



**100
things**

**to learn
before you're 10**

By
Gail Hugman

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This book is
dedicated to the children
of the world; especially those
who have inspired and
motivated this work.

Whatever the culture may tell
you, always believe in yourself
and forever strive to be the
best you can be; it makes
a difference.



With love, thanks and
appreciation for listening,
believing, supporting, encouraging
and for keeping the inspiration
alive while this book was being written
...oh, and for the practical business
of producing it.

Thank you all so much!!

Tanya

Neil & Mary

Neil

Carl

Morgana

Monica

Nick

Penny

Sarah

Jerry

and parents everywhere....

About the author



Gail started teaching in 1974. It was pre-National Curriculum. Teachers were left very much to their own initiative and devices in the Social Priority Area school where her teaching began in Haringey.

Gail's experience includes whole class teaching, covering the full primary age range. In addition to this, she ran a unit for disruptive pupils in Islington for three years; became a Home Tutor for children who had been excluded from school in Haringey and has worked with children with complex special needs. She has been praised by OFSTED on several occasions for her resourcefulness, creative teaching and her ability to bring out the best in even the most challenging of children. She held various senior management roles during her 30 years in schools.

Her experience includes teaching for a year in the USA and attending training in a school in Israel, where they have a different and interesting approach to education based in human development. She was also invited to observe and discuss educational issues in schools in South Africa and Mauritius. (From this she reports that playgrounds sound the same wherever you are in the world!)

In 2005, Gail established Lessons Alive as a teaching and development service. Her experience in schools, coupled with her private

work with parents and their children in their homes, has given her a unique perspective on the real issues faced by young learners and their parents.

Lessons Alive creates bespoke lessons to help address the individual child's specific needs so that they can establish a firm foundation for learning and living; helping to motivate, inspire and empower the child to take responsibility and engage in a meaningful and purposeful way in their education and development.

Birth to puberty is the foundation building phase of life and Gail believes it is crucial that parents, teachers and children themselves appreciate the processes involved during this period. Using her research, experience and observation she creates new and insightful talks and workshops for parents and teachers to boost their confidence and help them do the best job they can for each child.

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Introduction

It was September 2001 and the first day of term. The head teacher had forgotten that a student teacher would be coming to do observation and at the last minute, asked if he could observe my Year 6 class for the morning. I agreed and the bell announced the start of the school day. As the children poured into the classroom, pushing and shoving each other, jostling for what they considered the 'best seats' (near the back), I took a deep breath to call them to order, caught sight of the student teacher in the corner and stopped. I waited - doing my own observation while recalling my experience as a newly qualified teacher almost 30 years earlier when two, silent lines of children were led in from the playground to the classroom. The comparison was stark. It isn't that 1974 was 'right' and 2001 was 'wrong'; the difference caused me to start questioning what children really need in the preparation, foundation and bedrock on which they would build their lives. It made me question why so many children can behave in such an unruly way, or can 'switch off' in school (and at home); why so many children underperform or underachieve; what really causes a lack of confidence; low self-esteem or bullying? I waited 15 minutes that morning for the children to settle down and you can read what happened next in the poem called *Setting Boundaries* later in this book

Not long after this, I happened to be accompanying a group of children on a visit to a science event and we travelled in a neighbouring school's minibus. The driver was their young, dynamic Year 6 teacher, who was on the 'fast track to headship' scheme. On the return journey, I asked him what bothered him most in teaching. His answer was almost immediate: 'Motivation.' He went on to say that he could 'get the children to do what they needed to do', but he couldn't 'get them to *want* to do it'. I realised that if we were going to make any real difference, we need to focus on this '*getting them to want to do it*' and dig deep to get to the underlying causes of poor motivation, poor behaviour, negative attitudes and fixed mindsets.

I stopped teaching in school the next year and began presenting talks to local parents about motivating children. The talks were well attended and well received but there would always be parents waiting at the end who would thank me very much for the talk and end with, 'but will *you* come and talk to my child' and it became clear that there is often a gap between what children need and what many parents feel confident to deliver. This book has been written to help those parents bridge that gap. Here are some of the questions raised by parents themselves, when asked what they were looking for:

- To learn more about and get the best/most out of my children in terms of learning and motivation.
- To get them engaged.
- Ways to connect with my child that can help her grow emotionally and reduce anxiety.
- Ways to think about helping my children as they grow (and learn).
- To understand my child's approach to learning.
- How to be patient.
- My child to do what he's told without a war.
- A calmer, smoother running household.
- A child that is keen to learn.
- To support my 4 year old when he starts school in September.
- To help my children feel better and enjoy their learning as well as self-motivation and self-discipline.

- To motivate and fire him up so that he can understand or 'see' his own potential and the possibilities open to him and not be afraid to reach out for them.
- To understand different behaviours to learning and how to motivate my children through school.
- Everyone to believe in themselves.
- Tips on how to control their moods without getting angry with them.
- To know how to understand my seven year old child better.
- To motivate my child to want to do their homework ...and to check their homework...
- To be able to teach my children to be respectful in and outside of the home.
- My child to concentrate! How to speak/ask questions with a sensible answer. Keeping them motivated. Getting a response.

These questions are typical of many asked by parents who are juggling the demands of modern life and work, while they are raising their children. They may often feel their children 'could do better' and become very concerned if the child's school highlights this in a report, but many parents aren't so confident with changing children's attitudes or what to teach or how to really motivate and encourage them, especially if the children have 'switched off' and no longer respond to what their parents say.

This book is going to help by addressing these issues and questions. It's going to look at the reasons why so many children underperform at school and what can be done about aligning them at core, so that they stay connected to the positive influences that are in

them at birth. It puts forward tried and tested lessons, tools and strategies that have been developed during forty years of teaching experience and which have been repeatedly proven effective with children. It takes a step back and offers a fresh pair of eyes to look at childhood; its' purpose and human development.

It is during the first 12 years after birth that each life develops the framework for its future. It is a critical time in our lives because everything that happens during the period from birth to puberty has an affect on the foundation of that life. We know, for example, that if the child's hearing or vision is impaired in some way, it can have a direct affect on the development of their brain and learning. If they experience a major trauma, such as bereavement or divorce, it will interrupt their natural line of development and process and the consequences can more often than not, ricochet throughout their childhood and into adult life, even leading the individual into therapy if the effects are interfering in their ability to make progress or feel fulfilled.

One of the reasons for this seems to be that half our education is missing. In general, we tell children to 'listen' without explaining what that really means; we say they need to 'concentrate' without telling them how, in any way that is meaningful to them; so it is not what we say or teach that leaves a child's development vulnerable to confusion. It is more often what we *don't* say or do that leaves the way wide open to misunderstanding and misalignment. In general, ignorance about the brain and human development; poor reference; misinterpreting children's behaviour and not understanding what children *really* want, all contribute to their underperformance and underachievement.

Children frequently feel as though they have to 'wait to grow up before they can 'do' anything'. Lack of reference makes them unable to express their needs articulately and what they meet, or what they are asked to do, can feel like an imposition; a control and constriction, because in their eyes it can appear to conflict with their natural line of development (what they *feel* like doing), which is where they are based. This is one of the reasons they may switch off; rebel; lack motivation or develop 'attitude'. What children really want and *need* at core is meaningful development. It is what human beings are designed for. The

internal drives born in each of us are designed to be acted upon and, as with all things in nature, will do everything to find a way to be expressed and to grow. When the environment is not supportive; development is temporarily arrested. To remain, or reconnect, to inspiration and motivation, children need help to make the connections between personal growth and life as they live it coupled with the education they receive at school. Although it would be ideal if this was explicitly included in the curriculum and taught in school, the reality is that in a class of 30 children, each child can receive *just 10 minutes per day* of individual attention from their teacher and *only if all other teaching activities and duties are suspended!*

With the best will in the world, we all know this is simply not enough time to teach a child what they need to know about themselves; about the world; the culture; and about their purpose so that they can be the best that *they* can be, in attitude, motivation, independence, presentation, organisation, listening and concentration skills. Many naturally bright children develop low self-esteem, lack of confidence, frustration, boredom, poor presentation, underperformance; underachievement and/or cheekiness as a result of disconnection or distance from the core of themselves.

This is where parents can definitely help and this book aims to pass on the foundation building development knowledge and tools that have been shown to work. Every child can benefit from this work, *either to resolve an issue or to pre-empt difficulties that may arise*, because it puts things in perspective and gives them a sense of purpose and direction. They feel confirmed and empowered and have been shown to become happier, better motivated and independent as a result. This in turn has raised levels of achievement and exam scores. Although it is preferable that these lessons are taught by the time a child reaches puberty, they are extremely helpful for the alignment of teenagers who have not had them and who may need help to see 'the bigger picture' and to understand the processes they are experiencing so they, too, can feel more motivated and in control of their own future.

It really doesn't matter what nationality you are; the one thing *everyone* has in common - *all children - all adults - wherever we are in the*

world, whatever language we speak, whatever faith or lifestyle we adhere to, is that we are all **human at core**. This does not simply mean a physical sameness (although, whatever colour our skin or shape our features, our basic shape remains the same), but that we were all designed *to work the same way*. There is a human blueprint we can recognise in all babies at birth.

This book is about preserving and developing the human core in your child by giving them what they need at core and helping them to make the connections they need during their formation. The lessons draw on the knowledge of **what works** and **what doesn't work**. It is a dip-in-and-out book, not a sit down, start-at-the-beginning-and-keep-going riveting read, book. It is a book to be kept handy for when parents need it.

'100 Things to Learn before you're 10' is filled with a lot of common sense which is coupled with insights, reasons and reinforcing things-that-need-to-be-said that deep down everyone 'knows', but that are all too often assumed, left to chance or overlooked so *very few people think to teach them!* There are examples and stories to illustrate how the lessons can be used. The information covers the missing links, the bits the core of each child **needs to understand** so that they engage with the process of living and don't lose sight of its sense of purpose.

First things first

There is an intuitive sense in all of us, whether we recognise it or not, that tells us 'the world is not right'. We tell the children to 'be kind', to 'be polite', 'work hard', 'share' and 'not fight' but we live in a culture which seems to be relentlessly growing in conflict; anger and worse. Raising children to do what we instinctively know to be 'right' in this quagmire of contradictory evidence is stressful at best; often downright challenging and heartbreaking at worst.

If the world is to improve 'for our children', then we need to help them by teaching them two things.

1. What they need to know to **develop** the best of themselves.
2. What they need to know to **recognise** and **manage** the worst.

We all make mistakes. We may not be perfect. We don't need to wallow in it!

Nor can we closet ourselves away, focus solely on 'the perfect development' - if there even is such a thing - and pretend the 21st century does not exist, it does; and although there are those who do try to avoid it, it is simply not practical for most of us.

What these 100 things will help you do is find the way to preserve the integrity of the human core in your children and how to **use the 21st century** to help you do that.

There are hundreds of additional, obvious, practical things a child needs to learn before they are 10 such as: how to walk and dress themselves, how to wash and brush their teeth etc. These were never meant to be included in this book because they are generally covered very well elsewhere and not difficult to find. The purpose of this book is to **highlight where the gaps appear** and **deliver what is needed to fill them.**

The focus of this world - particularly in western cultures - is on how things look rather than on how things actually are in themselves. We say 'good morning' when it is raining; we tell children 'tests don't matter' and then get stressed about the levels they achieve. For the children it can be bewildering and confusing to work out what really *does* matter and who is 'telling the truth'; this book aims to help you explain it to them.

N.B. Very important note: The 100 things are written the way that they have been most effective in aligning and strengthening children. You are, of course, welcome to adapt them to your own child's needs but if you do, please be careful you do not introduce bias or persuasion or you may lose the essence of what is being taught. The wording is specific. It carries the concept and the meaning and will be understood by children of all ages.

About Motivation - a closer look at the situation

At the time of writing - June 1st 2016 - the world population was:

7,426,510,212

that's seven billion, four hundred and twenty six million, five hundred and ten thousand, two hundred and twelve...

By the time you read this, it will be significantly more.

This may not strike you as being of any real consequence while we are thinking about the motivation of children. However, the year the author was born, the world population was:

2,665,865,392

that's two billion, six hundred and sixty five million, eight hundred and sixty five thousand, three hundred and ninety two....

This means that in less than one lifetime, the world population has practically trebled. So, what does this have to do with child motivation and in particular your child's motivation?

- There is a distinct increase in pressure - if we treble the number of people in the room, we will feel it
- There is an increase in competition - locally, we see this with school places, travel, employment, the health service...
- Levels of pollution have dramatically increased affecting health and well being
- The growth of the 'throw away' culture has seen a weakening in values and quality