

The Colour Impact Project : Thinking, Feeling and Will

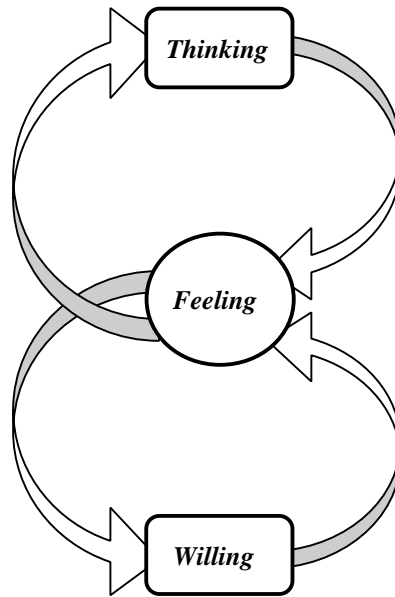
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Background

There are a considerable number of authors in the recent literature on autism who suggest that the problem lies in the realm of feeling and will as well as with thinking. Normal social interaction between individuals requires 'emotional connectedness' and a 'sense of self'. To connect emotionally it is necessary to be aware of feelings and to have a sense of self it is necessary to be aware of the ability to carry out an action which has visible consequences in the world (agency). To summarise, it is necessary to be aware of feelings and will. The suggestion is that for the individual with autism this awareness may be reduced or lacking.

Rudolf Steiner described the three psychological faculties of thinking, feeling and willing and suggested that in normal development these three are automatically co-ordinated by the body so that the individual human being functions effectively. He predicted that this automatic co-ordination might sometimes break down so that thinking, feeling and willing could somehow become separated. The tentative suggestion in this project is that some of the characteristics of autistic behaviour might be a consequence of separated thinking, feeling and willing.

The diagram below shows how in normal development the three faculties might function together:



The aim of the project

The principal aim in this project is to attempt to interact directly through the feelings and will of the child so that these areas of functioning become more familiar. Following suggestions from Steiner (1993), it is possible for the adult, consciously and sympathetically, to direct their own feelings and will toward the child in such a way as to engage those of the child.

The role of colour

It is widely believed that colour affects human beings by influencing the emotions and feelings. The first part of the Colour Impact Project was to investigate the effect of colour on the behaviour of children with autism.

Publications

“**Contact Through Colour**” by Di Pauli. *Special Children* (173) June/July 2006

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