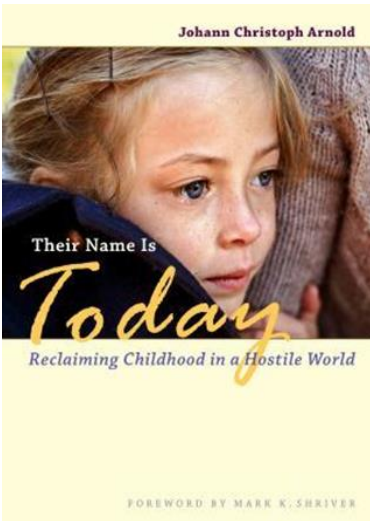




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Their Name Is Today: Reclaiming Childhood in a Hostile World
by Johann Christoph Arnold. Walden, NY. © 2014. 162 pages. ISBN: 978-0-87486-630-8.

Reviewed by Golden Cecily Sant

Childhood should hold some of our best memories. Memories where we played, but in today's world kids' childhood is being taken away. In Arnold's book he talks of ways to reclaim childhood and what children need.

Their Name is Today, is a great book to read for any teacher, parent, grand parent, or guardian that believe that kids should be able to have a childhood! Children need time and space to grow. The culture that we live in today is fast-paced. There are some parents that have their children involved in dance recitals, gymnastics, and sports all in one week. This amount of activity results in children having not much downtime to play, relax, or just be kids.

In this book the reader will find that Arnold has many thoughts, opinions, and

examples of what children need and how to give them back their childhood. There are also insights from different people sharing examples from their own childhood and their own children.

To raise a child, one needs to be able to give many things. Of course there are financial expenses but one also needs to be able to give love, honesty, and simplicity. In our society today, people hold back from having children because of financial expenses and fear of the future, but without children what would this life be? Children are born givers not takers. They are also teachers. Adults can learn so much from them.. Children get angry quickly but forgive just as fast. Children get a lot of who they are from their parents, guardians, and teachers. The ones who watch over children

mold them into who they will eventually become. To raise children who are happy and kind, one needs to have those same qualities in their selves. The life that is constructed in a home is largely responsible for our country's future social and public life.

Arnold greatly emphasizes that play is a child's work. Children are confused by tests and diagnostics at an age when they should be playing. We need to let children be children as long as they can be. Children have a mind of their own and cannot be programmed to our desires. Arnold enlightens the reader with Friedrich Froebel educational philosophy, which often spoke of the importance of children's play. Arnold uses phrases from an Australian educator, Maggie Dent, whose philosophy is that children are positively impacted by increased playtime at home, and more unstructured recess at school. There is no way to measure these benefits through standardized testing. Problem solving skills and the ability to use deductive reasoning in real life can only be accomplished by interacting socially with peers. *Their Name is Today* goes against today's education because we begin testing children at a young age and limit their playtime.

One interesting fact that Arnold brings up is that Finland has an unstructured model of education, where the children are allowed to freely play and explore without the pressure of adults. Children in Finland do not start school in a formal setting until the age of 7, yet they consistently have some of the highest rankings in the world on standardized test by the end of their school

year. The teachers also have a greater public respect than teachers in the United States and are paid more.

Not only does Arnold write about letting children play, he talks about letting children fail, limiting technology, limiting the material things, discipline, difficult children, and reverence. Everything that is written in this book could help teachers and parents.

Parents and teachers want their children to do great, but they should also be concerned about their character. When one fails at something or becomes disappointed it can build character. No one wants his/her child to fail or feel left out; but not letting this happen can cause children not to take responsibility of their own actions. Failure often teaches us more than success.

Technology has taken over our world and in ways it has advanced the world, but it has also caused problems. There are a rising number of children who lack the motor skills needed because they are addicted to tablets and smartphones. We know that too much screen time affects our physical health but it plays a big role in social health as well. Now a lot of children find it hard to communicate with others face to face. Technology has in ways made our society quiet, where you no longer see people carrying on a conversation, you see people plugged into their phones. Technology is a crutch to use for parents and teachers to get children to stay quiet so they can get things done, but it is harming them.

Keeping up with a child's demands can be exhausting. Giving them everything

thing they want can lead to raising a generation of spoiled brats! Arnold writes many examples and ways one can foster gratefulness in children.

Every child needs boundaries. Discipline should be an act of love not anger. Parents should not be afraid to discipline their child, but once the parent feels that the child is truly sorry, the parent should immediately forgive him/her. Each and every child is different but should not ever be abandoned. Discipline should always show that parents care for what their children do.

Arnold discusses the effect of so many children being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is leading to a widespread use of Ritalin, Adderall, and similar drugs. Many children who cannot sit still or pay attention are given this medicine because they are said to have disruptive behavior. This disruptive behavior can be traced to not having an appropriate relationship with parents. Arnold gives many different insights on having a difficult child in the chapter "In Praise of Difficult Children."

Arnold gives back that there is still hope in our humanity. He reminds us teaching requires a lot of affection, knowledge, and tolerance; that it takes time to discover the best in each child. He reminds us to refrain from showing favoritism, and from comparing children with others. We must not push them to become something that they are not. Never lose faith in a child or give up on them. Arnold reminds us that their names are today.

Tomorrow comes so quick and before we know it these children will be flying with their own wings. *Their Name is Today* is such a wonderful read for anyone who wants to give his/her child a great childhood!

About the Author

Golden Cecily Sant is a graduate Student at University of Louisiana-Monroe