

UpToYou, an educational platform
for education reform



Educational intervention project UpToYou

Emotions as a springboard
for personal growth



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What is UpToYou and what does it offer?

UpToYou is a non-profit and social interest foundation that aims to renew and revive education, understanding it as the key to interpersonal relationships. UpToYou is not limited to the educational realm and is applicable to families, schools, institutions and companies alike.

UpToYou's mission is to help people grow in the process of emotional maturation, and in their own understanding, in the full assumption of their freedom. At UpToYou, we believe that each person's dignity demands personalized attention focused on growing interpersonal relationships.

We further believe that education in virtues is not achieved by teaching behaviors or through theoretical discourse, but rather is best achieved through people experiencing an inner process of personal growth that has clear implications for both the way people behave and relate.

People develop their freedom by exercising it, making decisions and assuming personal responsibility. Our goal is to help people discern and seek the most appropriate response in the key of identity wherever they may be at the time. That is, to help them understand that, in every decision, we put our way of being a person in play. To do this, a regulatory mentality, formalisms, trends and a toxic dependence on what others think must be excluded.

We believe that not all personal development can be described as growth, but rather only that which starts from accepting reality as it is received and then perfects it by way of enriching interpersonal relationships.

Our formation plan is based on respectful accompaniment in a process of growth. Each participant is a protagonist. We do not teach virtues or values as a recipe to avoid life's problems and risks. We help people through their



search, starting with each person's inner life. Thus, UpToYou educators do not use didactic methodology or techniques, nor do they read from a manual. An UpToYou educator is, first and foremost, a mentor who speaks through coherent action and who educates through quality interpersonal relationships and proposes experiences for growth.

UpToYou is first a program of personal growth and, for this reason, is essentially respectful, compatible and propels each person or organization's mission and values, enhancing their originality.

Personal emotional maturity is a permanent challenge that we must all assume at every stage of life; it involves challenges that demand our response. Living a successful life depends on the quality of our response to them. "Maturity" therefore does not mean coming to the end of a journey, but rather is dynamic and opens up an unrestricted path for growth.

A center or organization that decides to go through the UpToYou process should know that the program affects all interpersonal relationships, thus everyone involved in the center or organization should partake in the formative process, implementing it in all areas of daily life.

All human organizations, from the family to other entities that promote the emotional growth of its constituent parts, establish a type of relationship that enhances the involvement and creativity of each of its members and thus contributes to a climate that favors full personal development and the effective achievement of the organization's objectives.





What is UpToYou's story?

UpToYou emerged out of a repeatedly-confirmed intuition that our team arrived at after a variety of educational experiences: every educational methodology, no matter how novel or valuable it is, not only always fails, but also can be counterproductive if it lacks the right kind of teacher-student relationship. These relationships take place in a highly emotional environment so establishing adequate emotional education that allows for interaction that favors growth seemed essential. This led to wide-ranging research on emotional education. We initially started by examining the adolescent realm. We found that the available resources, although they made valuable contributions, merely translated emotional education designed for the business world and for adults, and lacked clear focus on adolescents' situation.

These shortcomings encouraged us to carry out international and multidisciplinary research; from there, other issues emerged, including underlying anthropologies, conceptions about what it means to be educated, the role of educators, etc. This research, which remains open, was implemented in an educational setting in October of 2014 and since then continues to grow. In 2017, it is active in Spain (Pamplona, Tafalla, Valencia, Sigüenza and Belorado), Brazil (Cachoeira Paulista), Mexico (Puebla and Veracruz) and Cameroon (Bamenda and Kumbo).

Through this experience, we have discovered two main principles that define UpToYou's current position:

- We are certain *that education does not exist apart from that which involves learning to be a person, which only happens through interpersonal relationships*. Indeed, any iterations of education (emotional, musical, academic, etc.) cannot properly be called education

Education does not exist apart from that which involves learning to be a person, which only happens through interpersonal relationships ●



without personal education. Thus, emotional education foments growth starting from one's emotional reality, just as musical education foments growth starting with musical studies. No educational field is an end in itself. This brings up ethical questions from the beginning such as, "What kind of person do I want to be? What kind of relationships do I have?".

- If this is so, a purely technical education—where the educator remains at a distance and supports students' change from afar—cannot exist. *If education is personal growth within personal relationships, the educator himself is also called to growth.* Education is as necessary for the educator as it is for the student, since education is the key to any interpersonal relationship with independence of the context in which it occurs. Why do we have relationships if it is not with an eye for the other's growth, which in turn translates into one's own growth? This means that educational programs cannot merely include technical instruction, but rather must include a lived, first person experience that is then brought into the classroom. As a consequence, training is time intensive and demanding.

How does UpToYou help children and adolescents?

The program aims to help children and young people develop tools that permit them to become responsible and free in relation to the personal reality found in their emotional reality. It is key that both children and adolescents know how to situate their emotional reality for their personal development, and UpToYou is an excellent resource for doing so.

Children open up to life starting with the emotions that awaken in lived experience. The way in which a child's emotions form is a reflection of the way he/she will live, understand, and relate. Thus, children's environment and the educational methods present are key to how they experience emotions. UpToYou shows educators the educational methods and environments

that allow for mature development to suitably occur.

Adolescence presents a series of challenges to overcome, including maturity in decision-making, their realization and follow-up, maturity in social relations both among peers and with the adult world. Adolescents therefore must revise their identity by acquiring an awareness of who they are and what their role and vision are in this world. UpToYou helps young people to grow in personal self-knowledge based on their emotional reality; it further enables them to make decisions that take into account the globality and complexity of their lives, resulting in enhanced interpersonal relationships. All of this equates to their personal growth.



Why is the program called UpToYou and why does it use those colors?



The program's name, **UpToYou** (as in "It's up to you"), was chosen because adolescents often live their emotional state as an extreme and, consequently, are buffeted by the winds of emotions and feelings, as if they were on a ship sailing without a rudder. This is how a capricious child or a reckless young person emerges. This program helps them to see that they themselves can set limits. They are taught to get to know themselves, as well as their inner dynamics, and to act on them with an understanding of themselves and their situation.

That is, on the one hand, they discover that their emotions are not entirely capricious; rather, they see that their emotions have a root cause. This finding helps to remove a tragic view of the emotions and teaches them that, even in tragic situations (indeed, many children and young people today live through tragic situations), they have the last word. Life remains full of possibility.

They also learn that this last word is very important because, when deciding to do something, they are deciding what kind of person they want to be and what kind of personal relationships they want to have with the people around them. This is why **UpToYou** does not aim to educate choice through choosing, which equates to educating according to whim, but rather aims to educate choice with an awareness of what is at stake, which allows for responsible living.

Thematic stop light colors were chosen to help young people get to know their inner dynamics and which of those dynamics to let flow, which should be reoriented, and which require more thought. It helps young people take an interior journey, starting with an examination of internal behavior such that, afterwards, they can freely move from their interior to the exterior.

What are UpToYou's educational principles?



1. Education equates to facilitating growth and thus helps students determine their “way of being,” knowing that interpersonal relationships define a person. Thus, growth in “way of being” takes place in how students live concrete interpersonal relationships. UpToYou does not intend for students to compare themselves with or confront values understood as predetermined standard ideals, but rather that they come face-to-face with the immediacy of interpersonal relationships.
2. The first step, which cannot be skipped, corresponds to starting by accepting reality as it is received. This reality corresponds to a large part of life, including the body, family, culture, country, etc. In that reception, the student is basically passive and her first action must be the reception of that reality without trying to change it and recognizing the impact it has had.
3. Something that is unknown cannot be received. This implies not judging because judgment often impedes knowledge. This is the only way to know the complexity present in any event. We use the emotional route to help students get to know their personal complexity, which becomes present in the emotions. Whatever an adolescent wants, however he lives and relates, whatever and however he does what he does, he ends up feeling one way or another. Thus, we have to start from a given emotional reality to help students achieve



interiorization until discovering the whole plexus of relationships that explains a given emotional situation.

4. Students have to stand before their concrete reality and the people around them and then realize that their decisions are important, that is, that they imply deciding their “way of being.” Decisions that affect interpersonal relationships equally affect personal identity. The decision-making process implies a critique and review of what has been received. Deciding how one treats others, determines who one wants to be. This educational-formational act is always performed; it is not optional. The question then becomes which “way of being” one wants.

5. Not every decision equates to growth, which corresponds to the perfection of the received or, in other words, that which im-

proves interpersonal relationships. There is then a need for healing and strengthening interpersonal bonds, which is achieved through gratitude and inner reconciliation and is recognized in a unified and grateful reading of one’s life. Seen as such, the process of formation is an endless process open to unrestricted growth.

6. Educators can never be left out of this process. If growth occurs in the growth of interpersonal relationships it means that growth occurs in both the student and the teacher. They grow because they grow together. Education is not meant to remedy students’ deficiencies, but rather is part of our nature and both parts need it. Education, that is, “fomenting growth,” is the key to interpersonal relationships beyond school.

How does UpToYou understand feelings?



At UpToYou, it is fundamental to start on a path of interiorization that begins with emotional personal reality ●

At UpToYou, we believe that feelings are information and generate tendencies. If feelings are information, we might ask, what information do they contain? Feeling is information about the advantage of human complexity. They tell us how we live that complexity. That is to say, whatever we want, however we live and relate, whatever we do and however we act, it is normal to end up feeling as we do. Seen this way, feelings are the result of all of the above, the complexity of our lives. Feelings are an effect. If feelings are valuable information, then we must get to know them. At UpToYou, it is fundamental to start on a path of interiorization that begins with emotional personal reality and ends when we grow in the knowledge of our personal vital reality.

As noted, feelings are information and generate tendencies. What does it mean to generate tendencies? A tendency does not determine, but rather directs, while feelings determine. But the orientation they awaken depends on how all the information contained in the

feeling has been understood. Feelings inform us of a lot, hence their importance and their limitation; they tell us about the concrete way of living life's complexity, but they do not tell us about the elements or dimensions that converge. If we see a person who, for example, has his shirt on upside down, a feeling of some kind of rejection might awaken in us, but it is not clear if that rejection is towards the person or the shirt. Rather, it seems that the shirt-person combination in this case is not a successful one. This feeling tells me that the shirt and person do not go together, but it does not tell me anything about them. If I misunderstand the feeling, I may reject the shirt, but that is not the fault of the feeling; rather, that which informs the feeling falls short. So, for example, a teenager might say, "I hate my father," but what does

she really hate? What does this hate tell us? If she misunderstands the feeling, the tendency would be to go against her father's will, but if she properly deciphers the information contained in hatred, she will discover that she rejects the concrete way they are living the father-daughter relationship. Moreover, she will discover that hatred could not exist if she did not in some way love her father. The tendency that generates the feeling depends on how the information contained in it is deciphered. Without a proper process of self-understanding, we will simply pity ourselves and make others suffer.

Thus, at [UpToYou](#), we believe that feelings are information and generate tendencies.





How does UpToYou understand emotional education?

Once we have a piece of information, we should seek to understand it; once we have a tendency, we should seek to maximize it.

Our educational program helps people walk a double road, but, as mentioned above, we take into account that a tendency should not be maximized until all the information a feeling contains has been extracted. The young woman who hates her father could respond to the question of, “What do you want to do?” with, “hit him.” But if we ask the same question and she discovers that it isn’t her father himself that she hates, but rather the situation, then she might respond, “I do not know what to do.”

Maximizing a tendency means helping to discover the smallest traces of humanity present in every emotional situation. There is always something to find. We could say that no feeling is wrong because it is the result of something that precedes it. That which precedes it also contains the intimacy and best wishes that live in

To be a better person means perfecting and enriching our personal relationships ●

us, even if they co-exist with the most crooked and perverse of desires and tendencies. We must strive to find those traces of humanity that remain in every human being no matter how horrible their actions have been in the past.

Maximizing a tendency can only be done by relating it to the complexity of life and interpersonal relationships. So because all people relate on an interior level (human beings cannot have merely superficial relationships), personal growth and the growth of our interpersonal relationships are one in the same. To be a better person means perfecting and enriching our personal relationships.

How does UpToYou NOT understand feelings and emotional education?



Emotions do not determine; they simply condition ●

We do not understand emotions as agents that direct our life, as a duplicate self within us. Consequently, emotions do not determine; they simply condition. Their effect depends on how the information they contain is deciphered.

If emotions are information, it is never appropriate to control or regulate them. This information should be understood and studied, but never regulated. There is nothing to do with an emotion in itself and it should not be judged positively or negatively. In that sense, UpToYou suspends judgment. Following the example of the upside-down shirt, neither the shirt, the person nor the feeling are ugly. It may

be pleasant or unpleasant, but not positive or negative, which refer to growth and are moral terms. Rejoicing at another's harm can hardly be described as positive, even if the joy it provokes is pleasant.

Regulating or controlling emotion literally borderlines on madness. A crazy person does not have contact with reality and if, with the help of a feeling, one has access to knowledge of a personal vital reality, then, by distorting that feeling, one closes off the possibility of accessing personal reality and falls into an imaginary and unreal world.

By distorting the feeling, one closes off the possibility of accessing personal reality and falls into an unreal world ●

How does UpToYou work with children and youth?

It does not make sense to work with individual students if you do not work equally with teachers, with friend groups and with the families. That is why we use a variety of dynamics.

Extensive and profound teacher training – With what has been mentioned thus far, it is clear that we all need a permanent emotional education like this. There is no state of “already educated.” While we are alive, we experience emotions and we are able to take paths of personal growth starting from our personal reality. In addition, UpToYou does not offer techniques, skills, or competencies (although it requires them). UpToYou is an experience and faculty cannot help others live an experience before having lived it themselves. That is why teacher training, as will be detailed later, is long and basically requires introducing UpToYou in their lives. If teachers find that UpToYou helps them in their lives, they will naturally develop it with students, even if they do not directly apply the program as such.

In addition, it does not make sense, for example, for teachers to show students that making mistakes can be a path for growth and that, far from being frightened or afraid of error, it is worth accepting the challenge of it, if the next hour the teacher tells students, “Wake up! If you make mistakes you’re never going to learn!” These kinds of incoherencies are, at minimum, disconcerting to students.

It is so important to work with teachers that we believe that initial training is not enough, even if it last years, but rather requires follow-up, helping the center develop more and more resources. In addition, in this symbiotic relationship, we all are enriched by lived experiences.

There are four proposed levels when working with students, including group meetings, individual work, a support group (group of friends) and personal interviews.

While we are alive, we experience emotions and we are able to take paths of personal growth



- **Group meetings:** These meetings correspond to the entire class group and consist of small introductions, a central activity, reflection and an activity proposal. There are three types of group meetings: a) to propose tools, b) to work on various topics and to delve into one aspect in particular, and c) to hold meetings that repeat and reinforce tools.
- **A support group:** These meetings have two or three students. The group members should be close enough to support one another. With this support, proposed activities and their experience are monitored: the members advise each other, reflect together and support each other in the day-to-day. Students should not just learn to relate to themselves, but also to others their own age. Avoiding bad relationships is not the same as an education in having good relationships and it is imperative that students receive this formation. Support group meetings are designed to take advantage of peer influence for personal growth and to help build healthy friendships. At all support group meetings, decisions are made that should be evaluated at the next support group meeting.
- **Personal interviews:** These interviews are held with the tutor or another person from the center focused on the program. These interviews can either be with each student individually or with the support group; they seek to more closely follow participants' experiences.
- **Individual work:** This corresponds to prescribed exercises done alone. In this way, we foster the reflection and interiority necessary for personal growth. This platform is also indispensable. Sadly today, many children and young people are accustomed to a carrot and stick mentality (although this is sometimes as simple as just letting the child do whatever he wants). That is, students are not usually accustomed to doing free activities. An activity is free if it is done for its own worth, not for what will happen next. With this work, the student will discover the pleasure of being alone—the pleasure of getting to know one's own life, seeing it, understanding it and loving it.
- The only thing missing is the **work that is done with families**. We say with families and not with parents because we do not seek to produce "trained" parents, but rather families that know how to find and live the enjoyment of sharing a common life. We work with parents because everything that is done with children is done equally with their parents. The form changes, but the overall dynamic remains the same. In addition, family meetings are aimed at promoting constructive dialogue within the family.



How does UpToYou interact with students?

Concrete ways of interacting with students depend on their maturity, age and specific situation, but in general terms it goes as follows:

1. The student presents a specific lived emotional situation that he wants to examine in detail because he considers it relevant for his life. The facilitator presents questions that help him recognize the complexity of his life and the relationships that allowed that emotional situation to arise. He is taught to discover that even in the most painful emotional situations, we find traits of humanity that should be upheld. Thus, the student grows in self-knowledge and discovers the complexity with which he questions his initial judgments.
2. The educator helps students discover the behavioral chain that often occurs after an event where an emotional situation occurs that produces a judgment, which in turn causes a decision and an action. Many times students are unaware of this process, but with various activities students learn these inner dynamics and to generate alternatives at each stage.
3. The educator helps students discover habitual inner tendencies by discovering their personality traits expressed in concrete behaviors.
4. The educator helps students unify their lives through gratefulness for and reconciliation of interpersonal relationships with peers, as well as with adults, especially the family. The educator helps students be proactive in this regard.
5. The educator helps students become proactive by implementing objectives that allow them to develop their best selves. Students also discover that, after new action, a new emotional situation occurs, repeating the indicated process and introducing them to cycles of continuous improvement.

We help students unify their lives through gratefulness for and reconciliation of interpersonal relationships ●





How is UpToYou beneficial?

The fundamental benefit of UpToYou is found in people enjoying unity in their life through improved personal relationships. It does not separate one's happiness from others' happiness, but rather puts them in relation, because growth happens when personal relationships grow. This central benefit is broken down into the following:

- **People who grow in self-knowledge.** They learn to recognize their state and inner tendencies starting from their emotional reality.
- **People who make decisions taking their own complexity into account, that of other people and that of life in general.** Different tools and activities bring more interrelated elements to the fore.
- **People who grow through clarifying personal identity.** They learn that when deciding to do something, we are essentially deciding what kind of person we want to be.
- **People who are proactive in their own lives.** A variety of tools help promote the best desires according to each person's possibilities.
- **Sensitive people who have an increased capacity to perceive the complexity in themselves and in others, and to bring out the singularity, intimacy and interiority of people in their actions.**
- **It promotes grateful and reconciled people through activities that favor gratitude and the healing of wounds to achieve unity in one's life.**
- **People with an incremental mentality, having experienced personal growth throughout the program.**
- **People who do not put a stop to growth because they learn that, starting from their own emotional reality, a path of self-knowledge and personal perfection is always open.**
- **People who respect themselves and others because they learn to suspend all personal judgment about themselves and others, since judgment always involves reducing the whole to a part.**
- **Sociable people.** Participants discover that no good personal future exists apart from the improvement of interpersonal relationships.
- **People who know how to find meaning in their tasks and work, which increases their dedication to them.** They learn to connect what they do with their personal growth and that of others because they do not understand their tasks as action that is technical, one-time or external to their person, but rather as an opportunity to define who they are and how they relate.





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