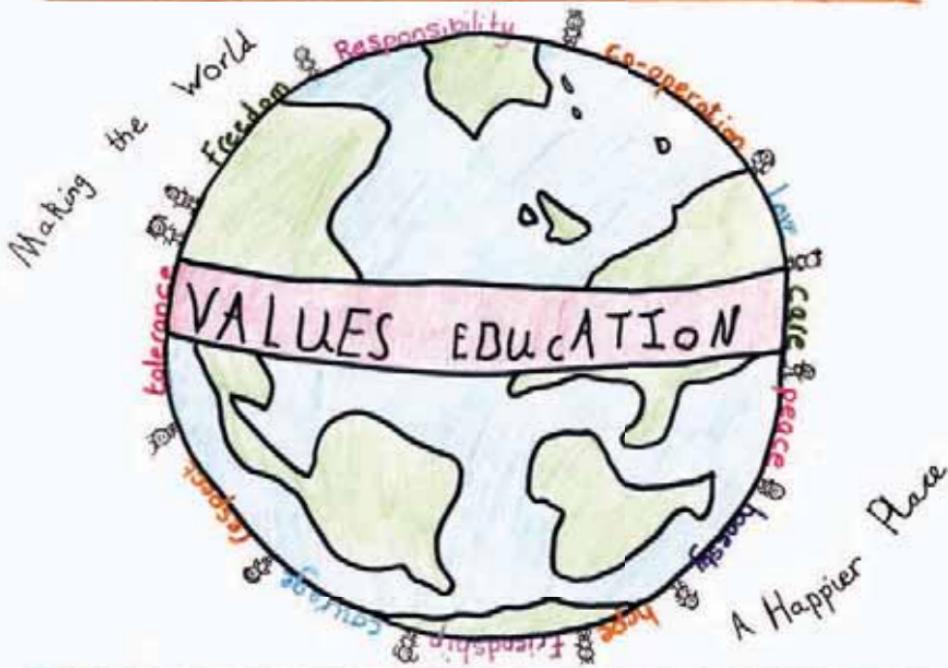


THE LITTLE BOOK OF VALUES

*Educating children to become thinking,
confident, responsible and caring citizens*



Julie Duckworth Edited by Ian Gilbert



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The Value of Values

The teacher

I have come to the frightening conclusion: I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated: a child humanised or dehumanised.

Haim Ginott, 1972

What is your passion?

The first teacher in space was to be Christa McAuliffe. She was part of the seven-man crew on the space shuttle *Challenger*. On 28 January 1986, the flight Christa was so proud to be a part of ended in tragedy when the space-craft disintegrated over the Atlantic just 73 seconds into the mission.

Christa McAuliffe was selected from 11,000 teachers to be the educational link between space and the children on earth. Her passion lay in education and she encompassed all the values and ideals in which every teacher believes, and although she never got to report from space, she did a lot to inspire a new generation of children to dream

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about being a part of a future space programme. She also taught us that one of the greatest professions in the world is teaching. I live by her words: 'I touch the future. I teach.'

Do you have a passion in your life - a passion for someone or about something that drives you to pursue it at all times? The word passion has so many connotations, depending on context, but I often wonder how frequently it is used within the world of education.

I am passionate about life and especially my career as a teacher, and now a head teacher. Teaching in the primary sector for 20 years, it was always my desire to make a positive difference to children's lives by valuing them as individuals. It is a privilege to be able to teach and know that you have the capacity to influence the future. Indeed, one of my former pupils is now teaching in the school where I first taught her.

I believe the fundamental quality of being a teacher is to have the passion to value your students so that each and every one of them feels as though they are *your chosen one*. When I recently asked a class of 10 and 11-year-olds what qualities they would find in their dream teacher, these were their answers:

- Is kind
- Is generous
- Listens to you
- Encourages you
- Has faith in you

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- Keeps confidences
- Likes teaching children
- Takes time to explain things
- Helps you when you're stuck
- Tells you how you are doing
- Allows you to have your say
- Doesn't give up on you
- Cares for you
- Tells the truth
- Treats people equally
- Makes you feel clever
- Is trendy in clothes and ideas!

Scrutinise this list closely. The word 'teaching' appears only once, in the phrase 'likes teaching children', and there is nothing relating to instructing, but there are plenty of words and phrases associated with feeling valued. If we are going to touch the future and make a positive difference to this planet we all share then, yes, we have to teach children the skills required for them to gain knowledge, but the processes we adopt to deliver that teaching should be based on our principles as human beings. These principles are the universal values we all share, many of which you will find in this *Little Book*.

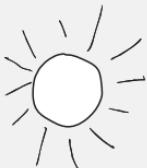


Reflection task:

Take a few moments to reflect on the word passion and recognise where it features in your own life. How do you convey that passion? Do you have an icon you admire and respect because of their passion and consequently their actions? How do you let other people know about your passion?

So what are values? It is values that drive our thinking and behaviour. We behave the way we do because of our internal set of values – our beliefs about ourselves and others that determine our actions, and influence how we behave. This affects the relationships we develop in life and the security we give to others within that relationship.

When I became a head teacher I had not heard about *Values Education*, although I led through applying my own set of values. These, such as love, happiness, respect and care, I had been taught by my parents and family, while others, such as perseverance, understanding, humility and freedom, I had learned through my experiences in life. Today, there is much talk of the breakdown of family values, so where else will children learn such values these days if not at school?



Reflection task:

Take time to capture the values that people who know you would use to describe you as a person. How do others perceive you and what values are present or absent in their minds?

Would these values be different depending on the context, e.g. as a work colleague, parent, wife/husband/partner ... ? Be honest with yourself. Are our values always positive traits? I was once asked about the expression of anger and whether it should be considered as a value. Does anger feature as a value in your list and if so how do you deal with it?

Adopting a values-based approach to teaching and learning can radically change relationships, and how the school functions, within a short space of time. It has been encouraging to see how teaching values at my current school, a large primary near Hereford, has impacted on parents and the local community in just two years. It is gratifying to hear the positive feedback from parents telling us how values have had a positive effect on their families and even their own professional lives.

For example, Debs Hiley works as a doctor in the town of Ledbury, Herefordshire. Dr Debs (as she is known) is a parent and now the chair of governors. This, in her own words, is her opinion of *Values Education*:

'When I first heard our new head talk so much about Values Education I was a little cynical. I wondered if it was, as I frequently see in my profession, just another fashion or just

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paying lip service to an unattainable ideal. HOWEVER, having spent time understanding how 'values' was to be integrated into every detail of school life by listening to one of the founders of this initiative and seeing how values was a part of every cell of school life, I became the ultimate born-again convert!

For my children and all the children at Ledbury Primary School I think values aims to instil in them the basic guidelines by which one might hope they live life in a decent, happy and loving manner ... yet aspire to 'be all that they can be'. Sometimes I feel it is religion without any creed or denomination ... a wonderful ideal. But an ideal that is tangible ... And it permeates every aspect of school life so the children truly believe and understand it.

I have seen such changes in children's sense of fairness, justice and sense of responsibility to attain high standards in achieving all their values and a more healthy respect for everybody; this includes both adults and children. In terms of happiness, behaviour and discipline within school I think the impact is enormous. Some of this is quantifiable – for example, exclusion figures have reduced – but much of the impact is immeasurable. Visitors, from new parents to visiting heads, find the 'values' palpable.

Our governing body has incorporated many of the values in its core functioning, especially respect, openness, honesty and quality. We frequently remind ourselves of these values both in the role of day-to-day school functioning but also in the roles we play within school and within our meetings. 'Values' has also helped me to evaluate my life and my relationships with my own family and people I deal with, at school and at



I am
sorry I
hurt your
feelings.

Honesty

honesty • noun 1 the quality of being honest. 2 a plant with purple or white flowers and round, flat, translucent seed pods, so named from its seed pods, translucency symbolizing lack of deceit.

proverb there are often practical as well as moral reasons for being honest.

This is what the children say honesty is:

- Telling the truth
- Having integrity and using it in every day life
- Being sincere, truthful and trustworthy.

Honest people:

- Tell the truth despite consequences
- Voice opinion in a kind, thoughtful way
- 'Tell on' someone only when necessary
- Show and share their feelings
- Know classmates and teachers care and want the best for them
- Feel and react without guilt
- Express themselves positively as well as critically.

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explores twenty-two values that can be taught through schools and indeed the whole community.

It will inspire you by using examples of where values are already being used by children and adults in schools and share practical tools to stimulate discussion and philosophical debate.

It will also help people to take stock of their own values and how they wish to lead their lives.

"If our children haven't got the attributes of perseverance, resilience and a positive attitude to embrace the challenges ahead of them - then how can they grow up to be the citizens of the future? The Little Book of Values documents the analysis and practice of these attributes in a vibrant school community."

Anne Evans OBE, Chief Executive HTI

"Values Education has the power to transform schools; their staff, children and culture, Julie shows us how."

Rachel McGill, Director, Sunray

"Julie Duckworth's little book, with an enormous heart, will be a source of inspiration and practical ideas for schools to be values-based communities."

Dr Neil Hawkes, International Education Consultant for Values-based Education www.values-education.com

Julie Duckworth has been teaching in the primary sector for 20 years. As headteacher she has radically transformed the quality of life for both children and staff in her primary school by introducing Values Education. She is regularly asked to speak to local authorities, heads and teachers about her work. She is a speaker and associate of Independent Thinking.



The Independent Thinking Series brings together some of the most innovative practitioners working in education today under the guidance of Ian Gilbert, founder of Independent Thinking Ltd. www.independentthinking.co.uk

Education

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