

# Creating **INSPIRED** Students

Putting the **Heart**  
at the Center of the Education Experience





## Thank You

Heartfelt thanks to all who contributed and all who shared their personal experiences on how a Heartfulness practice has helped them in their daily life.

With love and gratitude, and profound hope for a future filled with the magic of the heart.

1. Introduction	4
2. Quo Vadis (Where Are You Going?)	7
3. Designing Our Future	15
4. Aude Sentire (Dare to Feel)	20
5. A Peep into a Heartful Classroom	28
6. The Science of the Heart, Meditation and Self-Development	36
7. Why the Heart as the Center?	45
8. Heartfulness: A Scientific Approach to Heart-Centered Meditation	52
9. Heart Speak: Personal Experiences	62
10. Heartfulness Programs for Schools	71



# 1. Introduction

What is this book about? It is about the heart in education, and how we can learn to make it the center of our experience. Such a simple but profound shift can take many different forms — but it always produces something magical at the end.

This book asks us to think about some important questions: Has education become a pressure cooker experience for students? Are we as administrators, educators and parents creating a joyful, free and loving learning environment which brings the best out of them? Is there time and space in the school day to practice life skills that strengthen their social and emotional development?

But the core idea of the book is about connecting to the heart — the nucleus of the human system — and how such a shift has compelling benefits over the short term that continue to grow in significance over time with practice.

***The core idea of the book is about connecting to the heart — the nucleus of the human system — and how such a shift has compelling benefits over the short term that continue to grow in significance over time with practice.***



It observes how the school years are the ideal time to learn and practice this precious life skill that will serve us well in all facets of our personal and professional lives.

The book touches upon the growing body of scientific research on the role the heart and the benefits of meditation in the science of well-being and the science of self-development.

Modern neuroscience research has shown that even short periods of meditation done regularly have measurable benefits that correlate to changes in specific areas of the brain. This research offers guidance to educators when integrating heart-centered practices for social and emotional development into the daily school schedule.

This book describes a simple, secular, heart-centered practice called Heartfulness and advocates a scientific approach that is based on personal experience and observation. Readers get a glimpse into the firsthand experiences of some young people from around the world on how the practice of Heartfulness has helped them.

***This book describes a simple, secular, heart-centered practice called Heartfulness and advocates a scientific approach that is based on personal experience and observation.***

Finally, the book provides information on how to integrate a Heartfulness program into your school. We hope this book inspires you as an educator, a school administrator, a parent, or a student to think about adding a heart-centered practice for self-development to the learning experience.

***The book provides information on how to integrate a Heartfulness program into your school.***



Two roads  
diverged in a wood and  
I-I took the one less traveled  
by, and that has made  
all the difference.

- Robert Frost



## 2. Quo Vadis (Where Are You Going?)

*“You got to be careful  
if you don’t know where you’re going,  
because you might not get there.”*

**Yogi Berra**

What was one time you really enjoyed what you were doing in school? Pause for a few minutes and go back to that time. Was it because you had a really good teacher — someone who was kind, fun, and brought the best out in you? Was it because you were doing something that you really felt connected to?

If you are a parent or an educator reading this book, was your entire education experience like that? Or were they just a few bright sparks of light in an otherwise difficult trudge filled with anxiety and stress? If you are a student, do you feel more relaxed, confident and inspired with every passing day?





Wherever you go,  
go with all your heart.

Confucius



## **Putting the Heart at the Center of the Education Experience**

What does the word 'center'  
bring to your mind?

Perhaps the image of a circle with a center?

What qualities does the word 'center'  
bring to your mind?



## Holding Things Together

Perhaps the first thing that comes to mind is that a center is the focal point of a system, which in many cases is invisibly holding it together. As the sun is the center of the solar system holding the planets together, as the mother is the center of a child's life, as the nucleus is the center of the atom holding the particles together, the heart is the center of the human being, and all other faculties are connected to it. Just as the planets would go flying into space if the sun did not play its part, just as a child's life without a mother lacks its most joyful element, and just as the atom would disintegrate without the nucleus, an education experience that does not give the heart a central role fails to inspire.

## Expanding Our Circumference

The idea of a center immediately brings with it the idea of a circumference. For a toddler, the mother is its center, and its circumference is but a few feet from the mother. As we grow older, our circumference increases as our imagination and capacities grow. However, the greater the circumference, the stronger the connection must be with the Center, in order to retain stability, authenticity and our essential qualities. A human being whose heart expands along with his imagination to embrace more within its circumference is able to distinguish what is good for all. This expression of goodness is life-affirming and promotes unity and harmony in the world. An education system that serves to expand a child's imagination, strengthen intellectual capacities, and promote an ever-deepening connection to their heart can produce inspired students who manifest this beautiful melding of heart and mind.





## Source of Energy and Nourishment

The idea of a center also triggers the idea of a Source from which the system derives energy and nourishment for its functioning. At the physical level, the heart is, of course, a pumping station sending purified oxygen and nutrient-rich blood to all parts of the body, while receiving the blood that needs to be purified. At a subtler level, the heart is the source of all the finer human qualities — peace, kindness, will, courage, love, joy, faith, passion, empathy — all qualities of the heart, without which nothing of real value can be accomplished. The heart has the precious ability to transform negative feelings to positive ones — fear to courage, jealousy to love, dejection to hope. At the subtlest and most significant level, the heart, at its center, is a place of absolute calmness and serenity, a place of inner retreat for a human being to rejuvenate and recharge whenever he or she feels the need.

Educators play a vital role by cultivating within themselves and modeling this heart-centered behavior that first benefits them, and then serves as a positive influence on the students who naturally develop this habit by observing their teachers. This skill of referring to the heart and utilizing its resources cultivates poise in students, which helps them retain their balance and maximize their potential even under challenging circumstances.

***“We pay a high price for the exile of feeling in education. For the future, it’s vital to rethink the dynamic relationships between heart and mind within human consciousness and their essential place in the education of all our students.”***

**Sir Ken Robinson**





## Suggested Video

### Do schools kill creativity?

Ken Robinson

[www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity)

As educators and parents, can we design an education experience that integrates the heart in a central but subtle way into the education experience? Can we design an education experience that inspires each teacher and student, provides a secure space and time for each person in the school to practice these heart-centered skills, and gives a gentle helping hand for everyone to tune their heart-mind field and achieve their highest potential? Can we prepare students in such a holistic way to flourish in life?

*Can we design an education experience that inspires each teacher and student? Can we prepare students in such a holistic way to flourish in life?*



## Personal Exercise and Reflection

Sit silently and participate in this self-reflection exercise. Below are some suggested questions to spark your thoughts. They are just suggestions. Choose questions that appeal to you. You don't have to answer all of them.

1. What does listening to the heart mean to you?
2. Pause for a few minutes and go back to one time when you really enjoyed what you were doing in school — when you felt inspired and really connected to what you were doing. Reflect on this experience to understand what brings the best out of you.
3. Reflect on the meaning of the quote at the end of the previous page by Sir Ken Robinson. What changes do you feel that this inclusion of heart, and the dynamic relationship between the heart and the mind, can produce in the classroom?



Not all of us  
can do great things.  
But we can do small things  
with great love.

Mother Teresa

### 3. Designing Our Future

Superman is one of the most beloved superheroes of our time, one that most of us have grown up reading in comics or watching movies of — **the Man of Steel!** With his idealism, courage, and strong moral sense, Superman captured the hearts of generations of fans. Superman derived his energy from the Sun and was drained by exposure to Kryptonite, the radioactive element from his planet Krypton.

#### **What Is Your Source of Positive Energy?**

Perhaps it's a strong morning cup of coffee, or an early morning jog outdoors. Perhaps it is good and healthy food, or following your passion. Perhaps it is being with the people you love or you feel a connection with, or just some quiet time. What parts of us are we energizing through these different actions? As humans, we are multi-layered beings made of body, mind and spirit; the physical, mental-emotional, and causal; matter, energy and absolute. A feeling of overall well-being results when all three layers or states of our existence are attended to and nourished.



## What Drains You?

If we observe closely, we notice that when the subtler layers of our being are negatively affected, we feel more drained. An event that is emotionally disturbing is far more draining than a physically exhausting workout. When someone insults you, or does something that breaks your spirit, it is much harder to regain your energy than it is after back-breaking work. Therefore, it follows quite naturally that if we engage in activities that feed our spirit and are intellectually and emotionally satisfying, we feel energized, and our feeling of joy permeates through all layers of our being.

*If we engage in activities that feed our spirit and are intellectually and emotionally satisfying, we feel energized, and our feeling of joy permeates through all layers of our being.*

## The Connecting Link

It starts to become interesting when we realize that the center or connecting link is the heart. Management institutes have started to recognize this and have embraced the idea of integrating meditation and heart-centered development into their programs for developing our future leaders.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> An increasing number of workplaces have integrated meditation and other wellness programs into the work day to increase employee happiness and productivity.<sup>4</sup>





Our current education systems do an excellent job of developing students physically, intellectually and, to a certain extent, emotionally. The four C's of modern education — critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity — provide important skills that students need to succeed in our global society.<sup>5, 6</sup> However, globalization and the increased competition for admissions into educational institutions have added tremendous stress into students' lives. Therefore, as parents and educators we need to equip our students with the skills to re-energize themselves. Their emotional resilience, their ability to re-energize and find joy, purpose and fulfilment, is key to their own wellbeing and happiness, and in turn augments their ability to bring joy and happiness to others through their life work.

Schools and teachers play a vital role in this vision. This simple and profound shift in education has the potential to produce something magical at the end. It is time for us to integrate heart-centered self-development programs into the school day of every student. The earlier students start practicing these simple techniques, the more time they have to master these essential life skills until it becomes second nature to them.

***As parents and educators we need to equip our students with the skills to re-energize themselves. Their emotional resilience, their ability to re-energize and find joy, purpose and fulfilment, is key to their own wellbeing and happiness, and in turn augments their ability to bring joy and happiness to others through their life work.***





## References

- 1. Innovation starts with the Heart, not the Head**  
Gary Hamel  
[www.hbr.org/2015/06/you-innovate-with-your-heart-not-your-head](http://www.hbr.org/2015/06/you-innovate-with-your-heart-not-your-head)
- 2. The Power of Nuance of the Heart**  
Anthony K. Tjan  
[www.hbr.org/2011/09/the-power-of-nuance-of-the-hea.html](http://www.hbr.org/2011/09/the-power-of-nuance-of-the-hea.html)
- 3. The Benefits of Meditation: Better Choices, Better Outcomes**  
Sigal Barsade  
[www.executiveeducation.wharton.upenn.edu/thought-leadership/wharton-at-work/2015/08/the-benefits-of-meditation](http://www.executiveeducation.wharton.upenn.edu/thought-leadership/wharton-at-work/2015/08/the-benefits-of-meditation)
- 4. Mindfulness, Meditation, Wellness and their connection to Corporate America's Bottom Line**  
Arianna Huffington  
[www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/corporate-wellness\\_b\\_2903222.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/corporate-wellness_b_2903222.html)
- 5. An Educator's Guide to the "Four C's"**  
[www.nea.org/tools/52217.htm](http://www.nea.org/tools/52217.htm)
- 6. Smarter Teacher**  
Brain Miller  
[www.smarterteacher.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-6-cs-of-education-for-future.html](http://www.smarterteacher.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-6-cs-of-education-for-future.html)





I truly believe the only way we can create global peace is through not only educating our minds, but our hearts and our souls.

Malala Yousafzai

## 4. Aude Sentire (Dare to Feel)

*“Few are those who see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts.”*

**Albert Einstein**

As human beings, we have always been uplifted by stories of adventurers, pioneers and visionaries, whether they were real or fictional. From Captain Kirk, who commanded the starship USS Enterprise in Star Trek, to Albert Einstein, who imagined riding on a beam of light, to Malala Yousafzai, who stood up to the Taliban and is a champion for education, their stories have captured our hearts and minds. All of them seemingly imagined the impossible, broke barriers that were thought to be unbreakable, and showed courage and compassion where others were afraid.

At the core, these stories are an expression of our inner nature that is without fear, that is expansive and knows no limitations — indeed, in the core of our hearts we are infinite. When we imagine freely, create bravely, and embrace more of the universe in our thought, we are in resonance with our inner self. We dare say that what really inspires us about these people are not their achievements but the conviction we see in them, their vision, their energy and their compassion. We believe that they are not acting just from their intellect but from the stirrings of their hearts. As human beings, the heart is part of our fundamental make-up; it is indispensable to our joy, and the source of all true creativity.



*When we imagine freely, create bravely, and embrace more of the universe in our thought, we are in resonance with our inner self.*



## Suggested Article

### Who is Malala?

Pamela McLoughlin

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/Malala.pdf](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/04/Malala.pdf)



### *The Restless Mind*

Today's world is full of information that pulls our attention in umpteen different directions. As students, or even as adults, when faced with a decision we choose an option after analyzing the pros and cons. However, sometimes we start second-guessing ourselves when we are exposed to different options later. The resulting wavering of mind and heart starts eating into our happiness and peace of mind. This restless state of mind in turn affects our current performance and future decision making.

Why this wavering of mind and heart? In modern life, we have trained our mind to follow so many different channels that the effectiveness of the mind along any one channel is reduced. Further, these different channels become sources of strong attractions and repulsions in our heart that lead to uneasiness and anxiety. An unsteady mind clouded by conflicting emotions becomes a drag on our conviction, imagination, energy and overall well-being.

Choices made based on our innermost calling and the feelings in our heart stay with us through the ups and downs that are part of life. These choices have a deeply stabilizing and nourishing effect that reduces the wavering of the mind. We naturally start limiting the number of channels we pursue and start doing more of what is really important to us. Being in touch with our feelings takes us to a space where the process is not analytical, not one of pros and cons, but one that needs a different kind of awareness. We develop the capacity to become an observer of ourselves.

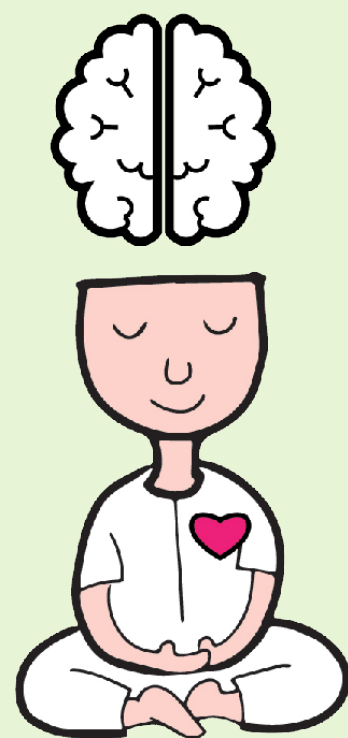
***A relaxed and clear mind that is supported by a good heart forms the foundation for good character.***

## Being My Best

Following a heart-driven process helps develop character from the inside out. A relaxed and clear mind that is supported by a good heart forms the foundation for good character. The external character reflects this internal state through communication, relationships, and level-headed and organized thinking. The innate goodness and humility of heart is expressed through sharing in the happiness and sorrows of others, and openness to accepting feedback and criticism.

## Expansive Thinking

The ability to think expansively in an all-embracing way, or visionary thinking, is not possible without feeling. While the intellect can be focused on a particular thing, feeling allows us to widen the field and incorporate several things simultaneously in a holistic way to arrive at a vision.



One example of such expansive thinking, which is different from the intellectual process, is the story of the 6-year-old American boy who wrote to President Obama in September 2016. He wrote this letter, an excerpt of which is included below, after seeing the photo of a young Syrian boy affected in the war:

“Dear President Obama, remember the boy who was picked up by the ambulance in Syria? Can you please go get him and bring him to our home ... we’ll be waiting for you guys with flags, flowers and balloons. We will give him a family and he will be our brother.”

This boy is combining what he has learned from multiple sources — his knowledge of world news, and his understanding of geography, politics and war — with the feelings in his heart of universal love and brotherhood, to arrive at a vision for the solution. He has already envisioned the other boy coming to his home, being given a celebratory welcome and invited into his home to be a part of his family. One can imagine this boy growing up to be a leader who uses his heart and his intellect to solve problems. A vision born out of feeling, even if it is not concrete, provides direction and impetus for perseverant action utilizing all our faculties. Feeling is the quiet steam without smoke and noise that has the power to rotate a turbine or push a locomotive.

***A vision born out of feeling, even if it is not concrete, provides direction and impetus for perseverant action utilizing all our faculties.***



#### Suggested Video

**Boy, 6, who wrote refugee letter visits Barack Obama**

[www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-38032575/boy-6-who-wrote-refugee-letter-visits-barack-obama](http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-38032575/boy-6-who-wrote-refugee-letter-visits-barack-obama)



### Heartful Teacher Tip:

Encourage students to incorporate feeling into their creative process. Inspire them to experiment and learn from their personal experience how starting with feeling and including the heart, can help them calm their mind, find joy in what they are doing, and lift their thinking to a new level. Motivate them to combine what they are learning in school with the inspiration they are feeling inside.



### Connecting with the Stillness in Our Heart

*“All true artists, whether they know it or not,  
create from a place of no-mind,  
from inner stillness.”*

Eckhart Tolle

When a thought becomes deep, it brings into effect something like a pause that has a tremendous force. This pause, when a thought deepens, when we connect with the stillness in our heart, when a vision is created, and when a subtle and silent resolve is made to complete the action, is how creation comes into being. While schools are trying hard to find a balance between filling classes with information and providing

space for original thought, the heart does not yet have a special place in the education experience.

To enable each student to connect with this place of inner stillness in their heart, we need a practical method, and for ages that method has been meditation. In this state of heartfelt silence, our mental energies are not dissipated in umpteen different directions but instead, with practice, we are able to get absorbed within and achieve deep states of stillness.

Meditation is a simple and effective process for connecting our mind and heart, for melding thinking and feeling, for combining analytical thinking with the creative process. In this process, the mind and our thoughts become regulated and clear, and the intellect and ego are refined. But most vitally, the heart itself is nourished, and we feel its subtle presence throughout. Through this practice the heart becomes the center of our experience, and the mind is freed to perform at its full potential. Thoughts arising from such a mind have the beautiful fragrance of the heart and can make a deep impact on others nearby.

***Meditation is a simple and effective process  
for connecting our mind and heart,  
for melding thinking and feeling,  
for combining analytical thinking  
with the creative process.***



The next chapter describes one example of what a Heartful classroom can be — a true and inspiring story of how a Heartful approach to learning and teaching brings the heart and feeling into the education experience and can make a real difference in inspiring students.





## Personal Exercise and Reflection

Sit silently and participate in this self-reflection exercise. Below are some suggested questions to spark your thought process. They are just suggestions. Choose questions that appeal to you. You don't have to answer all of them.

1. **Who is your hero, and why?**
2. **Reflect on situations when your mind is really restless. What can you do to help calm your mind?**
3. **What do you know about meditation and how it helps?**



## Suggested Article

### **The Light-Beam Rider**

Walter Isaacson

[www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/opinion/sunday/the-light-beam-rider.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/opinion/sunday/the-light-beam-rider.html)

### **Don't Let Your Head Attack Your Heart**

Peter Bregman

[www.hbr.org/2014/07/dont-let-your-head-attack-your-heart](http://www.hbr.org/2014/07/dont-let-your-head-attack-your-heart)

### **What is Positive Education and How to Apply It?**

Mariana Pascha

[www.positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-positive-education](http://www.positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-positive-education)



## Suggested Videos

### **Positive Education: Teaching Wellbeing and Mindfulness**

[www.sbs.com.au/news/thefeed/story/positive-education-teaching-wellbeing-and-mindfulness](http://www.sbs.com.au/news/thefeed/story/positive-education-teaching-wellbeing-and-mindfulness)



Teaching is a work of  
**heart.**

# 5. A Peep into a Heartful Classroom

Dr. Sandra Batista, who contributed this chapter, is a Senior Lecturer of Computer Science at University of Southern California. She has been practicing meditation for over twenty years and integrating this meditative awareness and sensitivity into her teaching and work.

## How Teaching Math Teaches Compassion and Kindness

*(This essay was written in 2017 when Dr. Batista was at Princeton University)*

**Dr. Sandra Batista**

Senior Lecturer of Computer Science University of Southern California

I am a theoretical computer scientist. I teach introductory theoretical computer science at Princeton. Can you guess what the most difficult aspect of teaching this class is? It is that the students do not believe in themselves. Even though they are brilliant Princeton students, they still think that math is hard and that they are not very good at math.

Well, what I am to do? I am trained in math and computer science, not psychology or psychotherapy. This is where my years of training in meditation come in. From the training in settling my own mind



and cultivating peace within myself, I have noticed that whenever there is resistance, especially strong resistance of this type, I have found that the most beneficial antidotes are love and mercy expressed through kindness and gentle compassion. Let me tell you how my course staff and I put this in action. I realized that if I am going to make progress with my students, I am going to have to figure out how to help them overcome their self-doubt and suffering when it came to math classes.



### Compassion Guide 1:

## We do not humiliate people.

How does this manifest itself? First, we are very careful in our language. I am not sure if you have ever been in a math class and had a professor say “obviously” or “clearly.” Well, it may not be so obvious to someone in the class. So, we avoid using those terms and any language that may alienate people.

Second, we encourage collaborative problem solving. We solicit responses from students, and whether the solution given is right or wrong, we discuss its validity as a team. This helps students who may be afraid to ask for clarifications. This also makes learning our collective goal, so even if a student gives an incorrect response, we work together to improve it to make it right. Everyone’s contribution is valued and welcome.

Finally, we do not give feedback on graded materials that humiliate people. We offer detailed comments to justify deductions that permit students to improve their understanding. In this way, students know we are working with them to improve the mastery of the material.

A critical aspect to our collaborative, supportive style of learning is that everyone is a valuable contributor to the learning process. This leads to our second guide for compassion.

***A critical aspect to our collaborative, supportive style of learning is that everyone is a valuable contributor to the learning process.***



## Compassion Guide 2:

# We do not give up on anyone, and especially not ourselves.

You may have noticed that when we involve everyone and actively support them, we encourage their involvement. I assure students that although the material is challenging, if they put in the work they will be supported by me and my course staff. How do we keep them from giving up? Why is this so crucial?

When we write someone else off or, even worse still, when we write ourselves off, we assume we cannot do something before we even try. It is almost as though we are writing off our very existence — why bother putting in the effort? I assure my students if you do not give up on yourself, I am not giving up on you. I assure them if you give up on yourself before you ever try, you will never know what you can do. If you keep on trying, at least then you will have a realistic view.

There is one student in particular who would come to my office hours very frustrated. He had already dropped the course once. He had already spent hours on a counting problem and made no progress. I told him the only way out was through, and that he had to continue working on the problem in a systematic way, labeling the enumerations that I had given him. Then I sent him on his way. He was annoyed, but he wrote back that he made progress and kept coming back to office hours for more guidance. Then after an exam, I handed him his graded test back and he froze with tears welling up in his eyes. He has scored a perfect score on the exam. He could not reply to my praise and he stood there holding his exam shaking. For me something magical had happened: he had told himself he was not good in math, and there he was with concrete evidence in his hand that that was not was true.

We were changing people's perceptions of themselves or what they believed that they could or could not do. However, that we needed to change people's beliefs about themselves was concerning. This leads to our first guide for kindness. How is it that we are not kind to ourselves?



### Kindness Guide 1:

## How are we kind to ourselves?

What is the story that we are telling ourselves about our abilities? Are we being kind to ourselves through our beliefs? For many of my students that story is, 'I am not a math person.' I think the most powerful thing we can do is give them the gift of doubting that story. Maybe you haven't had enough support yet? Maybe you need to rest more? Maybe you need a tutor? Maybe you need to modify your academic schedule? Maybe you need more support from health services or counseling?

I think this is a constantly evolving struggle. It is something that I struggle with all the time, especially with overworking. However, at least if I cast doubt in my story, my story that I need to overwork to make progress, I can see how I can treat myself in a kinder way. Thankfully my students are teaching me by the kindness they show towards me.





## Kindness Guide 2:

# How are my students kind to me?

My students treat me with profound respect, and because of this I am learning that I should treat myself with respect, too. They seek my advice for personal matters, academics, and careers, and this is giving me more confidence to listen to my own advice.

They also go out of their comfort zones to participate in class. They get over their fears of being wrong or appearing stupid to help our class make progress. I will never forget the first day I was in a huge lecture hall. I was terrified, and all of a sudden, the students who normally talk to me would not speak at all. I finally asked, “Why aren’t you talking to me? It’s very lonely up here when you don’t talk to me.” Then they did one of the most generous things I had ever experienced. They all started chiming in the same way they would as if we were in a very small room. They began raising their hands to reply to questions. Then they raised their hands to ask their own questions or for clarifications. Then they just started having a conversation with me from their seats while I was in the front of a huge lecture hall. We were all a team working and having a conversation to solve these problems. It was magical, and now they continue to chime in whenever they want. We are all better for it.







### Kindness Guide 3:

## How are my students kind to each other?



I think you can tell I have very kind and generous students, so please let me share one last story of how they amaze me with how they are kind to each other. They are permitted to collaborate in teams on their homework. It is a great opportunity for students to make friends. I am frequently reminding them, “if you are always competing to be the smartest person in the room, then you are missing your opportunity to help and serve others.” My lab TAs are extremely talented and skillful in math. I think they may very well be some of the smartest people I have met, but what is more is that they are kind and that they love to use their knowledge of math to help others to learn math too. They may not be able to convince other students to love math as much as they do, but they do share their love and they are passionate. They are so passionate, in fact, that they were keeping a secret from me.

We asked that they work 6 hours per week in total during the evenings, Monday through Thursday, to help students on their homework. They were so committed and devoted to helping the students that they were staying until 10 p.m. or midnight nearly every night of the week. I was upset that they hadn’t told me and wanted to be sure they were fairly paid. More than anything else, I was remarkably moved by their kindness.

## Putting the Heart at the Center of the Education Experience

As a Heartfulness practitioner who has been meditating for more than twenty years, it is hard for me to separate my practice, my time meditating and such, from the rest of my daily life, such as teaching. In fact, my Heartfulness practice is integrated into my daily life so much as I bring meditative awareness and sensitivity to my work, and I also consider every interaction in my daily life as a chance to engage in a heartfelt way with everyone. Why do I need to go anywhere or do anything in particular, when I have all that is sacred in front of me in the form of my students?

I think my meditation practice has helped me to recognize the importance of being an educator and the relationship between a teacher and a student. Having students trust me to teach them is a great blessing and responsibility. I am grateful that my students trust me. I am grateful that my students realize that I care for them as my own relatives. I am grateful that my students allow me to push them, so that they can bring out the best that they are for themselves and for the benefit and to the highest service of all of humanity.

While meditation has been around for centuries, a lot of scientific research has been done recently to evaluate its benefits. This information is challenging our common notion about the role of the heart in our human system — is it merely a pumping station? Or is it the central unit regulating all our physical, mental and emotional rhythms? There is a need for education systems and schools to review this research and reflect on how to incorporate heart-based self-development into the education experience.

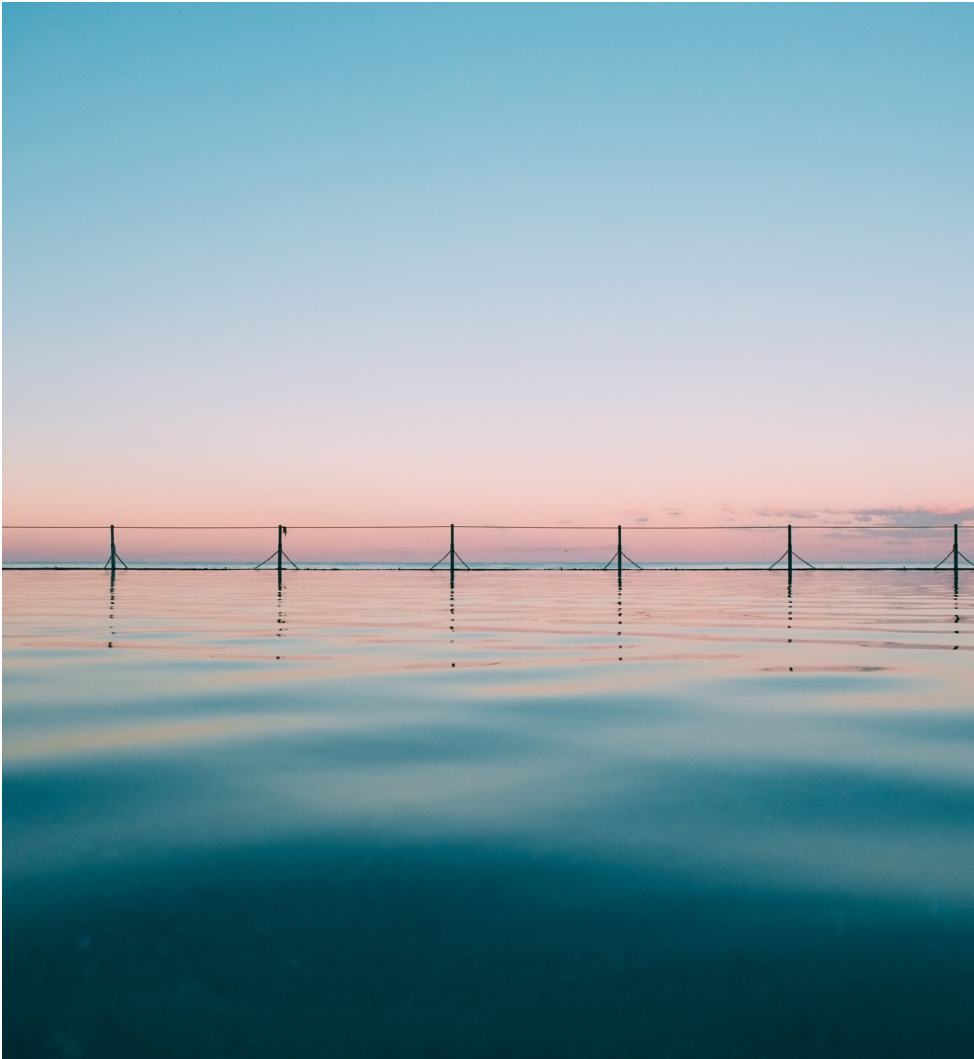


### Suggested Article

#### Integral Communion

Christopher Macmanus

[www.heartfulnessinstitute.org/blog-1/integral-communion](http://www.heartfulnessinstitute.org/blog-1/integral-communion)



I think 99 times  
and find nothing.  
I stop thinking,  
swim in silence, and  
the truth comes to me.

Albert Einstein



## 6. The Science of the Heart, Meditation and Self-Development

*“The next step in human evolution is not inevitable, but for the first time in the history of the planet, it can be a conscious choice. Who is making that choice? You are.”*

**Eckhart Tolle**

For millions of years, evolutionary leaps enabled human beings to develop a greater degree of mastery over their external environment in order to survive and fulfill their basic needs of food and shelter.<sup>1</sup> Fast-forward to today, and the marvels of science and technology have led to immense advances in every area, including food production, medicine, communication, construction, transportation, etc., touching almost every aspect of human life.

As human intellectual and scientific endeavor stretches towards greater knowledge and mastery of external nature to improve our quality of life, each generation rediscovers a truth that human beings have intuitively known for a long time — that our experience and perception of external nature is inextricably intertwined with our experience and mastery over

our internal nature. A lot of recent medical research into epigenetics,<sup>2</sup> neurocardiology,<sup>3</sup> psychophysiology,<sup>3</sup> sleep,<sup>4</sup> stress, and brain waves<sup>5</sup> is beginning to uncover new information about the power of human thought and the relationship between the mind and the heart.



## Suggested Videos

### Biology of Belief

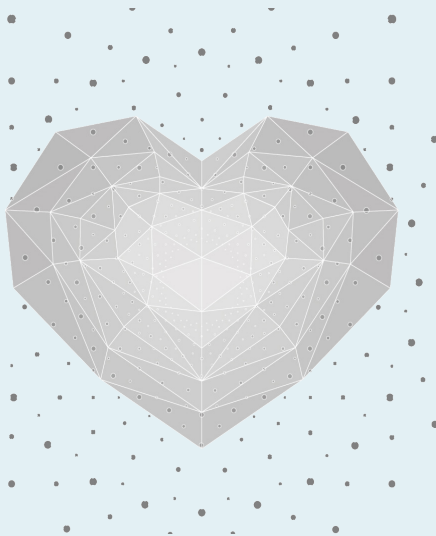
Bruce Lipton

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjj0xVM4x1l](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjj0xVM4x1l)

### The Science of the Heart

Substantial research into the role of the heart in human performance has been done by the HeartMath research center. An overview of this research was published in Science of the heart by Dr. Rollin McCraty.<sup>3</sup> Due to this research and other such studies, we now understand that the heart contains its own brain, which receives, processes and sends information to multiple organs, and that there is more information flowing from the heart to the brain, through its ascending neural pathways, than in the other direction.

HeartMath research has demonstrated that stress and negative emotions disturb the heart's vibratory rhythm, which is then communicated to the brain through these neural pathways, impairing all aspects of our cognitive function — thinking, learning, reasoning and making decisions. On the other hand, positive feelings in the heart harmonize the vibratory pattern and enhance our cognitive functions, our ability for self-regulation and our overall performance. This concept of **Coherence**, which is characterized as a state of optimal function of mental, emotional and bodily processes that is achieved when the heart's vibratory pattern is harmonized, is the most significant result of this research from the HeartMath Institute from an education perspective.



## The Science of Meditation

A lot of research has been done in recent years on the benefits of meditation. A brief description of three such studies is included below.

Harvard neuroscientist Sara Lazar studied the physical changes in the brain before and after meditation. <sup>6</sup> She found differences in brain volume in different regions of the brain before and after eight weeks of meditation practice in a group of people who had never meditated before. The regions that were positively affected included areas responsible for attention, learning, cognition, memory and emotional regulation. In addition, those associated with empathy, compassion, fear and stress also were affected positively.



### Suggested Videos

#### How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains

Sara Lazar

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc)

A 2015 study in the Journal of Community Hospital Internal Medicine Perspectives<sup>7</sup> measured the impact of Heartfulness meditation on healthcare providers. The study was conducted by the Internal Medicine Department at Wellspan York Hospital, Pennsylvania. Thirty-five healthcare professionals, including resident physicians, faculty physicians, and nurses, participated in the study. Twelve healthcare professionals who were in the control arm did not participate in meditation. The results of meditation showed significant decreases in negative attributes, including anger, anxiety, cynicism, irritability, fear and stress, and substantial increases in positive attributes, including joy, calmness, confidence and sleep quality. Significant increases in telomere length were also measured in participants age 33 and under.



A study<sup>8</sup> in the journal *Translational Psychiatry* analyzed the molecular mechanisms behind meditation's effects on the immune system. The conclusions showed that the effects of meditation are more than just relaxation. They showed that meditation can shift gene expression and even boost mood over time. All the groups in the 20,000 genes studied showed shifts in gene expression related to stress, inflammation and healing, with the experienced meditators exhibiting particular shifts in genes related to fighting infection. The participants also had increases in telomerase activity, thought to indicate healthier aging.

***The effects of meditation are  
more than just relaxation.  
Meditation can shift gene expression  
and even boost mood over time.***

## **The Science of Self-Development**

Starting from a relatively young age, modern life stretches us physically, mentally and emotionally. How we handle the stresses and strains of life and how we are able to use those experiences to develop ourselves and others around us determine our entire quality of life. Leading business schools have done substantial research into self-development. Three such studies, described below, highlight the central role the heart plays in self-development.

Jim Collins and his team researched 'Level 5' leaders, the key ingredient behind truly great companies.<sup>9</sup> Level 5 leaders, they concluded, combine extreme personal humility with intense will and resolve, the tendency to give credit to others while assigning blame to themselves, and personal shyness but fearlessness when it comes to making decisions for the organization. These leaders, they observed, confront the most brutal facts of their current reality, yet simultaneously maintain absolute faith that they will prevail in the end. It is worth noting that these core qualities of the heart — humility, iron will, fearlessness, faith and putting others before oneself — formed the differentiating characteristics of CEOs of truly great and enduring companies.



Daniel Goleman, in his article “What makes a leader?”<sup>10</sup> presented the conclusions of his team’s research that shows that emotional intelligence (EI) is twice as important as technical skills or IQ for excellent performance at all levels. It is again worth highlighting that EI skills – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills – all directly relate to the heart.

***Emotional Intelligence skills – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills – all directly relate to the heart.***

In his research,<sup>11</sup> Shawn Achor explored the ‘happiness advantage’ - how when people work with a positive mindset, performance on nearly every level – productivity, creativity, engagement – improves. Based on the results of his research, he recommends developing simple habits such as gratitude exercises, meditation, physical activity, and appreciation to cultivate a positive mind-set.

***When people work with a positive mindset, performance on nearly every level – productivity, creativity, engagement – improves.***





### Heartful Teacher Tip:

Incorporate micro-breaks in the class room in which students can participate in activities that are rejuvenating and mood boosting. Uplifting gratitude exercises, a short and fun physical activity, a few minutes of silent relaxation and heartful silence, can make a significant difference.



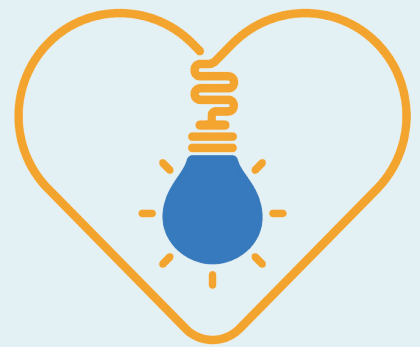
## The Need for Heart-Based Self-Development in Schools

The qualities highlighted in the scientific studies discussed above are latent in all of us. They can be nurtured and developed through effective heart-centered practices and practical exercises that promotes emotional and social development. Schools can play a pivotal role in preparing students all the way from elementary through high school to integrate the heart's inspiration into all aspects of their lives.

A self-development program built around the following three core elements can teach students important life skills that can make a profound impact and enhance all aspects of their lives:

- Heart-centered practices to improve physical, mental, emotional and inner wellbeing
- A scientific approach to these practices with an emphasis on personal experience and self-observation
- Practical techniques and exercises for heart-based self-development

*Schools can play a pivotal role in preparing students all the way from elementary through high school to integrate the heart's inspiration into all aspects of their lives.*



## Personal Exercise and Reflection

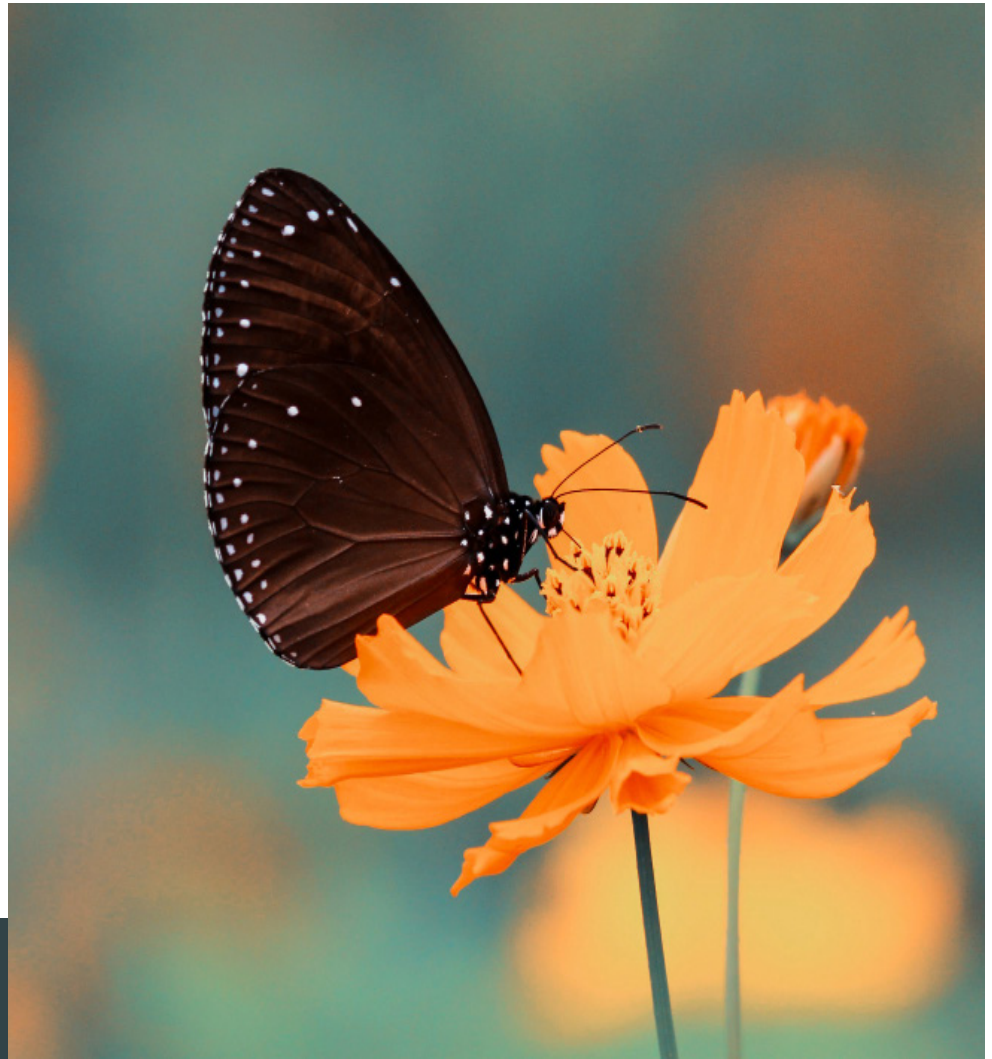
Below are some suggested questions to spark your thought process. They are just suggestions. Choose questions that appeal to you. You don't have to answer all of them.

1. Search for recent scientific research into the heart and meditation. Read 1 or 2 articles to understand the benefits of heart-centered techniques and meditation.
2. Search for management studies on leading from the heart. Read 1 or 2 articles to understand the role of the heart in leadership and self-development.
3. Research and find people in different fields who are using meditation today and why.



## References

- 1. Human Evolution Timeline**  
[www.humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-evolution-timeline-interactive](http://www.humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-evolution-timeline-interactive)
- 2. The Biology of Belief**  
Bruce Lipton  
[www.bruce-lipton.com/books/biology-of-belief](http://www.bruce-lipton.com/books/biology-of-belief)
- 3. Science of the Heart: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance**  
Rollin McCraty  
[www.heartmath.org/research/science-of-the-heart/](http://www.heartmath.org/research/science-of-the-heart/)
- 4. One More Reason to Get a Good Night's Sleep**  
Jeff Liff  
[www.ted.com/talks/jeff\\_iliff\\_one\\_more\\_reason\\_to\\_get\\_a\\_good\\_night\\_s\\_sleep?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/jeff_iliff_one_more_reason_to_get_a_good_night_s_sleep?language=en)
- 5. Meditation and HD**  
Stephanie Liou  
[www.web.stanford.edu/group/hopes/cgi-bin/hopes\\_test/meditation-and-hd/](http://www.web.stanford.edu/group/hopes/cgi-bin/hopes_test/meditation-and-hd/)
- 6. Harvard Neuroscientist: Meditation Not Only Reduces Stress, Here's How It Changes Your Brain**  
Brigid Schulte  
[www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/05/26/harvard-neuroscientist-meditation-not-only-reduces-stress-it-literally-changes-your-brain/?utm\\_term=.0aa5fbc7b001](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/05/26/harvard-neuroscientist-meditation-not-only-reduces-stress-it-literally-changes-your-brain/?utm_term=.0aa5fbc7b001)
- 7. Effect of Heartfulness Meditation on Burnout, Emotional Wellness, and Telomere Length in Health Care Professionals**  
Jayaram Thimmapuram et al.  
[www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20009666.2016.1270806](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20009666.2016.1270806)
- 8. New Clues into How Meditation May Boost The Immune System**  
Alice G. Walton  
[www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwaltton/2016/09/06/new-clues-into-how-meditation-can-boost-the-immune-system/#799662011c18](http://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwaltton/2016/09/06/new-clues-into-how-meditation-can-boost-the-immune-system/#799662011c18)
- 9. Level 5 Leadership: The Triumph of Humility and Fierce Resolve**  
Jim Collins  
[www.hbr.org/2005/07/level-5-leadership-the-triumph-of-humility-and-fierce-resolve](http://www.hbr.org/2005/07/level-5-leadership-the-triumph-of-humility-and-fierce-resolve)
- 10. Emotional Intelligence**  
Daniel Goleman  
[www.danielgoleman.info/daniel-goleman-what-makes-a-leader-2/](http://www.danielgoleman.info/daniel-goleman-what-makes-a-leader-2/)
- 11. Positive Intelligence**  
Shawn Achor  
[www.hbr.org/2012/01/positive-intelligence](http://www.hbr.org/2012/01/positive-intelligence)



I am in the process of becoming the best version of myself.





## 7. Why the Heart as the Center?

*“ A person’s world is only as big as their heart. ”*

**Tanya A. Moore**

“Think out of the box” is a phrase we hear often — it refers to an invisible mental box that we have put ourselves into that prevents us from expanding our view. We become aware of the box within which we seem to be stuck by getting an occasional glimpse of what it’s like to be outside the box, due to either a personal experience or someone else’s observations.

It could be an ‘aha’ moment when an entrepreneur gets a business idea or a scientist the solution. It could be a moment of inspiration. Perhaps a solution to a life situation presents itself that fits all your needs and just feels right, but somehow never came up during your analytical process examining each logical option. Or it could be an experience where you open your heart and realize where true joy lies.

“Let’s take a step back” is another phrase we often hear — it implies we are too caught up in the problem, that we have lost sight of the bigger picture. By taking a step back we allow ourselves to step out of that box, even if only for a brief period, to consider the bigger picture. Perhaps the word ‘outstanding’ really refers to those who show the imagination and the willingness to step out of the box in which others remain.

We come across many such boxes as we go along. Education, in its essence, teaches us how to recognize when we are in a box, and how to think differently — from which springs innovation. However, not all boxes are the same.

## Stress, Fears and Desires

Some boxes are made of our experiences, insecurities, fears and temptations. We are all too familiar with how these emotions can impair our thinking and our actions and limit our potential. Being stressed or anxious affects almost everything — our behavior and attitude, interactions with others, our ability to perform, and our sleep.

## Thinking and Feeling

Perhaps thinking limited to using only intellectual and logical processes itself becomes a box when the signals from the heart are ignored. As we assume positions of responsibility in our professional and personal lives, we realize that at the heart of it lies making decisions that affect ourselves and those around us. Making tough decisions forces us to carefully dwell on the answer from our intellect to see if our heart agrees with it. Throughout history, many great leaders at important junctures in their lives made decisions that were *inspired from their hearts* even though they may have gone against common logic.



## Ego, Another Box

Probably the trickiest box that we all encounter is our ego. Sometimes making us feel shy and self-conscious, and at other times arrogant and domineering, sometimes triggering a feeling of inferiority and want, and in other situations leading to feelings of jealousy, it can feel like a sorcerer who can change form at will. Egoistic feelings can distort our thinking and push us to pursue short-term goals directed towards instant gratification. Real peace, stability and joy lie outside this box — a feeling of great lightness and freedom that lets us pursue our true goals without being bogged down — the realm of our heart and spirit.

*Real peace, stability and joy lie outside this box — a feeling of great lightness and freedom that lets us pursue our true goals without being bogged down — the realm of our heart and spirit.*

## Unboxing Ourselves

A beautiful principle of inversion comes into play here. By stepping out of each of these boxes, we give ourselves more space and freedom. Our thinking becomes broader. We become more accepting and open-hearted, and at the same time we traverse the path towards our own center — the heart. We are simultaneously centering ourselves and expanding our circumference to really connect with everyone and everything around us.





## Through Heartfulness, Inspiration

Meditation on the heart can be very helpful to us in this process of transformation. It helps in building a solid foundation of mental and emotional well-being, just as exercise builds a strong foundation of physical well-being.

Meditation is based on the simple principle that we imbibe the essence of what we meditate upon, and by meditating on the heart we imbibe its essence. Heartfulness is a dual process of refining and purifying of our heart-mind field while settling the mind on our center. By this process we achieve a state of coherence that results in maximizing well-being and performance at the same time.

***Heartfulness is a dual process of refining and purifying of our heart-mind field while settling the mind on our center.***



### Heartful Teacher Tip:

Design a classroom environment that is relaxing and promotes positive feelings in the heart. Creating this external environment promotes a similar internal environment in the heart that enhances cognitive functions and has a direct impact on student performance. Learning becomes a joyful activity.

Even at the physical level, meditation on the heart can be beneficial in reducing anxiety and stress, normalizing our blood pressure, boosting our immunity, improving our quality of sleep, and providing a feeling of relaxation and overall well-being. As we proceed with our practice, we find that this subtle vibration from the center can help in refining our emotions, intellect and ego and take us towards our calm and still center. With a refined mind, intellect and ego, a person can operate at their highest potential, and exude a feeling of clarity, lightness and joy. Whatever activity we decide to engage in, we are able to fully fix our attention on it while still being centered.

Modern education curriculums aim to fine-tune our thinking and intellect, and to help us develop soft skills related to attitude, work ethic, teamwork and communication. We need to support this external process with an internal practice of personal development — balance the research and knowledge with personal experience from our practice.

The next chapter introduces a scientific approach to heart-centered self-development called Heartfulness. Heartfulness provides the tools needed to actualize the potential resources of our heart. The simplicity of the practice makes it easy to integrate into our everyday routine, and each practitioner can test the effectiveness of the practice by a process of self-observation.

***Meditation on the heart can be beneficial in reducing anxiety and stress, normalizing our blood pressure, boosting our immunity, improving our quality of sleep, and providing a feeling of relaxation and overall well-being.***



Sit silently and participate in this self-reflection exercise. Below are some suggested questions to spark your thought process. They are just suggestions. Choose questions that appeal to you. You don't have to answer all of them.

- 1. Do you feel that you are performing to your full potential? If not, what factors are limiting you? How do you feel meditation can help you build a foundation for achieving your goals?**
- 2. Close your eyes and relax. Let your mind go to any situation, big or small, where you have used your heart openly and effectively. Pause for a few minutes and immerse yourself in the experience. What are the feelings and qualities you experience in this heartfelt condition?**
- 3. Close your eyes again and relax. Ask yourself the following question: how do I nurture my heart? Pause and immerse yourself in this introspection.**







We can wait for the inner inspiration to come or we can actively cultivate it.

The choice is ours.

Choosing to actively cultivate the inner inspiration of the heart is **Heartfulness.**

Kamlesh D. Patel



## 8. Heartfulness: A Scientific Approach to Heart-Centered Meditation

*“What lies behind you and what lies in front of you pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.”*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Whether it is soulful music, a simple act of giving, or an entire cultural movement, human actions that lift human capability and the human spirit as a whole happen when the heart and mind act as one. From time immemorial, mystics have strived towards this unity, and then, having achieved it, traced the path back towards diversity. With that inner state, their feelings, thoughts, words and actions become a natural expression of the heart. The scientist symbolizes the power of the intellect and the rational mind in understanding phenomena and creating solutions. The scientist studies the immense diversity in Nature, and through that tireless research aims to find the underlying cause that is at the base of this diversity. Through this process, he or she hopes to create a better world for all.

The legendary University of Oregon track and field coach and Nike co-founder, Bill Bowerman, once said, **“If you have a body, you are an athlete,”** thus inspiring the athlete in every one of us. Building on this, Nike’s mission statement is **“To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world.”** As human beings endowed with brilliant minds, we can go one step further and say, **‘We are all scientists, and we are all mystics.’** And it is very promising that doctors, soldiers, sportspersons, artists, students and many other fields are now incorporating meditation as an effective wellness and performance enhancement tool.

This balance between the outward-focused mind through which a human being interacts with the external world, and the inward-focused mind through which a human being derives sustenance and inspiration from the heart, are both essential for our well-being. With scientific research pointing to an enormous unutilized human potential, and modern life putting an ever-greater strain on our minds and bodies, thought leaders inspire us to integrate the heart more into every aspect of our lives. There is now a surge of interest and enthusiasm in simple and effective techniques for stress management and achieving our full potential. Will the next evolutionary leap be characterized by a human race that is realizing its own potential hidden in the heart?



***This balance between the outward-focused mind through which a human being interacts with the external world, and the inward-focused mind through which a human being derives sustenance and inspiration from the heart, are both essential for our well-being.***

## Mindfulness and Heartfulness

Mindfulness offers us non-judgmental, moment-by-moment awareness and aliveness to the present moment, our thoughts, and a sense of connection with our breath and our body. This connection with the present moment is precious in today's world which is dominated by external attractions, stresses and worries. A beautiful feature of the Mindfulness movement is the growing emphasis on compassion and kindness with ourselves and others.

Heartfulness is a continuation of Mindfulness inwards, an expansion of a mindful practice into deeper dimensions. It is a journey from the realm of the body, the mind, and feelings, to the center of our heart, the profound place of inner stillness and silence within. This diving deep into ourselves profoundly rejuvenates us. We tune our being to the subtlest vibration in our heart center, and all the other layers of our being — our ego, intuition, emotions and feelings, intellect, thinking, and body — are refined and recharged.

***Heartfulness is a continuation of Mindfulness inwards,  
an expansion of a mindful practice into deeper dimensions.  
It is a journey from the realm of the body, the  
mind, and feelings, to the center of our heart.***



*“Depending on how we manage the heart-mind field, it can either be turbulent and complex, like a roaring ocean during a storm, or it can be like a still pond where even a feather landing on the surface creates ripples. This is where a spiritual practice has a vital role to play, as it gives us the techniques to regulate and simplify this field, bringing clarity, focus, stillness and peace.”*

**Kamlesh D. Patel**

Heartfulness is a secular practice of heart-centered self-development that helps tune the heart-mind field. It offers a simple set of breathing, relaxation, heartfelt-silence, and rejuvenation techniques — dynamic and effective tools for personal growth and mind management. Through these techniques, one can learn to brush aside the complexity of thoughts and enjoy deep states of consciousness and stillness that will refresh body, mind and spirit. With a clear and relaxed mind, one can operate effectively, with lightness, happiness and a sense of fulfillment.

Heartfulness embraces a scientific approach through personal experience and observation. In this personal scientific research, the practitioner himself becomes all three — the experimenter, the object being experimented upon and the result of the experiment.

***Heartfulness embraces a scientific approach through personal experience and observation. In this personal scientific research, the practitioner himself becomes all three — the experimenter, the object being experimented upon and the result of the experiment.***

It offers the following practical techniques:



## **Heartfulness Relaxation**

**A simple technique to relax the body and mind**

Unless the body is relaxed, it is difficult to bring our mind to a relaxed state. Heartfulness relaxation helps to bring the body and mind to a calm state conducive to meditation. The entire body from top to toe is brought to a deeply relaxed state by gradually drawing the mind's attention through different parts of the body and finally settling on the heart.



## **Heartful Silence**

**A simple technique to tune the heart-mind field**

Heartful Silence is a process of fine tuning the heart with the mind by meditation on the heart. With practice, the mind becomes more and more centered in the heart. When the mind is calm and tuned to receive the heart's guidance from our deepest consciousness, then life becomes a reflection of our authentic Self and hence a journey filled with wonder, joy, clarity, peace and love.





Adding this time to be in meditative Heartful Silence to our morning routine is a great way to begin and set the right tone for the day.

*With practice, when the mind become more and more centered in the heart, when the mind is calm and tuned to receive the heart's guidance from our deepest consciousness, then life becomes a reflection of our authentic Self and hence a journey filled with wonder, joy, clarity, peace and love.*



### **Heartfulness Rejuvenation**

**A simple technique to remove turbulence in the heart-mind field**

When inner peace is disturbed, the connecting link to the heart is weakened. The mind loses its clarity due to this turbulence and is frittered away into multiple different channels. Heartfulness Rejuvenation is a simple technique of unwinding and de-cluttering at the end of the day to remove daily stress. The technique helps remove all that is leading us to a feeling of heaviness, anxiety and mental fatigue, and fills that space with lightness that permeates the heart and every corner of the body. At the end, when all the accumulated stress of the day leaves our system, we feel rejuvenated and light, and the mind regains its calmness and clarity.





## Fostering an Inner Connection

A simple technique to nurture the inner connection with our heart

In Heartfulness, connecting within is creating a relationship with our heart. This can be done in many ways — through self-dialogue, heartfelt silence, and introspection. It is important to bring our heart increasingly into our thoughts. Heartful Silence in the morning is the ideal way to create this connection and set the right tone for our day. Evening rejuvenation helps us strengthen this connection by removing all the clutter that was accumulated during the day. The next peak time to connect within is bedtime during the balance between being awake and asleep.

By establishing this connection just prior to falling asleep, we create a link between our conscious mind and our subconscious that will last throughout the night. Through this daily cycle of connection, starting with morning meditation and ending with the bedtime contemplation, we expand our capacity to be attuned to our heart and the highest potential within us. It helps us continuously improve ourselves every day.

*Through this daily cycle of connection, starting with morning meditation and ending with the bedtime contemplation, we expand our capacity to be attuned to our heart and the highest potential within us.*





## Heartful Affirmations and Breathing with Awareness of Purpose

A simple practice to build a positive attitude and create ripples of goodness

We extend our internal practice through conscious thought processes and behavior that reflect and reinforce our internal condition of well-being. Thus, we make our consciousness dynamic — it grows, expands and touches the outermost layers of our being and others around us. We spread calmness, confidence, empathy and positivity wherever we are.



## The Heartfulness Journal

A simple technique to continuously observe and adjust

Like a scientist, this personal research is carried out with keen interest, constantly observing changes to the heart-mind field and adjusting ourselves to be in tune with the heart. The observations are noted in a personal journal that becomes a detailed log book to refer to when needed.

***“ A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. ”***

Nelson Mandela

A scientific approach to heart-based self-development can be easily integrated into the education experience. The benefits of such a simple change have tremendous positive potential for the world. Many young people today are drawn towards avenues for personal development that help them grow as balanced individuals — they are redefining success<sup>1</sup> as an opportunity to learn, love, and ultimately, grow.





## Heartful Teacher Tip

These simple tools provide a way for students to rejuvenate, relieve stress and fatigue, calm their mind and focus. With practice students become better at creating a positive inner environment even if the external environment is stressful or disturbing. This ability to self-regulate and tune their inner environment helps them handle pressure gracefully and elevate their performance.



## Personal Exercise and Reflection

Sit silently and participate in this self-reflection exercise. Below are some suggested questions to spark your thought process. They are just suggestions. Choose questions that appeal to you. You don't have to answer all of them.

**What was one time you were stressed out? Or were going through an experience that was emotionally challenging? How did this event affect you? What helped you recover from the experience?**

**Pause for a few minutes and go back to that time. What did you learn from this experience? What techniques have you developed for yourself to feel better during such situations?**



## References

1. **Redefining Success as an Avenue of Personal Growth**  
Suraj Sehgal  
[www.linkedin.com/pulse/redefining-success-avenue-personal-growth-suraj-sehgal?articleId=6226813422776905728](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/redefining-success-avenue-personal-growth-suraj-sehgal?articleId=6226813422776905728)



Sooner or later  
you're going to realize,  
just as I did...

There's a difference between  
knowing the path and  
walking the path.

Morpheus, *The Matrix*

## 9. Heart Speak: Personal Experiences

*“When your heart speaks, take good notes.”*

Judith Campbell

We asked some young meditators ‘Why do you meditate?’ and ‘Why is listening to your heart important to you?’ – and we listened.

Below are thoughts from five young meditators based on their experience with meditation and how it helps them.



**Clara Smith**

**Australian Junior Race  
Walking Champion,  
Heartfulness Practitioner**

“I started meditation when I was 16. Since then I have been practicing, and I also think that it helps a lot in my sport, and also in other aspects of life such as studying and everything like that. Especially in the big meets, I meditate for about 30 minutes the night before and it helps me to relax and really focus on what I need to do the next day. In my actual race, I feel that it has changed my mindset. I kind of see mindset like a mirror, if you are able to adjust it – you see a different lens to life. And when I am at the race it enables me to try really harder and push myself to the maximum.”



## Mamata Venkat

TEDx speaker and  
Heartfulness Trainer



“I have been practicing Heartfulness meditation for the past 7 years. The more and more I committed to my meditation practice, I could feel the benefits in every single aspect of my life. I am pretty glad that I started meditating right at the beginning of college, because if I didn’t have that technique that I could use to ground me every single day, I think transitioning into college and subsequently into adulthood would have been a lot more difficult. When I was in college, meditating first thing in the morning really set the standard for my day. I would be able to go into my day with a strong heart, sense of focus, and a determination to complete my routine and get everything done in a timely manner. I learned how to rely on the voice that I had connected to within through daily meditation on the heart. I think the best part about meditation is that when you create a strong, genuine connection internally with yourself, you are able to use that grounded energy and employ it in every aspect of your life.”

Mamata’s TEDx talk on “How Meditation Changed My Life”  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=snkr-1C2e7U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snkr-1C2e7U)





## Miriam Hanid

Artist, Silversmith and  
Heartfulness Trainer

Miriam is an extraordinary silversmith who has been selected for many awards and commissions. Many of her works are inspired by water. Miriam uses water as a metaphor for the divine current of energy flowing through all forms of life.

### **Creativity and Inspiration through Heartfulness**

“I feel certain that some of my greatest work in silver has been drawn from the deep insight and positive inspiration experienced in my daily meditation sessions. The Scintillated Vessel came directly from a feeling I had while on a Heartfulness Meditation Seminar in Denmark in 2011.

An important improvement has also been stress reduction in relation to deadlines, events, public speaking and the nature of long-term commissions. I have observed increased levels of efficiency and patience in myself when carrying out my work too. Although I do still have deadlines and more things to make and deal with than I have time to accommodate, I now prioritize a lot better and procrastinate less, which means that the actual silversmithing work I do is of a much higher standard than before.

I have been practicing Heartfulness Meditation for 11 years. This is a way of living and it has enriched my life in many ways. Meditation is such an important part of my creativity that I really can't do without it now!”

## Emma Ivaturi

Heartfulness Trainer,  
Heartfulness Magazine Editor  
and Designer



“I had long known the benefits of Heartfulness, having sought out a practice that spoke to my core. I felt excited for an opportunity to work with our local nonprofit Kidsbridge as a Heartfulness instructor in the classroom. The organization was thrilled to develop this branch of their elementary-age programming as more and more schools are opening up to the benefits of sharing relaxation techniques and mindful skillsets with children early on. The teachers and children both reported a calming outcome leading to less stress. I trust it’s the first of many seeds in an ever-enriching field of awareness. The first time a teacher recommended meditation to me was my last semester in college, so I can only imagine the ripple effects in a generation given these tools at the outset!

Having homeschooled an autistic child the year before, I saw her natural attraction to having the Heartfulness relaxation in our daily routine. Complimenting any educator training, I feel that my meditation practice has amplified the growth I’ve seen when working with children by being attuned and open to them, heart to heart. Now that we have a child of our own, I can see how much more patient and present I’m able to be with him because of this introspective practice.”



**Dr. Ranjani Iyer**

**Ph.D. in Education,  
Middle School Educator,  
Heartfulness Trainer  
and Education Coordinator**

“I started Heartfulness meditation when I was in high school and have been practicing for over two decades now.

After every meditation, I feel relaxed and serene. It gives me a moment to pause and self-observe. I feel calmness within and an inner balance to take me through my life as an educator and a mother of three teens.

As a middle school educator, I also find the relaxation techniques useful in my class and with my students. In my experience teaching in inner city schools, my teen students, with family and emotional issues, always come to me asking to do the ‘magic’ of Heartfulness relaxation to calm themselves and feel inner peace.”

## Heartfulness in the Classroom

Below are thoughts from students who experienced Heartfulness relaxation and meditation as part of a multi-week program offered in their school. These short reflections show how even in a short span of a few weeks, students are able to feel the benefits of meditation and express their experience so well. They observe how with practice meditation becomes easier to do, and how it can be a useful tool for the future!



“I am more calm in situations that are stressful. Being a high school student, I don’t sleep very much, but sometimes after I meditate, I sleep very soundly.”

“In myself I am more at peace. I am more calm and I have better self-control. I find myself being less angry and more forgiving. I am happy with myself so I don’t have to worry about others bringing me down. In school, I have better focus on the tasks at hand and I can get them done in a timely fashion. I am better off socially as well. Overall I am a happier being in all sections of life.”



“I have noticed that I can more easily clear my mind and block out distractions. Also, in tense or stressful situations I can calm myself down faster and more effectively through meditation. I have noticed that the more I meditate, the deeper I am able to fall into it, without falling asleep. This program gave me a useful tool for the future.”

“Since I started meditating, I think I am a much more relaxed person. I also think it has been easier to memorize information such as schoolwork. Over the past few weeks my meditation has been able to go on for longer before I lose focus. This has made a difference for me because I can focus for longer and am less stressed out. I would say this program is very helpful in improving focus and relaxing.”



“I am able to focus on things better and think more clearly. I feel more centered and focused within. I care about what is going on inside myself and I am able to be more open and attentive to my own thoughts and emotions. I am more in touch with myself and what is going on within versus the distractions around me.”

“Throughout high school I have had anxiety problems, and meditation has been incredibly beneficial in alleviating this. I am calmer in any situation I find myself in, and I also find that I am more present and aware of what is going on around me. With repeated practice, meditation has become easier and easier.”

“With this new practice of meditation, I have found not only that it is easier to fall asleep, but also focus in class and on specific things. I am less anxious about tests and presentations. Meditation practice for me has changed in that it is significantly easier to fall into ‘the zone’ when starting. Emotionally I feel much more stable. My family in fact reminds me to meditate if I am getting cranky, and that helps a lot too. Family is really supportive with this because they have noticed many changes. The program is wonderful! I would only say that I wanted to meet with you more. The group meditations are the most helpful and the best feeling.”

“Meditation helps me get through life’s problems with ease because it makes me think the biggest things are so small. Also, sometimes I feel much better internally and a lot calmer. I think more before I act. Also, meditation has put me in a more positive attitude towards life and situations I go through every day. I am a lot more optimistic doing things and it has helped me come to an understanding where I am at life.”





Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want. Everything else is secondary.

Steve Jobs





## 10. Heartfulness Programs for Schools

[www.heartfulschools.org](http://www.heartfulschools.org)

Heartfulness is a simple and practical way to experience the heart's unlimited resources. Through Heartfulness, we are able to really listen to the heart. When we listen to those feelings and capture the inspiration that comes from within, we are able to master our life in a joyful way. This exercise of fine-tuning the heart with the mind is done through a stepwise scientific approach.

In Heartfulness workshops, teachers and students learn simple and effective techniques that help them develop calmness from within, leading to reduced stress and anxiety, improved focus, discrimination and wisdom, expanded consciousness and overall wellbeing, and the ability to excel in whatever they do.

***Heartfulness is a simple and practical way to experience the heart's unlimited resources.***

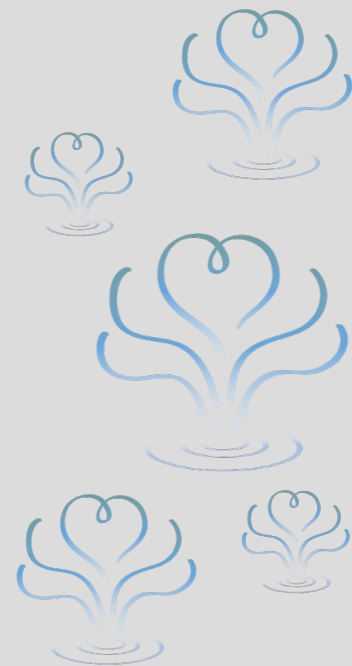
Heartfulness Education Programs aim to develop courage, compassion, tolerance, patience, cooperation, generosity, joyfulness, a responsible attitude to resources, and a vision for future humanity. [Research shows](#) that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) provides significant benefits in schools. By developing the ability to be in tune with their inner Self, students practicing Heartfulness techniques naturally develop SEL skills.

Heartfulness programs provide practical activities in:

1. Ethical dilemmas – choices and consequences;
2. Effective listening, introspection and communication;
3. Managing conflict, bringing harmony;
4. Leading with wisdom, integrity and humility;
5. Innovation and creativity;
6. Growing through difficult circumstances; and, most vitally,
7. Learning the four core practices of Heartfulness, to support all the above.

***Heartfulness Education Programs aim to develop courage, compassion, tolerance, patience, cooperation, generosity, joyfulness, a responsible attitude to resources, and a vision for future humanity.***

A Heartfulness teaching program can range from a set of three workshops to an ongoing series of workshops, providing a deeper understanding of all the Heartfulness techniques. Support is always available from Heartfulness trainers. Heartfulness programs are designed to be simple and integrate seamlessly into the daily life of a school, without any disruption. It is for everyone, irrespective of religion, nationality, personal beliefs, socioeconomic backgrounds, academic ability and any other demographics.



Heartfulness Education programs are organized in three stages:



## EXPERIENCE

The teacher training programs offer a set of Heartfulness techniques conducive for self-development. These techniques help the teacher to:

- **Relax — learn to let go**
- **Heartful Silence — learn to experience inner calm**
- **Rejuvenate — learn to refresh**
- **Introspect — learn to listen to your heart**



## TRAIN

The teachers are trained to create a conscious learning environment in their classrooms.

- **Enable students to practice the Heartfulness techniques**
- **Experience conscious living**
- **Practice life skills**
- **Imbibe values through activity-based joyful learning**



## ENGAGE

The teachers are exposed to various aspects of Heart-centered pedagogy that include

- **Soft skills**
- **Inquiry-based learning**
- **Emotional intelligence**

This method is available in over a hundred countries around the world, and has been adapted for schools, universities, corporations, communities and individuals. The program is offered free of charge by Heartfulness trainers. There is no cost for the program except expenses incurred for printing training material, which the school may cover.

Heartfulness programs in schools are a joint initiative between the school and the Heartfulness Institute. Here are some steps to get started:

- Visit [heartfulschools.org](http://heartfulschools.org) to learn about our vision, approach, benefits and programs.
- Make an appointment to meet our Heartfulness coordinators, who will introduce the vision and practicalities of the programs to your key decision-makers from the school's board, management and teaching faculty. This way there will be a collective agreement on the best way to proceed in the school's environment and timetable. You can contact us at [edu@heartfulnessinstitute.org](mailto:edu@heartfulnessinstitute.org)
- Start with a voluntary program for the teachers first, so that interested teachers can personally experience Heartfulness for themselves. This pilot program for innovators will provide an opportunity to internalize the Heartfulness techniques, clarify questions and practical difficulties, and experience the benefits of the program.

The core group of teachers can then become ambassadors and Heartfulness champions for the school and help facilitate a wider roll-out of the program that is tailored to best fit the school schedule and requirements. Teachers who are interested in pursuing programs further can be trained and certified as Heartfulness Education trainers.

- Nominate one of your staff to be trained as the coordinator for the Heartfulness program in the school. This person will then mentor others, liaise with Heartfulness coordinators, and manage timetabling, etc.
- Involve parents — tell them about Heartfulness and how it can make a real difference to their children's lives.

# Heartful Schools

Through Heartfulness, Inspiration



[edu@heartfulnessinstitute.org](mailto:edu@heartfulnessinstitute.org)

[www.heartfulschools.org](http://www.heartfulschools.org)

Written by: Dr. Prem Shivakumar

Edited by: Ms. Teresa Valentine

About the Author: Dr. Premkishore Shivakumar is an avid Heartfulness practitioner and trainer. He started the practice of Heartfulness as a graduate student and is interested in sharing its benefits with one and all. His hope is for students to discover this valuable life skill earlier in their lives. Prem works as a computer architect and lives with his wife and two daughters in Austin, Texas.