



Inspiring individuals,  
families, schools, communities,  
companies and organisations  
to be values-based

**FROM MY HEART**

**TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH VALUES**

**Dr NEIL  
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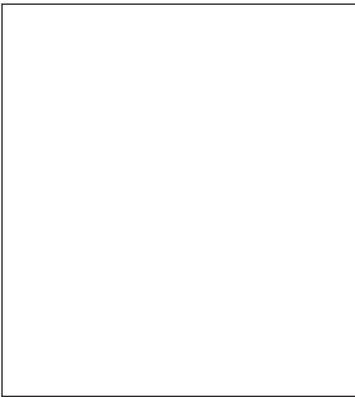
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## Chapter 1

# You and me

Hello! Thank you for choosing to read my book, which is written ‘from my heart’. It is unlikely that you know me, so here is a photo ...



You



Me

Before reading my book, I would like to invite you to find a picture of you to put in the space next to mine or, if you prefer, make a sketch of yourself. You see, this book is about more than just reading a text: it is about you and me, and the relationship we can develop through the exploration of values which this book provides. I believe that good relationships are paramount – they help us to make sense of our complex world, and most of us desire them. They are the fundamental core principle of a values-based family, business and school.

Now, please may I request that you spend a minute or so just being still and quiet, thinking about what you sense about us both. You probably know very little about me, but you will know a great deal about you.

# Pause ...



Thank you. I will explain later why it is so important for us to take moments of quiet reflection. I sense that you are someone who has chosen to read this book because you are conscious of your own personal journey through life; you are open to deepening your understanding about how you can help yourself and others to live life with a greater sense of inner peace and harmony.

I am sorry that I can't be with you personally; nevertheless, I have put the energy of loving good wishes, which I put into my talks about values, into this book. I often begin my talks by spending a little time in silence, just being still and gently making eye contact with individuals in the audience – hopefully each one. I know that some folk may think a variation of, 'Who the hell is this weirdo?' Others giggle or glance furtively at the person sitting next to them for reassurance, whilst others adopt a wry, expectant smile. My simple act has a profound purpose, which is for me to make a connection with each person in the room, so that there is a realisation that my thoughts and ideas are not just carried in the words I say, but in the relationships that I establish. I assure the audience that no one is invisible to me during my presentations. I am not just giving a talk; I am trying to inspire people to adopt a living philosophy and its practices.

I shy away from calling myself an 'inspirational speaker', because I have experienced sitting in audiences when speakers have used techniques and content to engage their audiences, but have not engaged with individuals at a personal level; thereby leaving them disempowered to really engage with the subject of their talk. Have you had similar experi-

ences when you have felt ‘missed’ and left with the impression that the presenter has given the same talk umpteen times before?

I believe that deep learning occurs in the space between people, so authentic modelling of the process of being a values-based person is vital if the messages contained in my words are going to resonate with people who are just like you and me. When I was a schoolteacher, I soon realised that I might think I was teaching one lesson, but each student was hearing it differently and learning different things, because they were hearing my words through the filter of their own experience, upbringing and culture. It is the same for each person who reads this book: each individual will sense different meanings as my words interact with their life experiences.

Thus, this simple act of silent connection helps to establish the beginning of a relationship and intimacy. I have noticed that people who are genuinely interested in others, on initial meetings, take time to make eye contact and just *be present* for a few seconds before speaking. I remember being made extremely aware of this process when taking an active part in an education conference in Edinburgh. The principal guest was the Dalai Lama, who had this gift in abundance, and he made each new meeting very special for each of us. I would recommend that you make this a part of your awareness when you are meeting both friends and strangers. They will sense a pleasant difference in you.

Are you a people-watcher? I often turn a visit to my local supermarket into a rich experience of people-watching, especially of parents/carers with their children in tow. My observations have led me to the conclusion that if you want to learn about parenting in its many diverse forms, then watch as children are taken shopping. For instance, the parent with the misbehaving child, who is shouting and running amok in the aisles, and whom other shoppers are pretending to ignore, suddenly shouts out, ‘Shut up you little brat. I’ll tell your Dad when I get you home. You’re really a nasty bit of work.’ Or the parent you overhear saying, ‘Now Jessica, where are the baked beans? It’s spelt b-e-a-n-s. Ah yes, well done dear, you are clever.’ Of course, these examples are

caricatures, extremes, but they illustrate the range of parenting that makes up our society.

I would suggest that there are simple key skills/understandings about parenting that, if generally adopted, could transform relationships for the better in so many homes and classrooms. The central maxim to remember is that adults should never tell off *a child*, only (if appropriate) the *child's behaviour*. In the first example, the child is told that they are 'a nasty bit of work'. In hearing this, probably repeatedly, the child will develop an understanding that they are not liked for who they are. Subconsciously, they say to themselves, 'If I can't be noticed for being good, then I'll get attention by being bad.' Often they will carry this self-perception throughout life, because they have been thwarted in their efforts to cultivate a meaningful attachment with significant adults, such as their parents.

I think that we need to invest in finding ways of supporting the development of parenting skills across the whole of society. I remember talking with a secondary school teacher in Merthyr Tydfil (in South Wales), who pointed out to me that, in her community, they had children who had been parented by children, who had been parented by children, who had been parented by children – three generations! These individuals hadn't had the chance to develop many basic parenting skills, because they had been expected to raise their children alone and not as part of an extended family. Do you notice that, despite many examples to the contrary, there is a current lack of understanding about how to be an effective and loving parent? The teacher in Wales was not being unnecessarily critical – she loved the people in her community. However, she recognised that the community was no longer raising its children as it once did, when there was shared responsibility with grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends living locally, who passed on the wisdom of parenting and shared in that responsibility.

Without such cultural wisdom, we have, at one end of the spectrum, neglected and even abused children and, at the other end, over-indulged, potentially selfish children (demanding the latest iPad) who actually seek meaningful relationships, based on love and trust.

My intention is not to paint a picture of doom and gloom, because I am optimistic – as this book will show – that we can help and support all parents and adults in all societies to be at ease in the role of a parent/caregiver.

So, what do I hope that you will gain from reading this book? My main purpose is to inspire you to adopt universal, positive human values in your work and life and be a role model for them. I would like you to be so inspired that you will want to be an active part of a growing worldwide movement for transformational change. I hope that, as you take the journey with me through the pages of this book, you will conclude that the movement is not just an idealist's dream. You will gain the understanding needed to transform your own life and read the evidence about how values-based education (VbE) is transforming the lives of individuals and institutions, such as schools, and reaching out into all aspects of society.

One such school is Revoe (in Blackpool). Whenever I give a presentation about values-based education, I usually begin by showing a picture of a pupil at Revoe School. His name is Trev and I met him when I was invited to the school's 'Grand Opening of Parliament'. Revoe has moved on from the notion of a school council to ensuring that the children feel really involved in the leadership and management of the school (a key to how they have transformed pupil behaviour).

Firstly, a bit of background. A few years ago Revoe was judged by the English inspection service, Ofsted, to be a failing school; in fact, one of the worst in the country. It sits within what is described as a socially challenged catchment area. It was at this point that Cath Woodall was appointed to be the head teacher and began the task of transformation. On first meeting Cath, after a values presentation for Lancashire head teachers, I was aware that I was in the presence of an outstanding, optimistic leader with huge determination and the necessary practical skills to create a learning environment that would transform the school. She knew that, to provide a rich education for the pupils, she would need to embrace the community and demonstrate that Revoe was a good school. One of the first tasks was to ensure that the chil-

dren came to school, so each morning she asked her teaching assistants to form a series of human buses. They would go out into the community and call at the children's homes to collect the pupils, who, for whatever reason, may have been reluctant to come to school. At first, the teaching assistants were met with a varied reception but, as the weeks passed, the community began to understand that Cath wanted the very best for their children, so they began to support her innovative initiatives.

Back to Trev. I spotted him by himself, waiting for the Parliament to begin. He seemed very glum, so I asked him if he was OK. He paused, eyeing me suspiciously, and then he said in a tearful voice, 'Mrs Woodall says that you are the important visitor who gives talks. My name is Trev; I'm in Year 4. You know, I am the Minister of Finance, but my Mum and Dad can't be bothered to come and see me today. They never come!' He then looked down at the ground and, for a moment, I considered what I could say that might be of some help. I then said, 'OK, can I be here for you? What's more, can I take your picture and, whenever I begin a talk, I will show your picture?' He glanced at me with a look that conveyed a mixture of hope and disbelief. We then went into the school's hall for the Grand Opening of Parliament, which was terrific, with all the staff and children entering into the spirit of the occasion. A wonderful moment was when Cath came in as the Queen to open Parliament – inducing a ripple of laughter from the parents and community members attending. Trev was great.

I have kept my promise to Trev and I have proved it to him because, some while ago, a professional development day was being held at the school by the National Education Trust (NET) and I had been asked to speak about the growing number of schools that are becoming values-based. Before I began, I asked Cath if Trev could be asked to come to the hall. He was now in Year 6. Without question she agreed and, with a broad smile, Trev arrived in the hall, and I invited him to sit at the front as I began my talk – with his smiling picture on the screen. I wish you could have seen the expression on Trev's face as it lit up with pride. Later, Cath confided in me that my two simple acts had done wonders to raise the self-esteem of this boy, who so desperately needed the



approbation of adults. Healthy attachments and good relationships are the cornerstone of a values-based school.

Trev and Revoe School represent what I hope will be gained by people and organisations that adopt values-based education. In a nutshell, this is *inspiration* to want to be the best people that we can be, in our personal, family, community and work life. So, as I set out on the journey of writing this book, my purpose is to inspire you and to give you some important practical tools that will help you transform both your own life and the life of the school, business or company in which you work. Although the majority of my examples will be from my own background, which is in education, they can equally and effectively be applied to any business or institution – the core principles are the same.

How can you get the most from reading this book? May I make a few suggestions? Firstly, let me check: Do you know where your heart is?

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Please take a moment to place one of your hands over your heart and just leave it there for a few seconds – can you feel your heart beating?

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In so many countries now, young people are encouraged to think cognitively and apply deductive logic to problem-solving. We learn to use objective, scientific methods which we bring to our listening and reading. We are taught to break down argument and to be critical, looking for the flaws in reasoning. This is a great skill which I use myself, but I believe that we no longer have the correct balance between the cognitive and affective domains. By affective, I mean the area of feelings and emotions that fuel our creativity and help us to be fully integrated human beings. So, when reading this book, ask yourself how you *feel* about what you are reading, not just what you *think* about it. Maintain an open mind and sense what could help you to see the world through a different or adjusted lens; this will enhance your awareness and your consciousness.

Next, can you remain positive whilst you read this book? What is your mood at the moment?

Keep a check on yourself, as you will absorb more from my words if you are in a positive, relaxed state of mind. Research shows that children learn best when teaching is fuelled with positive emotion and when there is challenge, tempered with humour and fun.

Finally, are you a perfect person?

There was a man in an audience once, who, on hearing this question, put up his hand. I asked him why he thought he was perfect. His reply brought a roar of laughter when he said, 'I think I'm perfect, because my Mum says I am!' I don't know if he was saying this with his tongue in his cheek – I suspect that he was. The truth is that none of us have reached perfection. I know I haven't – my family and friends often remind me of my many flaws. The point is that talking about values can make some of us feel uncomfortable, because we are fully aware of our foibles. Please accept yourself for who you are today and join me on a lifetime's journey of self-improvement.

You are entitled to ask the question, 'Who is Neil Hawkes and what gives him the right to write a book with a focus on values?' Those who know me well will appreciate that I avoid the spotlight being turned on me, preferring instead to be a king-maker rather than a king. The reason for this is that I observe what happens when a person's ego takes control of them. It often causes people to cease being in touch with their innate human qualities and, instead, become deluded by power, wealth or fame. TV reality shows feed this appetite for what I term *false recognition*. *True recognition* is being valued and seen for who you really are, which I believe leads to people being comfortable in their own skin, as they shun the illusion of power and position. When asked the question, 'What do you do?' I am pleased to reply that I am proud to be a teacher. I have had the privilege of teaching people across all age groups. However, I currently focus my energy on teaching adults and young people about the benefits of basing their lives on a serious consideration of universal, positive human values.

I am indebted to Frances Farrer, whose wonderfully crafted and inspiring book, *A Quiet Revolution* (2000), told the story of many of the influences on my early life, as a student teacher, head teacher, local

authority education adviser and then as the head teacher of West Kidlington School (in Oxfordshire). It was at West Kidlington that my career seemed to take on an incredible energy, as I was privileged to work with an exceptionally gifted group of teachers and support staff, who were supported by an enlightened governing body. The chair of governors, Bob Laines, a respected community leader, created a political and social environment that encouraged me to be an educational entrepreneur. For just under seven years, we all worked creatively together to harness the energy of the school's community to see if we could raise academic achievement and help the pupils to develop good character.

My leadership reflected my belief that the key role of a head teacher is to release the creative dynamic of all who work in the school. In an institution, such as a school or company, there should never be a hierarchy of relationships, only a hierarchy of roles. The outcome was that the adults willingly gave their time, talents and enthusiastic support to the life of the school. As people, we realised that we weren't values neutral because every time we spoke we revealed our intrinsic values to the pupils. After much discussion, we decided to introduce the pupils to a form of values education, the process of which I will describe in Chapter 6.



**The Values Sculpture:** West Kidlington School believes that the world in the future will be held up, or not, by the values that children develop when they are growing up. That is why the school is such an important part of this process. The sculptor Wendy Marshall inspired the children to think about how they could depict their values holding up the world. The hands and arms, modelled on the pupils' bodies, represent the five continents.

We soon found that this special focus on values made a profound difference, not only to the children, but on the adults too. West Kidlington School does not claim to have invented values education; a cursory investigation on the Internet will show that the subject has a rich and varied philosophical history spanning over two thousand years. What West Kidlington School can modestly claim is that it was one of the first schools, in modern times, to deliberately and systematically teach its pupils about positive human values, and where the adults consistently modelled them. Later in this book, I describe some of the other unique elements of West Kidlington's methodology and pedagogy. I am delighted that the practice is still embedded and enriched in the school, under the caring leadership of the school's current head teacher, Eugene Simmonds.

The word soon spread that school life was a bit different at West Kidlington. The principal education adviser for Oxfordshire, Richard Howard, gave his full support and the Ofsted inspection visit confirmed the school as very good with outstanding features. Visitors started coming from other parts of the world to see for themselves what was making this school unique. One was Professor Terence Lovat from Australia, who subsequently used the school as the blueprint for Australia's own development of values education. West Kidlington's reputation reached UNICEF headquarters in New York, and Cyril Dalais, head of the Early Childhood Education Cluster, invited Linda Heppenstall, the school's values coordinator, and me to join twenty other educators from around the world to plan an international values programme. From this meeting came the international values programme known as Living Values, which is now directed by a charity called ALIVE (Association of Living Values International). In the UK, head teachers and teachers visited the school. One regular visitor was Bridget Knight, who, when appointed as an adviser, took values education to schools in Herefordshire. Di Thomas, a head teacher from Bedfordshire, took the work to schools there.

Did everyone embrace the work? I mentioned Revoe School earlier and I remember two members of staff telling me that, when they first heard me talk about values work, they didn't think it would work in

their school – it was ‘too warm and fuzzy’. They admitted that they were completely cynical and could not see how it would work with children and a community that were, in their words, challenging. However, the head teacher encouraged them to give it their best go. I’m pleased to tell you that, when I recently met these teachers again, they said that they had been completely wrong and that it did work. In fact, it had changed their approach to teaching, which was now based on the principles of values-based education.

Another teacher, in a Bedfordshire middle school, had shared with me her scepticism about values education. However, she said that, over a five-year period, it had changed her life and her teaching. Before the current head teacher had introduced values education, she was often sick on her way to work because she found the job very stressful. Now she felt a renewed person, and her attitude to her pupils and teaching had changed completely, so that she now enjoyed coming to the school and had improved relationships with the pupils.

I hope these stories give you permission, if you need it, to read this book with healthy scepticism, because I think it is important for you to come freely to your own conclusions, and not feel that I am manipulating your thoughts and opinions in any way. I know, being a healthy sceptic myself, that it is only through personal experience and rigorous assessment that we can be sure of the validity of any claims that are made about values education.

This is why, whilst I was head teacher at West Kidlington, I decided to apply to Oxford University to study for a research doctorate. I was fortunate to be supervised by the former director of Oxford University’s Department of Education, the acclaimed Professor Richard Pring, to whom I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. His intellectual insights, wide knowledge of education, wisdom and good humour sustained me over the nine years of my part-time research. My work was subjected to Richard’s ongoing critical scrutiny, evaluated by members of the university and externally examined by Professor Bart McGettrick from Liverpool’s Hope University. For this work, I was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil). The claims that were made in

my own small-scale research were later endorsed by a large-scale research project, funded by the Australian government and conducted by Newcastle University (New South Wales) (Lovat et al., 2009). I will share some of these findings with you in Chapter 2.

In the following chapters, I will introduce you to what I am passionate about: what I think is the most important, exciting and inclusive philosophy, and related practices, which have the potential to ensure human sustainability and happiness in the twenty-first century. It is what I have termed the *philosophy of valuing: self, others and the environment*, better known as *values-based education*.

### Some reflection points to ponder from this first chapter:

- Pause and take a minute or so to keep still and silent. In the silence, just explore what you have learned about what I find important in life. Then consider if this has made you reflect on your own priorities.
- Are you aware of your own thinking bias? For instance, do you like to focus on logical argument and concentrate on detail, or do you enjoy creative, big-picture thinking? Perhaps you are a person who achieves a balance between the two.
- What are the one or two main thoughts, feelings or sensations you have had whilst reading this chapter? Are you remaining in a positive frame of mind as you read this book? Remember that we gain the most from reading when we feel relaxed, purposeful and have a sense of enjoyment.

## Chapter 2

# Your values journey

In Chapter 1, I observed that no one can be values neutral. This is because life imbues us with values; we cannot escape from them. If you are a teacher, then your pupils will sense your values as soon as you speak to them. Likewise, if you are a parent or work in a shop, business or company, then your values will inform who you are, how you interact with others and out of which lens you see the world.

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Your values journey ...



Let's reflect ...

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Take another pause now to reflect on your own values. Have you ever considered why you have them, where they came from and how you display them? If you could click on the speaker icon in the picture above, you would hear a version of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, from his album *Alone in IZ World*. My friend and sometimes co-presenter in Australia, psychologist Andrew Fuller of *Tricky Kids* fame, recommended it to me. Because of his amiable

humour, I always think of him as the Billy Connolly of Oz. It is frequently helpful for some people, but not all, to have some appropriate music playing in the background as we are transported into our inner world of reflection. May I suggest that you now take some time, as much as you need, to reflect on your own values journey, and play your own music if it's practicable and desirable to do so.

Pause ...



I wonder what you have been thinking about? You may have been reflecting on your parents or other relations and how they gave you some of your values. I know that I absorbed many of mine from my paternal grandmother. She lived with my immediate family and spent a lot of time talking with me when I was a small child. I sometimes catch myself making judgements about how others are behaving, because Grandma was a stickler for good manners – the Victorian variety – and I now have to check that I don't form an inappropriate value judgement about another person because of Grandma's strong, clear voice, which I can still hear in my head. I suspect that you may have similar voices from your childhood.

You may have also reflected about teachers who taught you or, if you were inducted into a religion, the values you developed because of your beliefs. Your values may also have come from friends, especially during adolescence, when the influence of the peer group is very strong. The media, in all its forms, has also probably played a strong part in your choice of values. I often watch and listen to people talking together, and wonder if they chose particular values, which now guide their behaviour, or just absorbed them without being conscious about



the process. I suspect that for most of us it is the latter. This is one of the reasons why I think that values have to be made explicit and brought fully into conscious awareness.

Look back at the picture of the globe in a golden hand. It is part of a values sculpture at Oatlands Infant School (in Surrey). Using symbols is a creative way of helping young children to learn about values. This hand, and there are many of them on the sculpture, was modelled on a child's hand. Can you guess which value the globe represents? There are no right or wrong answers because it depends on what you want it to represent. However, the school decided that this symbol of the world would represent the value of *unity*. Another hand has people holding hands fixed to it, representing cooperation.

Like yours, my own values journey spans my lifetime. In my introduction to Frances Farrer's *A Quiet Revolution* (2000), I acknowledged the profound influence of others on my own values development. These ranged from my grandmother, with her insistence on good manners, to the huge inspiration of Peter Long, head teacher of South Stoke Primary School (in Oxfordshire), during my final teaching practice. Such significant characters were profoundly influential on the development of my character. It was Peter's dedication and patience, when working with children, that helped me to understand the importance of establishing good relationships in schools; that quality education is about influencing the whole person, not merely about the transference of knowledge and skills. I watched Peter playing games with the children at break times, always giving freely of himself, enthusing pupils with his humour and inspiring them to be the best people that they could be. Peter became my role model, an educator I have kept in the forefront of my mind, especially when I have been in situations where people have not been able to model such positive values.

My values journey reached a very significant point when I was appointed head teacher of West Kidlington Primary and Nursery Schools (near Oxford). I'd had a very varied and fascinating career in education until this point. I had experienced two previous school headships and had been a local authority education adviser. Prior to

coming to Kidlington, I had been the principal adviser of the Isle of Wight Education Service. It was here that I'd had an experience that changed the path of my career.

I clearly remember one September morning in a hotel in Shanklin. I was talking to a mixed group of teachers about what ingredients make a good school. All, I thought, was going well, until I noticed a female teacher in the back row of the audience, her arms folded, who seemed to be tutting under her breath. Being an experienced teacher, I automatically started to try to engage her, through eye contact and turning up the volume of my enthusiasm. None of my usual teaching techniques seemed to have any positive effect. In fact, she now seemed totally disengaged. It was then that I had my epiphany moment, because a voice in my head started to say to me: 'Neil, perhaps what she is thinking is, "What does he know about what he is talking about? If he really did know, he wouldn't just talk about it, *he would do it!*"' In an instant, I realised what I needed to do. I stopped thinking of the disgruntled teacher and concentrated on the audience as a whole. Towards the end of my presentation, I noticed that she had unfolded her arms and was indeed smiling.

This didn't change my thinking though, because when I had finished the talk, I drove back to the county offices in Newport and saw John Williams, the chief officer, to tell him that I had decided to resign. He looked bemused. I explained to him how the teacher had acted as a catalyst, which had jolted me into realising that I wanted to put what I was telling others into practice. He was amazed. When I went on to say that I wanted to be a head teacher again, he tried to dissuade me, telling me that I would have a great future career as a chief education adviser/officer in a large county.

My mind, however, was made up, so I looked in the situations vacant column of the *Times Education Supplement (TES)* and saw the following advertisement:

Wanted,  
Head teacher,  
West Kidlington School  
just burned down!

I thought, 'Yes, this is the place for me, somewhere where I can build an innovative philosophy and practice, based on what I have been sharing with others.' Incidentally, the school had burned down on 5 November, Guy Fawkes or Bonfire Night in the UK, when someone had put a firework through the front door of the school and it had caught ablaze. The fire razed the school to the ground, except for the nursery, which the firefighters had managed to save. This was clearly a very sad time in the life of the school, as precious curriculum resources, as well as the school building, were lost in the fire. It was especially poignant as it happened only a few months before the school's much respected head teacher, Paul Canterbury, was due to retire. The advertisement for a new head teacher was calling out to me, so I applied. The rest is history because, when I was appointed to the school, I found that I had chosen (or had they chosen me?) a very special community of people.

The teaching and support staff gave me their full support, as did the governing body, chaired by Bob Laines. Whenever I talk about my values journey, I like to emphasise that the development of values education at the school was very much a corporate affair; I could not have led the process without the wonderful support of all the staff. I think I gained this partly because of my core beliefs as a leader. As I said in Chapter 1, I believed (and still do) that my core purpose was to provide the conditions that would release the dynamic creativity of all who worked in the school, so that they could give of their very best.

This meant that each employee would acknowledge the role they were playing in the school (e.g. office manager, teacher, teaching assistant, site manager), but this role did not mean that we were considered by each other as either better or worse as people – we were all equal. Too often schools, businesses and institutions are organised using a hierarchy of relationships – the boss is at the top of the staff photo display in the reception area and the person who cleans is at the bottom; the boss has his or her car park space near to the front door, others at a corresponding distance. I am sure that you can think of your own examples. In these settings, the new employee has to be silent and learn the culture of the organisation – and to acknowledge that the boss and senior

leadership team have the best ideas. This is not how more enlightened organisations function and is far removed from a values-based one.

At West Kidlington, my predecessor, Paul Canterbury, had fostered an excellent team of caring, open-minded people who were skilled in whatever role they played in the school. It was on this strong foundation that I was able to build a values-based organisation. Frances Farrer asked if she could write an article about our work for the *TES*. She became more and more interested in the values concepts and, after writing another article for the *TES*, she suggested a book. Random House published *A Quiet Revolution* over ten years ago and it has made its way into several other countries, including Pakistan and the United States. I cannot overstate what a masterpiece this book is, as Frances captured the very soul of the school in her writing.

For just under seven years, the school worked to embed values education in the curriculum. We developed our own resources, but also used other excellent materials produced by organisations such as the Human Values Foundation. We wanted to celebrate our success in embedding values education and make a statement about it to the community. To this end, we asked Wendy Marshall, a professional sculptor, to work with Year 6 pupils (11-year-olds) to design and create a sculpture that reflected our values philosophy (this is the photo that appears in Chapter 1). It turned out to be an inspiration for all. The children suggested that there should be five arms to represent the children of the five continents of the world. The arms hold up the world, which is an inspirational metaphor implying that, in the future, it will be the positive values of the children that will raise up our world.

Without wishing to sound grandiose, I do believe that the future of communities, countries and, yes, humanity is dependent on the values that our children develop, which will guide their thoughts and actions as adults. The school community of West Kidlington did not invent values education; what I think is unique is its claim to have been the first school to explicitly and deliberately embed the philosophy and practices of values-based education in every aspect of its life and work over an extended period of time. In fact, the school is still attracting

visitors because the work has become so embedded in the consciousness of staff at the school. It is they who saw the benefits of the approach and have subsequently inducted two head teachers into its methods. The current head, Eugene Symonds, enthusiastically embraces the concept:

Leading the school, where values-based education all started, is both a privilege and intensely humbling in equal measure. It is a privilege to be part of school where so many members of our learning community share my commitment to the values of compassion, care, creativity, courage and cooperation. It is also deeply humbling to see the impact these values have on our children's achievements. Headship can be a relentlessly challenging job, but I am proud to be associated with such a uniquely enriching place of learning.

Eugene has skilfully led the school with great tenacity, keeping the values dynamic alive and fresh, ably assisted by his incredible Liverpudlian humour.

During my headship, I clearly remember one particular visitor to the school, Bridget Knight, who at that time was the deputy head of another local school in Kidlington. She had heard about the values work and asked if she could come to a school assembly and talk to me afterwards about the benefits and challenges of becoming a values-based school. I remember Bridget light up when she saw what we were doing. She later gained her own headship and developed an outstanding school at Stonesfield (in Oxfordshire). She went on to be a schools adviser in Herefordshire, where she motivated head teachers to turn their schools into values-based schools. The quiet revolution of West Kidlington spread and was gaining momentum. After a presentation to Bedfordshire head teachers, Di Thomas, head of Greenfield Lower School, was similarly convinced and became the focus for nurturing values schools across the county. Similar stories can be told in Surrey and other parts of the UK.

I decided to focus my energies on working with head teachers and school communities so that we could build up a movement that could

show the positive effects of adopting values education. I consciously shied away from trying to convince politicians and others in authority, because I had found that such people tend to want very fast results. I also believed that it was important for teachers to really believe in the work and not think that it was an official requirement from above. I recall that Bridget Knight and I were invited to see an official, who warmly received us at 10 Downing Street, in the last days of Tony Blair's government. We were informed that it was too late for values education to become an initiative (as it had in Australia) and that we should perhaps return when a new government was appointed. I am not sorry about that, because there is now much more genuine interest as we are able to show the effects and benefits of values-based education across more schools.

Australia was a different story. Professor Terence Lovat (Emeritus Professor, University of Newcastle (Australia) and Senior Research Fellow, University of Oxford) was excited about values education. He thought that West Kidlington's experience of values-based education should become the gold standard for Australia's comprehensive values education initiative. Terry was one of a number of individuals who worked behind the scenes to convince politicians and educationists to support and invest in values education. A federal programme resulted which led to Australia spending upwards of \$40 million dollars implementing values education in its schools. This was a very clever mixture of government initiative and local community support. Terry believes, as I do, that values-based education improves academic attainment whilst giving students the personal, social and moral skills to be global citizens. Terry says:

As educational systems everywhere search for ways of improving academic achievement levels for all students, as well as preparing them with the personal, social, emotional and moral skills required for life in global societies, the credentials of values-based education are without peer. Evidence has shown that VbE has unusual potential to achieve all these goals at one and the same time. It fits well with the latest brain research that shows the interdependence of the thinking and feeling hemi-

spheres of the brain. It also fits well with all that we have learned about the effects of quality teaching and holistic pedagogy. VbE has the potential to combine the best of contemporary theory and practice about ways to optimize learning in the modern classroom.

Over the last ten years, I have had the privilege of supporting the wonderful team of values educators in Australia, speaking at conferences and schools across most states. Later in this chapter I will refer to the wealth of research from Australia that shows the impact of a systematic development of values education.

As I write, I suspect that you may now be wondering if everyone has cheered with support for values-based education. What about the sceptics? Surely some have thought it a waste of time, and not really effective in raising standards and improving character and behaviour? As I observed in Chapter 1, on a visit to a Bedfordshire Middle School, I met an experienced teacher who shared with me how she had been very sceptical about the potential benefits of values education. I asked her to tell me what affect values education has had on her experience as a teacher. She paused, took a deep breath and replied:

OK, I had taught here for eleven years and, up to the time that the current head teacher was appointed, I'd had a pretty rotten time of it. At my professional interview, he asked me what I thought of the school. I told him that the sight of a red jumper made me physically sick on my way to school. I loathed coming; I hated being here. I was probably the biggest sceptic of anybody about how values education could possibly turn anything around. I just couldn't see it. Gradually, I saw that things were changing. I was thinking more about the values and the pupils, in turn, were reflecting on them and, in a nutshell, I can't believe how my life, my approach to children and teaching has changed in the last five years. There have been dramatic changes. I look back and I can't recognise that person, the life that I was leading and those relationships I had, or rather didn't have, with the children I was teaching.

This teacher's values journey gives a clear example of what so many parents and teachers have described about the intrinsic power of adopting what on the surface seems very simple, yet has profound consequences. I am often asked, frequently by politicians: 'What you say sounds wonderfully idealistic, but where is the research evidence to support your claims?' I actually agree with the underlying question, because I think it is important that the development of educational practice is grounded in sound research evidence. My impression is that, too often, educational policy is formed on ideological whims rather than in a consultative process that includes a considered analysis of research. Therefore, I think it is important that, without going into too much detail, I end this chapter by giving you the opportunity to reflect on the impressive research evidence.

Uniquely, in 2002, the Australian government made a concerted effort to fund and foster a range of activities to support schools in developing explicit, informed, systematic and effective approaches to values education in all areas of school policy and classroom practice. Values education is seen as a means of nurturing Australia's common democratic way of life, which includes equality, freedom and the rule of law. Values education has been supported throughout the country by schools and communities who have been keen to address values education from a community perspective. Values education and student well-being are now an integral part of Australian schooling, as they are seen as central to fostering high academic standards in the context of an ethically based school community.

I was delighted to have played a small part in this process, having been invited to be a keynote speaker at two National Values Education Forums. I remember flying into Australia from the UK for the first of these, my first trip down under, and not having planned to give myself sufficient time to get over the jetlag. I arrived in Canberra and found myself giving the keynote in what was for me the middle of the night. I was so sleepy, I recall thinking that I was hallucinating as I gave my talk, but I discovered afterwards that only I had been aware of this and a very tuned-in audience of empathetic values educators had rapturously received my ideas (and jokes).



The Australians used my practical experience and research as a former head teacher, who had implemented values education in a UK school, to underpin the professional development materials for their teachers. I have made seven subsequent visits to Australia to share good practice and to inspire school communities to scaffold everything they do with positive human values, such as respect, integrity, responsibility and compassion. My own research at Oxford University, which I completed in 2005, made a number of tentative claims regarding the contribution that values education can make to quality education. I am delighted that these have now been validated by a large-scale action research project in Australia (Lovat et al., 2009). The Australian research, which was an integral part of the National Framework for Values Education in Australian schools (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005), revealed the following five key interrelated impacts of values education:

- 1 Values consciousness
- 2 Well-being
- 3 Agency
- 4 Connectedness
- 5 Transformation

These five identified impacts support my assertion that a systematic and planned approach to values education can improve students' engagement with schooling, promote better learning outcomes and enhance students' social and emotional well-being. The evidence conclusively shows how values education can transform classrooms, relationships, school environments, teachers' professional practice and parents' engagement in their children's schooling. I hope you will be fascinated by the following brief outline of the impacts, which have provided rich evidence to support my belief that values education should be at the heart of all individuals, communities and organisations.

## Impact 1: values consciousness

It was found that deliberate and systematic values education enhances values consciousness. For instance, students, teachers and parents developed an increased consciousness about the meaning of values and the power of values education to transform learning and life. Encouraging the skill of reflection is crucial to this process. Such increased awareness resulted in more than a superficial understanding of values but was related to a positive change in student behaviour. Incredibly, teachers began to think more deeply about their teaching and the values that they modelled, both in and outside the classroom. Students reported on how values consciousness had impacted on their actions, which had become more altruistic.

It was discovered that the establishment of communication about values between teachers, students and parents, through newsletters, community forums and artistic performances, had very positive effects. For instance, giving time and space for teachers and parents to be involved in their children's values education both enhanced relationships and afforded time for parents to reflect on their own values.

## Impact 2: well-being

Students' well-being was enhanced through the application of values-focused and student-centred teaching, which gave time for them to reflect deeply on the nature of values, and what these meant to them and others. Teaching strategies included silent sitting, reflective writing, multimedia production, drama performances and poetry writing. In thinking about, acting on and feeling values, students developed awareness of self-worth, empathy and responsible personal behaviour. I was delighted that evidence from the data showed that values education had a very positive effect on the sense of self of students who are 'at risk', marginalised or disadvantaged.

Students also developed a greater understanding of the impact of their actions on the well-being of others. Values education helped students and teachers to look inside themselves, and really work out what they value and who they are. There was compelling evidence that well-being impacts were experienced by teachers, parents and families, and in classroom and whole-school environments.

### *Impact 3: Agency*

Agency is at first sight a strange term. It stands for the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make choices and act on them – to be self-disciplined. The evidence showed that values education strengthened student agency when it involved various forms of giving, outreach and working in the community; for instance, through values action projects that allowed students to enact their values, such as thinking about how the school could more actively support a residential care home for the elderly. Agency was developed through meaningful, real-life experiential learning, such as engagement in community projects – where there was opportunity for the development of student voice, initiative and leadership – and an explicit focus on ethical, intercultural and social issues.

Structured reflection on their experiences and learning was a central element in developing agency. Such activity generated a deep sense of 'self' and 'others'. For values learning to take place, activities have to be deeply personal, deeply real and deeply engaging. Not surprisingly, relationships between students and teachers were enhanced through such activities. I believe that this research finding has wide implications for teacher agency and teacher education, in terms of understanding how to teach and structure learning in the context of an active enquiry-based curriculum.

### *Impact 4: Connectedness*

The research showed how values education builds positive and wide-ranging connections between teachers, students and parents. It supported student engagement in learning, improved parent engagement in their children's learning, and allowed teachers to develop new relationships with their students and each other, and the parents and families in their school community. This was achieved through shared goals and practices in values education, which led to the development of mutual feelings of respect, trust and safety, and varied opportunities for collaboration. The research findings show that the values led to improved and stronger relationships between teachers, students and parents; for example, more respectful behaviours in the classroom, school and home. Community engagement brought about quality outcomes for teachers, students and parents.

### *Impact 5: Transformation*

I am sure that it won't come as a surprise that change and transformation was at the heart of the values projects. It was the result of teachers and students being urged to engage in continuous reflection on the actions they implemented in their schools. Key changes were in modifications in professional practice, as well as personal attitudes, behaviours, relationships and group dynamics. Transformations – for instance, in the development of getting on well together (relational trust) – were experienced and observed by teachers, students and parents alike. Also, the ability of students to concentrate in their lessons (academic diligence) was enhanced, leading to greater academic achievement.

The data point to profound transformations in student learning. Students developed a deeper understanding of complex issues; for example, how to understand sophisticated concepts about values when these are explicitly taught. Such teaching changed their attitude

and perception of a value, which led to a positive change in their behaviour. Students and parents experienced personal change and reported seeing changes in others. For instance, a student said how the class had positively evolved and that values had helped them to become more mature, adjusted people. The research showed the profound professional and personal transformation that can result when the parent community is involved in students' learning.

### *So what does this tell us?*

I hope you can now understand why I am so passionate about the impacts of values education. The research evidence is such an important part of the international values journey, as it shows the impact that values education has on encouraging quality education and parent/community involvement. It provides a sound rationale for parents, teachers and educational systems to recognise the importance of adopting values education. The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools has provided an important part of my personal values journey and matured my vision for the development of values-based schools. It provides the platform for the next chapter that answers one of the questions you may be asking: What is the starting point for values-based education?

### *Some reflection points to ponder from this chapter:*

- Were you fascinated as you reflected on your own values journey and the impact it is having on your life?
- Are you sensing any differences between your personal and professional values journey? If so, what are they? What are the consequences of these differences?

- I would like to suggest that you keep a journal in which you can record your thoughts about this book and the impact it is having on you. It could form the basis of a new habit that will help you to consider and nurture your life as your values journey develops in the future.
- As a parent, teacher or in another role, collect evidence about the effects that having a greater values awareness is having on your life. Please share this with others and, if you come up with some new evidence, please let me know at [www.valuesbasededucation.com](http://www.valuesbasededucation.com).