



## PILLARS OF PEACE

*Create Calm Values Have Deep Roots in Montessori<sup>1</sup> and Yogic Teachings<sup>2</sup>*

### Create Calm Value #1 (Compassion)

#### Kindness (Ahimsa)

#### Following the Child

Compassion is at the root of kindness, or ahimsa -- the action of non-violence, not only restraining from physical violence, but also from emotional or social violence, which can manifest in many different ways. In her book, *The Yamas and Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice*, Deborah Adele tells the story of a monkey who thinks he has rescued a fish from drowning by bringing it up into a tree. But really, he has taken the fish away from the place which meets its needs for survival and growth. Adele says, "All we have to offer in the end is to get into the water with those in need, not to bring them into the tree with us" (Adele, 2014, p. 35). Meeting someone where they are and observing to see what they really need, rather than what we think they need, is the compassionate and non-harming thing to do. The Montessori environment belongs to the children. It is carefully crafted with child-sized furniture, simple yet beautiful materials, and graceful touches that create a cozy atmosphere. The teacher (known as the "guide" in Montessori classrooms) ignites the spark between the child and the environment and steps back to observe. As the child connects with the environment to meet their own needs, it fosters a sense of security and safety. The child has been given the gift of being placed where their developmental needs can be met and they have the room to explore who they are and determine who they will be.

Compassion: holding a safe/neutral/welcoming space; guiding, not controlling, the experiences of others; letting someone grow in an environment that serves them the best; the adult creates a space absent expectation or judgment where the student can look inward and then project outward, supporting the awareness of the internal "I" that exists in the "all" around; fostering space for play and encouraging students to create joyful life-long learning experience themselves and guiding their own learning.

At Create Calm, compassion is the foundation for developing self-regulation in oneself and others, feeling the freedom to identify, express, and meet needs in a safe and nurturing space.

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<sup>1</sup> Montessori is a form of educational practice developed by Maria Montessori who believed that children possess all they need to grow and thrive and that adults can be powerful guides when instead of imparting wisdom they inspire it, trusting the child to be the true guide of their own experience.

<sup>2</sup> Embedded in yogic teachings are a series of moral and ethical principles known as the Yamas and Niyamas. The Yamas (the "be good") and the Niyamas (the "feel good") help guide us in our interactions with ourselves and others and provide a base from which we develop our character as human beings.



## Create Calm Value #2 (Awareness)

### Competency (Asteya) & Self-Growth (Swadhyaya)

### Independence & Self-Confidence

Harmony in the mind-body connection enhances decision making and a sense of safety, critical factors in establishing independence and competency. According to the yama, asteya, we are most competent when aligned within the scope of our abilities. Awareness is the gateway to recognizing what is needed for us to grow and creating goals for growth founded in integrity and reciprocity. When we find ourselves lacking, feeling cheated, superior, or arrogant, we are stealing physically and emotionally from our experiences and depriving ourselves of self-growth. This deprivation can lead to unhealthy attachments. Dr. Maria Montessori spoke of deviations that can occur in children when their development is obstructed. One of these deviations is attachment. At the beginning of a school year, we see children who wander around the classroom in such a way that demands the attention of the guide as well as other children. When they sit down to work, they are distracted and seek validation and praise from others. Over time, however, they begin to listen to their inner voice and make decisions that are rooted and true to what they need for their development. They also seek less and less positive reinforcement from others. Both on the mat and in the classroom, healthy attachments and the development of the balance of giving and taking are cultivated when we believe in ourselves, and feel gratitude for who we are and what we have.

Trust, Confidence: providing a stable platform from which students launch into a discovery of the mechanisms they possess for launching from within, revealed through the practice of awareness.

Non-judgment, inclusion: designing classes and experiences for students through which they can connect with and develop the ability to see themselves and others without judgment or criticism, trust themselves and express themselves with kind truthfulness, and form healthy attachment that offer a solid container to withstand criticism while simultaneously permeable enough to accurately know and refine the scope of our abilities.

At Create Calm, working within our competencies, speaking our truths, and encouraging the practice of looking inward to see more clearly outward put awareness into action in growing ourselves, students, and the community.



## Create Calm Value #3 & #4 (Alertness & Consistency)

### Learning through Experience (Tapas)

### Love of Learning

Courage shapes new strength and breeds character to stay the course or embrace change. Courage, an element of tapas, invokes alertness and consistency in the form of discipline when applied to a situation through curiosity, wonder, and awe. A Create Calm instructor who is also a Montessori teacher witnessed a beautiful display of tapas, or burning discipline, in her classroom one day. A 4-year-old boy was deeply focused on his work of counting beads when the other 22 children in the class began to put their work away and gather to walk on the line that wound around his table. Music was softly playing. Throughout all of the activity that surrounded him, he remained focused on his work and did not even look up. In this example of tapas, he chose, consciously or unconsciously, to remain with his work and stay present. Working through challenging or frightening situations, we can emerge stronger, and new possibilities open before us. The repetition of work in the Montessori environment and the practice of yoga create the space for discipline, strengthening and steadying ourselves, tapas. It also fosters a passion and confidence for life-long learning. Trusting in our learning and diving in with alertness and consistency, especially in times of challenge, builds our capacity to make sound decisions and to realize the greater purpose in all of our experiences.

Curiosity & wonder; remaining available to the opportunities to grow steadier and stronger in the challenge, training focus through discipline, and trusting the learning process; fueling the thirst for knowledge and growing the feeling of security creates connection, community

Create Calm is committed to building a community of life-long learners, of active, compassionate citizens that Maria Montessori refers to as “citizens of the world,” breeding community consciousness by inviting wonder; maintaining gentle and purposeful focus, and courageous exploration.



## THE MISSION BORN OF THESE VALUES

At Create Calm, we believe all children deserve to be seen and loved.

Our highest priority is to guide children to learn to calm themselves, listen to their intuition, cultivate empathy, and practice kindness and acceptance.

We honor:

all children

diversity in education

a culture of creativity

the Black Lives Matter initiative

the interwoven nature of our world - the I in All

and the power we have to heal and grow together.

Create Calm is dedicated to developing internal guidance systems for external fortitude through alertness, awareness, compassion, and consistency.

