I, **EILEEN S. COOPER**, hereby submit this as part of the requirements for the degree of:

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (Ed.D.)**

in:

**EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**

It is entitled:

**ON COMPASSION, A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND LIVING IN THE QUESTION: AN INWARD JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF THE PRACTICE OF INQUIRY**

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ON COMPASSION, A NEW PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND LIVING IN THE QUESTION: AN INWARD JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF THE PRACTICE OF INQUIRY

A dissertation submitted to the
Division of Research and Advanced Studies
of the University of Cincinnati
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION (Ed.D.)

in the Department of Educational Foundations
of the College of Education

2002

by

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This dissertation is a philosophical inquiry that introduces a new approach to thinking about education. The purpose of this study is to invite readers as co-participants to generate compassionate hearts with the intent of bringing forth a vision of wholeness to benefit the Earth and all her creation. I suggest that education is a metaphor for life while implementing the metaphor of a tapestry weaving to create a sacred space and form for the practice of inquiry that seeks to understand the relationship between compassion and education through an inner way of knowing and being. Discourses on compassion and opening the heart of education, the weft threads, are woven upon the warp thread, the idea of living in the question, providing a contextual framework for the inquiry. In addition, I explicate how two approaches to qualitative research, heuristic methodology and organic methodology are integrated with Zen Buddhist thought to contribute a lively sense of dialogue to a written, philosophical document. Discourses on compassion suggest that compassion is an actual force or energy that is everywhere present and may be consciously accessed and recognized by people who are mindfully focused in a heart-centered meditative state.
Discourses on opening the heart of education explore the principal assumption of this inquiry which reflects my perception that we are alive in a moment of time where old forms of life that no longer serve humankind are dying while simultaneously a newer expression of life is emerging. This time of transition is marked by fear and suffering. Just as a knowing midwife can help a laboring woman through the difficult challenge of transition, compassion as the midwife of consciousness may help humankind through these difficult times of opening our hearts and minds toward a life of wholeness as the heart of education awakens. This philosophical inquiry comes to fruition as a foundation of thought that engenders a new kind of philosophical practice that I call an epistemology of the heart based on an ethic of compassion.
DEDICATION

To my son, Arjuna Gale Cooper Anderson,
To my companion, James Charles Mainger,
&
To Kuan Yin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion

In loving memory of my parents,
Philip H. Cooper & Beatrice Bloom Cooper
I am deeply grateful to my committee members (in alphabetical order), the Rev. Pat Barker, Dr. Karen Edwards, Dr. Annette Hemmings, and Dr. Patricia O’Reilly, from whom I have learned the true nature of education, teaching, the mystery of life, and compassion. I also extend my deepest gratitude to Victoria Wilson, whose generous support and personal contribution to this work helped to create and nurture its unfolding. I thank each of you from my heart for holding a sacred space from which I could contribute my understanding of another way of knowing and being.
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REAL PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

(Especially in the Wake of September 11\textsuperscript{th} 2001)

A PRAYER, OFFERING AND ASPIRATION FOR HEALING

The Dalai Lama remarked during a visit to the United States, “My purpose is really only to make some small contribution to the field of love, kindness and compassion and to the unity of all people everywhere” (Friedman, 1986, p. 84). Similarly, Roshi Maureen Stuart, an American Buddhist teacher, observed during an interview about her life’s work, “If not for the realization of this compassion towards all sentient beings in the world, of what use is our practice?” (ibid., p. 70).

I have come to feel this way about my dissertation. During the last several years, the processes of researching, exploring, creating and writing this work have come to be my practice. Traditionally to Buddhists, the word practice refers to everything one does in the world in order to learn, teach and live the dharma. Dharma, which comes from the Sanskrit dhamma, originally meant the natural condition of things, their essence, the fundamental law of their existence (Armstrong, 2000).
Each time I began a new work period for this project I set the intent, "May whatever good or healing comes from this activity extend around the world as an offering of hope and faith for all suffering to cease and wholeness to reign." And, again, I invoke this aspiration:

"May this dissertation serve as an offering or aspiration for the energy of compassion and love to be activated in time to heal the Earth and all Her creation."

"Fear Not"
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is multifaceted. My aim is to capture—to preserve in lasting form—a process. It is not to present a static construct—a product—but rather something that is alive and vital: something that may be conceived of as having a quality closer to the word "livingness," like a Japanese brush painting, a poem, or a pottery vessel.

My purpose is also to speak in a language that is accessible not only to those familiar with and schooled in the thought-forms of academia but to anyone who may eventually become a reader of this document. The idea of a
dialogue or conversation comes to mind as the vehicle for this type of expression.

Finally, I am introducing this study On Compassion, A New Philosophy of Education and Living in the Question: An Inward Journey to the Heart of the Practice of Inquiry as a groundbreaking and evolving kind of philosophical discourse. This inquiry into compassion and a new philosophy of education hangs together on a common thread: the conscious exploration of what it is like to be "living in the question." My thoughts exist in the form of this dissertation. I present them as an invitation to you, the reader, to participate with me in this new kind of philosophical practice as a medium to co-create another way of knowing and being, one that I call an epistemology of the heart based on an ethic of compassion.

Focus

The substance and marrow of this dissertation is my subjective understanding and belief that education is a metaphor for life, living, and the mysterious way in which we are each called into being over and over again as "the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself" (Gibran, p. 17). My intuition and inner awarenesses suggest that, at the beginning of the 21st century, life itself seems to be
calling forth or bringing into being a new birth of consciousness. I present this study as an instrument for exploring, facilitating, and supporting this transformation. Mary Caroline Richards (1980), writer, potter, and teacher stated:

Transformation is a challenging undertaking. Even to propose it may set up resistance, as if to propose change is somehow to belittle the present, and thereby to arouse defensiveness. But this is not the spirit of transformation. Indeed, it is simply the willingness to yield to the evolution of living forms, actively to cooperate with the changes which are natural to the deepest purposes of things. Mobility for change is another way of speaking about developing a sense for the dynamics of living formative growth. This kind of change grows out of life process itself...observe regularly a plant which is both growing and dying; that which has both new growth green to the eye, and flowers or leaves which are turning brown and falling off. Observe this plant faithfully and you will begin to see a continuous forming/transforming activity, which is itself a kind of circulating integral form, including both the dynamics of what are conventionally thought of as entropy and negative entropy, decay and renewal. (pp. 186-187)

This time of metamorphosis seems to be moving, like the plant that has both new green growth and old brown
leaves, through simultaneous periods of decay and renewal. Life seems to be challenging us at a deep level to become more fluid and expansive in our perception of what it means to be alive.

**Principal Assumption**

Old forms of education (life) are dying and new ideas about what education is are being born. It is a time of transition and uncertainty. Just like a woman giving birth who is in transition (the stage of labor when her cervix is fully dilated just before she feels the urge to push) may become afraid and despairing because she is in pain, we, as a human community, are afraid and despairing because we are in pain.

A surface observation or perception of this moment in time reveals much fear and suffering. However, learning to open our inner eyes of perception and awakening the heart-mind may allow us to see that perhaps the global and local social, political, economic, and environmental chaos and educational crises of the day—-all that the Earth is "suffering"—-are symptomatic of this intense time of transition. Just as a knowing midwife can help a laboring woman through the difficult time of transition, a knowing midwife may help us through these difficult times of
opening our hearts towards a life of wholeness. Perhaps compassion is the midwife, all sentient beings are the Earth’s laboring body through which this birth is occurring, and a new philosophy of education is our new life manifesting.

Overview

A Course in Miracles (1976) teaches that all actions expressed in the outer world of appearances have as their source either love or fear, which, in itself, is a call for love when one is suffering. Fear and suffering are states of dis-harmony or dis-connection.

Buddhism teaches that compassion is not an emotional response to suffering, nor is it a theoretical or intellectual construct. Compassion, as an aspect of loving kindness, is an actual energy that is everywhere present and can be awakened by opening the heart-mind. 2,500 years ago the Buddha's teachings on loving-kindness in the "Sutta Nipata Sutra" described the nature of compassion as being "An all-embracing love for all the universe/In all its heights and depths and breadth/Unstinted love, unmarred by hate within...(Harvey & Baring, 1996, p. 138).

Compassion, "an all embracing love for all the universe," is an energy that causes the doors of our heart-
mind to open so that we may come to know that each one of us is profoundly connected to all living beings and to all of life (Remen, 1999). Compassion can be thought of, then, as an aspect of consciousness that binds together or makes whole that which has become separated or dissociated from us.

Simplified, this translates into the awareness that fear and love, where compassion is an aspect of love, are both archetypes or patterns in direct opposition to each other. Wilson (1995) stated, "If love or compassion is the glue--a "force" which binds together or makes whole--then fear, as the opposite, is what happens when we become unglued: Our lives become dissociated, dis-connected, or split" (Personal Communication, February, 1995). From this point it follows that woundedness, pain and suffering (or "the hate within" as a reflection of fear) are the results of living split lives; inner and outer ways of knowing and being have been torn asunder.

The root of the word education is educare, which means "'to lead forth the hidden wholeness,' the innate integrity that is in every person" (Remen, 1999, p. 35). If education is a process of living that draws forth our innate wholeness, it may also be thought of as an activity of healing practice. Perhaps it is an awakening to the energy
of compassion as an aspect of loving-kindness that is needed to lead forth the hidden wholeness, to heal or glue the split that exists in each of us individually and collectively as all sentient beings in the body of Mother Earth. Perhaps this is how education and compassion are related.

The word *perhaps* is a key component of this inquiry. I am not proposing to answer a question, but, instead, I have proposed that the common thread which binds together this inquiry and, ultimately, what will enliven it, is the conscious exploration of what it is like to be “living in the question.” It is an invitation to engage you, the reader, in a conversation or dialogue as part of a new way of knowing, an epistemology of the heart that has an always evolving quality to it and is never solidified or fixed. J. Krishnamurti (2001), a 20th century mystic, eloquently elaborated this idea when he stated:

A dialogue is very important. It is a form of communication in which question and answer continues till a question is left without an answer. Thus the question is suspended between two persons involved in this answer and question. It is like a bud, with untouched blossoms...If the question is left totally untouched by thought, it then has its own answer because the questioner and answerer, as persons, have disappeared. This is a form of dialogue in which investigation reaches a certain point of intensity and depth, which then has a quality which thought can never reach. It is not a dialectical investigation of
opinions, ideas, but rather an exploration by two or many serious, good brains. (p. 1)

This dissertation On Compassion, A New Philosophy of Education and Living in the Question: An Inward Journey to the Heart of the Practice of Inquiry does not offer a prescription for pedagogy, or a formula for practicing the art of teaching. It offers no procedures for designing curricula with specific outcomes, nor does it propose what schools are supposed to do. I do not attempt to force a clear and precise definition of what education is, except to offer that education, for me, has come to be a metaphor for life and our deeper questions about living.

This investigation depends upon the reader to participate in my inward journey to the heart of the practice of inquiry. Most recently, Jennifer Clements, Dorothy Ettling, Dianne Jennet, & Lisa Shields (1999) articulated how important the participation of the reader is to organic research practice, a newly emerging "qualitative research methodology which stands at the intersection of feminine spirituality and transpersonal psychology" (Serpentina, 2001, p. 1). They contend that the collaborative relationship that comes into creation through the interaction of the lived world of the reader with an
author’s written words is an integral, necessary, and sacred component of this type of project.

This investigation captures the process of inquiry by inviting the reader to "enter the temple of the question" (Richards, 1980, p. 8), in order to make familiar what it is like to live in the question, with all the mystery, ambiguity and, most of all, the great uncertainty that this may imply. Therefore, what I present here in the form of this dissertation is not an argument, an answer to a problem with a discrete set of findings, or a theoretical analysis. It is an endeavor to articulate and elaborate a process that begs one to challenge old beliefs and thought-forms that may no longer serve our needs. It is in this way that it is unique: It provides a space in the context of a written text for the diverse voices and experiences of the possible readers who may become part of the grand dialogue that all of life seems to be engaged in.

**Significance of Study**

This work is important and necessary because we are alive at a moment in time marked by uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity. Times of transition always are, but the events of Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center collapsed, killing thousands of
people, have brought this to the foreground of our personal and collective human psyches. It is my personal understanding that these kinds of awarenesses, at this level or magnitude, produce more fear and suffering. Often, fear and suffering manifest as crises which may appear as self-hatred, escalating racism, family violence, environmental harm, or the escalating war in the Middle East.

If life is indeed giving birth to herself and we are in the stage of labor known as transition, then these events are indicators or symptoms of this time of rapid change and transformation already under way. American Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron (2002) suggested that “a transition,” when thought of as a gap that arises between any two states or as an in-between state, is marked by anxiety, heartbreak and tenderness. “It’s the kind of place we usually want to avoid. The challenge [to living with uncertainty, ambiguity and insecurity—living without answers in the question] is to stay in the middle rather than buy into struggle and complaint. The challenge is to let it soften us rather than make us more rigid and afraid” (p. 56).
By viewing our suffering with a tender heart, we may be able to see that life itself is calling our attention to the need for wholeness and healing, beckoning us to awaken to new possibilities for who we, as a human community, may become. Sogyal Rinpoche (2002) described how there is opportunity in uncertainty that doesn’t exist elsewhere:

This constant uncertainty may make everything seem bleak and hopeless; [sic] but if you look more deeply at it, you will see that its very nature creates gaps, spaces in which profound chances and opportunities for transformation are continuously flowering—if, that is, they can be seen and seized. (p. 62)
CHAPTER II

PRESENTING THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the role of the literature in relation to this study and how relevant literature will be presented. In Chapter I, I introduced this inquiry as a groundbreaking and evolving kind of philosophical discourse that has a living and fluid quality. Additionally, I set the intent for this document to be an instrument for supporting change and transformation in me, the reader, and all of humankind’s and Earth’s new birth of consciousness. As such, it became essential for me to present a review of the literature in such a way that would continuously engage the reader at both the experiential and personal levels.

Therefore, I chose not to include a traditional, exhaustive review of the literature as a discrete, separate section. Instead, I take my cue from qualitative research methodology and integrate relevant literature throughout the body of this text. Although the nature of this inquiry is philosophical, I consider my inspiration for it and its conceptual and theoretical framework for presenting the literature to be primarily informed by grounded theory, organic inquiry, and daredevil research.
An important assumption of grounded theory is that an exhaustive literature review is not done in order to allow theory to emerge directly from the data and remain “grounded in” the data. Literature is reviewed continuously throughout data collection, analysis, and the final write-up (The Royal Windsor Society for Nursing Research, 2001).

A newly emerging form of qualitative methodology and design, organic inquiry seems to be connected most deeply to this study and provides the best justification for utilizing this approach. According to Clements, Ettling, Jennett, and Shields (1998), in organic inquiry “the point of view of the researcher is an important tool in relating the literature to the topic and in making the material inviting so that the reader feels encouraged to participate with the study” (p. 99). The literature becomes more meaningful and alive when it is located within the context of what is being read.

Janice Jipson and Nicholas Paley (1997), in their book Daredevil Research: Re-creating Analytic Practice, “open up zones of possibility for intellect and imagination to launch analytic projects into unexplored space” (p. 5). They provide an epistemological framework for exploring and creating knowledge that is experimental and imaginative. Daredevil research is in a sense, a conceptual field in
itself. It is a way of “meaning-making” that seeks to transform thinking by presenting analyses in non-traditional formats such as poetry, visual images, and visual images juxtaposed with verbal text and dialogue. This kind of analytic practice contributes another strand for understanding why my literature review is presented as a process of interweaving rather than as a separate entity.

A central concern of these three methodologies is that while a traditional or objective literature review can help focus a study, it also may bias a researcher’s thinking and limit openness to whatever emerges during the entire course of a project, including its final written presentation (Patton, 1989). By weaving the literature continuously throughout the body of this dissertation, I am making a space for my voice, the voice of the reader, and the energy of this dissertation to come forward in a simultaneous, direct, and creative dance or interplay.

Additionally, I have incorporated long and contextual quotations, poetry, prose, lyrics, and visual images into the text. The use of lengthy quotes, which has traditionally been frowned on in academic and scholarly discourse, preserves the voice or integrity of the person being quoted in a way that cutting them into smaller fragments does not. Preserving the identity of the original
author also adds to a lively sense of dialogue and conversation otherwise lost in a written document.

Visual images are a form of symbolic representation. According to Arrien (1987), symbols, like creative ideas, may function as a universal language. They help to connect our internal and external realms of consciousness and perception, allowing us to penetrate more deeply into the mystery of life.
A literature review woven into the body of the dissertation allows me, the researcher; you, the reader; and other voices represented here to intertwine in a moving, continuous and dynamic interplay. By including this multiplicity of voices in the ongoing “long body” of the conversation, I signify to myself and the reader that the process is co-creative, as opposed to a passive activity in which the reader receives information unconsciously. It is my goal that in this way, the written words, as they become the read words may actually transform and contribute to the processes of creating another way of knowing and being that I am introducing here as a new kind of philosophical discourse: an epistemology of the heart based on an ethic of compassion.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter is organized into three parts. In Part One, I reflect on how writing this dissertation has been analogous to weaving a tapestry and how that became a metaphor for the form and arrangement of the discourses. In Part Two, I portray how I was inspired by several contemporary philosophers of education to experiment with a confluence of research methodologies that fit well with my way of knowing and being in the world as a source for creating a new kind of philosophical discourse. Part Three explicates the major components from three approaches to inquiry that contribute to this synthesis and explores how together they serve as the underlying conceptual and theoretical framework for this project.

Part One: Form

I’ll begin with a story that I first encountered as the prologue to a novel by Paula Gunn Allen entitled The Woman Who Owned the Shadows. It is a story about Grandmother Spider. To many native peoples, Grandmother
Spider, or Spider Woman, kept and taught the mysteries of the past and how they affect the future. “Spider” is considered to be a master weaver, teacher of language, and keeper of the magic of writing (Andrews, 1998).

In the beginning was the Spider. She divided the world. She made it. Thinking thus she made the world. She drew lines that crossed each other. Thus were the directions. Thus the powers. Thus were the quadrants. Thus the solstices. Thus were the seasons. Thus was woman. Within these lines placed she two small medicine bundles. Singing, she placed them. There were no others then but the Spider who sang.

In the center of the universe she sang. In the midst of the waters she sang. In the midst of heaven she sang. In the center she sang. Her singing made all the worlds. The worlds of the spirits. The worlds of the people. The worlds of the creatures. The worlds of the gods. In this way she separated the quarters. Singing, she separated. Upon the face of heaven she placed her song. Upon the face of water she placed her song. Thus she placed her song. Thus she placed her will. Thus wove she her design. Thus sang the Spider. Thus she thought.

Within the pouches, the sacred identical pouches she had placed the seeds that would bear the woman who was her own twin. Uretsete and Naotsete she would name them, double woman would she name them, from whom baskets would come all that lives. In the northwest placed she one. Placed she one in the northeast.

And as she sang, as the Spider sang, the pouches swelling, dancing, gave forth seed, the women. Thus have the women of our people ever reverenced the seeds, and saved them. Thus have we given honor to them. Thus are the seeds eaten, thus they remind us of our generation, thus they sit on the altar of power, thus are they planted in the ground, thus are they kept ever with us.

And the sisters awoke, those two, they who would give human form to the spirit which was the people. Singing they awoke in the darkness that is below in the place of the Spider, in the firmament that is the place of the Spider. Singing they awoke and sat near the Spider, the Grandmother, who sang.
And the Spider sang. She thought to name the
twain. Long she thought, singing. And she knew one was
She Who Matters and the other was She Who Remembers.
So she named them Uretsete and Naotsete. The women who
made all that lives on earth. Who made the world. Who
formed matter from thought, singing.
And as they sat with the Spider, alongside the
Grandmother, they took up their work, the work of the
sisters, the women, the double women who would bear
the world.
And they said, "We will name. We will think."
Thus they made they the languages, all the tongues of
the earth. Thus finished they everything. In beauty
finished they. All the names. All the tongues. Thus
was everything made, and made different.
Shaking, Uretsete named them. Shaking Naotsete
thought about them. Thus made they the sun. The stars.
Singing they made the elements, the rains, the
thunders, the winds, the snows. Shaking, they were
singing. Shaping the katsina and the spirits, the game
and the mountains. Singing, chanting, shaking,
crooning, they named everything. Thus made they
everything ready for their children.
And Uretsete made the division of the waters and
the land, shaking. Saying the water and the land have
become good. Only the earth will be ripe, said she.
Upon the earth will live the people. Thus she said.
Thus they sent their thought into the void.
Singing, chanting sent their thought of the Spider,
out into the void. Thus finished they everything and
set everything in place. (pp. 1-2)

Ted Andrews (1993) created a dictionary of totems in
which he explains "totems" as being "any natural object,
animal or being whose phenomena and energy you feel closely
associated with during your life" (p. 7). As I endeavored
to compose this section, I gazed up at the computer monitor
and noticed a lovely, full-bodied gray spider making her
way across the screen. Knowing that I was going to write
about the words of this philosophical discourse taking the
form of a tapestry and that I wanted to include the story about Grandmother Spider, I felt compelled to refer to his entry about spider’s symbolism. I was pleased to discover synchronicity at work. In addition to the spider’s natural association with weaving because of the intricate webs she weaves in which to catch prey, she also has a long mythological history associated with being the guardian of ancient languages and alphabets. Andrews (ibid.) wrote:

To many there was an alphabet even more primordial. It was formed by the geometric patterns and angles found within spider’s web. To many this was the first true alphabet. This is why spider is considered the teacher of language and the magic of writing... Remember that spider is the keeper of knowledge of the primordial alphabet. Spider can teach how to use the written language with power and creativity so that your words weave a web around those who would read them. (pp. 345-346)
The clearest way to think about how to understand the form this dissertation takes is to imagine a tapestry. A tapestry is a weaving laden with designs and patterns. The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia (2002) describes the weaving process:

The first step in weaving is to stretch the warp, or longitudinal yarns, which must be very strong. The weft, woof or filling crosses the warp, binding the warp threads at either side to form the selvage. The three essential steps after the warp is stretched are: shedding, or raising every alternate warp yarn or set of yarns to receive the weft; picking, or inserting the weft; and battening, or pressing home the weft to make the fabric compact. In most primitive weaving these operations were performed by the hands alone, as in making rush mats and baskets. Gradually frames for holding the warp evenly stretched and devices for throwing the weft came into use [looms]. (p. 1)

Writing this dissertation has been like weaving a tapestry. Gathering and preparing the materials has taken time, thought, energy, creativity and intention. Patterns appear and designs are created through a blend of traditional and non-traditional writing styles, a mix of both linear or rational, and circular or intuitive reasoning. Visual images are integrated with textual components. The visual symbols, full-length poems, lyrics to songs, and longer-than-standard quotations that are included throughout the body of the text add to the patterns embedded in the manuscript by supplying bumpiness, roughness, smoothness and sheen to the overall texture--
yielding a different but necessary dimension that couldn’t be created without them. Just like different yarns such as wool, cotton, or silk and reeds such as grass, willow, or cattail enhance the design of any cloth, basket, or tapestry weaving, these diverse components serve to augment what I am articulating.

Although thinking about the writing of a dissertation and the form it takes as a tapestry may be a new and original idea, the metaphor of weaving—-weaving a basket in particular—-has been applied by other essayists, novelists and storytellers to their works. During an audio interview, Pulitzer-Prize-winning writer Alice Walker (1995) shared these thoughts about her writing process:

Until I really feel I want to express something I don’t try ...I mean ...I changed my name when I turned fifty. I took my grandmother’s Cherokee name, Telula. I took this name to Wilma Mankiller and her husband, Charlie Soap, (Wilma’s the Chief of the Cherokee) and asked them to tell me what it meant and Charlie was able to say that the closest he could figure it out was that it meant “Basket-Maker” ...and I really feel that I weave my stories in that same way. It’s like an expression of being: the paradox of disappearance and appearance, the way that you see a beautiful basket and you feel the soul in it. That’s the way a novel should be and there’s a certain amount of disappearance in it and I think that’s why I like it ...that whole sense of ...not needing to be the center, ya know. So you can just be quiet and let what is be. (Audiocassette Recording)

Another award-winning poet, novelist, and essayist, Marilou Awiakta (1993), also perceives her writing to be a
weaving. She described her book *Selu: Seeking the Corn Mother’s Wisdom* as having the form of a basket. To the question she posed to her readers, “How can a book have the form of a basket?” she replied, “[T]he same way a bowl can be shaped like a shell, a net like a web ...[o]r as a flute takes up the song of a bird. The forms transpose through a basic affinity” (p. 34).

Marilou Awiakta (ibid.) perceived that the poems, essays, and stories in her book, took the form of “a round, doublewoven basket in the Oklahoma Cherokee style, arising from the thoughts themselves” (p. 34). Like her, I enjoyed a similar experience while engaged in the writing of this dissertation: Its “natural form” became a woven tapestry, also arising from the thoughts themselves.

As I worked with my personal-narrative, heuristic study on compassion, and philosophical discourse about a call for a new philosophy of education, and gathered together poems, quotations, stories, and visual images, I saw how they collectively formed “the weft” and shared a common “warp”—the idea about living in the question. These (the warp and weft) were strung together and hung on one loom: the traditional five chapter organization and arrangement of this dissertation.
The loom then, the basic five chapters of the dissertation, serves as the framework; the weft is the contents of each. Sometimes the weaving appears to be tightly woven and linear. Other times, there appear to be small and large spaces left open in the fabric of the discourse. For some, the patterns may appear to be clear, colorful, and determined, while others may perceive the spaces and empty places to hold more vivid or deeper meaning. This is intentional. As I pushed the shuttle under and over, and over and under, stopping now and again to adjust the tension on the loom, I consciously thought about creating a discourse where you, the reader, might want to pick up the yarn if so inspired. Although the manuscript in one sense is complete and lies bounded between the covers of this book, the dissertation or tapestry, itself, still hangs on the loom with the multiple threads of various textures, substances, and colors hanging free. Without you, the reader, to take up the yarn weaving under and over, and over and under, back and forth, and up and down, there can be no vibrancy, no vitality, no evolving meaning and no epistemology of the heart based on an ethic of compassion.
Part Two: Inspiration

I present four philosophers in this section: Nel Noddings, Wendy Kohli, Zen Master Dae Gak, and Mary Caroline Richards. As I read each of their writings and sat with them in the well of my being, I noticed a common spring from which I could draw courage and inspiration to engage in this new kind of philosophical practice that I am unveiling as this project.

In her book Philosophy of Education, Nel Noddings (1995), a contemporary thinker and philosopher of education contributed a novel approach to the study of philosophy and examined differences between traditional and new paradigms within this field. She stated:

Despite the dominant analytical view of twentieth-century philosophy, philosophers have sometimes created theories and today many philosophers engage in constructive work. They introduce new language and suggest powerful alternatives to the standard use of language. Some now even draw heavily on literature and empirical data in the form of teaching-narratives to make points that cannot be made in the traditional style of argumentation. Whether this work is properly called philosophy is part of an exciting debate. (pp. 1-2)

These words encouraged me to integrate the concepts and theories from two qualitative-research methodologies: heuristic research and organic research with Zen Buddhist
thought in order to formulate a methodological framework for this project.

Wendy Kohli (1995), a contemporary of Noddings in her book *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education*, proposed that the field of educational philosophy can no longer be identified with one school of thought. She suggested that questions such as “What counts as philosophy?”, “Who counts as a philosopher and why?” and “What is knowledge?” offer the opportunity to take a fresh look at the nature and kinds of voices participating in the conversation and offer no guaranteed answers or outcomes. Instead, what is gained or desired is a lively conversational exchange that reveals new and different points of view on recurring themes. This kind of dialogue is both nurturing and strengthening to the field and its participants.

Wendy Kohli’s words were also encouraging. Reflecting on them revealed to me that my voice and unique perspective should be included and might even provide a much needed contribution to the ongoing re-visioning and re-shaping of this field of study.

The teachings of Zen Master Dae Gak (2001) are harmonious with my conceptualizing this project as being a process: something that is open-ended and ongoing. His
thinking inspired me to consider how the idea of a dialogue or conversation could be a vehicle for this type of expression, even when presented in a written form. I offer his insights in Part Three of this chapter.

Mary Caroline Richards was a potter, teacher, poet, and writer. She also has been described as a philosopher and mystic. Although she is no longer alive, I believe she is a kindred spirit, and I sometimes wonder, as I write this dissertation, if she may be my muse. Even now, as I begin to share her inspiration, I sense in my body a feeling that I can only describe as “fullness of heart.”

I first came to know Mary Caroline Richards through her writing. While engaged in a research project on education and wholeness, I read her book Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America. I was immediately surprised by her ability to communicate something about life and education that seemed to be so much like me and how I lived in the world. The most dominant and continuous awareness I had while reading this work was “This is me; I could be saying this. At last, I’ve found another kindred spirit on the journey!”

The part of her that I perceive as resonating so deeply with me is her appreciation and commitment to the understanding that the “world is always bigger than one’s
own focus” and that “education is part of our real experience involving all that we are inside and out” (Richards, 1980, pp. xii, 21).

Her monograph *The Public School and the Education of the Whole Person* has had an enormous influence on me and the creation of this project. Here, she created a sacred vessel with words where she gathered her readers together to experience for themselves with reverence, wonder, and awe the possibility that perhaps “the experience of transformation is ... education, i.e., it is a leading out of what lives within” (Richards, 1980, p. 186).

Each of these thinkers profoundly affected this discourse. I was inspired by each, individually and collectively, to take the steps to engage in a philosophical project that Jeffner Allen (1990) might identify as being experimental, innovative, and “as yet unnamed” (p. 1).

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When we discuss modern philosophy, must it be defined by the latest books and ideas on the same old subjects out of Oxford or Berkeley, or are there other sources of contemplation and wisdom, lacking academic credentials, perhaps but closer to the pulse of the human heart? What about, for example, so-called New Age philosophy? What about liberation theology? What about various folk philosophies, passed on from generation to generation by way of myths and stories, admonitions and advice? What about the philosophy of multiculturalism as such? What counts as philosophy today is very much at issue, but this should not be seen as crisis but rather as a fruitful and exciting opening and an opportunity for other traditions to come spilling in with their own ideas and influences. As one twentieth-century leader put it, in quite a different situation, “let a thousand flowers bloom.” That doesn’t mean, as some would fear, that we have to jettison Socrates, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel and the wisdom of the West, nor does it mean that we should throw up our hands, refrain from criticism, and agree that every idea is as good as any other. What it does mean is that we are now ready to open our eyes and our ears to voices and ideas that have for too long been excluded or pushed to the margins of philosophy. They are demanding to be heard, and in their own terms. And where the voices are soft and distant, largely buried in the past, or ideas seem oddest and most foreign, that is where we should listen hardest. For that is often where we have refused to listen longest.

- Robert C. Solomon & Kathleen M. Higgins
In this section, I will elucidate the distinguishing features from three approaches to the practice of inquiry most relevant to this project: On Compassion, A New Philosophy of Education and Living in the Question: An Inward Journey to the Heart of the Practice of Inquiry: heuristic research methodology, organic research methodology, and Zen Buddhist thought. Although the major contributions of each are presented in linear form—one following the other, collectively, they flow together forming a confluence and create a synergy from which a unique process of inquiry unfolded. Essentially, this convergence of methodologies evolved and grew as each part of the project revealed itself to me and as I listened to and trusted my own psyche, my inner self. This also helps to explain why this project is described as “an inward journey to the heart of the practice of inquiry.” It is important to note that although heuristic and organic methods of inquiry are traditionally thought of as approaches to conducting human science research, in this study, I present them as an approach to thinking about the practice of philosophical inquiry.
Heuristic research methodology. Heuristic research methodology is grounded in a theoretical framework that values the deep intra- and inter-subjective components of knowing, as well as the intuitive and metaphoric. The inner life of the researcher's subjective frame of reference is intimately involved with the process of conducting heuristic research (Frick, 1990). According to Tuttle (1988), intuition may be conceptualized as a way of knowing that is nondual, immediate, and based on the dissolution of the subject/object dichotomy. Metaphors, according to Polyani (1975), through the power of offering unusual comparisons of ideas, can bring new meaning to our experiences.

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) were the first thinkers to present heuristics as an approach to conducting human science research. They emphasized that heuristic inquiry:

is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behavior.... It is on the focus of the human person in experience and that person's reflective search, awareness and discovery that constitutes the essential core of heuristic investigation. (p. 42).

Moustakas (1990) later published a manuscript in which he further conceptualized and articulated heuristic research design, methodology, and applications. It is this work that served as a model for my quest to learn about the
experience of compassion. The findings from this study are presented in Chapter Four, Discourse Two: On Compassion.

The key features of heuristic research that follow are most relevant to this project and the experiences I have encountered while engaging in this process:

‘Heuristic’ ... [is] ... a word that meaningfully encompass[es] the processes that [are] essential in investigations of human experience. The root meaning of heuristic comes from the Greek word, heuriskein, meaning to discover or to find. It refers to a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomena with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self knowledge. (p. 9)

The heuristic process is a way of being informed, a way of knowing. Whatever presents itself in the consciousness of the investigator as perception, sense, intuition, or knowledge represents an invitation for further elucidation. (p. 10)

Whatever the effect, the heuristic process requires a return to self, a recognition of self awareness, and a valuing of one's own experience. The heuristic process challenges me to rely on my own resources ... [and] to accept as authentic and valid whatever will open new channels for clarifying a topic, question, problem or puzzlement. (p. 13)

The tacit dimension plays an important part in heuristics. Knowing more than can be articulated shrouds discovery in mystery... [and] ... guides the person to untapped aspects of awareness in nonlinear ways that allude analysis or explanation. The tacit is visionary; it incorporates the aesthetic aspects of consciousness without neglecting clues of cognition. (p.49)

The heuristic research process demands of the investigator that he or she be "willing to undergo the
personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey.” (p. 14)

Both Patton (1989) and Frick (1990) emphasized that heuristic inquiry has a strong foundation in existentialism and is connected to phenomenology. However, after working with this methodology, I came to believe that it may have stronger links to the contemporary and emerging field of transpersonal psychology. Rosemary Anderson (1998) offered the best definition of this discipline that I have encountered. She stated:

As a field of research, scholarship and application, transpersonal psychology seeks to honor human experience in its fullest and most transformative expressions. It is usually identified as the “fourth force” in psychology, with psychoanalytic, behavioristic, and humanistic psychologies as its historical predecessors. The word transpersonal has its etymological roots in two Latin words: trans, meaning beyond or through, and personal, meaning mask or façade—in other words, beyond or through the personally identified aspects of self. Whenever possible, transpersonal psychology seeks to delve deeply into the most profound aspects of human experience, such as mystical and unitive experiences, personal transformation, meditative awareness, experiences of wonder and ecstasy, and alternative and expansive states of consciousness. In these experiences, we appear to go beyond our usual identification with our limited biological and psychological selves. As the field has matured, a more general study of the common boundary between spirituality and psychology has expanded to include the shared affinities between “the transpersonal” and an increasingly wide spectrum of professional endeavors, including anthropology; sociology; medicine; and especially immunology, parapsychology, consciousness studies, philosophy, religion, Yoga, the
creative arts and a variety of bodywork and healing practices. (pp. xxi-xxii)

**Organic research methodology.** Organic research emerged through the collaborative effort of four women, Jennifer Clements, Dorothy Ettling, Dianne Jennet, and Lisa Shields. Clements, et al. (1999) describe it as a “new and evolving research methodology which stands at the intersection of feminine spirituality and transpersonal psychology” (p. 1). Braud and Anderson (1998) tell us that the ultimate goal of organic research is that it “seeks to nourish personal transformation in the researcher, coresearchers and readers, alike” (p. 31).

Because the core of organic research places emphasis on the transformative power of stories about significant experiences as told by participants, using the participants’ voices and words as much as possible, I thought I would recount how I unexpectedly encountered organic research.

It had been four months since my dissertation proposal had been approved, and, still, I hadn’t begun to write. The school year was over, and I was determined to work on it that summer. I slowly cleaned the house over the period of one week. On the day I set aside to begin, I first smudged myself, my office, and my computer and lit a stick of
incense before extending the thought out into the world that whatever good came from this work, it would have the power to help all sentient beings. The practices of smudging and burning incense are traditional activities that people native to this continent and other cultures from around the world engage in. They involve burning certain dried herbs and fragrant plants to create a cleansing smoke bath used to purify people, ceremonial and ritual space and ceremonial tools and objects (Sacred Hoop Magazine, 1993). I continued creating a sacred space for myself and this project by writing in a special dissertation journal/log I had recently acquired. My journal entry for June 26, 2001 stated, “I consciously set the intent that I will be lead each day to those experiences, things, inspirations and people I need to complete my dissertation and make it good” (Personal Document).

I worked “religiously” throughout the next month and into August. On August 9, 2001 I wrote:

I am tingling and trembling with excitement...I found SERPENTINA on the web. I feel that the sacred divine feminine has guided me here. At last I feel like I am not alone out there with no other scholars to converse with. Someone has articulated a new methodology, organic research, and already it affirms my understanding for why during the entire process of conducting my heuristic compassion study I felt like I was bringing something else to the foreground -
something more akin to the sacred and feminine. THIS IS IT. It is almost as if my thoughts about my unique journey of doing inquiry have found a sisterhood. I am no longer lost in an academic void. I am so energized today. And grateful. (Personal Document)

Needless to say, I sent for a copy of the manuscript that morning.

There are many important features of organic research methodology that apply to the way I approached the practice of inquiry for this discourse. Organic inquiry acknowledges and honors that which is sacred and personal. By allowing the researcher to engage with the spiritual and intimate nature of the subject chosen for investigation, it provides a framework for conducting studies in which the topic under investigation is deeply personal. Inherent to this type of research is the understanding that ultimately the aim or goal of the study is the transformation of the future reader. Clements, et al. (1998) stated:

We find the spirit of the research topic as a muse or deity, perhaps a personified image with a twinkle in her eye who knows the truth of the topic under investigation. She holds universal teachings and is ready to share them with the world. Then there is the group of future readers who are ready to perceive individual truths from among these knowings. Each one is on a unique path so no two will receive the truths in the same way. The researcher is the facilitator or channel, the connection between the hungry reader and the all-knowing muse. The researcher listens to the unfamiliar and uncomfortable messages from the muse about how to conduct the study. The researcher strives to learn the language. These messages arrive in chthonic forms such as dreams or sudden intuitions or
even tape recorders that refuse to rewind. Rarely linear or explicit, these messages must be translated by the researcher so their truths may be passed on as messages to be interpreted by readers. (pp. 3-4)

Jennifer Clements, et al. (1998) reported that their mutual desire to find a sacred and personal voice for their individual research projects led them to develop organic research methodology. Braud and Anderson (1998) emphasized that:

Organic research grows from a reverence for the sacred aspects of the topic, the method, collaboration with the coresearchers, the context, and the implications of the inquiry. It may include nonrational and nonverbal ways of gathering and reporting data. The unique method of each organic study depends on the creativity of the researcher and is expected to evolve during the investigation in response to influences from within the researcher’s psyche and from external events that have impacts on the progress of the work. (pp. 259-260)

Clements, et al. (1998, 1999) described five basic characteristics of organic research. Instead of a series of explicit steps, it is these characteristics that guide the investigator along the path of his or her project from beginning to end. The metaphor of the growth of a tree serves as a dynamic and living symbol or image for the organic process. They are:

1. Sacred: Preparing the soil. To grow a healthy and productive tree, a gardener must be willing to work with care. She or he must first prepare the ground by
loosening and fertilizing the soil. The ground of organic research is a sense of responsibility, reverence, and awe for the earth and all her inhabitants as well as for the mystery of creativity.

2. Personal: Planting the seed. Then the seed may be planted and watered. The seed is the initial concept for the study. The researcher’s story of her or his subjective experience of the topic becomes the core of the investigation.

3. Chthonic: The roots emerge. Chthonic comes from the Greek word chthonios meaning “in the earth.” In English, chthonic has come to mean “dark, primitive, and mysterious,” or “of the underworld and its gods and spirits.” Underground, the seed sprouts, takes in nourishment and develops the beginnings of a complex root system. Although the research begins with a particular intent, the methodology often evolves and changes during the course of the investigation. The researcher is urged to pay attention to unconscious expressions in his or her life such as synchronicities, dreams, intuitions, and other manifestations of inner knowing throughout the research process. Just like the invisible roots of a tree, this realm is not outwardly visible or
controllable, but is one that offers much richness to the evolution of the research and is necessary to the very life of the tree.

4. Relational: Growing the tree. The tree sends up a shoot, and branches develop. Although the investigator may begin the work alone, the illumination of co-researchers as both participants and readers are what allows the work to fully take form and is what the work depends upon in order to fully emerge and to breathe on its own.

5. Transformative: Harvesting the fruit. Finally, the tree bears fruit which contains tomorrow’s seeds. The fruits of organic research reach full development not so much by the presentation of information gathered or insights gleaned, but rather by the personal transformation of the researcher, his/her co-researcher(s), and the inspired participation of the reader. Within this kind of willingness to be transformed lies the possibility or invitation to remember, experience, and create a new perspective that may become the seeds of future research projects.

Zen Buddhist Thought. Zen Master Dae Gak (2001) from Furnace Mountain Zen Center presented important insights into the process and practice of dialogue in his writing,
What is the Meditative Mind?: Inquiry in the Process of Dialogue. One of the aims of this dissertation is to capture the process of engaging in inquiry and living in the question through the activities of dialogue and conversation. The following summary of pointers from this work provide a unique perspective for thinking about and illuminating the role of dialogue in this new kind of philosophical discourse:

1. Dialogue happens when those involved inquire and investigate for themselves without resorting to any systemized teaching, to any external authority or to any belief or dogma. When each participant (each reader being an equal participant) is willing to put his or her energy, attention, and affection into the dialogue as a process, transformation is possible. Dialogue rooted in affection and attention is an outcome of listening.

2. Agreement is unnecessary when there is understanding.

3. You and I, as participants, are equally capable. No one is more knowing or knowledgeable than any other.

4. Questions and confusion are valuable.

5. Silence is valuable.
6. The quality of our presence and awareness when quietly listening is as important to dialogue as speaking.

7. The process of inquiry through dialogue is described as a process of awareness. It is the art of listening, seeing, learning. It has as its core the investigation of the question of the division between the observer and the observed, self and other, question and questioner. It requires being free from attachment to or fixation on a particular position.

8. For true dialogue to occur, there has to be a passionate and energetic interest. In this interest there can be no goal or preconception but only the willingness to stay present within what is being said or thought and what one is saying. Without this passion for immediacy, only dead words are exchanged. In these ways, dialogue is no different from sitting quietly in meditation.

9. When we meet in dialogue, innumerable different ideas and opinions are expressed.

10. Conflicts arise in dialogue from the different way statements are perceived: to the listener a statement may appear to be theory, conjecture or manipulation;
to the person speaking, what is said appears to be true.

11. Without judgment, can there be a process of looking into what is being said in the moment and finding what is true here, now, in this? Dialogue is an ongoing open-ended process that does not produce easy answers but requires sincere consideration and constant reflection.

Summary

This chapter focused on the organization, inspiration and methodology which informs the process of inquiry that underpins this work (see Figure 1). It is best represented as a synergistic confluence of thought that integrates three central ideas: a body of writing can take the form of a woven tapestry; different contemporary thinkers and philosophers profoundly informed and inspired the creation of this project from its inception; and qualitative research methodologies sometimes converge to serve as an epistemological framework for philosophical inquiry.
Figure 1. Representation of the methodological framework portraying Grandmother Spider weaving an intra- and inter-dynamic interplay of thought-systems that synergistically informs this inquiry.
CHAPTER IV

DISCOURSES

Introduction

This chapter represents the part of the dissertation that I call “the heart of the practice of inquiry.” It is comprised of three discourses. The first discourse is a brief personal narrative that acquaints the reader with some knowledge about me and helps to locate the seeds of this project. The second discourse, “Teachings on Compassion,” originated from a heuristic research investigation in which I explored the experience of compassion. The first and second discourses set the stage for the third, “Opening the Heart of Education.” This discourse explores the question, “Why is a call for a new philosophy of education that has at its heart an understanding of education as healing practice of extreme necessity as we journey into the twenty-first century?

After careful thought about how to present these discourses, I decided to allow the voice of each to speak for itself. Mary Caroline Richards (1989) described a similar decision-making process about her writing that resonated deeply with me:
As I read through what I have written during these past months, I get the impression of a shifting rhythm in the landscape, as from the shaggy crown of a thicket to the formal economy of its skeleton. Certain areas seem to me to want cropping, but there is something in their shape that seems true if not trim, and so I leave them to show themselves.

This book is like a bush; it grows from a single root, many branches, many leaves and twigs, but all the same plant. Many resemblances, as one branch and its leaves look like another, except when you look closely. But there the whole thing is: structure and foliage. And there is a plan, which was gradually disclosed to me as I wrote. (p. 5)

Reading through the discourses, I think of the image of the plant—in this instance a tree—as the blueprint or pattern for understanding how these sections intersect. The narrative represents the seeds from which the trunk (the teachings on compassion) sprouted branches, leaves, and flowers—the discourse about a new philosophy of education.

Linking this with the metaphor of a woven tapestry as the form and organization of this dissertation, “the tree” (the discourses) becomes the primary pattern comprising the weft threads of the tapestry woven across and supported by the warp thread which is the underlying idea of “living in the question.” In a tapestry, “each color or design area is woven independently of the others with a separate weft thread” (Harvey, 1990, p. 9). This definition of the technique of tapestry weaving is another useful metaphor
that further clarifies how the discourses are connected.

Harvey (ibid.) stated:

Like any other woven tissue, tapestry is composed of a warp and a weft. The warp, which is ... a skeleton structure, disappears completely beneath the body of the fabric. All that can be seen in a finished tapestry is the weft, made up of the different colored threads forming the decorative scheme. However, the weft threads are not taken systematically across the width of the warp (as in other tissues), but only across that part of the warp corresponding to the colored areas indicated in that section of the [pattern] being woven. In other words, tapestries are woven in “patches” and several rows of the same color are woven consecutively. (p. 10)

Although the discourses are presented sequentially, they are interrelated at a deep inner level where each one subtly yet profoundly affects the other. Although each evolved individually, one gave rise to the next and, eventually, I became aware that together they combined to form an integral unit or an indivisible unity where “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” and where each individual discourse is enhanced by the oneness that weaving them together creates.
Discourse One: Locating the Seeds of This Project:

A Brief Personal Narrative

The Warrior

I've been searching
For my warrior
I've been walking
Down tracks of time

It's such a struggle
To seek forgiveness
Like chains and shackles
These ghosts of mine

Feels like I'm dancing
With truth and wisdom
Precious rhythm,
you are my guide

These days are sacred
My heart is humble
Oh warrior show me
The shining light

Oh can you hear me
I can hear you
Far beyond the tracks of time
Oh can you feel me,
I can feel you
Feel the power inside my life

- Saterfield, Byron, & Dietrich
On Compassion, A New Philosophy of Education and Living in the Question: An Inward Journey to the Heart of the Practice of Inquiry arises out of the depths of my own life experiences. Many years ago, when I was on the threshold of adulthood, I began a journey, or more appropriately as Satprem (1973) would describe it, an “adventure of consciousness.” I had no idea where it would take me or why I was embarking on it. I only knew that it grew out of an inner urge somewhere deep within my heart calling me to follow, much like the lyrics from the preceding song beckon me.

Throughout that time, I became very aware that the paradigm that governs Western thought and epistemology is based on a worldview that is reductionist in its method and system of inquiry and reflects the limited view of the intellect and the empiricism of the natural sciences as the ultimate and only reality. As I began to pay attention to my inner life, I found myself drawn to other philosophers and spiritual seekers who reflected back to me a vision of knowing and being that perceives consciousness, or what Rudolf Steiner (1965) and Sri Aurobindo (1955) call the suprasensible world of the spirit, to be the underlying foundation for all existence.
During those days (the late 70’s), I was engaged in an undergraduate course in the biological sciences. I was training to become a rigorous scientific investigator who seeks only knowledge that could be quantified and objectified—that which existed separate from me.

However, my experiences of life were never that narrow and I continued to believe in the emerging awarenesses of my own intuition. I began to know life as a process: fluid and dynamic. Yes, that which is tangible existed but it appeared to be part of something much more grand and ineffable—something seemingly less solid and immutable. My journal entry from January 28, 1979 captures this realization:

Running this lightly snowing Zero degree Fahrenheit morning I had the following experience. My neck ached and shoulder, too. As I walked I “imagined” a hand - I watched a hand massage my muscle - I was the observer - It wasn't a physical muscle - the spirit of the muscle. Next it massaged my lungs in the same way. My shoulder no longer ached. Nor did my asthma persist. Later, while in the tub I had this thought:

I am all at once 
the experiment, the 
experimenter, the 
experimentee 
The observed, the 
observer & that 
which observes 
The object and the act 
the control & the study. (Personal Document)
This perhaps represents my first attempt to articulate a knowing about the nature of reality and who I am in relationship to the world in which I was part of. With this experience, came a sense of mystery that I also continue to embrace.

Since that time, I have come to live and be in the world with a knowledge that who we are, at depth, is constantly unfolding the outer dimensions of our life experiences. I call this deeper part of my nature Spirit or Higher Self.

I am also aware that at the beginning of this new century, at the start of a new millennium, I am not alone on this journey. Many others have studied, described, and articulated similar awarenesses about the interface that connects the visible and invisible dimensions of existence. James Hillman (1995) calls it "the soul's code," and Jean Houston (1995) calls it "our greater story." A passage written by Marilou Awiakta (1993) focuses our attention on how difficult it can be to live in a culture with a worldview that accords the highest status to empirical scientific investigation, while it does not value intuition, or that which comes from the inner life of the spirit, as a valid means of understanding and knowing about oneself and the world. She stated:
Exacerbating the conflict ... was a conflict of worldview and communication. Appalachians and Cherokees--my relatives--are symbolic peoples. We view the world in cosmic connection, where the tangible is a reflection of the intangible, of the spirit. We speak of this connection in images. Science, on the other hand is based in facts that can be demonstrated and proven. It tends to create an objective mindset, which speaks literally and views imagistic thought as subjective, primitive, unreal and romantic. What I was experiencing was the conflict between the intuitive and analytic mind. (p. 149)

It is this split between outer and inner ways of knowing and being that I believe underlies every social crisis and challenge of our time. This split is the wound calling our attention toward healing or wholeness, to seeing beyond the narrowness of "only one way or another."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1995) further explained:

Crisis is actually an expression of inner confusion. Buddhism teaches that the root of all our problems is ignorance--a failure to understand our true nature. In reality, everything is relative, nothing is self-sufficient. Whether we look at economics, politics, the environment, or human relations, everything is a result of a succession of causes and conditions. This is the meaning of interdependence.

Healing the world has to start on an individual level. If we cannot mend our own way, how can we expect anyone else to do so? We need to be more farsighted; too often we meet with difficulties because we do not look ahead. We only awaken when our mistakes start to bear fruit. By then it is almost too late to react [italics added]. (p. ix)
I believe we are alive at a moment in which it is imperative to begin to see beyond the narrow vision of "only one way or the other," in order to heal the split between opposing worldviews (mind and body, feminine and masculine, intellect and spirit) so that we may begin to realize the interconnectedness of all existence. The "emergence of a new mode of knowledge" (Satprem, 1973, p. 42), that respects and values multiple ways of knowing and being is currently shaking the shackles lose from the bondage of divided life--the "us and they" and "inner and outer" ways of living in the world.

Currently we as a human community are participating in a radical transformation of life as we have known it (Houston, 1983 & 1995; Miller, J., 1986; Miller, R., 1992; Moss; 1986; Satprem, 1968; Sri Aurobindo, 1955; Steiner, 1909, 1920, 1924, 1965). If radical means root or foundation and transformation means a change in nature or condition, then a radical transformation means to be changed at depth. My hope is that this dissertation may be a catalyst or soothing balm that humankind needs so desperately at this time that will help to heal the wounds of disconnection as we continue our journey into a new century.
Discourse Two: Teachings on Compassion

This discourse originated from a heuristic research study I designed and conducted to explore the experience of compassion. The experience of compassion, the phenomenon under investigation, grew out of my intense and passionate desire to “know” compassion and express it in my life.

The person I chose to be my co-researcher is a mind-body-spirit counselor and educator who offers classes, retreats, and workshops through a private consulting practice in which she helps people to open to the transformative energy of the heart center. To her, compassion is a tool for transformation. She (2002) believes “that we are beings of spirit experiencing life in physical form” (p. 1). At a practical, living level, this means that we are beings of energy or energy systems who are affected by the world around us and who in turn, can affect the environment of others. Before she became my co-researcher, we signed a consent form that I developed (see Appendix A). The following entry from my journal illustrates how we negotiated our relationship as co-researchers for this study:

I am so excited. My dreams are beginning to manifest. I was very excited last week post class and our heuristic research discussion group. I decided to use the energy the next day to see if my
primary co-researcher - the person I feel most will be able to inform my research would want to do it. She said, “Yes,”!!! I am floating. I tried to call several times at her out-of-town office. Her answering machine picked up but I didn’t want to leave a message.

The idea flashed through my mind to write her a letter because I didn’t really know what to expect. There has been some tension within me regarding our relationship. She has been a teacher of mine for the last 2 ½ years.

Anyway, as the computer was warming up, I called a third time – we haven’t talked in months. I said, “This is Eileen.” She said, “Hi, how are you?” I told her I was great and that I had exciting news, that I was beginning my research for my doctoral studies. I told her my question and then said that of all the people I knew and met that she was the one I felt most understood and demonstrated this – [compassion] – and that it would be a great honor for me to have her be my co-researcher. She asked what it would involve; I told her two 1½ hour interviews, sharing drawings, paintings, photos, journal writings. She said SHE’D BE DELIGHTED!

I continued writing:

When I told her I couldn’t compensate her, she said she couldn’t wait to do this – that SHE SUPPORTS MY WORK! This is a momentous day for me and everything feels fully together. (Personal Document, January 12, 1997)

Heuristic research is concerned with depictions and ways of portraying tacit knowledge. My initial data collection plan required me to enter into conscious relationship with compassion at a deep intuitive level and to respond to life from that awareness. I paid close attention to materials such as audiotapes, pictures, poems, quotations, music, works of art, etc. that reminded me of,
or evoked, compassion. I also recorded dreams. Additional discernments or relevant thoughts were recorded in a personal journal that I had access to every hour of the day and night.

My co-researcher also paid close attention to her inner sense of this phenomena and its outer expression in her everyday life. She shared her experiences with me through an in-depth conversational interview session one month after her agreement to participate. A second interview was conducted approximately one month later. During the second interview, I photographed two of her paintings and she shared how they related to her experience of compassion. I shared photographs that were taken at the birth of a child I had “midwifed” into the world and shared how this manifested compassion for me. Audiocassette recordings were made during each session and later transcribed.

To supplement the interview data, I collected additional artifacts that depicted and/or portrayed compassion. These are in the form of rocks and tree branches, photo collections, musical cassette recordings and CD’s, books, and poetry organized and housed in storage (see Appendix B).
During the initial data collection, I had a dream about the goddess Diana that revealed information about the phenomenon of compassion and directions or “leads” about how to go about looking for information about this subject. I shared this insight with my co-researcher during our first interview session. The information she shared corroborated the information revealed to me in my dream: pursuing the suggestions disclosed in the dream, an altered state of consciousness, I focused my reading intermittently on stories and myths related to the feminine face of spirituality and ancient goddesses from around the world. I also focused on Tibetan Buddhist wisdom teachings in which compassion is a central theme. The everyday experiences of my sleeping and waking life were becoming the natural resources and raw materials of this research adventure.

The next phase of this investigation required that I organize and synthesize the data. I followed Moustakas’s “Suggested Outline Guide of Procedures for Data Analysis” (1990, p. 51):

1. I gathered together all of the materials (recordings, transcriptions, notes, journals, personal documents, photos, literature, artwork, and objects from nature) that I had collected.
2. I immersed myself in the materials until I had a felt sense about what my contribution was, what my co-researcher’s contribution was, what meanings the different pieces of data each held individually, and how they all fit together as a whole.

3. Next, I entered a period that was marked by intervals of rest in which I did not consciously think about the data, and intervals of reimmersion.

4. I returned to the interview audiotapes and transcriptions of my initial co-researcher. I asked myself the questions suggested by Moustakas: Does the depiction about the experience of compassion that is beginning to emerge fit the data? Does it contain the essential qualities and essences that reflect or portray this experience?

5. I entered a period marked by intervals in which I immersed myself in the data and intervals of rest. I became aware that I was ready to take the final step--to develop a creative synthesis for presenting the data.

6. I entered a period characterized by my desire to find a way to present what I had learned in a form that was vital, energetic, and true to the meaning of the experience of compassion as it had emerged from
investigating this phenomena with my co-researcher. I felt that something about her personhood, me, and the inter-subjective knowledge and essence of the experience needed to be expressed as the creative synthesis or culminating form for the data to be presented in.

It was originally my interest in the deeply subjective and inter-subjective ways of knowing and being which arose out of my awareness that humankind, at the individual and collective levels, is currently undergoing a tremendous transformation of consciousness global in magnitude, that lead me to design a research study to explore and investigate the experience of compassion.

Compassion has long been a companion of mine on this journey through life. My earliest awareness of perceiving and experiencing the phenomenon of compassion dates back to my childhood when I experienced (within a three year period), the loss of my mother and father through death. Many years later, as an adult volunteer at “Fernside: A Center For Grieving Children,” I learned that almost every child who experiences the death of his or her parent(s) seems to feel that he or she has felt more of a presence of compassion in his or her life following an experience of loss. It seems that the experience of compassion has helped
these children, as it had helped me, to make the necessary adjustments to living a life without a loved one, while at the same time bringing more of an inner feeling of caring for humankind into conscious awareness (Personal Document, February 7, 1997). Compassion had also been like a safety net, holding us grieving children when the feelings associated with the despair of our grief threatened to annihilate us.

My experience of compassion had more recently been enriched through my participating in a monthly spiritual support group that focused on developing skills associated with personal and collective transformation. In this experiential group, we were exploring “compassion as a tool for transformation” (Co-Researcher, [Brochure], 1994).

Heuristic inquiry begins with a question that the researcher seeks to illumine because it is deeply meaningful to him or her. Through my own search for the discovery of the meaning of compassion, I immersed myself in a profound relationship with this quality as it presented itself throughout my experiences of living each day.

As I reflected on the possibility of conducting an inquiry about the experience of compassion, I visited again
and again these words by Moffit presented by Moustakas (1990) in his manuscript:

To look at any thing
If you would know that thing
You must look at it long:
To look at this green and say
"I have seen Spring in these Woods," will not do - you must
Be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in
To the small silences between
The leaves,
You must take your time
And touch the very place
They issue from. (p. 12)

I underlined “Be the thing you see” and scribbled in the margins, “I must BE compassion--this is hard to do--to be compassion itself, enter the realm of compassion. You must Become [sic] the thing you see!”

With this in mind, I embarked on a great adventure of the mind, body, heart and soul. Early in the process, I shared with my co-researcher how “doing” this research was for me, like following a path that lead within and without simultaneously. My discovering and applying heuristic research methodology to the phenomenon of compassion was so much in harmony with my own understanding of how the inner and outer dimensions of living are in constant and dynamic interplay with each other. When I shared my insight about how this study was a bridge for the world to come to grasp
the necessity of these kinds of knowings and representing
the inner world of the self, she stated:

Well, to me, it’s also...giving it a name. I really believe in the ancient idea that to name something is to have power with it. So for a language of the heart, for us to be able to name that energy gives it a way to manifest.

The meaning of this is profound: Not only was our research concerned with understanding the meaning of the experience of compassion, but in the process of illuminating this phenomenon, we were actually going to call it into being. We were accessing and manifesting compassion!

How excited and humble I felt. While transformation was a primary goal of heuristic inquiry, the essence of the findings from exploring the experience of compassion was that compassion, was, perhaps, the most necessary and instrumental of all human experiences (at a core level), that are transformative and bring forth healing and wholeness.

This was fascinating to me. Our two interviews revealed the essence and meaning of the experience of compassion at its deepest and innermost levels and elucidated how the energy of compassion moves through each of us and acts in our everyday lives.
To me, the unabridged accounts from these interviews and my journal entries offer the purest, most vibrant, and best depictions and portrayals of compassion. I offer them, then, in original form, as "Teachings on Compassion." This approach allows the experience of compassion and discoveries made about this phenomenon to remain vital and alluring and personally meaningful for each reader. They invite us to experience for ourselves the power and dynamism central to the experience of compassion, while remaining true to the nature of every heuristic investigation--to reveal the intra- and inter-subjective components of an experience. Therefore, I invite you, the reader, to enter into these words with the conscious intent of invoking what compassion means to you in the light of these illuminations.

Teachings on Compassion From Interview 1 (Co-Researcher’s Voice)

You know, to me, the heart carrying the energy of compassion has been my whole focus in my spiritual work. Compassion, to me, isn’t just a feeling: it’s a force--I see it as being an actual force, an aspect of love and its name is compassion.... My idea about compassion is that it is an actual force, that when it graces a person, or moves through them, it expands them, and makes them aware of how things interconnect.

One of the ideas about [the Chinese Buddhist Goddess of Compassion] Kuan Yin is that she is
powerful. She is so strong that to just chant her name is to be graced by her energy.

One of my biggest awarenesses of love and compassion having a real effect on my life were always about ... having an awareness of a need of seeing something that I understood other people were overwhelmed or afraid of. And I addressed the need. I look at those as being compassion moving through me and bringing forward a kind of behavior, almost as if the idea that compassion is around all the time and it’s constantly looking for a vehicle to move through...I myself was a willing vehicle ... to manifest that so I don’t necessarily believe that anyone does anything special to make that happen as much as they’re just willing to open to it and it alters behavior.

I think that compassion allows us to rise to the occasion--that’s what makes the difference between coming forward and speaking the truth or being manipulated by fear, because I really believe that that is the issue of our time is that people are motivated by fear and people do things because they are afraid of what will happen if they don’t do, whatever the circumstance would be and there’s too little being done in the name of love ... that to me is an enormous evolutionary leap in the consciousness of a human being to act upon a force of love because they love so much, rather than to do what they do because they are afraid. It creates ... a different kind of human being!

Compassion is a huge transformative force that the way my own inner wisdom describes it is to say that love becomes whatever is needed for wholeness to take place ... Love is the transformative force and if there is pain, love becomes soothing.... If there is grief, love becomes comfort.... Compassion is a particular grace of love that brings forward something inside of people.

It seems to be another aspect of compassion that it creates such an environment of holiness and sacredness that people feel it and they unconsciously know to stand and bear witness and to not interfere. They know they’re watching something
sacred. So I believe that we all have [compassion]. We all have the keys to it.

I think compassion is the energy field that moves us to where we connect once again with spirit ...some of my most intense experiences of feeling compassion is from spirit directed toward me and not through me.

Teachings on Compassion From Interview 2 (Co-researcher’s Voice)

Compassion is the thing that gives me courage to go beyond my fear.

This whole month has been about letting the energy of compassion adjust me through the ...labor of change ... the discomfort of change. I’ve been having dreams about babies and birth and pregnancy, and I know the discomfort of change is just labor ... is laboring to give birth and to me compassion is the midwife.

I think that one of the major powers of compassion is the ability to stand in the center of our own sacred space ...[to know] this is my life, this is my journey, and to keep letting myself be called forward, because in the end one thing that will trip me up is the one thing that trips everybody else up and that is getting caught in fear.

I think that the energy of compassion is a transformative force. Look at the idea that what prevents us from growing and developing is when we get stuck in a belief system or mind-set or a way of perceiving or a way of feeling ... whatever; however people fit that into their idea of what life is about is when we get stuck in one of those areas and ... usually the stuckness has to do with, I believe, ego development with the child part of ourself. Either we want other people to be responsible for us or we don’t ever want to have to deal with anything difficult. Or we want to be in control of other people. I mean it has something to
do with not wanting to follow the natural flow of life, because the natural flow of life says, "You will grow. You will learn. You will be challenged. You will be vulnerable. You will bring out the resources." Life says you will experience all these things on your natural journey and when we get stuck is when we get off the path and we just stand there. And we watch it go by because we’ve somehow decided that we should be exempt from the journey. And compassion is the energy that gets us unstuck again. It’s the energy that gives us ... I really believe in the idea that love manifests whatever is needed. And that love slash compassion becomes the antidote to the dis-ease that’s pulled us off our journey. So if the dis-ease is fear, compassion manifests as courage. And comfort. If the dis-ease is self-absorbedness, compassion manifests as humility. And being humble and being brought to our knees and realizing, “I’m not the only one in pain. Life is not just difficult for me. It’s about me and six billion other people, ya know.” So I really see compassion as a transformative force that brings forward the medicine of honesty in whatever way we need it to bring us back on the journey again.

One of the things I’ve been trying to focus on with people is that you don’t have to get to some particular place on your journey to find love. Every single moment has love available. The gift is to remind me that there is so much available in inner reality and that we can pull anything out of there: we can pull music; we can pull painting, and sculpture, and dance, and poetry, and prose ... and what you’re going to write ... that that’s going to come from this rich interior space--that is our heritage and our legacy to those who come along. It says, “Look within ... look at what you’ll find. It’s amazing in here.” Compassion is the doorway where the interior space can travel into the outside world to make itself known, but it’s also the doorway back into the interior space. I don’t know any other way in .... There might be other ways in on this mystical journey that I don’t know about ... but I do know that compassion is a doorway that anyone can access.
We have many different layers of reality available to us and we can focus on any one of them and bring that into creation. And the more I am in a compassionate state and filled with the energy of compassion the more choices I realize there are. [In my practice] I've had the opportunity in the last four months to work with more therapists than I have in the whole 15 years I've been working and over and over again what's been missing in their personal journey and working with people is knowing how to open to compassion to renew themselves. And what I've been able to share with them is how to open into the core of their self [sic] that cares so much about humanity that moved them to the kind of work they do.

Compassion helped me open to my own sense of my inner worth and my inner value to know that none of us need be intimidated by each other at all. You know that space where compassion is present there's no intimidation. There's sharing. There's honesty. How different would our hospitals be if the basis of our work was compassion and patients weren't [sic] trying to be good patients for their doctors? What would happen if our work was based on compassion and we actually had great reverence and joy for the journey ... and for each other?

Teachings on Compassion From Journal Entries (My Voice)

Compassion is witnessing--bearing witness. By removing the self--coming to know the self as the other knows the self and also maintaining our own inner sense of self, we come to have compassion for the human condition (joy, too).

What is this that ripples and waves and thunders through my body - an orgasm of tears? Compassion? Compassion from the soul for the self, for self for the soul. SoulSelf. One self is One Beingness. Compassion allows this knowingness of soul. It is an expanded, enlarged quality-ability. Therefore it is a spiritual quality. Joy and Sadness. The ALLNESS [sic] of existence; “isness” [sic]. “BEINGNESS” [sic]. Compassion allows for our
humanness ... These thoughts come post meditation. I have been listening to a Tibetan Buddhist meditation tape designed for the meditator to dwell in love, compassion, joy, and peace. I become aware that my whole being is expanding and, all at once, I am simultaneously aware of all of creation as it exists at that very moment, including the entire history of all of humankind throughout the millennia. My body ripples with waves. Eyes overflowing and spilling tears. My body is crying. For the whole world, there is love. For all the pain and suffering and all the joy and freedom. For all human experience. In the manifest world, all at once, it was beautiful and precious, and I didn’t see any part that needed to be fixed. I had become compassion!

I am sitting in Blegen transcribing tapes—listened to Tape four of Pema Chodron’s “Awakening Compassion.” I am struck by a feeling of peace and awe. My life has changed because of doing this work. I can honor my life and be more open to who I am and who others are—every one, every experience—in a non-blaming way. I couldn’t have changed like this before. I’m more open and more alive! Compassion allows me to know that there is something larger in the world than each of us that connects us to some essential goodness and extends through us as a well-beingness beyond the boundaries of race, class, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, nationality, etc. Compassion allows us to see all of humanity and human experience as sacred and precious. The tragedies and joys are just tremendous experiences that change us, and these link us, one to another, to all the people who experience these things and teach us that we all are part of each other, capable of doing and acting in all the ways that every one of us is capable of behaving—both “good and bad.” Life isn’t solid; it is fluid, shaky, and constantly becoming.

Coyote Oldman articulates a wonderful definition of compassion on his CD. COMPASSION IS A DEEP FEELING AND CARE FOR OTHER PEOPLE AND OTHER CREATURES. I couldn’t have worded it better, except that what is missing is what has been emerging in
my study and that is the importance of extending this to ourselves.

This excerpt from Thich Nhat Hanh’s *Teachings on Love* moves me to my bones. It captures compassion at its deepest core. I am so grateful to have found it, and excited. The journey truly is intelligent. Once we set the intent--this time to be open to compassion entering my life and walking with it, when we show up in our lives and pay attention--it is right there! My heart resonates with these words from Thich Nhat Hanh’s passage:

I am one with all beings who are alive today-those who have realized truth of no-birth and no-death and are able to look at the forms of birth, death, joy and suffering with calm eyes; those who have inner peace, love and understanding and can touch that which is healing, nourishing, and refreshing and also have the capacity to embrace and act in a world with love and care; and those who are suffering because of physical or mental pain and anguish. I am someone who has enough peace, joy, and freedom to offer joy and non-fear to living beings. I see that I am not cut off. The love and happiness of great beings on this planet keep me from sinking in despair and help me to live my life in a meaningful way with true peace and happiness. I see all of them in me, and I see myself in all of them. The Second Prostration is represented by a horizontal line, the here and now. When we touch the Earth in that position, we touch all living beings who are with us in this moment. We know that we are part of life, that life is seamless.

I wrote this poem in 1978 while I was trying to help boat people on the South China Sea:

Do not say that I depart tomorrow--even today I still arrive.
Look deeply: every second I am arriving to be a bud on a Spring branch, to be a tiny bird in my new nest, to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower, to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, to fear and to hope. The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive.

I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river. And I am the bird that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.

I am a frog swimming happily in the clear water of a pond. And I am the grass-snake that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones, my legs as thin as bamboo sticks. And I am the arms merchant, selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl, refugee on a small boat, who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate. And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo, with plenty of power in my hands. And I am the man who has to pay his “debt of blood” to my people dying slowly in a forced-labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth. My pain is like a river of tears So vast it fills the four oceans.
Please call me by my true names
So I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
So I can wake up
and the door of my heart
could be left open, the door of compassion."

A poem, “Please Call Me By My True Names,” by Thich Nhat Hanh. No words to express how I am moved.

I have presented these excerpts from interviews and journal entries in original form. Collected together they become “Teachings on Compassion.” Each one is distinct in its representation and has enabled me to know compassion through the lens of personal significance. My desire in presenting them here, in this way, is to give recognition to the heuristic process which values “personal knowledge as an essential requirement for the understanding of common human experiences,” (Moustakas, 1990, p.90). My hope is that they will invoke and awake the experience of compassion as it is meaningful to each individual who encounters them while reading these pages.

This brings me around to the beginning. When I first began this adventure, I became aware that what this work would demand from me was the willingness to become compassion--a daunting task. It also required that I would be open to the possibility of transformation. Undertaking
this journey, not only had I experienced moments of “becoming” compassion that were transformative, but I was filled with a sense of wonder and delight to discover how closely linked compassion was with the process of transformation. An important paradox had been disclosed.

This part of the journey was now complete. What lay ahead was creating a form in which I could share this experience with others, something which, in its synthesis would preserve the totality of the experience and the authenticity of me, my co-researcher, and the unique nature of our discovery about the experience of compassion.

Moustakas (1990) stated:

The creative synthesis encourages a wide range of freedom in characterizing the phenomenon. It invites a recognition of tacit-intuitive awarenesses of the researcher, knowledge that has been incubating over months through processes of immersion, illumination, and explication of the phenomenon under investigation.... The researcher [as scientist-artist] taps into imaginative and contemplative sources of knowledge and insight in synthesizing the experience.... In the creative synthesis, there is a free range of thought and feeling that supports the researcher’s knowledge, passion, and presence and infuses the work with a personal, professional, and literary value that can be expressed through a narrative, story, poem, work of art, metaphor, analogy or tale. (p. 52)

For several months, I was aware that I was searching for this. I entered into periods in which I was consciously playing with ideas such as a story, a sculpture, a narrative account, a poem, something that my co-researcher
and I could create together. Intermittently, I allowed my thoughts to become quiescent. During a conversation with my co-researcher she suggested that I go into meditation to ask compassion to reveal what kind of creative synthesis would be most expressive of our work together. I did this and set the intent to become aware of how to develop a creative synthesis to present our findings in a way that would best express the spirit and life of the experience of compassion as a whole and in light of our work together, while simultaneously keeping my co-researcher’s contribution and presence intact.

About two months later, I was taking a walk and had the “Aha!” experience: I would create a presentation in the form of a guided meditation developed by my co-researcher in which participants would be invited to experience compassion directly! I met with my co-researcher soon after and shared my idea with her. She liked it and suggested one modification which I incorporated into the meditation: to not only invite the energy of compassion to manifest during an indwelling, meditative state, but also to ask the meditators to recall a time when compassion had been present in their lives (see Appendix C).
Summary of Second Discourse. This heuristic study investigated the phenomenon, the experience of compassion. These teachings on compassion, when synthesized, revealed to me and my co-researcher that the essence of our discovery about the experience of compassion is that compassion is an actual force or energy that is everywhere present and may be consciously accessed and recognized by people who are mindfully focused in a heart-centered meditative state. Therefore, findings of this study are best presented as an interactive experiential encounter where attendees of presentations about this study would be invited to participate in discovering a way that compassion manifests and expresses through each person, individually and collectively, using guided imagery and personal sharing. Later I discovered a dance that also facilitates a direct inner encounter with an experience of compassion (see Appendix D).

More recently, I have become aware that the findings of this study inspired me to begin to articulate what qualities an epistemology of the heart based on and ethic of compassion might have (see Appendix E). The processes associated with this kind of inquiry also create a space for new and multiple methods of representing knowledge while re-defining what is worth knowing.
As my co-researcher explains so clearly:

Life is a journey into the mystery of our inner sacred spaces. Our "Higher Selves" are constantly communicating directions, reassurance, and support for our journeys through dreams, direct knowing, inspiration, and visions. However, our society has taught us to listen only to the intellect. This causes us to become dysfunctional when we try to relate to our inner, spiritual realities. We no longer know the language of our souls. (Co-Researcher, 1996, [Brochure])

The processes associated with heuristic research investigations and the energy of compassion may be the doorway for illuminating that which is unknowable through the outer perceptions of the physical senses--a language of the soul. It is no longer enough to limit ourselves to more conventional ways of knowing and being. I believe we are alive at a moment in time in which we are being called to live life from the depths of existence and address the inner concerns of our beingness that call our attention through the feeling, intuitive parts of our nature.

The world is being transformed and, as Rev. Pat Barker commented (personal communication, January 30, 1997), "When the light gets very bright, those caught up in fear and anger will heighten their expressions of this. They are afraid of the brightening light. Those not willing to pay attention to it are scared, are fighting. They will be yanked into it." If "compassion is ... the total
willingness to extend that which we are, which is unconditional love," (ibid.) we need to open to this energy now, more than ever.
Discourse Three: Opening the Heart of Education

THE CALL

Discourse Three explores the question, “Why is a call for a new philosophy of education that has at its heart an understanding of education as healing practice of extreme necessity as we journey into the twenty-first century?” It is organized into four teaching inquiries that address the four constituent questions embedded in the principal question: “What is a new philosophy of education?”, “What is the present moment?”, “What is education as healing practice?”, and “Where is this sense of urgency that compels us to examine this question as we journey into the twenty-first century coming from?”
THE RESPONSE

all that the human experience is about

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First Teaching Inquiry: What Is a New Philosophy of Education?
Wendy Kohli (1995) suggested that it is women philosophers whose works often question the fundamental assumptions of Western philosophy because they challenge us to think about “What counts as philosophy and why?” and “Who counts as a philosopher and why?” These questions challenge the discipline of philosophy of education to become less identified with only one school of thought, whether that be Aristotelian, pragmatic, or analytic. Although perhaps this brings with it more confusion and less clarity, it also creates an opening for engaging and exploring different possibilities for creating new modes of philosophical inquiry.

Nel Noddings is one of those philosophers. In her book *Philosophy of Education*, she articulated a contemporary approach to the study of the philosophy of education and examined the differences between traditional and new paradigms for the applied study of philosophy to education. She (1995) explained:

Philosophy of Education is the philosophical study of education and its problems. Unlike other branches of philosophy, it is rarely taught in philosophy departments [but] is usually taught in schools or departments of education. Its central subject matter is education, and its methods are those of philosophers.

Traditionally, philosophical methods have consisted of analysis and clarification of concepts, arguments, theories, and language. Philosophers, as philosophers, have not usually created theories of
education (or teaching, learning, and the like); instead they have analyzed theories and arguments, sometimes raising powerful objections that lead to the revision or abandonment of theories and lines of arguments. However, there are many exceptions to this view of philosophy as analysis and clarification. The classical Greek philosophers, for example, construed philosophy much more broadly and explored a host of questions that later philosophers--more narrowly analytic in their outlook--rejected as outside the scope of philosophy. Indeed for the Greeks, "philosophy" meant "love of wisdom," and today we think of their discussions as part of an "immortal conversation." (pp. 1-2)

These ideas suggest to me that a new philosophy of education is a fresh approach to thinking about and addressing age-old questions about life and living of central importance to most discourses in the field: "Who is the human person?"; "What is education?"; "How do we think about schooling in such a way that no voice is left unheard?"

Asking the question, "What is a new philosophy of education?" has not lead me to an answer; instead, I find an invitation to engage in a relationship with the question. This is a poignant reminder that life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be experienced (Rilke, according to Donaldson, 1995). A new philosophy of education is one that challenges us to consciously choose to live in the mystery of life by "enter[ing] the temple of the question" (Richards, 1980, p. 8). M. C. Richards
(ibid.) suggested that perhaps “living in the question,” in the form of an ongoing inquiry, is desirable. To her, the commitment to inquiry is not in finding the answer, in a certain way of asking: It demands that we enter the question as if we are entering a sacred space, a temple, “with awe and reverence and attentive listening” (p. 9).

Thus, I enter the question, “What is a new philosophy of education?” with reverence, awe, and attentive listening. I find not an answer, but discover that the heart of the question may hold what I am searching for. To Kohli (1995), multiple perspectives have found their way into the field. To Noddings (1995), philosophers of education must no longer be satisfied with narrow definitions that determine what philosophy is and is not. To Richards (1995), living in the ongoing inquiry is the challenge and demand of our age.

To me, a new philosophy of education is one that honors the sacredness of all creation, honors the need to include multiple perspectives, and seeks to expand the individual and collective consciousness of humankind beyond the present boundaries of current ways of thinking that serve to imprison us. I hear the call to create and embrace new ways of knowing and being. Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian-born philosopher, scientist, artist, and educator,
addressed this idea in a lecture given at Dornach, Switzerland in 1924:

Today it is not enough merely to think about the world. Today we have to think about the world in such a way that our thinking becomes gradually transformed into a general feeling for the world, for out of those feelings grow impulses for reform, for progress. It is the aim of [human wisdom] to present a knowledge of the world which does not remain abstract but which will enliven the entire being of mankind [sic], thereby becoming the right basis for educational principles and methods. (p. 26)

These awarenesses grow out of the heart of the question. It suggests that philosophy is not limited to words of wisdom as a veneer, but that it can convey the vitality of real-life experiences as the inner life expressing itself in outer form. Inherent to this perception, assumption, or belief is the understanding that the process of education arises out of this knowledge, bringing with it a new paradigm where wholeness or healing is the aim of education and we are not educated only during succinct periods of our development but for “our entire earthly existence” (Steiner, 1964, p. 322).
Second Teaching Inquiry: What Is the Present Moment?

As I begin to explore this question, I am moved by the awareness that it is Passover and that it is also Easter. Both are celebrations that honor renewal and rebirth in the continually transmuting cycle of life: living, birthing and dying. It is a moment of synchronicity for me—what Jung called a meaningful coincidence, and, perhaps, an act of grace, for herein lies the heart of the second question I seek to illumine: “What is the present moment?”

The Ritual/Life Cycle Committee of Congregation Beth Adam (1996) in Cincinnati, Ohio wrote the Haggadah we used at our Seder this year. A Haggadah is the narrative read at the Passover Seder, a special service about the story of the Jewish people’s bondage in, and flight from, Egypt. This liturgy offers a beautiful passage that, for me, carries a message that suggests how we may think about the present moment:

The long history of our people is one of contrasts—freedom and slavery, joy and pain, power and helplessness. Passover reflects these contrasts. Tonight as we celebrate our freedom, we remember the slavery of our ancestors and realize that many people are not yet free.

Each generation changes—our ideas, our needs, our dreams, even our celebrations. So has Passover changed over many centuries into our present holiday. Our nomadic ancestors gathered for a spring celebration when the sheep gave birth to lambs. Theirs was a celebration of the continuity of life. Later,
when our ancestors became farmers, they celebrated the arrival of spring in their own fashion. Eventually these ancient spring festivals merged with the story of the Exodus from Egypt and became a new celebration of life and freedom.

As each generation gathered around the table to retell the old stories, the symbols took on new meanings. New stories of slavery and liberation, oppression and triumph were added, taking their place next to the old. Tonight we add our own special chapter as we recall our people’s past and dream of the future.

For Jews, our enslavement by the Egyptians is now remote, a symbol of communal remembrance. As we sit here in the comfort of our modern world, we think of the millions who still suffer the brutality of the existence we escaped thousands of years ago.

The opportunities and the need to create a less violent, less oppressive world are enormous. But cruelty and apathy are still with us – across the ocean, across the border, across the street [and within ourselves]. It is up to each of us, each day, in small but profound ways to move our world one step closer to its potential. (pp. 8-9)

We then recited the following blessing:

B’ru-chim ha-cha-yim ba-alom.
Blessed is the life within the world.

B’ru-chim ha-cha-yim ba-adam.
Blessed is the life within us.

Prager (1998) teaches that Brakhot, the spiritual practice of blessing in Judaism, challenges us to bring kedusha, that which is sacred, into our everyday lives. It is an acknowledgement that, by pausing to create a moment to practice appreciation or gratitude, we open ourselves to experience our connection to the whole of life. Prager (ibid.) asks us to:
Imagine if at every moment we each embraced the world as the gift it is: an apple is a gift, the color pink is a gift, the blue sky is a gift, the scent of Honeysuckle is a gift, obligating us to heart-filled appreciation, to songs of gratitude. We are called not merely to notice casually now and then that something is special and nice but to sustain and deepen a profound and sustained gratitude. Indeed, the more we acknowledge our gratefulness, the more we temper our tendency to be users, despoilers, arrogant occupiers. We are on our way to kedusha. (p. 15)

I have been gifted in my life with a certain kind of openness, which means that I am a very eclectic person. This lead me to New Thought Unity Center in Cincinnati, Ohio to celebrate Easter Sunday, which this year fell on the fourth day of Passover. Here, I experienced another profound teaching that perhaps sheds more light on my quest to understand “What is the present moment?”

The Rev. Jack Barker’s (2000) lesson about Easter captured the essence of the meaning of the present moment when he stated, “Our point of power is in the present moment ... in the now moment ... and we need to focus our attention in the present moment experience of life that we are enjoying, being, having or doing” (Audiocassette Recording, 2000).

It is in the now moment that we can remember “to choose ... and recognize that everything we do in life is a choice” (ibid.). In the stillness and quietness of the present moment, we may come to know a truer aspect of who
we really are. From this perspective, we can open ourselves to hope and possibility and come to understand that, although we cannot change the past, the desperate conditions that are the results of the past’s limitations can be left behind (Barker, J. & Barker, P., 2000).

Earlier in the Easter service, the Rev. Pat Barker guided us through a powerful meditation that allowed me to have a direct inner experience of what the present moment holds. I offer her words here:

And we remember that the story of Easter is a story of hope.... Today is a gift to us offering the opportunity to pause and choose again to live fully. It’s the story of hope reminding us that no matter how difficult or painful that past may have been, today is a gift of new choices. A few short weeks ago there was no evidence of life and now a Lily pushes through the soil and blooms...where a few days ago we found no way around or through a mountainous problem...today, we can choose a new direction, as we open our heart to a new solution...Today, Easter, we pause and we open our mind so that we might do this more fully.... So Easter, a pause, becomes a turning point for us, a time to leave behind the desperation, the fear, the lack and to choose again because today is the gift of new choices. (Audiocassette Recording, 2000)

Richards (1980) elaborated the concept of pausing. Linking the word school with the word pause she explained that the root meaning of the words school and schooling is pause:

Pausing gives us a chance to redirect our behavior whether it be habitual, instinctual, dogmatic, fearful, greedy, unconscious, eager, conditioned, etc. Although automatic behavior is not bad or good,
school, because it asks us to pause, gives us the opportunity to direct our behavior more deliberately. What has been automatic now may be chosen or it may be reconsidered or revised. School from this perspective, is like a musical rest. It offers a chance to breathe, to listen, to collect ourselves, to come into relationship with what is going on around us, to take hold in a new way or let something go. (p. 20)

Through this exploration of the question “What is the present moment?,” the concepts of education, schooling, and the “now moment,” or present, become conjunct. The present moment is a state of consciousness in which we are graced to access higher or deeper parts of ourselves. It is where we can come to know the true state of who we are as interconnected spiritual beings. It is the here and now, the place of power, and the door to our inner selves. It is a moment in time belonging to choice and change.

The present moment, the now moment, is the only place where change can occur, where we have a choice about our thoughts, words, and actions in the world.

Many indigenous peoples from the Americas and around the world believe that what we do today, right now, has effects seven generations down the line, (Arrien, 1994; Lee, 1994). Therefore, it is imperative that we begin to live mindfully in the present moment so that we can make conscious choices with the awareness that what we do right
now will continue to impact our lives, the lives of our children, and those of our children’s children.

“What is the present moment?” I ask again. I pause and receive the insight that it is the only place where we can stop perpetuating the mistakes and despair of the past. The present moment gives us access to the awareness “that the Divine energy in us lives as the indestructible, eternal Self of us--that Self of us that brings us from despair to hope, from brokenness to wholeness” (J. Barker, 2000).

During the present moment, when we pause, we are being schooled. It is here that we may come to know that love abounds, that an infinite number of choices exist, and that we do have the power to change.

I leave this inquiry with the words to a moving song that enliven my heart and mind while contemplating the question, “What is the present moment?”

“At the Same Time”

Think of all the hearts beating in the world at the same time
Think of all the faces and the stories they could tell at the same time

Think of all the eyes looking out into this world trying to make some sense of what we see
Think of all the ways we have of seeing
Think of all the ways there are of being

Think of all the children being born into this world at the same time
Feel your love surround them for the years they’ll need to grow at the same time

Just think of all the hands that will be reaching for a dream
Think of all the dreams that could come true
Yes, if the hands we’re reaching with could come together joining me and you

When it comes to thinking of tomorrow
We must protect our fragile destiny
In this precious life
There’s no time to borrow
The time has come
To be a family

Think of all the love pouring from our hearts at the same time
Yes, think if all the light out there could shine around the world
At the same time

Just think what we’ve been given
And think what we could lose
All of life is in our trembling hands

It’s time to overcome our fears
And build a world that loves and understands
It helps to think of all the hearts beating in the world
And hope for all the hearts beating in the world

There’s a healing music in our hearts
Beating in this world
At the same time...
At the same time

- “At The Same Time” by Ann Hampton Callaway
As I cross the threshold and behold the temple of this question, my first perception is a feeling that suggests that I should immerse myself in the question, “What is education?” in order to elucidate the question, “What is education as healing practice?”

“What is education?” There are probably as many definitions of education as there are worldviews, philosophies, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks linked to the humanities as well as to the social sciences. While some are broad in scope, others are more constrained (Brubacher, 1951). Connel, Debus and Niblett (1967) stated that:

the term education [should not] be limited to what is taught consciously and for the most part in schools and colleges, or to those being educated. [It should] include what is taught anywhere whether in schools and colleges, or home or the church, not merely consciously but also unconsciously .... Advocates of a narrow definition argue that unless one takes a bold decision to limit one’s meaning, even if somewhat arbitrarily, education can become almost a synonym for life itself .... [I]n fact a very great deal of the educational process is ... carried on unintentionally. We simply do not know all that we may be teaching about our own outlook and way of life. We may think we are teaching chemistry or history or art when in reality we are also teaching--and more lastingly--manners, values, morals and taste. (p. 50)
Similarly, I feel a necessity to find a definition of education that is wide in scope as opposed to small and constricting, one that is in harmony with the very essence of life and livingness itself. Therefore, my preferred definition of education is one that reflects my personal experiences of knowing and being. It is: Education is a life-long journey to wholeness in which we are continuously exploring and unfolding the mystery of who we are at depth.

The “active force” of a definition such as this is rooted in, or springs from, an understanding and knowledge of another question, one that asks us to comprehend “Who is the person?” It is “the human being who is ... our concern in education--the human being in his or her wholeness” (Richards, 1980, p.70).

My understanding or knowledge of who we are, who the human person is, arises from my own experiences of an inner life over the course of my life-time. These direct personal experiences have been as real to me as that of the outer senses and have lead me to know the truth of our existence as interconnected, spiritual beings. I call these experiences “moments of awakening.”

The shaman, Zen Buddhist, and each of us who have experienced moments of awakening through meditation, mindful concentration, or even while engaged in activities
of the mundane world, know this kind of experience involves our releasing that part of our mental activity involved in humankind’s shared construction of reality. It is during these times that we are able to explore a truer and more meaningful existence (Pearce, 1974). In other words, these experiences involve “unknowing,” our giving up knowing in order to know the world in a deeper, clearer and more heartfelt way. Throughout the ages, both ancient and contemporary Eastern, Western, native and indigenous thought systems from all over the world have called this state of being higher consciousness or energy, love, God, or Divine Mind (Arrien, 1994; Houston, 1983, 1985; Judith, 1995; & Sri Aurobindo, 1955).

A Course in Miracles (1992) distinguishes between the real and the unreal, between knowledge and perception, or “unknowing” and knowing. It states:

Knowledge is truth, under one law, the law of love or God. Truth is unalterable, eternal and unambiguous. It can be unrecognized but it cannot be changed. It applies to everything that God created, and only what (God) created is real. It is beyond learning because it is beyond time and process. It has no opposite; no beginning and no end. It merely is.

The world of perception, on the other hand, is the world of time, of change, of beginnings and endings. It is based on interpretation, not on facts. It is the world of birth and death, founded on the belief in scarcity, loss, separation and death. It is learned rather than given, selective in its perceptual emphasis, unstable in its functioning, and inaccurate in its interpretations. (p. x)
This explanation presents a more abstract and less personal dimension of the experience of unknowing or awakening. The following contemporary poem by James Dillet Freeman (Unity School of Christianity) sparks a more direct and personal way of being in relationship with this reality. I discovered it during a challenging time in my life—a time when I had one of those “moments of awakening.” Later, I learned that a copy of it is on the moon, left there by Astronaut James B. Irwin during the Apollo XV space voyage in 1969.

I Am There

Do you need me?  
I am there.  
You cannot see Me, yet I am the light you see by.  
You cannot hear Me, yet I speak through your voice.  
You cannot feel Me, yet I am the power at work in your hands.  
I am at work, though you do not understand My ways.  
I am at work, though you do not recognize My works.  
I am not strange visions. I am not mysteries.  
Only in absolute stillness, beyond self, can you know Me as I am, and then but as a feeling and a faith.  
Yet I am there. Yet I hear. Yet I answer.  
When you need Me, I am there.  
Even if you deny Me, I am there.  
Even when you feel most alone, I am there.  
Even in your fears, I am there.  
Even in your pain, I am there.  
I am there when you pray and when you do not pray.  
I am in you and you are in Me.  
Only in your mind can you feel separate from Me, for only in your mind are the mists of “yours” and “mine.”  
Yet only with your mind can you know Me and experience Me.
Empty your heart of empty fears. 
When you get yourself out of the way, I am there. 
You can of yourself do nothing, but I can do all. 
And I am in all. 
Though you may not see good, good is there, 
for I am there. 
I am there because I have to be, because I am. 
Only in Me does the world have meaning; only out of 
Me does the world take form; only because of 
Me does the world go forward. 
I am the law on which the movement of the stars and 
the growth of living cells are founded. 
I am the love that is the law’s fulfilling. 
I am assurance. 
I am peace. 
I am oneness. 
I am the law that you can live by. 
I am the love that you can cling to. 
I am your assurance. 
I am your peace. 
I am one with you. 
I am. 
Though you fail to find Me, I do not fail you. 
Though your faith in Me is unsure, My faith in you 
ever wavers, because I know you, because I 
love you. 
Beloved, I am there. 
- James Dillet Freeman

It was during this moment of awakening that I more 
fully came to comprehend and experience for myself what 
Steiner (1965) and others meant when they proposed that all 
existence arises from a spiritual impulse that is 
unknowable through the outer perceptions of the physical 
senses. It is this impulse that leads us to directly know 
the truth of our existence as interconnected spiritual 
beings.
Many thinkers, including me, believe that we, as human persons, are mystical or spiritual beings engaged in a human experience on a journey of self-unfoldment (Steiner, 1909, 1924, 1965; the Barkers, 2000; & Wilson, 1994). Our true self, deepest core, inner self is “that part of us that is ultimately alive, energetic, creative and fulfilled” (Whitfield, 1987, p. 11), and it has the power to create its personal and collective experience. I also believe, like Steiner (ibid.), Sri Aurobindo (1955), and other great wisdom teachers down through the ages, that life is an adventure in consciousness—a consciousness that demands from us that we engage life in such a way that furthers the evolution of humanity and benefits everyone and all creation. Steiner (ibid.) and Houston (1983) believed that every person has a universal need to become fully human. A fully human experience is one in which we come to know ourselves as spiritual beings having a human experience that manifests as our individual and collective being simultaneously. These inner and outer states of being are in constant and dynamic interplay.

Hillman (1995) and Wilson (1994) teach that, once we come to know ourselves as spiritual beings having a human experience, we come to know that essentially our lives
belong to the soul, that unique part of us that manifests with our physical body at birth.

Once we become conscious of this indwelling spiritual source as the fundamental truth of our existence, we take up works, our actions in the world--the field in which we find our lives expressing themselves--to serve the evolution of humankind, all sentient beings, and the world at large. A morality of freedom and cooperation and a profound respect for all creation arises from this deep, inner, or spiritual understanding of reality and a co-creation of life in community or communion with itself is the result.

If the question, “What is education?” has the understanding of the human person in his or her wholeness at its center, then wholeness naturally becomes the aim of education. The Rev. Pat Barker’s (1994) words remind us:

> even [when] we don’t see ... wholeness, it is there, a part of us. Becoming aware of wholeness is where healing takes place. ... Because healing always contains the element of mystery, we are called to acknowledge and embrace that which is beyond our finite ability to understand. (Audiocassette Recording, 1993).

If wholeness is the aim of education, an understanding of education as healing practice grows out of the awareness that the process of living, and in fact all of life, is seeking after an ever more evolved expression of this
unity. Today, a fundamental vision of wholeness is manifesting as a global identity. We are being called to awaken or become conscious of our primary connections to each other and to the Earth. Inherent to this paradigm of wholeness, oneness, or interbeing is the awareness that all things are part of an indivisible unity or whole, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and each member of this oneness is enhanced by the diversity of the whole. In other words, each of us, because of the very nature of our existence, is unique and absolutely essential to the transformation of consciousness or journey towards wholeness that is constantly and lovingly unfolding life.

Education as healing practice is fundamentally rooted in this concept of wholeness and the knowledge that life, indeed all creation, inanimate matter as well as animate manifestation, has a spiritual source. To know life, one must penetrate the hidden or inner nature of our human beingness. The spiritual source of existence is an impulse whose nature it is to create and reveal wholeness through the constant onward press for change and growth. Spiritual unfoldment (the inner self) through our earthly physical existence (the outer form), where wholeness is the aim, envisions education to be a practice of healing that continually expands our conscious awareness and our ability
to grow and develop throughout the lifespan (Steiner, 1909).

According to Steiner (ibid.), education as healing practice “must have the task of providing a practical conception of the world—one that comprehends the nature and essence of human life” (p. 7). As a healing practice, it is not limited to exploring the greater questions of life only, but seeks to meet the immediate and mundane needs of the individual as well. Education as a healing practice reveals that a true knowledge and perception of life will respect existing things regardless of what improvements are necessary, sees growth and evolution in all things becoming, and pays attention to the present. Together, these three guiding principles lay a foundation for an understanding that education springs out of life itself and continually nourishes the harmonious growth of the personal and collective experience of the individual, all of humankind, and Earth.

The question “What is education as healing practice?” contributes to the understanding of a fundamental spiritual principle that has appeared in my life as “if you take care of today, tomorrow will take care of itself.” In other words, if we take care of, nourish, and pay attention to the present, wherein lies the embryo of the future, we will
be able to perceive the seeds of transformation, growth and reform, in all things becoming. This is the point of truth from where we take action. This is the essence of life and therefore of education. Education is life, constantly drawing forth its evolution, always becoming and manifesting. (See Appendix F for a statement of my personal philosophy of education).
Fourth Teaching Inquiry: Where Is The Sense of Urgency That Compels Us to Examine This Question as We Journey Into The 21st Century Coming From?

Inquiry number four. I am almost there, but I am very tired and want to stop. Just as I felt during the final hours of laboring to give birth to my biological child twenty-two years ago, I arrive here tired and not wanting to go on. And just like the process of giving birth to my son was intermittently humbling yet exciting, and sometimes discouraging, the process of birthing this project has also been sometimes exhilarating and sometimes discouraging. I will remember both as being always filled with mystery and wonder.

I have one more question to explore. I close my eyes and ask the muse of this dissertation for guidance and support. Just like a midwife, she encourages me to keep going and reminds me that the “baby’s head is almost out.” “Yes,” I say, as I remember to breathe, and, once again, I cross the threshold of a new question with reverence and awe.

All at once I am filled with three very profound and powerful images that well up from within my memory. I offer
them here because they may shed light on the final question we are about to explore.

1. Soon after the Oklahoma City bombing during April, 1995, the Cincinnati Enquirer printed a cartoon by nationally acclaimed cartoonist, Jim Borgman. It was an outline of the map of the United States. In the spot that represented Oklahoma City, he had placed the outline of a heart and, within the heart, the word, fear. The caption to this stunning image stated, “In the heart of the heart of the country.”

2. During that time, I was a volunteer at Fernside: A Center for Grieving Children in Cincinnati, Ohio. Fernside serves children grieving the loss of an immediate family member through death. One evening, the children whose group I was facilitating decided to make cards to send to the people dealing with loss and grief in Oklahoma City. One boy, who was seven years old, drew a picture. It, too, was the outline of the United States. Within its borders, was a boy, and from his eye, hung a huge tear, almost as big as the boy himself. Underneath, he printed the words, “The United Tear of America.”

3. The third image I offer is a circle. Scout Cloud Lee, (1994) describes this symbol as:
a way of expressing the relatedness of all things. A perspective that acknowledges one’s experience of the physical world, the world of events, feelings, thoughts and relationships.

On this continent, Native Americans have called this circle of life, “The Medicine Wheel.” “Medicine” acknowledges that the human being’s journey around the circle results in a “whole” complete human being and that this “human” lives in good and balanced relations in all aspects of life ... physical, emotional and finally spiritual. We are here to fulfill our vision and individual destinies in harmony with one another and in balance with nature. The time of the medicine power is here. It is a time of great accountability and consequences for our actions. (p. 9)

These are three potent images. They stir up the simultaneous emotions of despair and hope. They remind me that the present moment we are alive in, if looked at contextually and historically rather than temporally as we did in the second teaching inquiry, is filled with a sense of urgency. This sense of urgency is characterized by both hope and despair, or fear and love.

Many scholarly and popular thinkers of today including myself, are aware that “we are living in an exciting and wonderful time of a new birth of consciousness. Richards (1980) noted:

We have had a long period, some 500 years, of developing capabilities of objectivity and independence in our thinking and observing. We call them Natural Science. We have experienced historically an earlier period when we lived the bidding of the gods. Now we take on truth in inner freedom, finding our experience of Spiritual Presence each in our own way...The human being is waking up in a new day we do not yet fully possess. (pp. 14-15)
We are birthing the possible human and we are now in a state of whole-system transition (Houston, 1983). Woodman (1996) believes that, as we are crossing the threshold of the 21st century, we are bringing into being or birthing the next level of evolution. Some, like Miller (1992), explain this phenomenon as a paradigm shift. I liken this process to that of a woman giving birth. If we are alive at a moment in time when the earth is giving birth to herself, then the social, environmental, and educational chaos and upheaval of our day are symptomatic of the phase of labor known as transition. Gaskin (1978) instructs the midwife for managing this stage of labor:

Transition refers to the time of full dilation just before the urge to push is felt by the mother. As the mother nears transition, prepare her for it. Tell her that you will need her to stay in good touch with you during transition and the second stage. Transition is an intense time during delivery. Some mothers go through transition very smoothly and some will need your help. The mother may become emotional at this time when she wasn’t emotional before and won’t be later [italics added]. Rational thought may leave her, and she may think for a moment that she can’t do it [italics added]. She may feel nauseous and throw up. Assure her that this is temporary [italics added]. Transition lasts only a few moments...so help her through it. She should understand that she may have to exert great pure effort to keep herself together at the time of full dilation. (p. 352)

Many women become afraid and despairing during this stage of labor. They are in pain. And we, as a human
community, are in pain. Palmer (1980) described our culture as a culture of fear. A culture of fear is characterized by feelings of despair. It appears as chaos in our social institutions, especially in our institutions of education, and is rooted in the “disconnected” life, a life that has lost its bond to an inner reality. Wolfgram (1995) argued that the violent behavior among our youth and in our schools is signaling a need for educational reform. Barnes (1979) noted that Rudolf Steiner, as early as 1919, made the extraordinary observation that, if the educational environment of his time, which was marked by a certain lack of connection to the inner life, were to continue, it would eventually lead to educational collapse. Ultimately, the police would have to be called in to enforce from the outside the teachers’ authority which no longer would arise spontaneously from within!

Today, not only are there police stationed in our public schools, but many of these schools are losing confidence and support and students. Levies are no longer being passed, and even the buildings are rotting, decaying, and collapsing. These are urgent indicators calling our attention to a need for wholeness.

A definition of wholeness that appeals to me is that wholeness is an absence of woundedness (American Heritage
Dictionary, 1994, p. 920). Our woundedness, pain, and suffering are the urgent indicators that a new birth is occurring. These phenomena, appearing as unpredictable violence and horrific acts of terrorism, may be perceived as resistance to growth and change. Richards (1980) observed that:

Old forms die when life goes out of them. Perhaps the message is that new growth is on the way. Perhaps the human spirit is ready to take a new step into selfhood, and is outgrowing institutions and forms which cannot help it on the way. (p. 7)

Similarly, Moss (1986) wondered:

All humankind is being carried toward the darkness of self in the very process of coming to realize the great blessing of wholeness. We are opening even now. Will we be overwhelmed? Will there be a panicked scramble for familiar territory? Will years pass while we deny the glimpse of eternity that has been eroding the old basis of our lives and readying us for a new potential? Assuming we have opened deeply, will we have the patience and strength to let the new consciousness guide us? Will we reject our own lives? Will we be patient until the new consciousness becomes more accustomed, more ordinary and our life is sublimed gradually and naturally? Can we be sure that along the way we won’t empower the basic egoic structures and become inflated or even messianic? Will we take this new energy and empower old, destructive patterns and take ourselves out of life even faster? (pp. 32-33)

The questions that Moss proposes, to me, embody the sense of urgency that forms the question we seek to understand. And like Moss (ibid.), I believe that the path
we are on, this journey toward wholeness, always “requires tremendous courage, wisdom and a good dose of humor” (p. 33).

Awakening, like birthing, has its own timing. The moment of transformation requires that “we can no longer continue to live as half-light versions of ourselves. The complexity of our time requires a greater and wiser use of our innate capabilities. The world can thrive only if we can grow” (Houston, 1983, p. vi).

The chaos and crises of today are urgent indicators, signals that beckon us to enter this time of transition where one form of existence is dying and a new one is beginning, not with fear, but with hope. While despair may be characteristic of this historical moment in time, we have come to understand that the present moment when considered from a temporal perspective, offers great hope, for it is where love abounds. Just like a knowing midwife can help a laboring woman through the difficult challenge of transition, a knowing midwife can help us through these difficult times of opening our hearts towards a life of wholeness, as the heart of education awakens... Who is she? She is compassion.
The Midwife

Kuan Yin: The Chinese Bodhisattva of Compassion
Education is not learning about life, but participating in life. A new philosophy of education is one alive and responsive to the moment in time we are currently experiencing as we journey into the 21st century. Today, what has become institutionalized is our outgrown worldview of atomism and isolation. It is a worldview that breeds disconnection, fear, and despair (Palmer, 1992).

A new philosophy of education is radically alive. The word “‘radical’ means root, the support or foundation, the fundamental, the basis or basic principle. Radical aliveness challenges us to go to the root of aliveness, to the place from which our very sense of being emerges” (Moss, 1986, p. 2).

The present moment is the place where we can access that sense of our beingness in which we find wholeness and hope. A worldview of wholism, has at its heart, an understanding that the process of education is life drawing forth our wholeness and, therefore, sees education, or life, as an activity of healing practice.

The sense of urgency is palpable. We must access the energy of compassion as our midwife of consciousness if we are to successfully transform the pain, suffering, and
woundedness that are the results of living disconnected lives into a vision of hope and possibility for the Earth’s children--every one of us and all sentient beings. Awiakta writes:

When we women see the damage irreverence has done and is doing to our environment to our people our families and ourselves we weep. There is a time to weep. Tears relieve the mind/body spirit. Then comes the time to cease weeping, gather strength, trust our own thinking. And get the job done. However, before a woman can reweave life around her, she has to reweave her own--center her spirit and make it whole. This is the hardest task as many of us have experienced. (p. 189)

Connecting our lives to spirit is the task of the hour. It requires a new philosophy of education that has at its heart an understanding of education as healing practice. The words healing, whole, and holy come from the same root. A circle is a symbol of wholeness. Lee and Lyn (1994) explained:

The circle is the shape of Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, Grandfather Sun and every planet. It is the shape of a bird’s nest, the stem of a plant, the trunk of a tree, the hunting patterns and territorial markings of animals. It is the growth pattern of rocks and flowers and little children. It is the most universally occurring shape. It is the shape of smoke rising to the Great Spirit. It is the shape of our eyes. It is the diameter of our bodies. Orbits of atoms and molecules are circular. Seeds are circular. Eggs are circular. The entrance to the womb space is circular, as are all openings in the body. The circle has no beginning and no end. It is the shape of tipi lodges of our ancestors. Many claim that it is the most sturdy of all structures. The wheel is the most perfect shape for movement. The Great Provider is a
Circle of white light. The circle is the universal sum of all symbols. The circle is the symbol of perfection. All healing ceremonies occur in a circle. The circle of healing teaches us to think differently about things. In modern education we are taught to think in a linear way. Linear thinking uses only the intellect of the mind. In circular thinking, the mind is guided by intuition. Rather than being the guard and the guide, the mind becomes a parrot sitting on the true leader, intuition. From this vantage, the mind can claim with wonder and delight what is revealed through the eyes of the heart. A linear attitude is concerned with end product not process. The circular mind views process as what is important. The linear mind measures time in a straight line. Circular thinking steps into the flow. A linear attitude is constantly saying, “I want. I expect. I’m disappointed.” It is burdened with illusions of false power that say, “If I can do this, I can get that.” A circular mind values “the moment, the now.” A circular attitude is one of non-attachment to the getting. It enjoys the “doing.” The “deadline” has no sense of “hurry.” Linear thinking cannot understand medicine teachings. People who live in high expectations are tested the most. It is said by our elder, “Expect nothing, and receive everything. Expect everything and receive nothing but the lesson of expectation.” Healing is a memory of wellness ... a sense of well being. We all hold such a memory somewhere in our lives. (pp. 195-196)
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND EPILOGUE

Summary: How I Wove This Tapestry

As this discourse draws to a close I return to the metaphor of a tapestry weaving as a helpful tool for thinking about this inquiry On Compassion, A New Philosophy of Education and Living in the Question: An Inward Journey to the Heart of the Practice of Inquiry. I find the tapestry, now woven, hanging on the loom. Although I am tempted to grasp each edge and lift it off and to stitch and knot the warp ends, I realize that I must leave it hanging. This project, an epistemology of the heart based on an ethic of compassion, requires your participation, as the reader, to engage in an ongoing practice of inquiry with me. Drawing on the principles of organic research presented by Clements, Ettling, Jennet & Shields (1999) to conceptualize this, I am reminded:

Throughout the process of organic inquiry, the individual reader's potential transformation is held by the researcher to be the goal of the work. This transformation may be a small insight or a major revisioning of oneself. The researcher serves as the facilitator between the primary material and each reader. The goal of transformation calls for a different kind of participation than is usual for a reader of research. Rather than reviewing the material
presented, the reader must read the research as if it were a novel. (p. 2)

Therefore, I will let the many-colored and variously textured yarns remain hanging, inviting you to interweave your personal designs and patterns when so moved.

**Choice of loom.** A loom used for tapestry weaving depends on the weaver and his or her methods of weaving. The loom I chose is a simple frame suitable for writing a dissertation. The traditional five chapters serve as a basic and sturdy support for the method and system of inquiry I synthesized from the guiding teachings of heuristic research, organic research, and Zen Buddhist thought.

**Yarn for the warp.** The warp yarn must be very strong as it is under tension while weaving and holds the weft yarns in place. It must also be smooth and elastic to allow the weft to be packed down and to recover from stretching when the shuttle is pushed across it. It also needs to be constructed with a strong twist so that the yarn does not easily fray. I chose the idea “living in the question” for the warp. Sometimes, it is completely hidden and covered over by the weft and, occasionally, it becomes a part of the design where I created a space for it to show through.
Although it is not the dominant theme, it permeates the entire discourse.

Yarns for the weft. The weft creates the design. Each different yarn has its unique qualities and different textures. The appearance of the designs and patterns and how they are integrated depend upon how the weft threads are packed and how the tension of the warp is adjusted. The discourses represent the weft. The impressions of each, the bumpiness, smoothness, fullness of body or austerity of the teachings that comprise each of the three discourses remind me of a series of dharma talks.

A dharma talk is a discourse usually given in the context of intensive Zen meditation or zazen. Zazen is the practice of sitting in meditating for long periods of time in the company of a community of people also simultaneously sitting in meditation. The Mountain and River Order Monastery (2002) describe a dharma talk or discourse as:

a statement that challenges who we think we are, what the nature of reality is, and what the true activity of our life expresses .... These talks are to be engaged in a far different manner than our ordinary modes of acquiring information. Because the speaker is speaking from his or her direct and intuitive experience of the ground of being, we need to set aside our judging and analyzing mind and let the words penetrate to the core of our hearts. Described by Daido Roshi as “dark to the mind, but radiant to the heart,” the whole purpose of these Discourses is for the listeners to experience the ground of being for themselves and transform their lives. (p. 1)
Epilogue

In closing, I will reaffirm that this project and the writing of this dissertation arose out of a deep inner and sacred space within my own being. My hope is that these words and the presentations, workshops and other works that may grow out of it, either through me or the community of readers it touches, may each become a power object. A power object is powerful because it assists an individual who focuses on it to come to know directly something that is precious and meaningful about his or her own unique experience of life or life story. In this way, may the energy of compassion grace each person as you read these written words, and may the energy of compassion midwife your transition during these times of radical world transformation.

I will end this inquiry with one last thought, Priscilla Coolidge’s lyrics to the song, “Unbearable Love.”

We were all born here, for each other
time travelers, moving spirits
breaking each other’s hearts
falling into each other’s arms
human angels on this mission
with this vision
from the near and very far
away stars
we are mirrors of unbearable Love
Warriors of undying love
REFFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

1. Letter of Instruction to Participant

Date________

Dear_______,

Thank you for your interest in my doctoral research on the experience of compassion. I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and I am excited about the possibility of your participation in it. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate some of the things that we have already discussed and to secure your signature on the participation-release form which is attached.

The research model I am using is a qualitative model, through which I am seeking comprehensive depictions or descriptions of your experience. In this way I hope to illuminate the question: How do people describe and perceive the experience of compassion? The term compassion, as I am using it means your definition as well as empathic presence, non-judgment, and unconditional love. I am also interested in your perceptions of how the experience of compassion relates to your professional practice.

Through your participation as a co-researcher, I hope to understand the essence of the phenomenon as it reveals itself in your lived experience. You will be asked to recall specific episodes or events in your life in which you experienced the phenomenon we are investigating. I am seeking vivid, accurate and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you; your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as well as situations, events, places and people connected with your experience. You may also wish to share personal logs or journals with me or other ways you have recorded your experiences such as letters, poems, or artwork.
I appreciate and value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy and effort. If you have further questions before signing the release form or if there is a problem with the date and time of our meeting, I can be reached at 513/871-4808.

Sincerely,

Eileen S. Cooper

Doctoral Student in the Department of Educational Foundations
College of Education
University of Cincinnati
2. Consent Form

I agree to participate in a research study of compassion as described in the attached narrative. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and am participating voluntarily. I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a doctoral degree, including a dissertation and other future publication. I understand that my name and other demographic information which might identify me will not be used.

I also understand that I may experience feelings or emotions that are tender, painful or raw and/or an increased level of self-knowledge and self-understanding through my participation in this study. In addition, if for any reason I decide, I may withdraw my participation at any time. I understand that I may contact the primary researcher at 513/871-4808 and Psychiatric Emergency Services at 513/558-8577, following the interview, if for any reason I experience feelings or concerns that need prompt attention.

I agree to meet at the following location ______________________ on the following date __________ for an initial interview of 1½ to 2 hours, and to be available for a mutually agreed upon time and place for an additional 1 to 2 hour interview, if necessary. I also grant permission for the audio-tape recording of the interview(s). I understand that the audiotapes and written transcriptions will be locked and protected at all times.

I, the undersigned, have understood the above explanation and given consent to my voluntary participation in A STUDY ON COMPASSION.

_______________________________           _________
Signature of Participant                    Date

_______________________________            _________
Signature of Primary Researcher             Date
APPENDIX B

Bibliography


Guided Meditation to Invoke an Experience of Compassion

Begin by taking the time to move into a comfortable position, making sure that your body is relaxed ... allowing your back to be supported by the chair you are sitting on.

(pause)

Let your eyes close and take a deep breath in through your nose ... and out through your mouth. This is your time to nurture and explore yourself.

(10 s)

Give yourself permission to let go of your outer worries and your outer concerns...

(12 s)

Take another deep breath in.

(10 s)

And allow yourself to release ... and relax. Take another breath in and imagine that you can breathe all the way down to the tips of your fingers and all the way down to the soles of your feet.

(5 s)
And knowing that you can control or direct your energy by the focus of your awareness and intent ... focus your attention at the very center of your chest where the heart center is located. Imagine that you can drop your awareness down out of your head or up from your emotions and move it to the center of your chest.

(8s)

Begin to imagine, sense or feel a pool of emerald green light. If you see the light that’s fine, if not just imagine it there.

(10s)

And with your intent begin to imagine that energy expanding, as inwardly you ask it to open within you ... Asking the heart-centered energy to open and expand inside your body ... moving up into your shoulders, down your arms, into your hands.

(8s)

Enjoy the feel of it, the sensation of it as it begins to move up into your neck ... and all the way up into the brain itself ... allowing your thoughts to be slowed down and focused as the light expands outward ... filling your head. You are consciously choosing to fill yourself with the energy of compassion. Compassion is the doorway to growth ... to change.
Enjoy the feeling of it as the energy expands down from your heart into your abdomen...imagining the emerald green light expanding in rays, or waves of emerald green light ... Imagine all of your internal organs surrounded by this healing presence.

Allow it to move even farther now down through your hips...

Releasing and relaxing any tension...

Intend the energy now to move down through your legs...

All the way down to the soles of your feet. It is an act of self love to take the time to open to the energy and allow it to fill your body.

Imagine now the energy expanding beyond the limits of your own physical form...radiating from you...creating a sphere of light around you with you at the center ... relaxed ... balanced.
And from this space of deep heart-centered relaxation ... you can begin to intend or direct your memory to recall a time in your life when compassion was present. And you’re going to do that very easily just by asking and trusting that the information will come to you...not directing the outcome...but by giving yourself permission to remember.

(10s)

Take your time. And don’t worry if an image doesn’t come, but take note of the way you feel inside your own skin.

(2 minutes)

And setting the intent inwardly to remember what you’ve experienced during this time, knowing that you are exploring the territory of your inner reality and the energy of compassion ... and setting the intent to remain in this heart-connected space even as you begin to allow your awareness to return...

(15s)

And when you feel ready ... allowing yourself to stretch...

(10s)

And in your own time to open your eyes.
You can continue this process of coming to know compassion and deepen it by taking the next few minutes, turning to your neighbor, and sharing what you experienced, knowing that by taking the time to identify the sensations you had and the awarenesses you had, they become even stronger. It is worth the effort it takes to put your experience into words, and you may want to write about it some time later today.
APPENDIX D

A Dance to Invoke an Experience of Compassion
Kwan Zeon Bosai Dance: Dance of Compassion

(From Dances of Universal Peace)

Key of C (Open Tuning)

1. Kwan Zeon Bosai
2. Kwan Zeon Bosai
3. Kwan Zeon Bosai
4. Kwan Zeon Bo

Kwan Yin is the Chinese name for the Bodhisattva of Compassion. In the Far East this Bodhisattva is a woman. Ideographs in Mandarin Chinese pronounced her name Kuan Yin; pronounced Kwan On in Korean and Kan-on in modern Japanese. Kan Ze-on (Korean) and Kadazeon in Japanese are variants of her name.

In this form the name means, “She who perceives (Kwan), the sounds (On), of the world (Ze);" that is she who witnesses the distress of beings in the world, who hear their cries and accords them mercy. “Bosai” is the same as Bosatsu (Japanese) or Bodhisattva (Sanskrit).

FIRST TIME THROUGH

1. Walking in a clockwise direction, hands held palm to palm above head.
2. Palm to palm forehead (third eye)
3. Palm to palm heart center.

4. Hands slowly move down to waist.

SECOND TIME THROUGH

1. Walking in line of direction clockwise, left hand on right shoulder of the person in front; right hand raised above center of circle, palm up.

2. Glance towards fingertips, lower to palm, to forehead.

3. Lower to heart level.

4. Right hand palm down, lower to waist level.

THIRD TIME THROUGH

1-3. Continue walking in a clockwise direction; cradle infant in your arms who may represent: a wounded child in oneself; a person one perceives to be in need in one's family or community; or as the entire world. Arms may gradually expand to include all, so the final movement flows naturally from it.

4. In final “Bo” the arms are lowered, with the arms extended down and out to either side as a Blessing. The third phase is a reminder of a Buddhist walking meditation in which one feels that one is walking on the heads of all sentient beings, with each step a blessing.

Dance begins and ends at leader’s discretion.
Characteristics of an Epistemology of the Heart Based on an Ethic of Compassion

**An Epistemology of the Heart**

- Emergent
- Transformative
- Relational
- Inclusive
- Intuitive
- Open-Ended
- Fluid and Expansive
- Creative
- Always Evolving
- A Language of the Soul

**An Ethic of Compassion**

- As a way of being, is an expression of love in action
- Honesty
- Humility
- Connective
- Healing
A Statement of My Philosophy of Education

What Should The Purpose(s) of Education Be?

My inner awarenesses of life have lead me to believe that we are mystical or spiritual beings engaged in a human experience on a journey of self-unfoldment, discovery and co-creation. As interconnected spiritual beings, we have the power to create our individual and collective experiences. Central to this understanding is the idea that there is a fundamental unity connecting all of life’s diversified expression (a unity through diversity).

As the 21st century dawns, the Earth and all her people are being called to awaken to a truer understanding of ourselves and each other that begins with a fundamental vision of wholeness and is manifesting as a global identity. Inherent to the paradigm of holism is the awareness that all things are part of an indivisible unity or whole, that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and that each member of this oneness is enhanced by the diversity of the whole. In other words, each of us, because of our very existence, is unique and absolutely essential to the transformation of consciousness we are
undergoing. Therefore, the purpose of education has wholeness or healing as its aim and occurs in an environment where mind, body, and spirit: the inner and outer dimensions of existence, and the personal and collective expression of self intersect and unfold. The child is educated not only for childhood but “for his [or her] whole earthly existence,” (Steiner, 1954, p. 322).

**What Is The Nature of Knowledge?**

Knowledge is an intuitive feeling for the world that arises out of our authentic perceptions of self at depth and expresses through our actions on and in the world. It is a conscious expression and participation in life and an action taken from the point of truth within each individual and/or collectivity. It is a sense of aliveness, creativity, energy and empowerment.

**Are Students Inherently Good or Evil or Somewhere Inbetween?**

Who we are, at core, is inherently “good.” I do not believe in evil. Difficult experiences (and each one of us will eventually have to face these before we die) may perhaps call into play misguided behaviors that are expressions of our personal, historical, or collective
woundings, but no one and no part of life is evil. Each of us is called to experience and express love to the best of our ability at the points we exist in the “now” moment. We are each always doing the best we can, given the circumstances in which we find our lives expressing themselves. If we each are a unique and unrepeatable expression of Source, how can students be inherently evil?

What Is Teaching?

Teaching cannot be separated from learning. It is a dynamic life-supporting relationship whereby we extend ourselves into the world wholeheartedly. It is about co-creating an environment with our students/learners where each person is respected and encouraged to grow and change. Teaching requires tools for caring, sensitivity to the individual and to what is appropriate for his or her unique developmental stage, and to ourselves in diverse relationships. Teachers acting as guides (way-showers) and facilitators, interact with the learner to awaken and cultivate his or her inner wisdom in the process of growth and development. These relationships activate the potential within each individual and community of co-learners.
What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?

Knowledge of self and relationship is of most worth. Educational theory and practice that springs from a paradigm of wholism cultivates intuition and insight into its model of reality that also includes multiple ways of knowing and being. It has been my experience and understanding that there is a deep interconnectedness supporting life, a conscious energy or wellspring from which our deepest or most profound thoughts and greatest ideas unfold. This interconnectedness exists whether or not we are aware of it. Many, such as Joseph Chilton Pearce (1974), are appealing to humankind to give up its shared construction of reality in order to explore a truer and more meaningful existence. To the shaman or Zen Buddhist or to each of us who have experienced moments of awakening through meditation or even while engaged in the mundane world, this experience involves giving up knowing (or unknowing) in order to know. Some call this higher consciousness or energy, God, or Divine Mind. Opening up to and embracing the mystery of who we at depth will call forth the resources needed to support individual and collective growth and unfoldment. Community arises
spontaneously out of the interrelationships formed among students, teachers, local culture and environment and personal and collective history. These phenomena are enlivened by self-knowledge and provide a foundation for creating personal and shared meaning.

How Should Learning Be Evaluated?

A cyclical conception of time where life is followed by death, which is again followed by rebirth, reveals that there will always be periods of renewal and decay, sometimes occurring simultaneously. A conceptualization of learning that flows from an understanding of education as healing practice, that has embedded in it a movement towards wholeness where nature (life) is perceived as cyclical, does not need external standards of measurement. The processes and relationships that present themselves as challenges mark or call attention to the need for adjustments to be made as they arise.