The Seven Laws of Salem

First Law

*Give the children opportunities for self-discovery*

Every girl and boy has a „grande passion“, often hidden and unrealised to the end of life. The Educator cannot hope and may not try to find it out by psychoanalytic methods. It can and will be revealed by the child coming into close touch with a number of different activities. When a child has come “into his own”, you will often hear a shout of joy, or be thrilled by some manifestation of primitive happiness. But these activities must not be added as a superstructure to an exhausting programme of lessons. They will have no chance of absorbing and bringing out the child unless they form a vital part of the day’s work. The wholesome passion once discovered grows to be “the guardian angel” of the years of adolescence, while the undiscovered and unprotected boy rarely maintains his vitality unbroken and undiluted from 11 to 15. We do not hesitate to say: often the spiritual difference in age between a boy of 15 and a boy of 11 is greater than of a man of 50 and a boy of 15.

Second Law

*Make the children meet with triumph and defeat*

Let them learn to „treat these two impostors just the same“ – It is possible to wait on a child’s inclinations and gifts to arrange carefully for an unbroken series of success. You may make him happy in this way – I do doubt it – but you certainly disqualify him for the battle of life. Salem believes you ought to discover the child’s weakness as well as his strength. Allow him to engage in enterprises in which he is likely to fail, and do not hush up his failure. Teach him to overcome defeat. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat from the tree of life.” Rev. 2-7

Third Law

*Give the children the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause*

Even the youngsters ought to undertake tasks which are of definite importance for the community. Tell them from the start: “You want a crew, not passengers on the thrilling voyage through the New Country School. “Let the responsible boys or girls shoulder duties big enough, when negligently performed, to wreck a state”.

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Fourth Law

Provide periods of silence

Following the great precedent of the Quakers. Unless the present-day generation acquires early habits of quiet and reflection, it will be speedily and prematurely used up by the nerve exhausting and distracting civilization of today.

Fifth Law

Train the imagination

You must call it into action, otherwise it becomes atrophied like a muscle not in use. The power to resist the pressing stimulus of the hour and the moment cannot be acquired in later life; it often depends on the ability to visualize what you plan and hope and fear for the future. Self-indulgence is in many cases due to a lack of vision: "Wer das Ferne nicht bedenkt, dem ist Betrübnis nahe." (Goethe)

Sixth Law

Make games important but not predominant

Athletics do not suffer by being put in their place. In fact you restore the dignity of the usurper by dethroning him.

Seventh Law

Free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege

Decadence is not always an inexorable decree of nature, more often it is a wilful waste of splendid heritage. The "poor" rich girls and boys wholly thrown into each other's company are not given a chance of growing into men and women who can overcome. Let them share the experience of an enthralling school life with sons and daughters of those who have to struggle for their existence. No school can build up a tradition of self discipline on vigorous but joyous endeavour, unless at least 30% of the children come from homes where life is not only simple but even hard.