



***TOWARDS THE COMPASSIONATE SCHOOL FROM GOLDEN RULE TO GOLDEN THREAD: Maurice Irfan Coles (ed.) To be published by the IOE/Trentham (UK) and Stylus Publishing (USA) in summer 2015***

There is a growing international movement which aims to restore compassion to the world's epicentre. In part inspired by the Charter for Compassion, it argues that the Golden Rule, 'Treat others as you would wish to be treated,' lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions. An increasing number of cities and schools, and one country have signed the charter, declaring their intention to become 'compassionate.' To date, however, little has been written which provides a conceptual, theoretical and practical overview of the education system through the prism of compassion. This innovative and radical book addresses that gap arguing that, unless we can alter the prevailing educational paradigm so that all young people are actively taught collaboration and the value of service, as an antidote to the present dominant acquisitive individualistic norms, then the future looks very bleak. Although each chapter has been written as a stand-alone, they are interwoven and consistent in their compassionate message. Dr. Keith McGee from Boston University and Baroness Estelle Morris from the UK Parliament provide the fore and afterwords.

**Maurice Irfan Coles in *Changing the Story, Altering the paradigm*** justifies making global compassion the key and fundamental organising principle in *all* education systems. He defines terms like compassion, empathy, and altruism and charts a way through this linguistic maze. Compassion is the meta value incorporating a range of attributes, all of which children and young people simply and intuitively, 'get.' Coles offers 8 compassionate drivers; imperatives for societal and educational change. He examines some of the educational implications of changing the narrative, altering the paradigm and proffers some initial strategies.

**Dr. Tamara Russell and Tiago P. Tatton-Ramos in *Compassionate Minds (and Brains) in Education*** examine neuroscience data as it relates to the developing brain and "brain informed" ways of working in the classroom. The current literature relating to mindfulness and compassionate mind training is reviewed. They conclude that data tell us that mindfulness of the body is the key to engaging with our own emotional experiences in a more skilful and compassionate way and that this in turn is the building block to the ability to be more compassionate towards others.

**Dr. John Lloyd in *Compassion through Physical and Mental Health and Well Being*** maintains that compassionate education and compassionate schools are central to achieving good physical, mental and emotional health. A compassionate school is a healthy school in as much as it promotes and develops health literacy in the young and its school staff where they are able to assess and evaluate information, manage risk and make lifestyle choices that develop and maintain healthy lifestyles and ultimately good health. Lloyd examines how schools can be health promoting, where

outcomes for health and well-being are the drivers, with personal development outcomes of resilience, mindfulness, self-confidence and self-esteem.

In ***Be Oracles Power: Compassion through Spiritual Literacy***, Coles unpacks the terms spiritual, and spiritual development and explores their relationship to the cultural, social and moral dimensions. He offers the rationale for, and aims of the promotion of spiritual development and provides a range of 'spiritual signposts' which teachers can take into their own settings. He demonstrates how the practice of spirituality can become a teaching reality that is readily understood by all; can be translated into the language of the classroom and which makes spiritual experiences for young people an everyday lived reality.

**Professor David Woods in *Compassion through Moral and Social Development*** reveals how these areas contribute considerably to the climate and ethos of the school enabling children and young people to grow, flourish, become confident and compassionate individuals and appreciate their own worth and that of others. Through such provision, participation and impact schools can make a unique and distinctive contribution to the development of students and to the creation of a compassionate democratic society.

**Coles and Gilroy Brown in *Compassion through Cultural Development*** offer definition clarity of portmanteau terms like culture, heritage, and identity. They provide the rationale for making cultural literacy a key tool for the development of compassion and the building of cohesion. For them, in an age of multiple identities schools have a responsibility to help young people 'marry' these identities so that they do not conflict or if they do, pupils have coping strategies to mitigate their negative effects.

In the final chapter **Professor Mick Waters in, *Towards a World Class Compassionate Curriculum*** argues passionately for an international curriculum based in part upon six descriptors. Trenchant in his criticism of existing national curricula, he maintains that they are distorted by national and international testing, are backward looking and not conducive to an interconnected 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Waters concludes by describing how a compassionate curriculum can be structured and by advocating the international application of the 54 articles of the United Nations Rights of the Child which, if '*properly embraced by nations...would ensure a compassionate curriculum... worldwide.*'

**ALL BOOK PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO THE CoED FOUNDATION**