for learning. Where once segregation may have been unkind or unfair, now it is illegal. Action has been taken to give further dimensions of reality to our essential democratic framework. Old arrangements can no longer work. This particular dimension of the framework is new. Still, as is always true in creative arranging, solutions to the new problems will grow as people find new ways for arranging what has already been learned in their experience. The need for a new view has been supplied by

the changed framework. Specifics will be created as children and grownups alike find ways for resolving the conflicts within this new framework which importantly redefines their environment.

No one need tell Ronnie that framework arranging is difficult. He has known from the start that problems get tough when a person moves from *me and my world* to a wider world of people. But neither need anyone tell him that the problems can't be worked out, that bringing in others or encountering differing beliefs, is threatening to the security of one's framework. For in moving through various stages of the group and lone arranger, Ronnie has had practical experience in learning to work with and help create various frameworks. He is ready, as it were, to say *what do we have by way of resources and ideas and conflicts to work within in the framework of this group?* What a difficult though challenging question facing the grownups who join Ronnie in finding and creating solutions!

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What the
Resourceful Teacher
Needs to Know
about Spelling

To increase the pupil's knowledge of word meanings, of derived word forms, and of correct word use in context—are these among the aims of a spelling program? Of course they are, if the spelling program is one for today's pupils, one that considers spelling as a part of the language arts. And a resourceful teacher knows that the pupil's spelling text and the teacher's guide should contain materials for these interrelated learnings.

WORD POWER THROUGH SPELLING, for grades 2 through 8, is a program for mastering spelling. It is also a tool for the study of language. Through the experiences that it provides, pupils learn to understand all aspects of words. In this program, spelling is language.

To make sure that your spelling program contributes to the total language growth of your pupils, examine and use **WORD POWER THROUGH SPELLING**.

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