

Sukhomlynsky News



A child's curiosity

Dear reader,

*I hope you are well. This month's newsletter contains another 12 stories from **I'll Tell you a Story ... Philosophy for Children**.*

Two of the stories are about a child's curiosity. Both of these stories feature a boy named Serhii (diminutive form Serhiiko). In the first story, Serhii is contented to sit for hours observing some ants. In the second story, Serhiiko takes one of his toys apart to see how it works.

Sukhomlynsky was very keen to encourage children to be curious and saw curiosity as the driving force behind learning.

I hope you enjoy this month's selection.

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill

From I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children

Why are you sitting so quietly?

Grandma Mariia has an eight-year-old grandson named Serhii. The school year has ended, and Serhii is at home from morning to evening. He runs around outside chasing his dog Brovko, or Brovko chases him. Or he climbs up a tall tree, and grandma is worried he will fall. Or he runs along the road rolling a wheel, and grandma cannot sit quietly in the house: there are cars out there!

Grandma Mariia often complains, 'What a restless child you are, Serhii! You can't sit still.'

One day Serhii climbs up on the roof and cannot get down. The metal roof is very slippery. For a long time, grandma walks around the house while Serhii sits by the chimney pipe. The neighbours come and get Serhii down.

Then something very strange happens to Serhii. He has breakfast, seats himself on an old tree stump near the barn, and just sits there, looking at the ground.

Grandma looks out the window, and he is just sitting there. She looks out ten minutes later and he is still sitting there. She looks out half an hour later, and he is still sitting motionlessly.

'What has happened to him?' worries Grandma Mariia and goes outside to see what the matter is.

She goes up to Serhii and asks, 'Why are you just sitting there? You always run around jumping head over heels, not giving me a moment's rest. And now you're sitting on a tree stump, making me worried because you're not behaving like a child. What's the matter?'

'I'm watching how the ants live, grandma. It's so interesting!' says Serhii.

'Alright, Serhii my love, just sit there then,' says his grandmother tenderly. 'There's another ant nest under the pear tree in the orchard.'



From I'll tell you a story ...

The toad and the nightingale

A toad lived in a swamp. Of all the toads in the swamp, she was the most skilled musician. Every evening, she would crawl out of the swamp, close her eyes, and start singing, 'Croak-croak.'

One evening, just as the toad was about to close her eyes and start singing, she caught sight of a little grey bird settling on a crack willow. The bird started singing, and its song was full of joy. It was as if somebody was playing on silver strings. A young couple sat beneath the willow and listened. They were enchanted. 'How beautifully the nightingale sings!' they exclaimed.

The toad was surprised. 'What did those people find in the song that was so beautiful?' she wondered. 'Now, if I were singing, I could understand.'

And then she asked out loud, 'Tell me, please, humans, why does this song touch your souls? Here in the swamp, no one has even heard of a nightingale.'

The young man answered, 'To understand and appreciate a nightingale's song, you first have to move out of the swamp.'

How we found a nest in the forest

One warm spring day, we went for a walk in the forest. After a while we grew tired and sat under some trees to rest. We were sitting next to a bush. Suddenly Olya whispered, 'Look, there's a nest in that bush.'

We looked and saw a little nest, quite close to us. And there in the nest sat a little grey bird. She stared at us with her red eyes as if begging us, 'Please move away from here. Do not come so close to my nest.'

We could not take our eyes off the little bird. Then we quietly stood up and moved away from the bush. We found a thicket and sat down well away from the nest. Now our hearts felt more at ease. We had not frightened the bird. She sat in her nest and thanked us.

The toy frog

Serhiiko's mother bought him a very interesting toy: a little frog. When you wound up its key, it hopped, as if alive.

Serhiiko loved that toy. He enjoyed playing with it for a long time, but then he became quiet and thoughtful. He would take the toy and turn it over in his hands, examining it.

'Mum, can I take the toy apart?' he asked his mother. 'I would like to see what's inside.'

'If you do, it will stop hopping,' said his mother. 'You won't be able to put it back together again.'

But Serhiiko kept begging, and eventually, his mother allowed him to take it apart.

The boy unscrewed some tiny screws, located a spring that made the toy frog move, and put all the pieces into a box.

'The frog won't hop now,' his mother said.

'But now I know what made it hop,' replied Serhiiko happily.

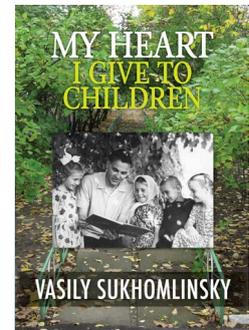
A white shirt at night

A little toddler lived with his mother. He had just started talking. He had a snow-white shirt. His mother washed it and hung it on the fence to dry. Night fell. The little boy asked his mother, 'Mum, can I take my shirt off the fence?'

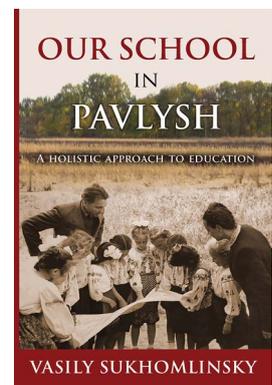


<https://www.thereallygoodbookshop.com.au/>

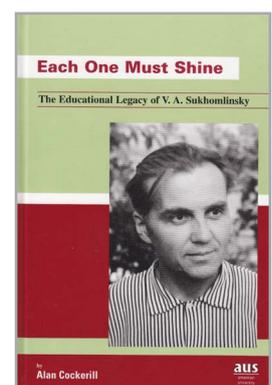
Pricing from
The Really Good Book Shop



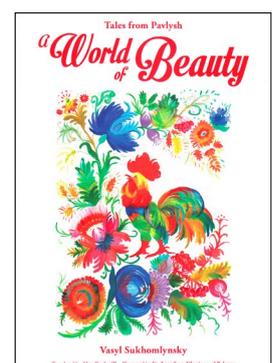
AU\$24.95 (special price)



AU\$34.95



AU\$34.95 (original hardback)



AU\$14.95 (original edition)

'Why?' asked his mother.

'The night will get on my shirt and make it black ... And then what will I wear?' he said.

Useful or harmful?

The teacher placed a large display case on his desk. The bottom of the case was covered with blue silk. Pinned to the silk were butterflies of many colours: white, red, grey, and yellow.

The teacher called out grade five student Andriiko and said, 'Take a close look at each butterfly and tell me whether it is useful or harmful.'

Andriiko could not take his eyes off the largest butterfly. It had huge wings that looked like crimson sails, and each wing was painted with golden stripes and silver spots. It seemed to Andriiko that any minute the butterfly would flutter its wings and fly out into the garden. But no, the butterfly could not fly, because it was dead. It was pinned to the blue silk forever. Andriiko gave a heavy sigh. He looked out at the garden and then back at the butterfly.

'Why don't you say something?' the teacher asked. 'I am sure that you know the answer. You have just had a good look at this butterfly. Is it useful or harmful?'

'It is beautiful,' Andriiko replied softly.

A blue world

I found a little blue glass, closed my left eye, and raised the glass to my right eye. What a wonderful world appeared before me! No longer a wide field, but an endless sea. It was no longer a combine harvester approaching me, but a magical ship. I had been crossing a field, but now I was sailing through blue waves. I approached the forest, but now it was no longer a forest, but mighty mountains covered with mysterious underwater plants. I looked at the green bushes, but now they were fairytale creatures, and it was not the wind that made them sway, but the blue waves of the sea.

Suddenly, from beneath a large underwater rock, a strange beast emerged. It had long ears and thin whiskers. Its paws looked like those of a walrus. Now I was scared. I took the blue glass away from my eye and laughed. The mysterious beast was a hare, basking in the spring sunshine. Everything around me was enjoying the sunshine: the forest, the wheat, and a lark in the sky.

An autumn day in the forest

One warm, sunny autumn day, our class went for a walk in the forest. All the clearings were covered with a carpet of yellow leaves, but the carpet only appeared yellow from a distance. When we reached a clearing, we could see that its carpet was multicoloured and made up of crimson, red, light yellow, and brown

leaves. Somewhere, far, far away, we could hear a woodpecker tapping on a tree: tap, tap, tap. We could also hear some wonderful music, as if something was ringing out, as if, far away, someone was playing a violin. It seemed to us that the sound emanated from the deepest part of the forest, but it could also have come from beneath the earth. What was it?

We listened to the sound for a long time, but we could not work out what that music was. Only when we advanced deeper into the forest, and could hear the music more distinctly, did we finally recognize the sound of a stream flowing in a ravine.

Grandpa Autumn

Grandpa Autumn lives in the dark forest. He sleeps on dry leaves and listens carefully to the singing of the birds. As soon as he hears the sad song of the cranes—'Koorlee! Koorlee!'—he gets up and says, 'My time has come. The cranes are flying away to warmer lands.'

Grandpa Autumn strides to the edge of the forest, grey-haired, in a grey coat. Wherever he goes, the leaves turn yellow and fall to the ground. When he reaches the edge of the forest, he sits down, leaning against an oak tree, and sings very quietly. It is not a song, but the autumn wind ... When he sings, his beard grows longer and longer, drifting on the wind. When it reaches the meadow, the whole meadow turns grey.

'Look at the autumn mist,' people say. It does not occur to them that it is Grandpa Autumn's beard.



The apple tree and the fence

A man planted an apple tree in his yard. The tree grew for a year and then for another year. The first flowers appeared on the tree, and the first fruit formed. But the man who owned the apple tree was mean and greedy. He was afraid that someone walking by might pick an apple. He built a high fence so that no-one could reach the tree from the road.

Two more years passed, and the apple tree grew even higher. The man built his fence higher. The apple tree asked him, 'Why are you hiding me with a fence. People walking along the road get joy from seeing what a beautiful apple tree I am.'

The man answered, 'But you are my apple tree.'

The apple tree could not understand. It looked at the blue sky and the bright sun and asked, 'And who does the sun belong to? And whose is the sky?' The man could not think of an answer.

The shortbread and the ear of wheat

Early in the morning, before sunrise, a man got up, put a white shortbread in his pocket, and went into the field. He walked through the crop, admiring the wheat. He tore off an ear, took a grain from it, tried it on his tooth and smiled. He put the ear of wheat in his pocket, where it met the shortbread.

'Who are you?' asked the shortbread.

'I am an ear of wheat.'

'Oh, how prickly you are,' said the shortbread. 'What are you for? What benefit do you bring?'

The ear of wheat smiled, twitching its whiskers, and answered, 'Without me there would be no bread, no rusks and no shortbreads like you.'

The shortbread was amazed. It looked with respect at the ear of wheat and moved over to give it more room.

'So, everything comes from you,' said the shortbread. 'But how did you get here?'

'Through people's work,' answered the ear of wheat. 'People make everything.'

The smallest apple

Mykhailyk is in grade three. His grandfather is an orchardist. During the summer, his grandfather lives in a little hut in the orchard. Mykhailyk often goes to visit his Grandpa Kostia. He helps him to cook his dinner and wash the dishes, and his grandfather treats him to honey, apples and grapes.

One day after dinner, Grandpa Kostia told his grandson, 'Today my friend Grandpa Omelko is coming to visit me. We'll prepare some nice food for him.' He poured some honey into a bowl and put

a plate of apples next to it.

One apple was big, rosy and sweet-smelling. Another was a little smaller, bright red and aromatic. A third apple was small, as white as marble, and also sweet-smelling.

Grandpa Omelko arrived. Grandpa Kostia sat him at the table and invited him to eat. For a long time, Grandpa Omelko refused to eat, saying he was not hungry. Then he took the smallest apple and ate it, dipping it in the honey. After that he would not eat any more, no matter how much Grandpa Kostia asked him to.

The old men talked for a long time, reminiscing about the past. Grandpa Omelko went home just after sunset.

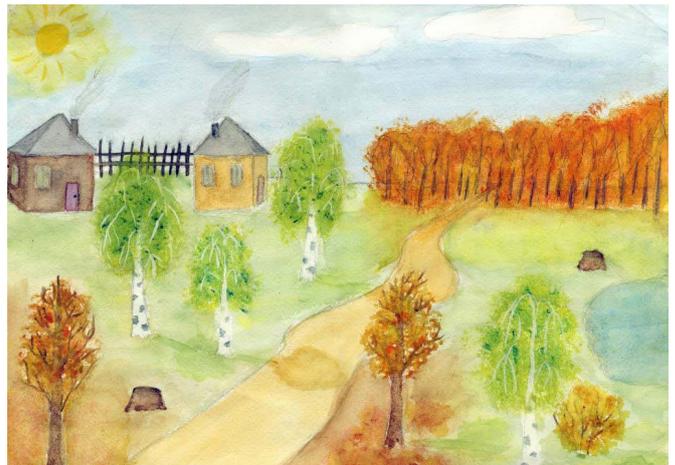
Mykhailyk asked, 'Why did Grandpa Omelko take the smallest apple? He must have been hungry.'

'He was hungry,' answered Grandpa Kostia.

'Then why did he only take the smallest apple?' asked Mykhailyk.

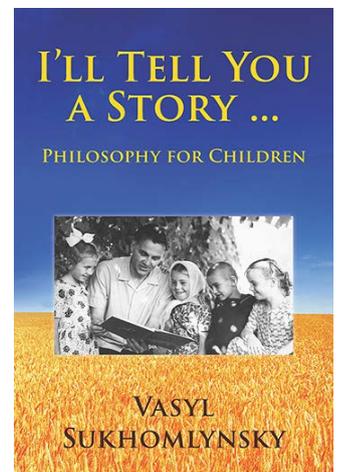
'Because he is a human being,' said Grandpa Kostia.

Mykhailyk thought quietly about this for a long time.



I'll Tell You a Story ...
Philosophy for Children

Over 800 stories
608 pages
Paperback: AU\$44.99
Hardback: AU\$54.99



In stock now at
[The Really Good Bookshop](#)