

What is a Krishnamurti School ?

An Interview with Professor P. Krishna

October 22, 2008

Abstract

This paper is an excerpt from the forthcoming second edition of "A New Approach to Learning and Living : Interviews with Teachers and Students of the Krishnamurti Schools"¹

¹For comments or information about the new edition, please contact Ulrich Brugger, MA (Education), and Earl Bates, 160 Besant Road, Ojai CA 93023. Telephone (805) 512 6283

Entire Contents Copyright 2005 by Ulrich Brugger and Earl Bates. All Rights Reserved

1 What is a Krishnamurti School?

Professor P. Krishna (PK) Interviewed on 24 April, 2005 at the Ojai Retreat by Ulrich Brugger (UB)

UB: What is the main purpose of a Krishnamurti school ? More specifically, what is the difference between Krishnamurti schools and other alternative schools ?

PK: Let me begin by explaining, first, the intent of a Krishnamurti school. I think Krishnamurti realized that present day education is a very limited affair, wanting to train individuals into professionals in different branches, but not addressing their development and growth in a holistic way and not concerned with them as human beings. Not concerned with the whole of their life but only with their professional advancement. He saw that this was leading to human beings who are specialists, very knowledgeable in certain areas but with very little understanding of themselves or of life and therefore they used their knowledge egotistically for fulfilling their own limited ambitions in life.

He saw that this was at the root of much of the disorder that we see today in society . His profound vision was that unless we bring about a transformation at the level of the consciousness in man we cannot fundamentally alter the state of society. He said if you look at human history you find that for over 5000 years it has been a history of wars and we are still violent and still fighting wars. So there has been almost no psychological evolution.

None of the religions, nor the different schools of thought, of philosophy, have been able to address and solve this basic issue. He realized that it should be the role of education to bring about a transformation of consciousness and not merely create egotistic human beings with ability and expertise. This, in turn, has two aspects. First, that one should not use methods in education which promote the ego process

in the child because one sees that it is the most destructive factor in life and in society. Secondly, we must help the student to free himself or herself of this ego process by coming upon self-knowledge.

Therefore we must create a learning mind which is learning not only about the external world around us but also learning about the way our consciousness functions, about our conditioning which includes several illusions that create division and disorder in our consciousness. Through observation and deep inquiry it is possible for the student to free the mind of these illusions and the consequent disorder in our consciousness. Education must basically create an inquiring mind which is learning and proficient both in knowledge and skills and, more importantly, in the understanding of oneself, which is self-knowledge. This was the broad intent of Krishnamurti for the schools. He envisioned that such an education could transform consciousness and thereby end disorder in our life and therefore in society.

UB: Can you give some concrete examples?

PK: Well, there is no fixed structure he gave which one can talk about. First, one must be clear about this vision of the intention of the school because that will affect every decision you make in creating the school. Then one has to use one's own intelligence and the resources one has available by looking at the particular situation in which the school is placed, the environment in which the child is located, the culture from which he comes, and adopt methods to develop a program which will realize this intention. He didn't lay down any specific methods.

He only talked about the intent and the approach to the child which should be one which does not promote or exploit the ego process in the child. So different Krishnamurti schools can be, and are, very different in their structure of education. But it must be based on love and affection and a deep concern for the child as a whole human being, with respect for that child. You have to be a friend to that child, not

have an ideal in your mind and then try to force the child to fit into that ideal, however lofty that ideal may be. Because that is a form of violence one does to another human being. His approach in that sense, both in the vision and the relationship with the child, was very close to Maria Montessori's vision in education.

No reward, no punishment, no comparison, no competition, no fixed idea of what the child should become, helping the child to grow and learn for himself or herself in all aspects, these are the central things about the relationship with the child in a Krishnamurti school. You have to create sensitivity for nature, for beauty, for art and culture, a feeling of affection, compassion, cooperation and a discipline which comes out of this love and affection and not out of fear. Without such a sensitivity in the mind you cannot later come upon self-knowledge merely through an intellectual process. Because intellectual things can be learned from books but sensitivity cannot be acquired from books.

Sensitivity is something a child gets from the atmosphere around him or her in the school and therefore the atmosphere in the school is the most important factor in educating the child. The issues of self-knowledge come into the education at a later stage when the child is old enough to understand deeper questions.

UB: What do you mean by sensitivity and what do you mean by the atmosphere of the school?

PK: Sensitivity is basically the quality of affection, the feeling of friendship and a sense of beauty in life. It is very important to help develop these things in the child. If you asked me what is the most important aim in education I would say as an educationist that the most important aim is to reveal to the child all the beauty there is in life. There is a lot of beauty in nature, there is a lot of beauty in art, in music, in mathematics, in sports, in friendship, in meditation, in yoga. In every aspect of life there is tremendous beauty, which means there is a joy

which the human consciousness experiences in that activity if you are sensitive. That joy is a consequence of sensitivity in that activity; it is not a reward that is separate from that activity, given by adults in order to force the child to get into that activity. That innate joy is important and it is connected with beauty and sensitivity. It is destroyed when you make him or her do all that for getting a reward which lies outside that activity; because then the work becomes merely a means to obtain the reward which is the essence of the ego process within us.

The child learns not so much from what we talk or teach as it does from observing what is actually going on around him or her. If the atmosphere is peaceful, if in it there is affection and there is caring then that's what it learns. If there is authoritarianism, there is violence, there is fear, then that's what it learns. So, if you want an inquiring mind you have to create an atmosphere which values inquiry as a spontaneous and natural thing. If you want to create a learning mind then around the child should be other minds which are learning, including that of the teacher. If you want to encourage dissent then you have to have an atmosphere in which dissent is respected and valued and not suppressed. If you want to have nonviolence then there should not be much violence in the atmosphere around him.

In all aspects, whether physical, intellectual, psychological or emotional, whatever the environment offers is what the child imbibes. So it's not merely a question of what you teach through courses; that's only a very limited part, the academic learning. How we relate with each other and how we relate with the child, all that is also a part of the atmosphere of the education in the school or at home. In most schools they only give emphasis to the syllabus and the teaching methods in the classroom but not to the relationship and that is a fundamental difference in a Krishnamurti school.

UB: You mentioned authority. There are many non-authoritarian schools,

what is the place of authority in Krishnamurti schools?

PK: There is authority in the sense of administrative decision making, like the authority of the captain of a team. If the team would not assign the role of a captain to anybody then who will take the decisions? So the decision has to be taken by one person and that is that person's responsibility; the role of a captain has to be there. But if he or she is a good captain and has a religious learning mind, then the captain consults the team and enhances his or her own understanding of the situation before taking a decision. Once the captain takes the decision it can still be questioned but it has to be respected because that is the role he or she has been assigned and that is the work he or she is doing.

So in that sense, administratively, you have to accept a certain amount of authority, but not spiritual authority or dogma or some kind of propaganda – like nationalism or the idea of success. Those are more sinister forms of authority which create division, they are not merely administrative, so there is no place for those in a Krishnamurti school. One does not wish to condition the mind of the child through any propaganda. Even with regard to rules, these are meant for facilitating the work and for convenience, but one has to remember that the rules are there for the school, for the teachers and students, not the other way around. So you may sometimes need to bend the rules, not follow them rigidly, and use intelligence to decide what is right and not mechanically apply a rule to decide what is right or wrong.

So a lot of discretion is there in dealing with the child. There is no dogma and you must have a lot of freedom for the teachers and students to innovate and do things differently. When you talk of complete freedom it often lacks wisdom or understanding, and when you talk of no freedom it is also a lack of understanding. So you have to have it in proportion, you have to have a balance there, which is what wisdom means. That is why it needs wisdom, to create the right atmosphere.

I like a metaphor given by Tagore, to explain this. He said,

"The waters of the river must be free to flow but if they don't respect the banks they will never reach the sea."

So you must value freedom but you must also understand the limits to that freedom. You have to educate the child also in this. How much freedom to have and when does freedom become license? All that is also a part of the learning for the child and the teacher in the school. Since we are not interested only in academic learning, we are concerned with the understanding of these issues also. Of course at a very young age the child may not be capable of understanding that and so you have to decide at what age it would be appropriate to introduce this thing and how you will handle children at different stages of their development.

At some level there may even be a need for certain authoritarian treatment but it is all done with the overall intention of promoting the intention of the school which is the health of the child both physically and mentally. It is done for his or her development, not because it is your rule. That is why the understanding of the teachers and the principal is very important. You cannot create a Krishnamurti school just by having a syllabus or a policy.

UB: How does one approach difficulties and problems that arise in the course of the day in a Krishnamurti school, both in relations between children and between teachers?

PK: First of all, because one is concerned with education holistically and one is not only interested in the academic learning, therefore one looks upon these problems also as opportunities for learning and one does not look upon them as merely a nuisance to be got rid of because they are interfering with the academic work. So the approach to the problem is different. If a problem has arisen it is an opportunity for the teacher and the student to learn about it, to inquire together why the

problem has arisen and how it can be resolved.

Secondly, the child's view must also be respected. There is no hierarchy; not that the teacher is older, more powerful so you take sides with the teacher and ignore the child and it's victory for the teacher! That would give the message that the strong can dominate the weak and the teachers as a group are against the child.

That is a terrible message to give in education. So when a teacher, for instance, punishes a child because a child has not done homework in mathematics, his aim may be to coax the child to do more mathematics, because he thinks that is very important and the child is ignoring mathematics; but in that very process he is also educating the child to learn that the teacher, who is older and stronger, can threaten and punish a weaker person, namely the child, and force him to do things. And this attitude or this message is far more damaging to the child than the little gain in learning mathematics that you might get out of punishment.

When you are holistically concerned you are interested in his learning mathematics but you are also not wanting to destroy him psychologically. So you don't use such methods, which means that you have to be not an authority but a friend whom the child can trust. You have to care for order in the classroom but you have also to care for the psychological order in the consciousness of the child. So, if you use fear then you may bring about physical order in the classroom but you are destroying the psychological order within the consciousness of the child. Since your concern is holistic you are concerned with both, so you have to now have more innovative methods by which you can bring about the order in the classroom without creating disorder in consciousness, without using fear.

This means it is a more challenging task for the teacher. It also means

that you cannot have very large numbers of students per teacher in the classroom, so that one can give individual attention to educate the child. All these things follow from the objectives or the intent of the school. If the intent is not clear they will not follow. Because you can just increase the numbers as financially that is a better proposition but your aim is not only financial. So the vision of the overall objective has always to be kept in mind while making decisions.

It requires that every teacher be clear why we are doing this and why we have this vision in education. That is a major difficulty in creating a Krishnamurti school. Since it is not just another system or another set of rules and policies to adopt. It means you have to have dialogues with the teachers and make sure that the teachers really understand this and it is part of their life and not merely a policy of the school.

UB: Let's take a concrete example. Let's suppose the child is afraid of the teacher or a parent or another student and you observe this. What is your approach to this?

PK: Yes , fear is not only between teacher and student. The student is afraid of examinations, the student is afraid of failing, the student is afraid of what his parents will think of him, the opinion of society about him and so on. So freedom from fear in a Krishnamurti school has two aspects. One is that you don't promote fear in the child through punishment and so on, but then you also have to help him overcome these various deeper fears. So merely not having punishment is not freedom from fear, that is only one very obvious aspect, since we don't want to add to the fear in the child. But the deeper thing is to help the child free himself from fear, through understanding it. In this the teacher is learning along with the child since he or she also has fear. One has to realize the importance of freedom from fear.

First of all, there should not be comparison and condemnation of a child or any form of humiliation. If a child is not very intelligent in

a subject, he or she should not be made to feel in some way inferior, otherwise it generates fear. So again, the atmosphere matters. If in the atmosphere of the school the teachers are praising the child who is bright and looking down on the child who is dull, then their mind is judging the child and treating the child depending on his abilities and a subtle form of reward and punishment is already invoked. Even though you may not actually be giving out punishment, but your attitude, the way you look at the child itself is a form of giving reward and punishment. So it needs to be understood by every teacher that we are there to help each child grow and that it is not our job to judge children and then praise them or condemn them. It is our role to be a friend to the child and help him or her to grow holistically, whatever may be the state in which they are at present.

The child may be relatively dull, may be having difficulties in that particular subject, but it is incorrect to label a child as dull. Actually when we do that we are ourselves dull because we have not understood the fact that intelligence in life manifests in various ways. It is not necessary that it must manifest in every subject and in every direction in a child. So there is no such thing as a dull or unintelligent child there is just a child who is better in mathematics and another one who is better in music and a third one may be better at computers. There may also be one who is not having any of these abilities and yet he may be a very good natured child, he may be a very affectionate child. How do you decide what a child should be? That's not the job of the teacher.

So you just help the child grow in every direction and each child learns differently. It's a little bit like growing a plant in a garden : you have to provide water, you have to let the sunshine come to the plant, you have to protect it against storms and so on, but the plant grows on its own. And each plant grows differently. In the same way you have to facilitate the growth of each child and not dictate the growth of the child. So the whole outlook of the teacher towards the child is different.

You do not give more attention to the bright child and less to another.

UB: Suppose all of this is done but the child is still afraid, from its family or some unseen cause. How would you address that issue?

PK: You can only use that situation to have a dialogue with the child admitting frankly that you yourself have fear in you too and that there are various causes for fear. We can point out those causes and point out that it is possible for human beings to free themselves of these causes and get rid of the fear. He therefore needs to work at it and you too are doing it in your own life. Let him know that you would be willing to help him if he wants to discuss any aspect of it along with you or with his or her parents. You are like a friend to him and you are also learning along with him and therefore he feels free to come and talk to you about it.

But the usual approach is to simply suppress all these problems because they are treated like a nuisance in the educational process. The teacher just wants to teach mathematics and all this fear etc is coming in his way so he just wants to get rid of it and get on with his mathematics. That is a very narrow minded approach to education. When you have a more holistic concern you can use the fear itself as an opportunity for learning together about how fear arises and inquire deeply into the causation even though he may not be able to eliminate the fear.

Of course it depends on the age of the child and the capacities of the child, at what level you will talk to him about this and how deep you can go into it. So you must always be flexible and use your intelligence. But the overall concern is one of helping him to come upon a deeper understanding of this problem and not merely brush it aside or escape from it. That's the difference in the approach in a Krishnamurti school.

UB: What if children come up with religious questions because many schools

today more and more have a separation between so-called state and the church. In many schools today religion is not a part of the school. If it is taught, it is separate, perhaps in a church. So how is that handled in a Krishnamurti school?

PK: A child of any religious background is admitted for education in a Krishnamurti school; we are not demanding any particular religious belief or background in the family or the child. But the parents need to know that we are not going to indoctrinate the child in any particular religion. We are going to educate him about all of the religions of the world as a part of history. The school is more concerned with generating understanding, wisdom and self-knowledge, which are inquiry-based explorations and not dogmatic assertions of pre-formulated values and beliefs. There is no belief or discipline of any kind that is imposed through fear, pressure or punishment.

The parent has a right to know that because he may not want to put his child in such a school. So you have to tell him what your intent is, what you are doing and what methods you use and it's up to them whether they value that or they don't value that. They decide whether to apply to a Krishnamurti school or not on the basis of that. So you state these objectives in your brochure and the parents are acquainted with it before they apply for admission.

UB: What if the parents are orthodoxly religious?

PK: Generally that kind of parents do not put their children in our schools, because they don't want exposure to a liberal education; they want an education which will indoctrinate the child into their particular religion and so they send him to another school, perhaps a traditional religious school. In our schools the children come from different backgrounds and have different conditionings, which is inevitable. But in the class room you have to handle that delicately without extolling some conditioning and looking down on another.

So we have what are called culture classes, where a teacher comes into the classroom and starts talking about something that has taken place either in the town or in the school itself which he has observed. And he gets the children to have a dialogue about this as to why this happened and what can be done, without imposing his own views. Get them to ask questions about it and respond and you put more questions. That makes them look at the deeper issues and in that process they get educated as to how these divisions are arising and how violence results. Or you might discuss problems of boredom or fear of the exam or competition in sports or whatever else that concerns them. All the time these kind of things are happening because the whole school is a living body and all of these things are taking place in relationship.

You have to give sometime where you can discuss these matters with the children at the deeper level and help them see at a deeper level without judging anybody on the basis of his religion or beliefs or belittling anyone. So that is one part which is formally done in classes where the teachers go and discuss this with the students. That is a part of creating an inquiring mind.

UB: In addition to that how would you make the mind religious? Krishnamurti talked of creating a religious mind.

PK: A Krishnamurti school is a religious place in a deep sense, not in the sense of belief or dogma or even prayer; but in the sense that emphasis is being given on growing in wisdom which is the understanding of oneself and of life. The aim is to free oneself, of the negative emotions within us, what Krishnamurti called the disorder in consciousness through understanding how these arise. This is a major attempt in a Krishnamurti school. It is religious because that is the way one actually comes upon virtue. Krishnamurti called it the flowering of goodness in consciousness.

There are two aspects to this. One is the sensitivity part which you cannot just get from intellectual dialogues. It comes through contact with nature. You take the child for hikes in nature, and you help them grow plants, you have them care for a pet. When they care for a plant, they develop a certain sensitivity that you cannot develop merely by talking. You take them out for a walk near a river. Each Krishnamurti school is therefore located in a very beautiful campus with trees and birds and mountains and rivers or waterfalls nearby. It is not simply because it is pleasant to live in such an environment but because living with nature somehow creates that sensitivity which is conducive to a religious life. Feelings of tenderness, feelings of affection, feelings of compassion are cultivated. Therefore, all of the schools are vegetarian and cruelty of any kind is to be avoided.

We discuss with the children why we do not want to kill, why we do not want to inflict suffering, whether it is the suffering of human beings or animals or of the poor man or the rich man, whether it is psychological suffering or physical suffering. For all forms of suffering, there must be compassion. When you create an atmosphere in which people are dealing with each other gently, they are discussing things out and not fighting with each other, not abusing each other, when there is an atmosphere of dialogue, when all questions are respected, even stupid questions, and inquiry is promoted as an innate part of living, a religious learning is developed.

If you have that in the atmosphere, the child automatically imbibes that and there is a respect for dissent. Equality does not mean having the same amount of knowledge or the same amount of money, equality means respecting everybody equally, giving opportunities to everybody equally, not looking down on anyone because of a lack of ability and not extolling anyone because of ability, not assessing and valuing human beings on the basis of their ability. Ability is a useful thing to have, but not to glorify oneself or anyone else because of it. So the

whole outlook on life, on each other, on relationships, is different. It is different only if it is actually so, not just something expressed in the brochure as the intent.

What the child is seeing is what the teachers actually are and it is the wisdom that is actually there on the campus which educates the child, not the wisdom in the books of Krishnamurti. It is there in the book but it is not there in actuality in the school. What actually is there in the atmosphere of the school is what matters.

UB: What would you say has actually been realized in this regard?

PK: I don't think there is any school that is really completely a Krishnamurti school in the sense that it has attained that atmosphere fully. There are several schools that are seriously attempting this. All the Krishnamurti schools have definitely achieved one thing. They have given to the children a happy childhood. The children are happy to be there, they like to be there, they see their school as their home where they are not being harassed. They are cared for and they feel secure in the school. I think that is a considerable achievement because when the child grows up happily and education is a happy experience for the child, that itself is a really valuable asset. It ensures to a considerable extent that the child is going to be more sensitive and less egotistic because of this atmosphere. That I think we have achieved.

What we have not been able to achieve, except partially, is in the area of self-knowledge, religious inquiry and the understanding of oneself and of life. This is a far more difficult proposition. For one thing it is because the children go away at a rather young age. Some of our schools are only up to age 16 and there are others that are up to 18 years of age. The children are rather young and they cannot really carry on this inquiry very deeply at that age. In the senior school to some extent one does that, but at that age, my experience has been that children are not much interested in these questions. because sor-

row and conflict and so on seem to them rather a distant thing. They have not experienced much of it and they are not so concerned with that. They have other issues such as boredom, fear, pleasure and sexuality in which they are interested and you have to talk to them about those issues.

A few children do get interested in deeper religious questions but a majority of them are not really interested. I cannot say that the children who come out of our schools have much self-knowledge. There we have not been really successful but certainly we have planted these questions and if you talk to them you will find them familiar with what are the problems of the ego and so on. We have given them the questions and what they will do with those questions later on in life is up to them, we have no control over that.

As you know, self knowledge is a difficult thing and it is not like teaching physics to a student. The knowledge does not necessarily give self-knowledge. So I think our responsibility is to plant the questions in their minds and that we can certainly do.

UB: How do our students do in society after they leave the school?

PK: It is a very variable spectrum because every child is different and responds differently to what they have learned from the school.

Overall, I would say they do have more of a learning mind but maybe they are a bit delicate because they come from a very protected environment. So when they go out first they get a lot of cultural shocks. They suddenly go to the university or college and find an atmosphere where teachers just don't care whether you have studied or not, whether you are happy or not, so they notice that. They value this kind of education and most of them wish they could have continued to have that atmosphere. Krishnamurti wanted to start a university but for various reasons we have not been able to extend this kind of education to the

college and university level mainly for financial reasons.

Our schools are private schools because the government will not support such a small student-teacher ratio. They don't give financial grants to us and we also need to have the independence to realize our own educational vision and not have interference all the time from government experts telling us what to do and what not to do. If you take money from the government then they impose their own conditions which means our objectives become more difficult and have to be compromised. So we don't take money from them and this means you have to buy all of the equipment yourself, you have to pay for the teachers salaries yourself. Doing this at the college and university level is far more difficult than at the school level so we have not been able to extend it that far.

I believe that students should be educated in this kind of environment right through the age of 21 or 22. Then I think you would equip them very strongly for facing society intelligently. But when you let them go off at the age of 18 it's like throwing them to the sharks at the young age of 16 or 18 and you have very little control. They do value their happy childhood but it becomes a nice dream for them, and most of them get corrupted by the stream of society later on. It's a very strong force but some do retain some of the qualities they imbibed at school. It's very variable from individual to individual and one cannot generalize.

I would like to add that I myself found it extremely fascinating to be part of a community involved in this experiment of creating a Krishnamurti school. Before that I was a professor of physics in a university and intellectually it was much more satisfying to be doing research and guiding Ph.D. students and teaching graduate students in physics. But it was an uncultured atmosphere in which one saw that there was a lot of petty politics and backbiting, jealousy and rivalry, even among the

professors, and there was a lot of violence in the campus and in the community. One felt that one was in a very uncultured atmosphere; but one was teaching relativity and quantum mechanics! There was an incongruity about it.

When I shifted from there and came to the Krishnamurti school, intellectually it was a big step down because one was teaching high school children instead of Ph.D. candidates, but on the other hand one felt as if one had come out of dirty water into clean water. Suddenly one found a community which values love, which values compassion, where there was almost no violence, no politics, no intrigue. They were not as intelligent in the ordinary sense of that word, but they meant what they said and they said what they meant.

So it was a much more cultured, non-violent atmosphere, free from addictions and groupism. There were ego clashes; I am not saying that in a Krishnamurti school the disorder of the world does not manifest. Of course it is still there, but it did not manifest in that cruel form in which it was manifesting in the university and it was being addressed by the education and used for learning. The children were being equipped with a learning mind.

UB: What would you do differently if you were to start again?

PK: The question is after 15 or 20 years of being principal of a Krishnamurti school if I were to do it all over again how would I do it differently?

I think I would start with a smaller school and I would start with a new one; because when you get into an old entrenched institution you already have staff who have been there for a long time and who have been conditioned by all kinds of activities which have been going on there and to change that school and reform it is far more difficult than to make a fresh beginning. Management-wise and financially making a fresh beginning is more difficult because you have to get funds for

it and acquire land and all of that but I am talking from the point of view of the objectives of a Krishnamurti school. The beginning has itself to be right and if the school has got set into certain traditions and patterns then it is far more difficult to bring in a new spirit.

A little while ago you had asked me what is the difference between a Krishnamurti school and another school. Outwardly, if you see, you will not find much difference; you will see that there are classes and there are courses and there are students and there are teachers and there is a time-table and all of that is also going on in the other schools. What is different is the spirit in which one is approaching that whole activity, the difference is in the approach and in the vision.

The structure is not really very different since the structure does not really block the approach. If you don't have the right spirit the structure cannot create the spirit; if you have the spirit the structure won't block the spirit and if it does, you can change it. Some structures may be more convenient and conducive but I don't think they determine the spirit.

Therefore, the spirit or the approach and the whole atmosphere is far more important than the structure or the rules; which ultimately means the human material, the wisdom, the understanding, the atmosphere, the quality of the teachers and to what extent they understand what we are attempting to do, whether it is really a part of their own life or are they just accepting it as a policy of the school, all of that is of prime importance in creating a Krishnamurti school. All of that goes to determine to what extent it is a Krishnamurti school.

If you start off with an old school which has not worked along these lines and then you try to introduce this spirit as a new philosophy of education in that school, it is very difficult; but if you start right from the very beginning and ensure that you work only in this spirit and

grow only at the pace at which you can grow, consistent with keeping this spirit, then I think you could accomplish much more than if you take an established school and then try to convert it into a Krishnamurti school.

I am saying all this because many people are thinking in terms of starting a Krishnamurti school and they have this option before them. Either they can take an existing school and try to make it into a Krishnamurti school or they can start a new school.

In my opinion it is much better to attempt to start a new school than to take one which has followed a completely different set of policies and inherit all of those teachers and administrators. Then its far more difficult to change all of these administrators and get them to grow in their understanding. It is much easier to start off with people who already have that understanding and want to work in that spirit.

I would like to end this interview with an anecdote which I heard from a close friend, who wanted to start a Krishnamurti school in Europe. She found a donor who was willing to support the enterprise financially. So they went to meet Krishnamurti and get his blessings for the project. He asked her, "This man is providing the money. If he was not there would you make the school?" Being an honest lady she did not say yes. So Krishnamurti told her, "If not, don't make the school!" So they shelved the project!

It takes a lot of wisdom, love, sensitivity and passion to create and maintain a Krishnamurti school. It cannot be done only with money and structures. Also, it has to be there in every teacher, not just the principal or director. That is what makes it both difficult and challenging.

* * *