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# teacher tom

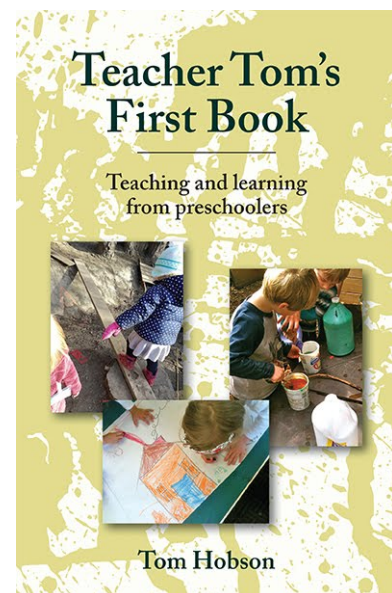
TEACHING AND  
LEARNING FROM  
PRESCHOOLERS.

monday, march 16, 2020

## We Will Emerge From These Interesting Times As Heroes

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It's a well-known ancient Chinese curse:

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*May you live in interesting times.*

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We awake this morning to find that at least 31 states have closed their schools, meaning that some 30 million children are staying home today and will do so until at least May, maybe longer. I expect those numbers to grow in the coming days. Seattle's schools have already been closed for a week. Many of the parents I know have so far tried to treat it like a snow day, a chance to cozy in, to indulge in family time. Some are planning for "homeschooling," mapping out daily schedules for their children, complete with desk time and recess. Others are frantically scrambling

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If you are interested in inviting me to speak at your conference or to otherwise work with me, please send your query to my wife and business partner:

Jennifer@TeacherTomsWorld.com. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule, but please keep in mind that I'm often scheduled a year or more in advance so please book early!

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## support teacher tom

This is my personal blog and is not a publication of the Woodland Park Cooperative Preschools. I put a lot of time and effort into it.

If you'd like to support me please consider a small contribution to the cause. *Thank you!*

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to figure out how to do their jobs from home while also caring for their children. And too many, especially hourly workers and those who earn their living in the hospitality industry, are finding themselves suddenly wondering when they will see their next paycheck.

I'm worried for my own family as we suddenly find ourselves faced the prospects of no income at all for at least the next couple months as conferences and workshops and seminars where I was booked to speak and teach have been cancelled right across the country and around the world. Some are exploring the possibilities of taking it online or re-scheduling, but everything is up in the air.

Interesting times, indeed.

Perhaps most "interesting" is that no one knows what is going to happen next, which means that we are all moving forward together, blindly. Yes, we're hopeful that if we can do this, and if we've started early enough, we can prevent our health care system from being overwhelmed as happened in the Lombardy region of Italy, but only time will tell. We are doing this in the belief that we are saving lives.

People who save lives are called heroes, and maybe we'll all feel that way at some point in the future, but right now it feels more like we are plunging into an unknown forest, following a path into darkness that we hope leads back into the light. What we are left with is putting one foot in front of the other. I can do that. You can do that. Today we can do it. Tomorrow we can do it. And then one day, no one can say when just now, we will find ourselves on the other side. We will be exhausted, sore, and perhaps even injured, but we will be heroes even if it doesn't exactly feel like it.

Parents have been asking for advice on what they can do with their kids. My short answer is to let them play. They are likely frightened and confused. This is something they need to process and that is done through play. I remember watching children playing their way through their anxieties after 9/11, and two boys in particular who would day-after-day fly their pretend airplanes into block towers. The instinct to create routines and schedules is a good one, especially in these times where none of us really knows where we are going. It does not have to be a particularly rigorous schedule, but we all take comfort from knowing

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### about teacher tom



**Teacher Tom**  
**Seattle, Washington,**  
**United States**

I am a preschool teacher, blogger, speaker, artist and the author of Teacher Tom's First Book. After nearly 20 years as the preschool teacher at the Woodland Park Cooperative School teaching children from 2-5, I'm now working with businesses and other institutions to help make high-quality, play-based preschool education a possibility for children everywhere.

[View my complete profile](#)

### teacher tom's new venture

Weekdays

what we can expect, from knowing that there is something we can control. It doesn't have to be complicated:

---

Wake up  
Breakfast  
Play  
Lunch  
Read stories/rest  
Play  
Dinner  
Bath  
Stories, snuggles, night-night

---

Go outside as much as possible. Avoid places where others are congregated like playgrounds and instead take walks, go into the woods, visit the beach, or just hang out in your own backyard. Don't let weather stop you. Dress for it. Take changes of clothing and dress in layers. This will likely be what your children most remember about this time of seclusion: being outdoors with their families.

Teachers might want to consider offering virtual circle times using Zoom, Hangouts, Skype or another service. You may not be able to hug them with your arms, but you can with your presence. Staying connected like this, even remotely, will make the transition back to school much easier when it finally comes, and it will come.

The kids will want to talk. They will have questions to which we adults don't have answers. When our daughter was young, a close family member was in the hospital, likely to die. I wasn't sure how to talk about this. It seemed like a heavy burden to lay on a young child. *Should I tell the truth? Should I tell her that he's likely to die?* One of my earliest mentors replied, "Isn't it also true that you hope he recovers? Why don't you just speak the truth of your hope instead of your fear?" In that spirit, I am telling children that they needn't be afraid of getting sick themselves, nor should they worry about their healthy parents. This illness seems to manifest relatively mildly in those under fifty who don't have underlying health issues. We are doing this to protect others, the way heroes do.

The truth is that we are heroes for doing this, all of us, even if we right now feel more like victims.

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**Inspired EC - Blog**

I will be striving in the weeks to come to offer my best thinking to parents and other educators. I am working right now with my friends at [Fairy Dust Teaching on a multi-part e-course](#) on the topic of partnering with the parents of the children we teach, the first episode of which will be available in the coming days and will go into more detail about how we can work together during these interesting times. We were already working on this project prior to recent events, but we've accelerated our schedule in the interest of providing support right now, when it's most needed. [You can sign up by clicking here.](#)

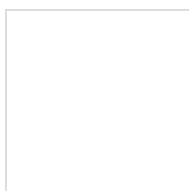
We are living in interesting times, and this morning it may feel very much like a curse, but what many don't know is that the flip side of every curse is a blessing that is activated when we speak the truth of hope. Together, we will keep putting one foot in front of the other, caring for our children, and supporting one another even if none of us knows exactly where we're going and for how long, but we will in the end emerge as heroes.

I put a lot of time and effort into this blog. If you'd like to support me please consider a small contribution to the cause. *Thank you!*

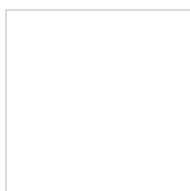


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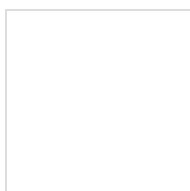
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