

Freire, P. (1976). *Education as the practice of freedom*. Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative.

**You are encouraged to read the whole book, and please make a proper citation if needed.**

1. Men relate to their world in a critical way. They apprehend the objective data of their reality (as well as the ties that link one datum to another) through reflection – not by reflex, as do animals. And in the act of critical perception, men discover their own temporality. Transcending a single dimension, they reach back to yesterday, recognize today, and come upon tomorrow. The dimensionality of time is one of the fundamental discoveries in the history of human culture. (3)
2. Integration with one's context, as distinguished from adaptation, is a distinctively human activity. Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality. To the extent that man loses his ability to make choices and is subjected to the choices of others, to the extent that his decisions are no longer his own because they result from external prescriptions, he is no longer integrated. Rather, he has adapted.
3. The integrated person is person as Subject. In contrast, the adaptive person is person as object, adaptation representing at most a weak form of self-defense. If man is incapable of changing reality, he adjusts himself instead. (4)
4. Radicalization involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen. It is predominantly critical, loving, humble, and communicative, and therefore a positive stance. The man who has made a radical option does not deny another man's right to choose, nor does he try to impose his own choice. He can discuss their respective positions. He is convinced he is right, but respects another man's prerogative to judge himself correct. He tries to convince and convert, not to crush his opponent. The radical does, however, have the duty, imposed by love itself, to react against the violence of those who try to silence him – of those who, in the name of freedom, kills his freedom and their own. To be radical does not imply self-flagellation. Radicals cannot passively accept a situation in which the excessive power of a few leads to the dehumanization of all. (10-11)
5. The radical is a Subject to the degree that he perceives historical contradictions in increasingly critical fashion; however, he does not consider himself the proprietor of history. And while he recognizes that it is impossible to stop or to anticipate history without penalty, he is no mere spectator of the historical process. On the contrary, he knows that as a Subject he can and ought, together with other Subjects, to participate creatively in that process by discerning transformations in order to aid and accelerate them. (12)
6. What was needed was to go to the people and help them to enter the historical process critically. The prerequisite for this task was a form of education enabling the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities, and their role in the new cultural climate – indeed to reflect on their very power of reflection. The resulting development of this power would mean an increased capacity for choice. Such an education would take into the most serious account the various levels at which the Brazilian people perceived their reality, as being of the greatest importance for the process of their humanization. (16-17)

7. Conscientização represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness. It will not appear as a natural byproduct of even major economic changes, but must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favorable historical conditions.
8. There is a close potential relationship between naïve transitivity and massification. If a person does not move from naïve transitivity to a critical consciousness but instead falls into a fanaticized consciousness, he will become even more disengaged from reality than in the semi-intransitive state. To the extent that a person acts more on the basis of emotionality than of reason, his behavior occurs adaptively and cannot result in commitment, for committed behavior has its roots in critical consciousness and capacity for genuine choice. The adaptation and lack of engagement typical of semi-intransitivity are thus more prevalent still in a state of massification. The power to perceive authentic causality is obliterated in the semi-intransitive state; hence the latter's magical quality. In massification this power is distorted, producing a mythical quality. In the semi-intransitive state, men are predominantly illogical; in fanaticized consciousness the distortion of reason makes men irrational. The possibility of dialogue diminishes markedly. Men are defeated and dominated, though they do not know it; they fear freedom, though they believe themselves to be free. They follow general formulas and prescriptions as if by their own choice. They are directed; they do not direct themselves. Their creative power is impaired. They are objects, not Subjects. For men to overcome their state of massification, they must be enabled to reflect about that very condition. But since authentic reflection cannot exist apart from action, men must also act to transform the concrete reality which has determined their massification. (19-20)
9. The special contribution of the educator to the birth of the new society would have to be a critical education which could help to form critical attitudes, for their naïve consciousness with which the people had emerged into the historical process left them an easy prey to irrationality. Only an education facilitating the passage from naïve to critical transitivity, increasing men's ability to perceive the challenges of their time, could prepare the people to resist the emotional power of the transition.
10. The education our situation demanded would enable men to discuss courageously the problem of their context – and to intervene in that context; it would warn men of the dangers of the time and offer them the confidence and the strength to confront those dangers instead of surrendering their sense of self through submission to the decision of others. By predisposing men to reevaluate constantly, to analyze “findings,” to adopt scientific methods and processes, and to perceive themselves in dialectical relationship with their social reality, that education could help men to assume an increasingly critical attitude toward the world and so to transform it.
11. They could be helped to learn democracy through the exercise of democracy; for that knowledge, above all others, can only be assimilated experientially. More often than not, we have attempted to transfer that knowledge to the people verbally, as if we could give lessons in democracy while regarding popular participation in the exercise of power as “absurd and immoral.” We lacked – and needed – sufficient courage to discuss with the common man his right to that participation. Nothing threatened the correct development of popular emergence more than an educational practice which failed to offer opportunities for the analysis and debate

of problems, or for genuine participation; one which not only did not identify with the trend toward democratization but reinforced our lack of democratic experience. (36)

12. Critical consciousness represents “things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations ... naïve consciousness considers itself superior to facts, in control of facts, and thus free to understand them as it pleases.
13. Critical consciousness is integrated with reality; naïve consciousness superimposes itself on reality; and fanatical consciousness, whose pathological naivete leads to the irrational, adapts to reality.
14. The answer seemed to lie:
  - a. In an active, dialogical, critical and criticism-stimulating method;
  - b. In changing the program content of education;
  - c. In the use of techniques like thematic “breakdown” and “codification”
15. Our method, then, was to be based on dialogue, which is a horizontal relationship between persons. (45).
16. Thus the educator’s role is fundamentally to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write. This teaching cannot be done from the top down, but only from the inside out, by the illiterate himself, with the collaboration of the educator. That is why we searched for a method which would be the instrument of the learner as well as of the educator, and which, in the lucid observation of a young Brazilian sociologist, “would identify learning content with the learning process”. (48-49)