

***NURTURING
COMPASSION
WITHIN
OUR SCHOOLS***

INDEPENDENT STUDY

A FIVE CREDIT CLASS

Course # ED434y/ED534y

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. MICHAEL SEDLER

Email: mike@communicationplus.net

(509) 443-1605

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Please use the checklist/syllabus in the manual.

PLEASE SEND ASSIGNMENTS ELECTRONICALLY (AS AN ATTACHMENT). It is best to send in no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time and I will send you back comments. Send them in numerical order (#1, #2, #3...). You may send work in Microsoft Word, in a Google Doc (but give permission for review), zip folder, a converted Pages file, etc.

Thank you for signing up for my independent study classes. You may take up to six months to complete this course, and may obtain an additional 3 month extension. DO NOT send in any completed papers unless you have registered for the class! If working in a group, put all names on each paper, except the integration paper which must be individually authored. See ** at bottom of page.

The checklist in the manual is to help you plan your schedule to successfully complete this course. The last page of the manual include a General Bibliography with phone numbers of publishing companies. If you prefer, you may choose an alternate book not on the suggested list.

On the following page, I have given you a brief biography/resume of my background. You will see that I have a Masters Degree in Social Work; my K-8 Teaching Certification and am a Licensed Social Worker with the State of Washington. My current primary role is as a consultant and trainer for schools, businesses and agencies. I also worked in education for 15 years as a Director of Special Education, a Behavior Intervention Specialist, School Social Worker, and Teacher.

I teach classes and seminars throughout the United States and in Canada. I am adjunct professor through two Universities in Washington. I am available for on-site training, classes, and in services for agencies and schools. I anticipate this class will be enjoyable and full of learning. Please contact me if you would like me to be involved directly with your school or business.

Thank you, once again, for signing up for it and I look forward to working with you over the next weeks/months. If you would like individual feedback on assignments, please indicate this when turning in your work

Sincerely,

Michael Sedler
(509) 443-1605
E-mail: mike@communicationplus.net
Website: www.michaelsedler.com
P.O. BOX 30310 - Spokane, WA. - 99223

** For those working in groups (400/500 level only!)- be sure to go to The Heritage Institute website at www.hoi.edu and click on the "group collaboration" icon.

1. Each group member must pick a book to read (you may all choose the same book).
2. Each group member must read the entire manual.
3. Final evaluation/integration paper must be individually authored.

Please share about my classes with others. It is my main form of advertising.

MICHAEL SEDLER

(509) 443-1605 (w); (509) 939-6302 (c)

email: mike@communicationplus.net or michael@michaelsedler.com

website: www.michaelsedler.com

Education

B.A., Political Science

Master Degree, Social Work

Master Degree, Divinity

Doctorate Degree, Ministry

Teaching Certificate

Work Experience

Consultant/Trainer/Counselor

Director of Special Education

Division of Developmental Disabilities, Behavior Consultant

Supervisor, Educational Services

School Social Worker (K-12)

Behavior Intervention Specialist (K -12)

Classroom Teacher (elementary and middle school)

Assistant Pastor

Other Experiences

State Correctional Facility for Juveniles, Counselor and Supervisor

Community Mental Health Therapist

State Trainer in Autism (State of Washington)

Adjunct Professor for several Universities

Student Teacher Supervisor

Consultant for schools, business, churches throughout United States

Provide weekend marriage retreats

Interview and Speech Coach/Trainer for Miss Arizona, 3rd runner-up Miss America 2012

Author

When to Speak Up and When To Shut Up. (Jan., 2006 Revell Books, \$5.99). Book from faith-based perspective. Communication book discussing conflict, power struggles, listening strategies, asking questions. **(Over 300,000 copies sold).**

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. (October, 2016. Revell Books, \$5.99). (updated/edited version of “Stop The Runaway Conversation.”) Two new chapters in addition to edits. Book from faith-based perspective.

Importance of not listening to negative discussions and how they impact a person's attitude.

Books are available through all bookstores, at www.bakerbooks.com, by calling 800 877 2665, or by checking with various online book companies. Revell Books is a division of Baker Publishing Group.

Both books are available in CD format as audio books.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

Register for courses anytime. (6-month period for completion from the date you register). **Collaborate with fellow educators-only one set of assignments turned into instructor.** (Check out "Group Collaboration Guidelines" at www.hol.edu). **Clock hours available for partial course completion.

The following are **3 CREDIT CLASSES** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits)

1. Increasing Motivation and Self-Esteem in Students (SS401p/SS501p)

Strategies to help students feel confident and help educators find more successful approaches with them.

2. Parents: Adversary or Ally--A Cooperative Approach (SS401q/SS501q)

Specific ideas on connecting with parents and helping better communication between school and home.

3. Social Skills: A Foundation For Learning (SS401v/SS501v)

Activities and ideas to encourage students to improve their peer and social relations.

4. Understanding & Connecting With Aggressive Students (ED404d/ED504d)

Each person will increase their understanding of ways to de-escalate aggression and its' causes.

3 CREDIT COST: \$280-400/500 level; \$195-clock hours (3 quarter = 2 semester)

The following are **5 CREDIT CLASSES**: (5 quarter credits = 3.3 semester credits)

1. Bullying Behaviors: Enough is Enough (ED437q/ED537q)

Identification and interventions to reduce bullying behaviors and victim mentality within schools and community.

2. Counseling Skills For Educators (ED409r/ED509r)

Helpful ideas on listening skills, asking questions, and communicating with students.

3. Gang Attitudes And Actions (SS406k/SS506k)

This class will help each person to identify gangs and intervention strategies for your community/school.

4. High Maintenance Behaviors & Interactions (SS409f/SS509f)

This course investigates the many aspects of high needs people, behaviors and effective interactions.

5. Mental Health Issues and Students (HE402n/HE502n)

Understand various disorders (oppositional defiant, obsessive compulsive, bi-polar) and interventions.

6. Nurturing Compassion Within Our Schools (ED434y/ED534y)

Ideas to help adults and children learn to be more sensitive, kind, and compassionate toward one another.

7. Organizational Teaching Skills (ED429w/ED529w)

Increase your own organizational and time management skills as well as helping students in these areas.

8. School Violence (SS406m/SS506m)

Each person will learn indicators and interventions for potential violent situations.

9. Stress Reduction in Staff and Students (HE401m/HE501m)

Strategies to reduce stress, become more effective in life, and teach these skills to students.

10. Student, Classroom and Whole-School Discipline (ED419g/ED519g)

Focus is on negative talk, gossip and rumors within schools. Behavioral strategies for each above area.

11. Youth Suicide (SS404u/SS504u)

Specific discussions on signs and interventions for suicide prevention.

5- CREDIT COST: \$415-400/500 LEVEL; \$315-clock hours (5 quarter = 3.3 semester)

NEXT PAGE FOR MORE CLASSES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

The following are **6 CREDIT CLASSES**: (6 quarter credits - 4 semester credits)

1. Autism: Questions and Answers (ED445y/ED545y)

Understanding the general areas of autism, diagnosis, and overall strategies for interventions for children with special needs.

2. Establishing Rules and Boundaries (ED445x/ED545x)

Ideas to assist educators in setting up a successful work environment for children (rules, procedures, teaching tools).

3. Inspirational Education (ED452f/ED552f)

This course will re-charge the batteries and create a new excitement about teaching in each person.

4. The Impact Of Trauma and Loss in Students (ED464z/ED564z)

Strategies to support children who have experienced traumatic situations in life.

5. Why Children Act Out (ED458t/ED558t)

Recognize the underlying function of behaviors and interventions approaches.

6- CREDIT COST: \$495--400/500 LEVEL; \$380-clock hours (6 quarter = 4 semester)

REGISTRATION: Call The Heritage Institute--1 (800) 445-1305; 1 (360) 341-3020
Or register on line at www.hol.edu

QUESTIONS: Please call Michael Sedler at (509) 443-1605. Leave message when necessary.

Email address: mike@communicationplus.net Website: www.michaelsedler.com

****For clock hours, only complete the first section of the course. Remember, clock hours may not transfer to other districts or states. You cannot go back and acquire credit once clock hours have been earned for a class.**

COURSE TITLE: NURTURING COMPASSION WITHIN OUR SCHOOLS

NO. OF CREDITS: 5 QUARTER CREDITS
[Semester Cr Equivalent: 3.3]

CLOCK: 5.0
PDU'S: 50
CEU'S: 5.0

INSTRUCTOR MICHAEL SEDLER, D. MIN., M.S.W.
 P. O. BOX 30310
 SPOKANE, WA. 99223
 (509) 443-1605
 E-MAIL: mike@communicationplus.net

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

The assignment checklist will help you plan your schedule of work for this course. Check off items completed so that you can better monitor your progress. While you have six-months to complete your work, many will find a shorter time period convenient. **Please email no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time for comments. Do NOT send further work until you receive comments from the instructor. Grades will be submitted once all assignments and the integration paper have been sent to instructor.** If involved in a group, all work should be sent through the Group Leader.

For Washington Clock Hours, Oregon Professional Units, or Continuing Education Credits., please complete the first 8 assignments.

____ **Assignment #1:**

Read all materials in the manual.

____ **Assignment #2:**

Read a book from the bibliography or one of participant's own choice. If taking this course in a group, each person should read a book. Only one person needs to write a summary. (2 pages in length).

____ **Assignment #3:**

Read the case study in manual, answer questions at end. **(send to instructor)**

____ **Assignment #4:**

Complete all required pages and worksheets within the manual. **(send those specified to instructor)**

____ **Assignment #5:**

Keep a journal for two weeks, three entries per week. Share examples that you observe of people demonstrating acts of kindness and compassion. Each entry should be at least 1 to 2 paragraphs in length. You may copy the journal. **(send to instructor)**

____ **Assignment #6:**

Observe another classroom (or a setting outside of the school). Record examples of kindness and compassion expressed in those settings.

____ **Assignment #7:**

Write a 2-3 page paper that emphasizes a plan to help children become more sensitive and caring toward other people. Include strategies from the manual, suggested readings, or from your own creative areas. **(send to instructor)**

____ **Assignment #8:**

Create an annotated bibliography of 5 or more books or articles related to the subject of this course. The annotation should include Title, Author, Publisher (or URL), length of the book or article, year of publication and a paragraph review of information contained. Add your opinion of the value of the contents of each book or article, and describe how you feel they would fit well in your teaching situation and benefit students. **(send to Instructor)**

This completes the assignments required for Washington Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or CEUs.

Continue to the next section for additional assignments required for University Quarter Credit

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

In this section you will have an opportunity to apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session, students from past years, or use one of your own children or other relative.

____ Assignment #9: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Focus on one student (or classroom) to share compassion strategies with and to practice implementation. It will be necessary to help the child become successful via role play, explanation, and practice.

____ Assignment #10: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

After a 2 week period, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies utilized by the student. Share any ideas for modification, changes, or additional strategies. Write a 2-page summary report. **(send to instructor)**

____ Assignment #11: You must choose either "A" or "B" (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Assignment #A: (SEND commentary to Instructor)

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
 - Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
 - Write a 2 page commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
 - Include any student feedback on your lesson.
- (The following is encouraged but not required):**
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library located at <http://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>

OR

Assignment #B: (SEND lesson and summary to Instructor)

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
 - Write a 2 page summary concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- (The following is encouraged but not required):**
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog <http://www.hol.edu/blog> prior to writing your article.
 - Please email a copy to [Rebecca Blankinship \(rebecca@hol.edu\)](mailto:rebecca@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
 - Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
 - Subject line to read: (Course Name, Blog)

Send to instructor: mike@communicationplus.net

500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

____ Assignment #12: (500 Level only)

In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete **one (1)** of the following assignment options:

Option A) Conduct additional reading and/or literature research and combine information from this to develop an in-service or training program for your school, district or another personal setting. Focus on enhancing compassion, caring, and kindness within the school system. Write the results in a 2-3 page paper. **(send to instructor)**

OR

Option B) Another assignment of your own design with the instructor's prior approval.

400 & 500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

Integration Paper (send to instructor)

__ Assignment #13: (Required for 400 and 500 Level Credit)

Write a 2-3 page Integration Paper answering these specific questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

Must be individually authored (name and course title) for those taking in a group.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Mike Sedler, M.S.W., brings over 30 year of educational experience as an administrator, social worker, behavior specialist and teacher to each of his classes. He provides consultation and seminars throughout the United States and Canada for schools, agencies and businesses. He has a graduate degree in Social Work, a Doctoral degree in Ministry, a Counseling license, as well as his teaching certification. All of Mike's classes are practical and "field tested" in schools and classrooms. Educators have found success in implementing Mike's clear and concise approaches. All of his course material may be immediately implemented into a school or a home.

NOTES: You may work collaboratively and submit joint assignments on all but the Integration Paper portion (and other designated assignments) which must be individually authored and submitted. Alternatives to written assignments such as a video, audio tape, photo collage, etc. are permissible with prior approval of instructor. **If you do not receive a confirmation email back after sending your paperwork via email, please re-send or contact the instructor to confirm it has been received. It seems that occasionally things get lost in cyber- space. Thank you.**

Full credit will be given to each student as long as all work is turned in. If something is missing, I will be in contact with you. Failure is not an option. ☺

Thank you for signing up for the course "Nurturing Compassion Within Our Schools." This is an area of particular interest to me as I strongly believe that children learn better in a safe environment. Treating each other with kindness, compassion, sensitivity, and caring will increase the learning atmosphere of our schools and community.

While this class is not guaranteed to turn each of your students into a Mother Teresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. or some other peaceful, kind, compassionate individual, it will help to integrate strategies into their lives that may begin to sow a seed of positive change. Remember, they are just children and have their whole lives to grow and mature.

The class is filled with ideas to help you as an educator become more in tune with your students. It will also focus on strategies to be used within your classroom or school to enhance sensitivity and caring amongst students. And finally, the course will give you specific ideas for helping students connect more appropriately with one another.

Again, thanks for taking this course and enjoy it.

Mike Sedler

WHY TEACH CHARACTER, KINDNESS, AND RESPECT? (Send to Instructor—next page)

“Sow a thought and you reap an act; Sow an act and you reap a habit; Sow a habit and you reap a character; Sow a character and you reap a destiny.”

(William Makepeace, British Writer)

1. The Intellectual Authority Perspective-

Most of the greatest thinkers throughout history (East and West) advocated “character building” in a person. Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Dewey, Confucius, Lao-Tzu, and Buddha all supported character formation in people.

2. The Historical Perspective-

The Founding Fathers of the United States (Jefferson, Madison, John/Abigail Adams, Ben Franklin) felt education was of high priority. Within this, they discussed moral character and moral responsibility.

3. The Law-Based Perspective-

Our educational codes direct the teaching of moral values that support democratic life. Research found that no state forbids the teaching of moral or character education (Lynn Nelson, Univ. of Northern Iowa).

4. The Public Opinion Perspective-

Gallup polls clearly show a dissatisfaction with schools in regards to discipline, In contrast, 97% want honesty taught, 93% want democracy taught, 91% want acceptance of races and cultures taught, 91% want patriotism taught, 91 % want moral courage taught, and 90% want the golden rule taught.

5. The Inevitability Perspective-

Children cannot enter school at age 5 and exit at age 18 and not have exposure and contact with moral values and character education. Children are impressionable.

SEND TO INSTRUCTOR:

Assuming we all agree that we need to teach character, kindness, and respect—why do you think this is important?

List 2 or 3 character areas that need to be a focus of concern with children. How might you teach these skills?

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF VIRTUE

"I touch the future, I teach." Christa McAuliffe

Answer each question that follows each bullet point.

SEND TO INSTRUCTOR. (2 to 3 sentences for each answer)

- **Aiming Higher-** *What are the expectations your school/classroom has for the child?* This is a great time to evaluate your own personal goals for your class or school.
- **Instituting Meaningful Service-** *What areas of "helps" are the students engaged in each month?* Set up monthly times for your class or school to engage in "works of help." This may be done in the school or in the community.
- **Encouraging Student Ownership-** *Are the children "part of the school" or do they simply "attend the school"?* Allow the children an opportunity to come up with service ideas. They may want to help a neighbor, go to a local park and clean up, or some other idea.
- **Building Relationships-** *Do schools teach children to build relationships or just expect it to happen naturally?* Are we practicing the social skills of helping others? It is easy to say that a parent should do this and I would concur. However, is it happening? Are you expecting children to exhibit behaviors they have never been taught?
- **Caring Enough To Correct Others-** *Does correction and guidance occur through encouragement or through discipline?* Schools should have an effective process to change behaviors. This may be through peer mediation programs, advisory sessions, school counseling groups, organized social skills program, etc. Without a plan to teach replacement skills, children fall into the same traps over and over.
- **Role Models Are Key-** *Are the educators living examples of what they desire from students?* Each staff person is a role model to children. Make a conscious effort to show them qualities they can emulate.
- **No Student Voice-** *Does it matter what the students think?* Is there a place for each student to share concerns? With whom?

WHAT ARE EMPATHY AND COMPASSION?

Empathy is a distinctly human ability to feel the emotion of someone else. If you grew jittery the last time you watched an action movie and saw someone clutching the edge of a rooftop, that's empathy. But, it is also much broader than that.

Empathy is a special form of identification. It is a term coined by Sigmund Freud to describe how we see ourselves in someone else and make their experiences and attitudes part of our own self-concept.

Often we don't understand someone's trouble because we haven't lived through them ourselves. Or, if we have experienced similar difficulties, they caused such pain that our empathy has become blocked. Such is the case of individuals who won't allow themselves to feel deep emotions because they fear reviving past emotions that may have been painful.

But what is compassion? Some time ago, I read a definition that I found striking. It came from a book by the French writer Marguerite Yourcenar. According to her, "compassion emphasizes the experience of suffering with those who suffer" and, because of this, "is far from according with a sentimental conception of life." She says that it "inflicts its knifelike pain only on those who, strong or not, brave or not, intelligent or not (such qualities are beside the point), have been granted the horrible gift of looking the world full in the face and seeing it as it is." Is this capacity to suffer for others, including not only human beings but all living things, compassion?

As Yourcenar presents it, compassion has nothing to do with a "sentimental conception of life." In order to be compassionate one needs courage and inner strength. To attempt to separate differences between compassion and empathy may take more time many more attempts and definitions. For now, we may use the words interchangeably.

Empathy and compassion are essential traits for dealing with others and much research has been conducted to understand these areas. At Eastern Illinois University, Dr. Mark Davis constructed tests that measure empathy and compassion. His findings, which appeared in the *Journal of Personality*, have important implications for understanding social development. On the following pages, there is a quiz adapted from some of his work. Enjoy!

HOW EMPATHETIC ARE YOU?

To learn how you compare with others in your ability to empathize, choose the answer that best corresponds to how you would feel in each situation below.

1. In emergencies, I become emotional. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
2. Even when I'm pretty sure I'm right, I'm patient enough to listen to other people's arguments. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
3. I feel deeply for the characters in tearjerker movies. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
4. When I am with a depressed person, I become uncomfortable and it is difficult for me to talk. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
5. I feel uneasy when someone I know casually tells me about a personal problem. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
6. When a disagreement with someone becomes intense, I can't deal with it at the time. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
7. Others have said that I am soft-hearted. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
8. I daydream about things (good and bad) that might happen to me. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
9. The true answer to the great majority of issues is not clearly black and white—usually the truth is somewhere in between. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly
10. I feel sad when I see a lonely stranger in a group. A. not at all B. somewhat C. a good deal D. very much E. exactly

On the following page you will find the scoring procedures as well as four basic ways to show empathy. Remember, this quiz is meant to give you only an idea of where you might be in life.

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR EMPATHY/COMPASSION QUIZ

According to research, in general, women are consistently found to be more empathetic than men. So, on average, women will receive scores that are at least 2 points higher than those of their male friends.

To tally your score, give yourself 0 points for each “a” response, 1 point for each “b” response, 2 points for each “c” response, 3 points for each “d” response, and 4 points for each “e” response. Keeping in mind that our quiz is not a perfect gauge of empathy, read on to find out what your score suggests.

A score of 25 – 40 points: Your empathy level is high. You are able to understand how others feel and offer them your support in a considerate manner.

A score of 12 – 24 points: You have an average level of empathy. You can be made to understand how someone else is feeling, but you don’t always sense it right away.

A score of 0 – 11 points: You exhibit low levels of empathy. You find it hard to identify with others, and can’t relate to how they are feeling unless you are in a similar situation.

EXPLANATION-- There are four basic ways in which we show empathy:

1. Through fantasies and reactions to fictional characters (as in items 3 and 8 of the quiz).
2. Through concern for others (items 5 and 10). Empathizers readily resonate the feelings of those having bad times.
3. Through a shift in perspective (items 2 and 9). Even though they may disagree, empathizers are flexible enough to entertain another person’s point of view.
4. Through distress (item 1). Empathizers are generally sensitive, and tend to experience strong emotions in upsetting situations.

Empathy and compassion are a form of caring and interest in others. It starts early in life through imitation. By the age of two months, an infant begins to mimic others’ smiles and this empathic identification expands in ever-widening circles to include other people and social contexts. The depth of our empathy depends upon how much empathy we received and learned from others as we grew up. However, the capacity for empathy doesn’t peak in childhood. The ability to feel for others can increase with age and experience.

Resonating with the feelings of others is necessary for the survival of all cultures. Freud’s disciple, psychoanalyst Alfred Adler, called it “fellow feeling.” Without it, all social cooperation would be impossible. There is no area of human interaction that escapes its impact.

CREATING CONNECTIONS (AND TRUST) WITH STUDENTS

A basic 1, 2, 3 approach to nurturing relationships

- **Address students by their name-** be respectful and recognize each student. Don't just call on them, use their names...give them an identity.
- **Pay attention to your student's moods-** remember, they are children and adolescents. They will have mood swings (boy, will they).
- **Focus on strengths and positive qualities-** continually point out their strengths and areas of success. Children can't hear enough positive comments.
- **When a challenging student does well, call home or send a positive note home-** stay connected with the family. Catch the child being good (although with some it is harder than others).
- **When approached by a student, LISTEN-** this is so important. Put down the pen, look into their eyes, and listen. Let them know they are the most important person at this moment. (Not a bad strategy to use with friends and significant others. Is this an all purpose class or what?) 😊
- **Encourage their ideas-** find ways to give them credit for suggestions and ideas. Set up situations for students to plan activities, events, and learning modules.
- **Help them find success during difficulties-** when a child is struggling, they need help. They are drowning and need you to save them. By themselves, they will not be able to think of creative ideas and strategies for success. Be a willing participant in their life.
- **Be open to new ways of teaching (listen to the students)-** ask for suggestions and ideas from your students. They know what methods work best for them...be open to new strategies and ideas from the students.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS

“A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of clothes I wore—but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.”

(A YMCA poster)

The First Commandment: Thou Shalt Put Parenting First

The Second Commandment: Thou Shalt Be A Good Example

The Third Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Carry This Burden Alone

The Fourth Commandment: Thou Shalt Be Deeply Involved In Thy Child's School Life

The Fifth Commandment: Thou Shalt Monitor What Enters Thy Child's Heart And Mind

The Sixth Commandment: Thou Shalt Stick To The Basics

The Seventh Commandment: Thou Shalt Give Consequences and Boundaries With A Loving Heart

The Eighth Commandment: Thou Shalt Use Positive And Appropriate Language

The Ninth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Reduce Character Education To Words Alone

The Tenth Commandment: Thou Shalt Make Good Character A High Priority In Your Home

The Stages of Moral Reasoning: Preschool to Adulthood

By Thomas Lickona

Stages of moral reasoning begin in the preschool years and may still be developing during adulthood. The chart (below) gives a thumbnail sketch of these stages; later I'll devote a chapter to each of them. Think of these stages as theories of right and wrong that we carry around in our heads as children, teenagers, or adults. Each stage or theory has a different idea of what's right and a different idea of the reason why a person should be good. Each new stage of moral reasoning brings a person a step closer to a fully developed morality of respect.

For each stage, the chart also indicates 'what I think are reasonable developmental goals: that is, the approximate age period when I think kids of normal intelligence, growing up in a supportive and stimulating moral environment, have a good chance of attaining a particular stage. Take a minute to look at this chart. You are a big part of your child's moral environment, but you're not the only influence on your child's progress through these stages of moral reasoning. Your child's general intelligence and amount and variety of social interaction (friendships, participation in groups) are also important. As kids get older, social and the intellectual experiences beyond the family are especially important in developing the society-wide "big picture" that's part of Stages 4 and 5.

What do these stages of moral reasoning tell us? They tell us, first of all, that kids are not short adults. They think differently from us. They don't see the world the way we do.

The Stages of Moral Reasoning*

(Ages indicate reasonable developmental expectations for a child of normal intelligence growing up in a supportive moral environment)

STAGE 0: EGOCENTRIC REASONING (preschool years – around age 4)	What's Right:	I should get my own way
	Reason to be good:	To get rewards and avoid punishments.
STAGE 1: UNOUESTIONED OBEDIENCE (around kindergarten age)	What's Right:	I should do what I'm told
	Reason to be good:	To stay out of trouble.
STAGE 2: WHAT'S-IN-IT-FOR ME FAIRNESS (early elementary grades)	What's Right:	I should look out for myself but be fair to those who are fair to me.
	Reason to be good:	Self-interest: What's in it for me?
STAGE 3: INTERPERSONAL CONFORMITY (middle-to-upper elementary grades and early-to-mid teens)	What's Right:	I should be a nice person and live up to the expectations of people I know and care about.
	Reason to be good:	So others will think well of me (social approval) and I can think well of myself (self-esteem)

STAGE 4: RESPONSIBILITY TO "THE SYSTEM" (high-school years or late teens)	What's Right:	I should fulfill my responsibilities to the social or value system I feel part of.
	Reason to be good:	To keep the system from falling apart and to maintain self-respect as somebody who meets my obligations.
STAGE 5: PRINCIPLED CONSCIENCE (young adulthood)	What's Right:	I should show the greatest possible respect for the rights and dignity of every individual person and should support a system that protects human rights.
	Reason to be good:	The obligation of conscience to act in accordance with the principle of respect for all human beings.

**Stages 1 through 5 are adapted from Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning as described in Kohlberg (1975, 1978, 1981); Stage 0 is adapted from William Damon (1977) and Robert Selman (1980).*

Parents are often surprised to learn that kids' moral reasoning is so different from their own and goes through such swings as they move through the stages. At Stage 0 (Egocentric Reasoning), which usually rules the roost at age 4 (but may start to show up even sooner), kids' moral logic is almost laughably self-centered. "Not fair! Not fair!" they say, meaning, "I'm not getting what I want!" Their moral indignation comes from a real belief that whatever they want is fair, just because they want it!

At Stage 1 (Unquestioning Obedience), often dominant at around age 5, kids do an about-face and reason, "Grown-ups have a right to be boss, and I should do what they say!" At Stage 2 (What's-in-It-for-Me Fairness), which usually breaks through between 5 1/2 and 7, kids do another flip-flop and think, "We kids have got our rights! Parents shouldn't order us around!" Stage 2 thinkers also develop a fierce but narrow sense of fairness and look at being good as kind of a tit-for-tat deal ("I'll help with the dishes, but what'll you do for me?").

I want to stress that even in the early stages of moral reasoning development, you can't be sure of a child's moral stage just from knowing his or her chronological age. One 5-year-old may be mainly Stage 0, another Stage 1. One 7-year-old may be predominantly Stage 1, another Stage 2. And the higher the moral stage, the more variation there is in when kids reach it. Many teenagers, for example, are still stuck in Stage 2 and are responsible for a lot of the me-centered behavior that we looked at earlier in the chapter. Other kids, especially if their social environment has demanded more than a what's-in-it-for-me morality, may begin to develop Stage 3 (Interpersonal Conformity) as early as the middle-to-upper elementary grades and continue to develop it through their early teens.

At Stage 3, kids are very much concerned about what people think of them. They figure, "If I want people to like me, I'd better be a nice person." By living up to other people's expectations, Stage 3 kids can also feel good about themselves. This kind of thinking can be the source of a lot of cooperative and caring behavior.

But Stage 3 has an obvious weakness: it confuses what's right with what other people want you to do. That's okay as long as the other people are presenting positive moral values (be kind, honest, and respectful of others). The challenge for parents of Stage 3 teenagers is to keep them tuned into positive values and strong enough to resist the peer-group seduction to get into things like sex, drugs, and drinking because "everybody's doing it."

Many teenagers, some during high school, some later, come to realize the shortcomings of Stage 3 reasoning and go on to develop the more independent, society-wide perspective of Stage 4 (Responsibility to the System). They keep the best of Stage 3 -- they still care about people they know personally -- but they look farther and see more. Stage 4 reasons: "There's more to being a good person than pleasing my family and friends. There's a bigger society out there, and I'm part of it. I've got certain responsibilities and obligations to think of."

The particular social system that a Stage 4 thinker feels obligated to may not be the one that most people support. A Stage 4 socialist living in a capitalistic society, for example, would be opposed to the values of the prevailing system. But regardless of their particular beliefs or values, Stage 4 thinkers share a sense of commitment and duty to some kind of a larger system beyond themselves. Most of the time, that system includes familiar social institutions: church, school, family, and country.

When Stage 4 considers irresponsible behavior, it thinks, "What if everybody did it? What if everybody shoplifted? What if everybody did as they pleased? The whole system would collapse." The great majority of Stage 4 thinkers believes that people should obey the law, pay their taxes, vote in elections, take care of their children, help their community, and serve their country. They believe in being a good and conscientious citizen. They're the backbone of any society. Teenagers and young adults who don't develop Stage 4 moral reasoning -- and, sadly, a great many do not -- lack the understanding of civic responsibilities required for good citizenship.

The major drawback of Stage 4 is that it sometimes gets carried away with the system it believes in and rides roughshod over the rights of individual people. A Stage 4 reasoner might say, for example, that people shouldn't be allowed to assemble to protest government policy if it's going to "stir up trouble" or cause problems for the government. Some societies and some individuals use Stage 4 reasoning to suppress individual freedom in the name of "law and order" or for the sake of a "cause." When Stage 4 sees a conflict between the system and individual rights, it comes down on the side of the system.

Stage 5, the stage of principled conscience, reorders the moral priorities. It says, "Look, any social system exists to benefit its individual members, not the other way around. No system should ever violate the rights of the people it was founded to protect." The founding fathers were thinking Stage 5 when they told us that if the government doesn't protect our inalienable individual rights, we should throw it out and get a new one! And yet Stage 5 has the highest respect for law, because it knows that law is the chief instrument for securing human rights. But it also knows that there's something even more basic than law which is the reason for law in the first place. And that's morality. Respect for persons.

Stage 5 also has a strong social conscience, based on the moral principle of respect for individual persons. That principle enables Stage 5 thinkers to mentally "stand outside" their social system and ask, "Are things as good as they ought to be? Is justice being served? Are individual human rights being fully protected? Is there the greatest good for the greatest number? And as I go about my personal life, do I show respect for the rights and dignity of all the individuals I deal with?"

At present, the research shows, only a minority of adults attain Stage 5. How many would attain it if homes and schools made a systematic effort to foster moral reasoning, starting in the earliest years, nobody knows.

CRISIS TEACHING FOR PARENTS

Calming Down

1. Stop The Problem Behavior

Be firm. This is not a time to give in. "I need you to stop yelling so we can solve this problem." "Once you stop crying, we can talk about this issue." If they refuse to calm down, give them a moment and repeat the instruction (giving them emotional space).

2. Describe The Problem Behavior

Saying a little may be better than saying a lot. Avoid "Stop acting like a baby," or "When you act like this..." Instead, share what the behavior looked like... "You were being loud and hitting the wall with your fist. It looked like you were really upset. How do you feel now?" If there is a place to empathize or emotionally connect, do so at this point.

3. Give Clear Instructions

Give a short, quick direction. "I would like you to sit on the sofa for a few minutes before we talk," or "Let's begin to clean up the dishes, then we can solve the problem." If he/she refuses to listen, go to the next step. Avoid arguing or repeating yourself over and over and over and...

4. Allow Time To Calm Down

Be the judge as to when the child (and you) are ready. Don't rush it.

Follow-Up Teaching

5. Describe What Your Child Can Do Differently Next Time

Help the child find alternatives. Telling a child to stop without giving them other ideas is a set up for failure.

6. Give A Reason For Using The New Behavior

This is a place to help the child see the rational for new behavior. "If you tell me you are upset without yelling, we can solve the problem faster."

7. Practice What Your Child Can Do Next Time

Role-play the situation. Pretend it is occurring and show your child how they can respond. Go through the process a couple of times. Investigate patterns of behavior (causes, triggers, issues).

8. Give A Consequence

Follow through with a consequence if warranted. "Thank you for working on this area. But, due to your behavior you will miss an hour of television tonight. However, I am excited that this may not happen again."

STRATEGIES FOR STAYING CALM

(Child or Parent) ☺

DEEP BREATHING

- Silently count to five as you take a deep breath through your nose
- Hold your breath for five seconds
- Count to five again as you let the breath out slowly through your mouth
- Take two normal breaths
- Repeat the first four steps two or three times (or until you feel calm)
- When you are calm, tell an adult

WRITING OR DRAWING IN A JOURNAL

- Go someplace where you won't be disturbed
- Write down (or draw a picture that shows) how you are feeling and what you are thinking
- When you are calm, tell an adult

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

- Make a positive comment about how you can handle situations appropriately. Use a phrase like, "I can get myself under control," "I've done this before, I can do it again," "I can stay calm and not get angry," "If I stop now, things will get better."
- Repeat the statements you choose over and over until you feel like you are calming down.
- When you are calm, tell an adult.

TAKE TIME TO COOL DOWN

- Go some place where you won't be disturbed or distracted
- Take five minutes to calm down
- Think pleasant and positive thoughts about life (positive self-talk)
- If you need more time, calmly ask for it
- When you are calm, tell an adult

MUSCLE RELAXATION

- Clench and squeeze your fists for five seconds and slowly release
- Slowly roll your neck in circles for five seconds
- Scrunch your shoulders and slowly roll them in circles
- Slowly rotate your ankles, then your wrists
- Raise your eyebrows as high as you can and slowly lower them
- When you are calm, tell an adult

CRISIS TEACHING

PHASE I—STAYING CALM

1. Give a simple instruction with a statement of understanding. “I know you’re frustrated, but speaking harshly won’t help your cause.”
2. Describe what was done wrong and what to do right. “You are raising your voice, what you should do is speak in a softer tone.”
3. Praise improvements in behavior. “Thanks for speaking in a tone of respect.” If behaviors continue, mention a consequence. “If this continues, there will be a consequence.”
4. Give a reality statement. “The sooner we talk about this, the sooner you can move on to areas you enjoy.”
5. If behaviors continue, mention the consequence possibility and provide a final opportunity for the youth to work through the original issue (start over with process). “A consequence will occur if this continues. I know you are upset, but we can work through this together.”

PHASE II—DE-ESCALATING BEHAVIOR

1. Choose a self-control strategy. “You are upset. Would it be helpful to take a time-out?”
2. Praise improvements in behavior. “Great job of staying in your seat.”
3. Give a reality statement. “Now we can discuss what is frustrating to you.”
4. Test for self-control with simple instructions. “You are doing a good job of relaxing. I would like you to pick up the book you knocked on the floor, then we will talk.”
5. Review behaviors that demonstrate self-control. “Remember to keep using a calm voice and give me a clear, verbal answer.”

PHASE III—COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

1. Prompt the student on how to receive consequences. “Super job of calming down. Now, do you remember how to receive a consequence without getting angry?”
2. Review the consequences earned. “You will have to stay in at lunch for the next three days. However, you can earn back some time by practicing self-control now.”
3. Child earns a positive consequence for using behavior that demonstrates self-control. “Excellent job of reviewing what happened. You have earned back one lunch time.”
4. Return to original problem and provide social skills training.

TEACHING EMPATHY: TIPS FOR FOSTERING EMPATHY IN CHILDREN

#1 ADDRESS your child's own needs, and teach him/her how to "bounce back" from distress. Studies show that children are more likely to develop a strong sense of empathy when their own emotional needs are being met at home. Children are also more likely to show empathic concern for others if they have parents who help them cope with negative emotions in sympathetic, problem-solving oriented ways.

#2 SEIZE everyday opportunities to model and encourage sympathetic feelings for others. By modeling compassion and pointing out life situations that call for sensitivity, adults will generate a response in children that will likely be positive. If you see someone being injured, victimized, or bullied (in life, on tv, in a movie, in books), talk with the child about how that person might feel.

#3 HELP children discover what they have in common with other people. Research suggests that children are more likely to feel empathy for individuals who are familiar and/or similar to them. Kids may also find it easier to empathize with people who they have shared unpleasant experiences with in life. The more we can humanize the victims of distress and tragedy, the better the child will be able to respond with compassion to others.

#4 TEACH children about the hot-cold empathy gap. Have you ever noticed how hard it is to appreciate the power of a food craving when you aren't hungry? Scientists call this the "hot-cold empathy gap," and it appears universal. When people are feeling cool and collected, they underestimate how compelling emotionally and physiologically "hot" states—like hunger—can be. Conversely, when in a "hot" state, we often underestimate how much our perceptions are influenced by the situation. The hot-cold empathy gap leads to mistakes in judgment and failures of empathy. When moments of discomfort or frustration occur for a child, we can teach them how these emotions will "color" their responses.

#5 HELP children develop internal self-control based on morality, not rewards and punishments. While rewards assist children in their beginning patterns, we must learn internal rewards are the "feel good" aspect of assisting others. This occurs through utilizing the previous strategies discussed on this page.

#6 TEACH children about mechanisms of moral disengagement. Research has shown that average, well adjusted people can be persuaded to harm others if given the right rationale. (Stanley Milgram's famous shock experiment found people willing to administer electric shock to others—the experiment "shocks" were fake, so relax). It is helpful for older children to learn about this experiment and the importance of personal decision making and choices regardless of the circumstance. The Nuremberg War Trials can also be used for "individual decision making" regardless of orders or the situation.

SEVEN DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

This is a great form to share with parents.

1. POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS—
Adults, peers, parents. What are your interactions like with your child? Are we looking for what is right or what is wrong?
2. STRUCTURE AND CLEAR LIMITS—
Rules and consequences. Children push against the rules, but need boundaries.
3. COMPETENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT—
Where are your pre-teens and teens finding success? They need a place of accomplishment and recognition.
4. CREATIVE EXPRESSION—
High interest activities. Help your children learn to express themselves in appropriate ways. Yes, it will look different than when you were their age (and yes, you were their age, you just may not remember).
5. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY—
Movement in life. Avoid the sedentary lifestyle. With video games, movies, and music, it is easy for your child to sit and minimize physical activity.
6. MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN LIFE—
Peer-mediation, counseling, input into others lives. Social contact is critical and not just with their friends.
7. SELF-DEFINITION—
Define “who I am”—values, ideas, morals. Communicate with your child in these areas.

THE SIX E'S OF KINDNESS DISSEMINATION

“A mediocre teacher tells, a good teacher explains, a superior teacher demonstrates; but the great teacher inspires.” (unknown)

1. **EXAMPLE-** As educators, we are always on display. It is “the person” not “the teacher” that makes a lasting impression on the child.
2. **EXPLANATION-** In order to increase and enhance the understanding of the students, we must explain what we desire, why we desire it, and the benefit of it.
3. **ETHICAL ENVIRONMENT-** Focus on specific areas of behavior and attitude. Avoid general evaluations and choose one or two areas of focus.
4. **EXPERIENCE-** Doing is better than talking. What is the school “doing” to involve and teach areas of kindness?
5. **EXHORTATION-** Encourage, speak words of possibility, lift their spirits, and give them hope.
6. **EXPECTATIONS OF EXCELLENCE-** People are inspired to change by what motivates and interests them. Find the key, find the hook for your students.

Choose one of the “Six E’s of Kindness” and write a paragraph regarding how you would (or do) integrate it into the lives of students.

SEND TO INSTRUCTOR.

BUILDING INTEGRITY IN CHILDREN

“What is right is right even if no one is doing it. What is wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it” (unknown)

The following is a “plan” for teaching students about integrity. Please feel free to modify areas so as to be more appropriate for your setting.

1. Ask the students to name people they admire and wish they were like.
2. Ask the students to list the qualities and characteristics they admire in these people.
3. Ask the students if they would still trust and admire these people if they lied, broke promises, or cheated. (Discussion)
4. Define integrity for the students: “you set a standard for yourself and live according to a set of positive principles and values, even when there is no one there to remind you of what is right.” Give examples—someone alone in a music store (okay to steal a CD?), cashier gives you back too much change, teacher makes a mistake and doesn’t count a problem wrong.
5. Suggest that people can lack integrity at times of their lives. Ask for examples of when or how this could happen. (break promises, steal from someone, lie to a friend).
6. Suggest that students can lack integrity in class. Ask for examples. (not following rules, spreading rumors or gossip, refuse to listen to someone).
7. Have students form groups of three. Create a brief story (about a paragraph or two) where a person must make a difficult decision that reflects their integrity. Don’t resolve the problem...leave the person in a situation to make the decision. Have each group read the story and discuss what a person with integrity would do. Also discuss what the difficult issues of the situation might be for the person.

Questions:

- a. Is it possible to live up to the standard of integrity all the time?
- b. What happens when we don’t live up to this standard?
- c. If you lack integrity with another person (or classmate), what can you do to make it right?

CASE STUDY

Answer the questions at the end and **SEND TO INSTRUCTOR**

It was Tonya's first day at her new school. She was now in the 6th grade. In her last school, she was the oldest grade in the school, but in her new school she is the youngest. As she stepped onto the school bus, it looked like all the seats were taken. One boy moved over a seat so Tonya couldn't sit down. Finally, she found a seat in the middle of some loud and rowdy boys.

Her new school looked nice on the outside, but she heard the inside was old and not very pretty. Her other school was brand new with fresh paint and carpet. Why did they have to move to a new school?

She walked into the school and was immediately overwhelmed. It was loud, crowded, not an adult in sight, and she had no idea where to go. She spotted the office sign and walked in. An older lady looked at her and sharply said, "This is the public office. The student office is on the other side." Embarrassed, Tonya softly muttered "I'm sorry." Just as she entered the student office, the bell sounded. All the students were in class, except Tonya. Great, now she was late.

She finally got her class schedule and walked in 15 minutes late to math. The kids stared at her (and they didn't seem friendly). The teacher mentioned that she was late and sent her to a place in the back. On her way to her desk, she tripped over the shoelaces of her new shoes. Everyone laughed. "I told Mom I didn't like these shoes" she thought. This was going to be a long day.

1. Name two things that might have helped Tonya have a better first day.

- a. _____

- b. _____

2. When a new student comes into the class, what ideas may be employed to help them feel more comfortable?

3. And finally, what type of protocol would you put in place for new students in a school?

NURTURING COMPASSION STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN

On the following pages, a more detailed description of each idea will be given to you

(Sample ideas to be used for one of your projects).

- Use of “kindness box” – students and staff can put notes reporting positive acts in boxes located throughout the school.
- Use of “kindness notes and coupons” – coupons that students “caught being kind” receive. They can purchase small items from a school store or local businesses.
- Cross-age tutor- older and younger students pair up in order to connect with their schoolwork on a regular basis.
- Study Buddy approach- students connect with one another to provide support.
- Guest Speakers- community members who promote positive change in the community can share their views and characteristics with others.
- Student Speakers- use students from local schools to share with one another about compassion and acts of kindness.
- Kindness Log- students keep track of their own actions each week. They can share them (see above) or turn them in to the teacher.
- Teaching Forgiveness- help children understand the concept of forgiveness and extending it to others.
- No Putdowns- develop strong rules against put-downs.
- Honoring Heroes- teach lessons on heroes and the importance of character.
- Posters and signs- students write out positive quotes and signs to place around the school.

KINDESS BOX

Purpose: to identify acts of kindness throughout the school.

This may be done in a classroom, grade level wide or school wide. Each student can take a shoe box and make his/her own container. For school wide options, a mail box may be used.

Students and staff are asked to write out notes to be placed in boxes. While this may be abused occasionally at first, this will minimize as people begin to use them more. If necessary, you may monitor who places notes in boxes by having specific "drop times" for the notes.

KINDESS NOTES/COUPONS

Purpose: to reward students who perform kind acts and the students who recognize them.

An example of note template is below:

Name (If you wish) _____

Today's date _____

Where did the act occur? _____

When did the act occur? Date _____ Time _____

Describe what happened (who performed the act? How did it impact people?) _____

In order to increase the successful and appropriate use of these notes, rewards or recognition may be given to the person who sends one as well as the person who gets one. Even if two students "scheme" to give each other a note, they are thinking of kindness and it may help them develop a habit. Ask various community businesses to "gift" prizes and coupons for these rewards.

CROSS AGE TUTOR PROGRAM

Purpose: to help connect students with one another in a positive atmosphere.

This may be used throughout your school. One example is having intermediate grade level students working with primary grade level students. Be sure to have at least a two grade level difference. Another strategy is having juniors and seniors working with freshmen and sophomores in the high school. If your district has buildings in close proximity, a middle school or high school student could work with elementary students.

This is especially helpful with students who may feel left out, isolated, or have difficulties with peer relationships. It allows for a building of self-esteem and a sense of purpose. In addition, this type of program has been found extremely successful with children who exhibit behavioral difficulties.

STUDY BUDDY PROGRAM

Purpose: to promote a support network among the students in a class or grade level.

Place students in groups of 2, 3 or 4. Explain that they are a support group for one another. If someone forgets their homework, is absent from school, doesn't understand an assignment, etc., they may call their study buddy group.

During class, you may use these groups for studying or classroom projects. It is often easier to assign them groups rather than having them choose groups (for obvious reasons). You may decide to change groups every month or every quarter.

It is important to teach the students the expectations of the group and give them specific examples of when they might utilize one another.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Purpose: to identify guest speakers in the community to address classes and schools.

I like to use speakers that may fit into a specific curriculum area, may have an unusual story of their life, or have overcome major obstacles to achieve success in life. I find stories of inspiration extremely helpful in developing a foundation of compassion.

There are several ways to identify speakers within the community:

1. Make a list of agencies that are a likely source of speakers (police and fire department, community agencies, charitable organizations, to name a few).
2. Ask students and teachers to list people they personally know that have a story to tell about their life, overcoming obstacles in life, becoming successful, helping others, etc.
3. Look for stories in your local newspaper or on the television and radio that discuss people of interest.
4. Look within your own staff for stories. Many of your colleagues have overcome incredible obstacles to accomplish in life.

STUDENT SPEAKERS

Purpose: to create a confidence within students to share with other classrooms or schools.

This may depend upon your grade level and abilities of certain students, but you may be able to generate a group of students to share about their life. Once again, look for stories of compassion, of service, and students who recognize the importance of helping one another.

KINDNESS LOG

Purpose: to assist students in monitoring their own behaviors and to focus on kind deeds.

Each student is asked to keep track of their "random acts of kindness." You may ask them to have at least one entry per day. At the end of the week, they can turn it into you, share it with others, or keep it in a personal journal.

Having students purposefully involve themselves in a compassionate act or one of kindness is a major step toward developing an environment of support.

TEACHING FORGIVENESS

Purpose: to help students understand the concept of asking forgiveness and releasing forgiveness to others.

We often ask a student to say he/she is sorry, but this is a one-sided approach. It does not require anything from the offended party nor does it allow for an interchange of emotions and responses.

Instead, have the student say, "will you forgive me?" This requires a response from the offended individual. They must either say yes or no. If the person says "yes", there is a better chance the two students will have resolved the issues. If the student says "no," then you will realize there is still a problem. If necessary, you can communicate with the offended party to help them work through their hurt and anger.

The problem that often occurs is that a student will say "I'm sorry," but the other person is still upset. Behavior problems occur later and one person might say, "I said I was sorry" or the other person might say, "I am still upset." Using the forgiveness approach allows for more communication and a commitment from each person. In addition, it doesn't force a student to say "I'm sorry" when they are not. I find this approach to be much more successful with students and to help them become more sensitive to one another's needs.

NO PUTDOWNS

Purpose: to teach each student self-management in the area of putdowns.

Too often, we hear negative comments from one student to another. "You're stupid," "You're a geek," "Shut up," and many other types of phrases. If each teacher or school were to set up a "no putdown" policy, it would go a long way in developing an environment of kindness and compassion. In my classroom, the first rule was always "No Putdowns." Any negative comment was met with a reminder of rule #1. Good days were appreciated and rewarded with reinforcements (extra recess, snack, no homework night, etc.). Continued use of putdowns resulted in consequences (loss of privilege, failure to receive a reward, etc.). This was a very important area to me as an educator.

Self-esteem is a critical pillar that each student attempts to build his/her life. Putdowns chip away at the fabric of self-esteem. This is a simple way to help your classroom and school become a safe environment for each student.

IDEAS:

1. Have a no-putdown day at school. Reinforce the class or school at the end of the day.
2. Schedule a week of "positive comments." Students are to say and do kind works in the school. This could be tied into the kindness log.
3. Encourage students to catch one another when a positive statement is made. They can hand out kindness coupons to one another.
4. Ask students to keep track of putdowns they hear during the day (or during one hour). Discuss this in class. The more awareness each student has in this area, the greater the chance each will be more careful with their comments.
5. Ask the students to extend the "no putdown" activity outside the school day. Let them choose a place to practice these new skills.

HONORING HEROES (RECOGNIZING CHARACTER)

Purpose: to help each student to understand the difference between character and talents/gifts.

One area that helps a person to understand the concept of compassion is the topic of character. Too often people (and children, especially) mistake talent and gifting for character. They see movie stars, athletes, rock stars, and wealthy people as heroes even though they may lack in basic character areas of life. Teaching these concepts may help each student to evaluate his/her own area of character.

1. Ask students the question, "who are your heroes?" Allow them to call out names of people and make a list on the board.
2. Ask the question, "what makes up a hero? what qualities are part of a hero?"
3. Ask students to list the qualities they would like in a friend.

From these lists, have a discussion about heroes. Look at the qualities of a hero and of friends. How many of the people on the "hero" list meet the qualifications of friends? Do people on the list of hero have the qualities of heroes?"

4. Ask each student to choose a person they know that has the qualities of a hero and write about them. Many children will choose family members or personal friends. They can share these stories with the person.

This would be a good time to obtain a guest speaker to share with the class. Choose someone who has overcome obstacles and would be an inspiration to the class.

5. This would be an opportunity to have students demonstrate characteristics of heroes and qualities of friendship.

A similar type of lesson is found in this manual under the heading of "Building Integrity In Students."

CREATING POSTERS AND SIGNS

Purpose: to create and post signs around the school to remind students and staff of kindness and compassion.

This may be an activity assigned to a particular class, grade level, or school-wide. Use poster board or butcher paper to write out signs. They will be placed throughout the school in prominent areas: cafeteria, hallway, office, classrooms, gym, library, etc.

Students and teachers may participate in this activity. Encourage students to find a quote from a person that discusses kindness, compassion, sensitivity, or love. They may want to quote a teacher, parent, coach, or community leader.

Selected quotes or statements may be read over the loudspeaker once a week as a way to reinforce the concepts. Students may be challenged to follow a particular creed or motto that is shared.

These quotes may be used for students to write reports or obtain additional information on an historical figure or community leader.

Students can pick a motto to follow for the week or the month. The more the students are thinking about these ideas, the greater the chance they will implement them into their lives.

THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

"When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die."

(Eleanor Roosevelt)

This is a process of teaching a positive virtue and implementation. After each statement, share one way you have or will accomplish this area. (SEND TO INSTRUCTOR).

1. Engage the child in the learning process: mentally, emotionally and morally.

2. Personalize a virtue: make it pertinent to the child's life (being honest, helping others, kindness, etc).

3. Understand the characteristic: help the student to understand the aspects and nuances of the virtue.

4. Get a commitment from the student: there must be a personal commitment to make an effort in utilizing the virtue.

5. Plan: develop a strategy for successful implementation.

6. Act: putting the plan into action and recognizing bad habits.

7. Monitor: this is the evaluation aspect of the plan.

GUIDELINES TO ENGAGING STUDENTS

1. GET THEIR ATTENTION (tougher than it sounds)-

Before you can teach anything to a person, it is important to get them to pay attention. When working on the topic of compassion, avoid lecturing and using a guilt approach. Find a reason for the student to be successful.

2. CHECK YOUR MOTIVATION-

We often approach situations where a student has been unkind or insensitive with harshness and frustration. If we want to help the child, he/she must sense that we are supportive of them and wanting to guide them. If they sense trouble, it is unlikely that they will respond.

3. KNOW THAT TALK IS GOOD-

Communication is critical. However, don't make it one sided. Ask the child questions, develop a joint plan for success, and write out the plan. Check back with the child every few days or at the end of the week. It may take a while for the behavior to change.

4. TALKING WHILE DOING IS BETTER THAN JUST TALKING-

Showing a child what you mean will increase the likelihood that it will happen. Take the child to the area you want the behavior to occur. Model it, practice it, and reward it.

5. UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYONE VIEWS LIFE UNIQUELY-

The child may not see the issues as you see them. Find out how each student will implement the "caring plan." What phrases will they use to show they are kind, what actions will they do to show compassion, and what strategies will they use to minimize negative responses? Avoid telling them what to do...work together.

6. BE TIME SMART-

Don't rush the situation. Allow the child to work through the problems without feeling pressured to perform immediately. Look for small changes with the child...a kind comment, a helpful action. Realize that it takes a while to develop a new habit.

INTEGRATING SENSITIVITY INTO LIFE

In order to be successful in nurturing sensitivity in others, we must look at our own life first. *“You can see the speck in your friend’s eye, but you don’t see the log in your own eye.”* (The Bible, Matthew, chapter 7, verse 3.)

1. SET PRIORITIES IN LIFE

- What is it you really want to be remembered for in life? How do you want people to remember you at work? Are you showing what you want to be remembered for in life, work?

2. HAVE A HEART OF COMPASSION

- Focus on helping others, serving others. Choose one person a week to help out in some way.

3. RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN LIMITATIONS

- Introspection is important. Evaluate areas of growth and commit to making a change in those areas. Ask people to hold you accountable in these areas.

4. ACCEPT IMPERFECTIONS IN OTHERS

- Show compassion, empathy, and understanding to others. Don’t hold people to a higher standard than yourself.

5. LET OTHERS CARE ABOUT YOU

- Allow other people to help you. We can’t do everything ourselves. Let others into your life.

6. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- If you don’t, it won’t happen. How are you doing mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Do a check-up.

7. LEARN THE ART OF BEING TACTFUL

- Be wise, careful, and sensitive. Be honest, but be tactful. Share in such a way that people can hear you.

Examples and Strategies for Teaching Character Traits

1. Spielberg Succeeds With Empathy

Trait: Resilience, Kindness, Compassion

Steven Spielberg is one of the most successful filmmaker ever. Everyone knows some of his blockbusters, such as *Schindler's List*, *Jurassic Park*, *Indiana Jones*, *Men in Black* and *E. T.* What you may *not* know is how some of his early heartaches taught him to emotionally connect with his audience.

Once, when young 24-year-old Spielberg was directing a TV episode at Universal, the head of the camera department stopped an associate and said, *"You've got to go down to the soundstage. It's something you'll never see again. Your friend Spielberg is directing."*

The associate responded, *"I've seen people directing before."* The camera man insisted, *"You've never seen a crew stand there and cry."*

So how did he learn the empathy that can't be taught in film school? Spielberg says that as a young person he experienced his grandmother's death with his family at her bedside. As a minority Jew in school, he experienced anti-Semitism through bullies. He learned what it's like to be an outcast, to be rejected. Fellow students thought he looked goofy and called him "Spielbug."

He learned the anguish of divorce by seeing his parents go through it his senior year. No one wants to experience these tragedies, but I doubt Spielberg could have learned to produce heart-felt films without them.

Says Spielberg, *"E. T. was about the divorce of my parents, how I felt when my parents broke up My wish list included having a friend who could be both the brother I never had and a father that I didn't feel I had anymore. And that's how E. T. was born. "*

For Discussion:

- 1) How did personal adversity help Spielberg empathize with others?*
- 2) How do you think this helped his film career?*
- 3) Can adversity help us with other careers besides filmmaking? In what way?*
- 4) How can you identify with the way Spielberg felt put down during his school days?*
- 5) How can understanding the benefits of adversity help to deal with adversities we now face?*

2. How Would You Have Treated Him?

Trait: Tolerance

As a child he began talking later than normal. In school, he was regarded as a freak by his classmates because of his lack of interest in sports. His teachers considered him dull because he was poor at memorizing by rote. One teacher told him in exasperation that he wouldn't amount to anything, was wasting everyone's time, and should drop out of school immediately.

Would you have looked down on him? If so, you would have snubbed **young Albert Einstein**.

For Discussion:

- 1) *How is it possible to be so smart, yet not recognized as intelligent by teachers or fellow students? (All of us have strengths and weaknesses. Some types of intelligence don't work well with school systems and don't translate into high grades.)*
- 2) *How do you think young Einstein would have fit in at our school? Would he have found a group of friends here, or would he have been an outcast?*
- 3) *How can understanding Einstein's background guard us from putting people into boxes?*
- 4) **Personal Reflection:** *What types of people do you snub and put into boxes? How can you overcome this lack of tolerance?*

3. Jordan Learns From His Brother
(Traits: Learning, Cooperation, Diligence)

Basketball superstar Michael Jordan reigns as one of America's most popular athlete. He's mastered the game to such an extent that pro player Magic Johnson could say, *"There's Michael- and then there's the rest of us."* Players such as LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Kevin Durant, and other great players are compared to Jordan.

But he didn't just wake up one morning, pick up a basketball, and begin his lightning fast moves and stratospheric jumps, dunking baskets against giant defenders. Believe it or not, he was cut from the Varsity team his sophomore year in high school. So what did he do to improve?

One could argue that without the fierce, daily, one-on-one, back yard competitions with his older brother Larry, who was a better athlete at the time, Michael would have never developed his ability and confidence enough to compete at the game. Larry was his mentor as well as best friend.

For Discussion

1. *How might Michael's life had been different had he never looked up to a mentor, or chosen the wrong mentor?*
2. *How can mentors help us succeed?*
3. *What should we look for in a mentor?*
4. *Is it okay to have more than one mentor?*
5. *Do you have a mentor? If not, who would be a good one?*

4. Learn From Motivated Friends
Traits: Learning, Cooperation, Diligence

Basketball great **Kareem Abdul Jabbar** once said,

"You can't let people who aren't going anywhere influence your opinions."

The opposite is also true. *Make sure the people who are going somewhere do influence your opinions.* This is a pattern in many successful people. They sharpen their skills and keep motivated by hanging out with those who have similar interests.

- **The world's best known theoretical physicist:** Twenty-two year old **Albert Einstein** and like-minded friends met frequently in each other's homes or talked on hikes, sometimes all the way through the night. These conversations had an enormous impact on his future work. They called themselves *"The Olympia Academy."*

- **The most successful entrepreneur:** Fifteen-year old **Bill Gates** met regularly with other computer enthusiasts who called themselves "*The Lakeside Programmers Group*."
- **One of the wisest men of his time: Benjamin Franklin** met every Friday for decades with a diverse group of civic-minded thinkers called "*Junto*". Many of his great accomplishments were a result of cross-pollination from this group.
 - Two of the most popular writers: **J.R.R. Tolkien** (Think: *Lord of the Rings*) and **C.S. Lewis** (Think: *The Chronicles of Narnia*) met with a group called "*The Inklings*," on a weekday morning in a pub and Thursday evenings at Lewis' house, often reading their manuscripts aloud to get input.

For Discussion:

1. How do you think these people's success was impacted by the people they hung around?
2. How can we often accomplish more with others than as a "lone ranger?"
3. What is some area of interest you'd like to pursue?
4. How could you find others with similar interests? (School clubs, etc.)

5. The Power of Put Downs

Trait: Acceptance

You'd think that Drew Barrymore had it all. Her acting success began by appearing on TV before her first birthday, then again at ages 2 and 4. She hit stardom at age 7 playing the little girl in Spielberg's hit, "E.T." At 7 years, she was the youngest person to ever host *Saturday Night Live*.

You'd think she was living every child's dream. She had talent. She was famous. But inside, the little star was hurting.

Like a lot of us, she let the put downs of others, both at school and at home, make her see herself as worthless. When she botched up an in-class assignment, her teacher called her stupid and said she would never amount to anything. Like most of us, she acted like it didn't bother her. But in her own words,

"I wanted to crawl inside myself and die. But there was no escape. I vowed not to show any emotion though. I sat there, stone-faced, crying on the inside and completely humiliated. "

The words of the insensitive teacher were reinforced by a group of cruel students who delighted in tormenting her. They hit her with books and called her names like pig, fatso, or saying her nose looked like Porky Pig's.

She countered by trying like everything to fit in. One day she got some surfer shorts with a spaceman design that she thought everyone would like. Instead, they burst out laughing when she walked into class, calling her a "cosmic cow."

Rather than realizing that she was important and could make something of her life, she believed their cutting words. In her own words,

"I just took their cutting remarks until, eventually, I let them completely undermine everything I knew to be true." (She ended up "feeling like the lowliest, homeliest, and dumbest creature."

Let's reflect for a minute on what happened to Drew's picture of herself. Although she had a gift for acting and achieved fame by age 7, she believed people's cutting remarks to the point that she felt totally worthless. With the people around her as her only mirror to see herself, she felt dumb

and ugly. Was her impression right? Not at all.

Ironically, this little girl who saw herself as a worthless failure, a "cosmic cow," "pig" and "fatso" would later be chosen by "People" magazine as one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world. The girl that the teacher called "stupid" and "headed for failure" would be paid \$26 million to star in the movies "Ever After" and both "Charlie's Angels" movies.

But at the time, she couldn't see her bright future. So, she turned to drugs to numb the pain. Big mistake. According to Drew, "The higher I got, the happier I imagined myself, the more miserable I actually was." Alcohol and cocaine put her in a rehabilitation facility by age 13.

What can we learn from Drew? Here are some thoughts.

First, don't believe people's put-downs. Your conception of yourself may look nothing like you really are. Some of the most successful people in the world were put down mercilessly during their school years.

Second, drugs and drinking only make things worse.

Third, don't ever put students or teachers down, even if on the outside they seem to not care.

For Discussion:

1. *Why do we put others' down?*
2. *What could motivate us to stop?*
3. *Do you think most people are really hurt by put downs, even if they act like they're not? Why or why not?*
4. *Why don't they tell people if it hurts?*
5. *What are some ways you see people putting others down at school or in your neighborhoods?*
6. *How did Drew allow the putdowns to make her feel like a hopeless failure?*
7. *How can we keep from letting putdown's ruin our self-esteem, making us feel like worthless failures?*

THE 7 WORST MISTAKES IN TRYING TO CHANGE BAD ATTITUDES

1. Thinking “It’s just a phase.” Bad attitudes don’t go away without interventions. The longer you wait, the more it becomes a habit. Set the boundaries and be firm with them.

2. Being a poor model. Our own attitudes have enormous influence on the student attitudes. How do you talk about fellow educators? The administration? Other students?

3. Not targeting the bad attitude. Be specific and target one attitude at a time. Don’t be too broad—“Be respectful” or “You have a bad attitude.” Help the person by focusing on one area and stating the problem. “You are raising your voice instead of speaking quietly.”

4. No plan to stop the bad attitude. Even though you may identify the problem, unless there is an action plan, the problem will continue. You must: a) address the behavior; b) state exactly how to correct it; c) identify the new attitude to replace it; and d) have consequences and rewards in place.

5. Not cultivating a replacement attitude. A bad attitude is caused by the absence of a virtue. For example, insensitivity is a lack of empathy; selfishness is a lack of compassion. Be ready to teach a replacement attitude.

6. Going alone. A plan will have a greater chance of success with other people involved (parents, teachers, friends).

7. Not sticking with the plan. Don’t get discouraged. Be consistent, but flexible. Learning a new habit takes time and encouragement.

PRACTICING HIGH SELF-ESTEEM

Research has found that 1 in 3 teachers have low self-esteem. A strong correlation has been found between the educator's self-esteem and that of the students.

Write one page sharing ways that you practice "high self esteem." (This is just for you)

1. *Practice living life consciously.*

Be aware of how you live your life. Don't waste days in bitterness and anger. Appreciate the life you have today.

2. *Practice self-acceptance.*

Be willing to accept yourself, with all your faults and struggles. If there is a need for change, do it. But still, accept the person within.

3. *Live your life assertively.*

Share your feelings with others. Be sensitive and caring, but take a stand for your beliefs. Stand up and be counted.

4. *Live your life responsibly.*

Be a role model for others. Be the type of person that people can respect, admire, and appreciate. It is not all about "me". Life involves those around us.

5. *Live your life purposefully.*

Can you articulate your purpose in life? Your calling, your destiny? Don't wander through life aimlessly. Choose a path and go for it.

6. *Live life with integrity.*

Let your name and character mean something to people. Be more than a footnote in life. Have strong convictions, be sensitive to others, and encourage those around you. Nurture the compassion that is within each one of us so that we may share it with others.

The “Compassion Strategies” listed on the next couple of pages are for use with students. **You do not need to turn them in to the instructor.** Add them to the list of ideas and interventions for students.

COMPASSION STRATEGY

Your self-perception (the way you look at yourself) can be examined by making a checklist about yourself. Put answers in each of the following areas:

What I Like About Myself

What Other People Like About Me

Now make a list of some things you do not like about yourself. After you finish the list, write out areas you cannot change.

What I Do Not Like About Myself

What I Can't Change About Myself

Write out a plan to change one area of your life.

1. What do I want to change? _____

2. Who will I tell about this plan? _____

3. How long will I give myself to change? _____

4. What is my plan?

COMPASSION STRATEGY

This will help students to evaluate their friendships and interests in life.

1. Have students list four or five friends.
2. Make two columns next to each name.

Sample:	Similar likes as me	Different interests than me
Jim		
Sally		
Tom		
Keri		
Steve		

3. Next to each name, list an area that they are similar and an area they are different. Explain to the student we are not looking at the way a person looks, their size, age, gender. We want similarities and differences in personal likes and dislikes. For example, we both like to dance, but he enjoys hotdogs.
4. The goal is to help children become sensitive to one another's uniqueness and special qualities.

The more you do this type of activity, the deeper the children will begin to look into the differences.

COMPASSION STRATEGY

The Story of “Bossy Billy.”

Billy was a new boy in the neighborhood and he wanted very much to make friends with other children. Most of the children in the neighborhood were friendly toward him and frequently asked Billy to join them in games and other activities. But Billy had a problem. When he participated in games or other events, he had this strong urge to be in charge—to be the “boss.” As a result, he would often make up his own rules and take control of the game or activity. As you can imagine, the other children disliked this. They wanted their ideas and wishes respected, but Billy was like a powerful train running full steam ahead. In time, the other boys and girls in the neighborhood gradually stopped inviting him to join them.

This, of course, hurt his feelings, but instead of trying to see how he could change his own behavior, Billy tried to “get even” by being mean and even more disrespectful toward the others. This did not help the situation and Billy continued to lose friends.

IDEA #1

Have the children think of ideas they could share with Billy to help him become friendly. They can brainstorm ideas that are written on the board.

IDEA #2

The students could each write Billy a letter that shares ideas to help him out.

IDEA #3

Ask the students to draw a picture of Billy acting helpful or nice with one of his friends.

Think of other ideas for students. This is a good activity and may be modified to make it age appropriate at any elementary level.

COMPASSION STRATEGY

The Story of Suzanne

Suzanne was now a freshman in high school. She still wasn't interested in school and seemed to be in trouble quite frequently. One day, after being sent to the office again, she noticed the plants on the counter. She asked the secretary about them. In a stroke of wisdom, the secretary asked if Suzanne would like to take care of the plants each day. With a shrug of her shoulders, she said "sure." After being taught how to water the plants, clip the dead leaves, and turn them toward the sun, Suzanne was ready. Over the next four years, Suzanne was the "plant lady" in the office. At the end of each year, the secretary bought Suzanne a gift certificate to thank her for her work.

1. What things do you like to do that other people might not know about?

2. What do you think about the idea the secretary came up with for Suzanne?

3. Do you think Suzanne did better in school over the next years? If yes, did taking care of the plants help out? If no, what might have helped?

4. At school, what type of activities might students be able to do and feel a part of the school?

Can Kindness Be Taught?

When preschools take applications, middle school sports teams are semi-professional, and college admissions are more competitive than ever, the idea of a family taking time to practice “random acts of kindness” almost seems quaint. Still, experts say this is one tradition that’s far from outdated.

“Kindness improves students’ self-esteem and the school climate,” according to the Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, a nonprofit with the sole purpose of teaching people to be nice to each other. “Whether academically proficient or not, students are given a way to excel through kindness, and excel they do.”

It’s not only struggling students who benefit from spreading good will. During difficult or stressful times, taking positive action is empowering to students and adults alike. And kindness, a uniquely human trait, encourages empathy and helps develop the kind of strong interpersonal skills that children will use their whole lives. In fact, by including both strangers and acquaintances, practicing “random” acts of kindness draws children out of their own small network and introduces them to the whole diverse world around them.

So, how can you get started? The good news about being kind is that the inspiration is all around you, and it needn’t be truly “random.” Coined in response to the all-too-often heard phrase “random acts of violence,” random in this context means only that the kindness should be directed towards the people we don’t always notice or appreciate. It could be a complete stranger, but it could also be the clerk at the grocery store, or the janitor at the gymnastics studio.

Brainstorm with your children about opportunities, and tailor suggestions to their ages and interests. Kindness needn’t be big to make a big impression. A little boy who decorates a thank you card and tapes it to the underside of the trash bin can make a huge difference in the day of the sanitation workers who do a tough and very necessary job. A teenage girl who spontaneously volunteers to baby-sit the neighbor’s toddler brings happiness to two people – the harried mom in dire need of a break and the rambunctious child itching for a new playmate.

Do you know a teacher who could use a sincere thank you? Have you read a news story about a family who needs new winter coats, or a charity struggling to keep its doors open? Have your kids keep their eyes open – they’re sure to spot someone who needs help picking up the books they dropped or reaching an item on a high shelf.

A spontaneous smile from a young child or a sincere compliment from an older one can make everyone’s day a little brighter. Help your kids learn to help others. Because it’s never too early to learn to be kind.

Rachel's Challenge

Since the Columbine High School shootings of 1999 school shootings have been a cause of fear for students and their families across the nation.

Rachel Scott was 17 and the first to die in the shooting at Columbine. After her death, her father Darrell Scott founded Rachel's Challenge, a school assembly and training program that promotes kindness and compassion. Unfortunately, Columbine was not the first, or last, school shooting in the United States. According to an article by Katherine Ramsland at crimelibrary.com, the first school shooting was in 1979 when 17-year-old Brenda Spence injured eight students at an elementary school and killed two men trying to protect the children with a rifle she received as a Christmas gift.

On Oct. 1, 1997, 16-year-old Luke Woodham killed his mother, two students and injured seven others. According to Ramsland, Woodham said, "I killed because people like me are mistreated every day. I did this to show society: Push us and we will push back."

"I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion then it will start a chain reaction of the same," Rachel said, according to rachelschallenge.com. This idea was found in Rachel's six diaries, which have been the foundation for Rachel's Challenge. Susannah Mitchell works for Rachel's Challenge and has also applied the five challenges to her own life. "[Rachel's Challenge] has driven me to set goals for myself and realize that they are attainable," Mitchell said. "It's made me a more compassionate and kinder person. And I think about how things will affect other people." Darrell and many other speakers have now toured almost 1,000 schools to promote the five challenges involved in the program.

Lift up America is a non-profit organization that brings community leaders together to help the less fortunate. According to ktvb.com the event aims to promote "stronger communities by setting the gold standard for acts of kindness on a community-wide basis." Boise State freshman Chelsea Cazier said she believes kindness could put an end to school shootings. "If people made an effort to be nice to strangers, and people in class, I think people wouldn't feel the need for violence," Cazier said. "[people] are less likely to destroy something they are a part of."

BSU sophomore Matt Parsels said he is already kind to people. He said kindness would prevent school shootings by creating "more bonding so there are no outcasts." He also said kindness can be showed with something as simple as a smile. For more information, or to get involved go to rachelschallenge.com or ktvb.com.

Rachel's Challenge

1. Eliminate Prejudice by looking for the best in others.
2. Dare to Dream - Set goals - Keep a Journal
3. Choose your influences - Input determines output
4. Kind Words - Small acts of Kindness = Huge impact
5. Start a chain reaction with family and friends.

Teaching Compassion to Children

by Dr. Caron Goode

Compassion is the desire to assuage feelings of suffering in others. A compassionate person considers the sufferings of others as his own. But compassion is not pity and it is also different from altruism, which is simply an action of helping others. Compassion is a combination of feeling for someone else, experiencing the suffering and a positive move to reduce the suffering of others.

Today there is a need to make specific efforts to teach compassion to children for several reasons:

- Competitive environments force us to be cut-throat - High levels of competition in society are not limited to only the workplace but have percolated down to academics and childrens sports. Even young toddlers are not spared by this bogeyman of vying for the best position in class or the maximum attention of the teacher.
- Violence in the media and environment - Our children today are more exposed to violence due to television programs and video games. This in turn tends to increase violence in children themselves. A review done by NCTV in 1990 found that 75% of the studies that were done on the effect of video games on normal children reported that video games had harmful effects. Psychologists Craig A. Anderson, Ph. D., and Karen E. Dill, Ph. D. have said "...the study reveals that even a brief exposure to violent video games can temporarily increase aggressive behavior in all types of participants" ^[1].

Teaching compassion can make our children aware of the world around them and it teaches tolerance towards different cultures and personalities. This enables children to be more sensitive and caring, that in turn leads to better relationships with others as they grow into adulthood.

Teaching Compassion to Children

All education begins in the home and so does teaching the virtue of being compassionate. Here are a few things that you can do to encourage compassionate actions in your children.

- Start at the very beginning -- Ensure that you express and show a lot of love and affection towards your child when he is a baby. They can feel the vibes and become soothed or agitated by their bonding with their parent. Alice Sterling Honig, a professor of child development in Syracuse University says "Without that attachment, babies will later have difficulty showing love and affection. The early months of infancy are crucial. When you have a relationship that's loving and secure with an adult, then you are probably going to be able to give to others in life the way you were given to." ^[2]
- Communicate about the benefits of compassion -- talking to your kids about how compassion can help them be better people will also help. Your children need to understand how being compassionate can help them contribute to the society that they live in and make their life more meaningful and worthy. It also communicates that you believe and practice compassion as a family. The child then tries to model these virtues since he believes that he is part of the family and wants to be like other family members.
- Be a role model - The first thing that you need to know if you want to teach compassion is that a child's strongest example is when you exhibit compassion yourself. Compassionate acts truly do speak louder than words.

- Volunteer service as a family – The act of giving up certain things to others and helping others can provide a great sense of achievement and fulfillment to an individual. You could plan trips to an orphanage and have your children give away some of their toys and clothes to other children. A family tradition of community service, setting aside of a certain amount every year for each member of the family to give away as charity, and praying together are among some of the family routines that go a long way in nurturing compassion so that it becomes an essential feature in the mindset of children.
- Use the aid of stories, folklore and mythology - Folklore, and mythology are mostly associated with positive values and the theme almost always provides useful lessons in moral and ethical values. Children who are constantly exposed to reading and discussions on such stories are prone to be more compassionate than those who listen only to the violent fare shelled out through the electronic medium.
- Talk about real life famous heroes - Stories of famous compassionate people help in developing high moral values in children and adults alike. Choose people like the Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King who are renowned for their compassion and moral attitudes. Reading sessions in the family of their life histories and events can also be instrumental in teaching the importance of being kind, caring, and empathic.

Teaching compassion to our children is more relevant now than it was ever before. It is the atmosphere in homes that necessarily reflects on the society as a whole. When there are tools available for teaching compassion to our children is it not better that we try to create a new environment that is non-violent and compassionate?

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The following two books are written by your instructor and contain a faith based perspective and biblical references. They are available on line or through bookstores. Both are available in CD format as audio books

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2016 (edited/revised edition). Examines the topic of gossip and how it impacts people. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665

When to Speak Up and When to Shut Up. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2006. Communication book discussing conflict and encouragement. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665 (**over 300,000 copies sold**).