



Reversing The Trend - From Narcissism to Compassion

EDUO 9895 2 Semester Credits/Units

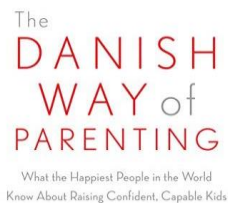
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***Note: This is a Public syllabus of the course. Course background, articles and assignments are partially shown.
For a fully detailed syllabus, please email the instructor.***

Course Overview

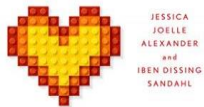
Welcome to EDUO 9895 Reversing The Trend - From Narcissism to Compassion. Encourage your students to find greater happiness and purpose in their lives by reaching out to help others. Read and view research that substantiates “giving” is a pathway to happiness while in the U.S. the Trend is moving in the opposite direction. Consider how you can help to reverse that Trend.



Course Text

The Danish Way of Parenting

by Jessica Alexander & Iben Sandahl ISBN: 978-0143111719



Course Objectives

In this course participants will have an opportunity to:

- Read the book *The Danish Way of Parenting*.
- Read and study resources about how empathy and compassion create greater happiness for the giver.
- Communicate ways that you can help reverse The Trend.
- Share your ideas and take-aways with other course participants.

Course Background and Assignments

Why a Course for Teachers?

In 2003 I was inspired by another to raise funds to build a school in Afghanistan. My friends and I did. I visited the school when it was completed in 2005 and in the interim learned about US involvement in Afghanistan. Observing the horrible living conditions in Afghanistan and knowing that the war we had help fund against the Russians in Afghanistan contributed greatly to those conditions proved to be life altering. I felt compelled to help Afghan families rebuild their lives. In 2004 I founded a non-profit organization, Trust in Education, to provide aid to Afghanistan. Visit www.trustineducation.org for details.

I've visited Afghanistan twenty times over the past 13 years. During those visits I became aware of a significant difference between Afghan and American children. Most Afghan children want to be teachers. Very few American children do. Is it just a matter of economics? You made the decision to become a teacher. Why are so few American children not doing the same?

Afghan children also say, when stating they want to be a teacher, doctor, soldier or policeman, "I want to help my people and my country". I've not heard American students express a commitment to "their country" or "their people". Again, why?

I've spent most of my time since 2003 working with volunteers. Early on it became apparent that givers are noticeably happier than those who aren't. Attending to the needs of others is much less stressful and has been far more rewarding than all other challenges in my life.

These observations and others led me to accept the suggestion by George Pickett to develop this course. Why? Because the consensus seems to be that we are raising too many children who lack compassion and empathy, feel entitled, and are more "stressed-out" than happy. What does that have to do with teachers?

Teachers are on the front line of child rearing and often spend more time with a child than his or her parents. Schools are where children interact with others having diverse backgrounds, beliefs, values and capabilities. Campuses are either "melting pots" or "salad bowls" inside which teachers are the most influential ingredient.

I suspect I needn't convince you of the need for character development in schools. That's likely the most rewarding and challenging aspect of your job. This course will provide you with links to studies, articles and videos that can be shared with those who might not initially support devoting more time to character development.

The course includes sharing with fellow teachers what you do in your classroom and school to develop character. A best practices list is being maintained that is being shared with all teachers who are interested. Your recommendations could end up on that list. You will therefore be both student and teacher in the formidable task of raising children who are compassionate, caring, empathetic, honest, and proactive, knowing that if they are, they will be happier and more likely to succeed. There are 4 assignments to completed and placed in course Dropboxes, **A1, A2, A3, and A8**. There are 4 Forums to post to, Forum **A4, A5, A6, and A7**

How to Submit Coursework

Each completed assignment in this course is submitted to the instructor for review. Follow directions at the end of each assignment on how to prepare and in which Moodle Dropbox to place completed work. Name each file submitted with your last name and assignment number (i.e. BrownAssignment3. Make sure you place your full name, course number and assignment number at the top of each document page. You will receive feedback from your instructor within 5 days indicating successful completion of the assignment or the need for revision. Assignment grades will be averaged for the final course grade.

A grading assessment rubric for written projects is found in this document.

Practical Advice from a Former Principal



Teachers have a major impact on child development. Who among us didn't have at least one inspirational teacher who broadened our outlook on life and made us a better person? I remember several. And, let's face it, you chose teaching not for the compensation you receive. Your greatest reward comes from the positive impact you have on children who pass through your room on their way to adulthood. Your time with them is surpassed only by the moment they return years later to tell you how important you were.

1. Importance of Providing Service Learning in Schools

- A. How important is it?
- B. What do we hope to achieve through service learning? Caring, Fairness & Citizenship.
- C. Is there any empirical evidence or studies that support service learning?

Answer:

Yes, there have been studies that support the teaching of character in schools that have shown reduced absenteeism, truancy, vandalism, discipline issues, etc., by those educational institutions that promote a schoolwide, systematic delivery of a character curriculum. For specific data, I would suggest you go online to Character Counts (<https://charactercounts.org/>). They have extensive data that answers many of your queries better than I.

- 2. Buy in by Parents, Teachers, Administration, School Boards
 - A. What resistance is there to devoting time to service learning?
 - B. What are the best ways to overcome resistance?
- 3. Buy in by Students –
 - A. What role should the student government and leaders within each class play?
 - B. What service learning projects/programs do students enjoy?
- 4. Service Learning Projects/Programs that have proven successful;
- 5. What doesn't work and why? Lessons learned.
- 6. Is enough time being devoted to service learning?

The Case for Giving

We all know that giving makes the giver “feel good”. We should, therefore, expect that those who have more give more. The opposite is true. There are studies to prove it. Submit the question to google should you need verification.

Why is there an inverse correlation between wealth and giving? The answer most frequently given is that the poor know what it’s like to be poor and thus more likely to come to the aid of someone who is. Whatever the reason, character development includes teaching children to be more empathetic, compassionate, caring and giving. It’s for their own good. They will be happier!

Should you need to persuade others of the value of these traits I’ve copied and pasted an article below, that may be helpful...



Five Ways Giving is good for you” by Jill Suttie and Jason Marsh

“A 2008 study by Harvard Business School professor Michael Norton and colleagues found that giving money to someone else lifted participants’ happiness more that spending it on themselves (despite participants’ prediction that spending on themselves would make them happier)...

Giving is good for our health

Giving promotes cooperation and social connection

Giving evokes gratitude.

Giving is contagious.

Read or Watch:

1. The End of Empathy – Empathy is on the decline

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/2010/06/01/end-empathy.html>

3. Why is narcissism increasing among young Americans?

5. America’s Insensitive Children? Jane Alexander

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/the-us-empathy-gap/494975/>

6. The Case for Empathy

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka/2012/09/26/why-we-should-teach-empathy-to-improve-education-and-test-scores/#4548bb8627c4>

Do you agree with these articles in relation to your school or community? If you agree that empathy and/or compassion is on the decline or lacking in your school or community, why do you think that is? If people don’t care or care enough, why don’t they? What’s changed or changing? What was your reaction to the differences in policies portrayed in the movie? What do you think the reactions would be for most Americans??

Place your response in the Assignment A1 Dropbox

A2 Compare & Contrast the Danish Parenting & School System with what you've experienced as a child, a student and a teacher (and possibly a parent).

Place your response in the Assignment A2 Dropbox



Fundraising Drives

I have over the years learned a great deal about fundraising, particularly in schools. Most decide to conduct at least two fundraising drives a year, one for the school and one for a local charity. I have, as a result of my experience in Afghanistan, become a proponent of also helping families living outside the United States. Natural disaster and special circumstance fundraising is also embraced in most schools.

Fundraising by and for a school's needs are the easiest to fund...

The Selection Process

How Should Money be Raised?

Prizes and Awards – Should there Be?

Selecting a Local or International Organization to Support

Fundraising Events and Activities

A4 What have been your most successful fundraising drives and events? What have been your most successful school projects that don't involve fundraising. What advice and recommendations would you give to others?

Post your response to the A4 Forum

Consider Implementing in your Class and School

This "best practices" list will grow over time as you and others send recommendations of what has proven successful. *Last Updated October 2018*

- **Circle Time**
- **Buddy Stops**
- **Acts of Kindness Walls**
- **Slam Poetry**
- **Peer Mediations**
- **Issue Bins or Boxes**
- **Games Students Can Play**
- **Let them eat cake**
- **Replace detention with meditation.**
- **Mindfulness**
- **Recommendations found in The Danish Way of Parenting:**

A5 What techniques do you use in teaching empathy and compassion? What works and doesn't? What advice would you give others?

Post your response to the A5 Forum

A7 If you tried any of the techniques, projects, exercises events etc. provided in this course describe what you did, the outcome and what you would recommend to others. Are there any that you or your school decided to use that weren't being used before?

Post your response to the A7 Forum

Conclusion

I undertook this project for a simple reason. I came to the realization over the past fifteen years that givers are happier and lead more rewarding and fulfilling lives. The sooner children begin caring about others as much as they care about themselves the better. They'll be happier.

I'm well aware of the burdens and expectations placed upon teachers, particularly in light of the standardized tests students must take. The last thing teachers need or want is one more program imposed from the top.

You may have noticed that this course is not a program or curriculum. That was by design. My hope is that teachers will collaborate, experiment, and determine what works best in their rooms and schools. Over time teachers will make informed decisions as to what to incorporate in their classroom.

Finally, I suspect I'm preaching to the choir. Odds are you're a giver. What teacher isn't? You know how critical character development is and likely agree that more needs to be done. Be the catalyst in your school and enlist, if necessary, someone to inspire parents and the community to become involved. A quote, I recently found, is now posted on my refrigerator.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Barak Obama

Course Assessment Rubric

Exemplary: A+ to A-	Acceptable: B+ to B-	Unacceptable:
Reflective, thoughtful ideas relevant to the assignment are clearly stated	Satisfactorily completes all assignment	Ideas are not clear or relevant
Very well organized	Generally well organized	Shows little or no organization
Responses show that resources have been well understood	Responses show that resources were read	Few or no facts or specific details from the resources
Free of spelling and/or grammatical errors	Writing contains a few spelling and/or grammatical errors	Numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors make the writing difficult to read