THE CHALLENGE TO CARE IN SCHOOLS

An Alternative Approach to Education

SECOND EDITION

NEL NODDINGS

Foreword

In this masterful extension of her work on caring, Nel Noddings asks us to seriously question some of our most deeply entrenched ways of thinking about education. She argues that a general curriculum based on the liberal arts is not the best education for all; that our focus in schools on verbal and mathematical achievement cripples many whose talents and abilities lie elsewhere; and that we need a radical change in both curriculum and teaching to reach all children, not just the few who fit our conception of the academically able.

Writing in a most engaging style—a blend of careful, scholarly argument and intimate, personal voice—she is unafraid to speak her mind as a philosopher, as a former math teacher, as a mother, and as a compassionate and caring person. She insists that the main aim of education should be a moral one, that of nurturing the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable persons. To that end she describes in great detail a curriculum organized around centers of care: care for one's self; for intimate others as well as strangers and distant others; for animals, plants, the earth; and for human instruments and ideas. She gives concrete examples of both math and arts teaching from this perspective.

Basic to this design of the curriculum is the assumption of multiple intelligences and the great variety and variability of children. Each child has unique talents, abilities, and interests in need of engagement and development by caring teachers and others in schools. Noddings uses the image of a very large family to convey the caring way to think about the task of schooling a diverse group of students. Imagine them as your own children, she urges, and you will see them each as unique individuals that you care about and want to help become confident and competent persons. She puts the human dimension back into an educational system that has become dehumanized.

The Challenge to Care in Schools first appeared in 1992. Now, with the publication of this new edition, Noddings has written a new Introduction that recognizes that the 21st century has brought an even heavier emphasis on academic achievement, accountability, standards, and testing that will probably make her pleas for a central place for caring in our schools fall on deaf ears. So, in her new Introduction, she recasts her argument in a traditional versus progressive education framework—one that sees the pendulum of policy and educational

philosophy currently swinging heavily toward the traditional side. But she wonders if the pendulum must always swing back and forth and whether it might be possible for caring to have a central place in our schools even in the current traditionalist environment. She argues, contra an either/or view of education, that both traditionalists and progressives could embrace caring as a central aim of educating without needing to give up their basic principles and philosophies. Her new Introduction sketches a way to do this and truly represents an advance in contemporary educational thought. Anyone who reads this book will come away with a feeling that the kind of change in schooling that Noddings advocates is both desirable and possible.

Jonas F. Soltis
Series Editor

Shallow Educational Response to Deep Social Change

Social changes in the years since World War II have been enormous. We have seen changes in work patterns, in residential stability, style of housing, sexual habits, dress, manners, language, music, entertainment, and perhaps most important of all in family arrangements. Schools have not responded in an effective way to these changes. Indeed, schools have responded, albeit sluggishly, to technological changes with various additions to curriculum and narrowly prescribed methods of instruction, but they have largely ignored massive social change. When response has occurred, it has been piecemeal, designed to address isolated bits of the problem. In this chapter, I will describe some of the changes that have appeared in social structures and the kinds of things schools have done in trying to cope with these changes.

In today's typical classroom there are many children from homes in which both parents do paid work, other children who have single parents, many who have half-siblings or temporary siblings unrelated by blood, some who have foster parents, and some who really have no parents at all. In a survey sponsored by the Girl Scouts of America (1989), one child in 100 claimed that no adults really cared for him or her. (Seven percent of the poorest children said this.) Although one percent sounds small, think how many children this means nationwide. Think also how desperately children want to believe someone cares, and therefore how proud and generous many would be in responding.

Many children arrive at school by bus, and their teachers have at best a vague notion of where they live. Only one third of the students in the Girl Scout survey said that their teachers care for them, and the proportion decreases as students get older. Only seven percent say that they would go to teachers for advice! Not only do students lack trust in their teachers, but many lack even the most basic human respect. In a newspa-

per account, a journalist who sat in on local high school classes reported the result of a teacher's reprimanding a student for cheating. The student responded, "What crawled up your ass and died?" (Simon, 1990).

On a given day, most students in any class have watched murder, assault, love-making, war-making, and/or competitive sports on television the previous night. For many—especially at the secondary level—their classrooms are located in large schools, 1,200–2,000 students, sometimes more. Teachers in these schools often cannot distinguish students from strangers on campus. In some such schools there are security guards and rigid rules about entering and leaving the campus. Students need passes to use restrooms and, once inside, they may be accosted physically or verbally, while outside someone may be timing their stay to prevent loitering.

It is not surprising that the single greatest complaint of students in these schools is, "They don't care!" (Comer, 1988). They feel alienated from their schoolwork, separated from the adults who try to teach them, and adrift in a world perceived as baffling and hostile. At the same time, most teachers work very hard and express deep concern for their students. In an important sense, teachers do care, but they are unable to make the connections that would complete caring relations with their students.

Schools were not always like this. When my husband and I were in high school, we knew our teachers cared, and we felt their all-too-watchful eyes on us constantly. I had the same teachers for four years of math, Latin, and physical education, for three of my four years of history, for three years of public speaking. I had different teachers each year for science and English, but I had four years of each subject. Some readers may react by exclaiming, "Ali, that's the way schooling should be—four years of English, Latin, math, science, and history! Even three years of public speaking! Wonderful!" Actually, it was not all that wonderful intellectually. Most of our teachers were not very good at the subjects they taught, but they knew us, talked with us, encouraged us. They worked us moderately hard, and I was always tired but sorry when summer came. School was a second home for me.

It is natural to feel nostalgic about our own school days if they were happy ones. But we cannot build our children's future on nostalgic dreams. We probably cannot reconstruct the small communities that supported rich personal interactions in the past. What is important is to recognize and admit that curriculum content—in the form of traditional subjects-was not a big contributor to satisfaction with schooling. Periodically, curriculum is touted as the key to educational reform and

huge amounts of money are spent on its revision, but astute observers have commented more than once that a focus on curriculum revision is "not the answer" (Bruner, 1971).

A word of caution is needed here. I agree with Bruner's observation that curriculum revision cannot be an adequate response to the social problems that face schools—problems that are more serious today than when Bruner made his comments. But this is not to say that curriculum change has no part at all in grappling with these problems. Tinkering with the standard curriculum, I will argue, is futile, but drastic change may contribute to a new environment in schools.

The emphasis on revision of the standard curriculum, far from contributing to school reform, may actually have induced greater alienation and unhappiness in students. In the late fifties and sixties, in response to a perceived national need for technical excellence, we saw a movement called the "structure of the disciplines movement." Scholars and educators associated with this movement put tremendous emphasis on an understanding of the fundamental structure, principles, and methods of the disciplines with which they were involved (Bruner, 1960). Mathematicians, scientists, and linguists gave advice and sometimes participated actively in curriculum construction. Psychologists and philosophers described and debated what it meant to teach the structure of a discipline. The federal government, fearing the possible superiority of Russian technology, supported curriculum development projects and teacher training. It was a heady time for educational theorists who saw almost no bounds to what could be taught if we just found the right way.

The movement brought with it a prescription for bigger schools (Conant, 1959, 1967). How else could we offer physics, advanced math, and several foreign languages and still be financially and intellectually responsible? Further, an expanding population required new and larger facilities. So began the drive to phase out small high schools and offer intellectually challenging courses in large, "efficient" school plants. Where there had been one hundred in my high school graduation class, there would be four or five hundred or more in my children's classes.

. Those of us in education at the time were swept along in an intellectual frenzy. As a high school mathematics department chairperson, I had responsibility for converting an entire district to the new math. It was not entirely a wrongheaded movement; the old math curriculum was badly out of date. And it was such a joy to learn new material instead of teaching the same old routines. I had great fun with rings and fields, with concepts such as commutativity, identity,

transitivity, and multiplicative inverse. Many of my students had fun, too, and graduated from high school with a fair knowledge of calculus, probability, abstract algebra, and modern geometry. But it was not fun for everyone. Lots of students could not see what multiplicative inverses had to do with everyday life, and many students persisted in spelling commutative "communitive" no matter how often I corrected them. To them, it was a word and not much more. We finally awoke from our intellectual dream, but headachy—with a desire to forget the whole thing. In a misguided attempt at fairness, we gave up our curricula aimed at the intellectually elite and went overboard for "the basics."

We decided that curriculum could be reduced to an elaborate set of behavioral objectives. Teachers were urged to state exactly what students would do, under what conditions, and to what standard. A typical behavioral objective for fifth grade mathematics might read:

Presented with 10 exercises of the sort $\frac{2}{5} + \frac{1}{3} =$, students will add fractions with different denominators up to 24, give the answer in lowest terms, and get at least eight of the ten correct.

Experts roved the country teaching administrators and teachers how to write precisely stated objectives. One had to say exactly what students would do; one was not allowed to say, "The students *will be able* to . . ." because such latent competence is not observable. Further teachers had to specify how the students would prove themselves: by test (paper and pencil? how long? with what constraints on words, numbers, variables, etc.?); by essay (how long? what kinds of sentences? content? form?); by speech; by project; and so on. Finally teachers had to specify the standard. What would count as competent performance? (Mager, 1962).

All over the country, states and districts buckled down to write every course of study in this form. Many educators compromised and concentrated on what the students would do—de-emphasizing the conditions and the standard—and, even so, long lists accumulated. Volumes accumulated. One can find these volumes in almost any school district, neatly arranged on shelves in curriculum offices or, sometimes, packed away in storerooms. I have often wondered how many person-hours went into that monumental task and, by implication, what the whole enterprise cost.

Many of us opposed the behavioral objectives movement (Eisner, 1969). I remember vividly my first encounter with this way of think-

ing. I was listening to students in my homeroom study for a history test. They had all the questions and were coaching each other on the answers. Oh, dear, I thought, these kids—good kids, some of my best math students—had got hold of the test; they were cheating. But, happily, that was not so. Their teacher had bought into the behavioral-objectives/criterion-referenced testing idea and had said, "Here's what you'll be tested on; learn it."

Was this an enlightened new way of teaching? On one level it sounded sensible. If you want kids to learn, for goodness' sake tell them what you expect them to do. First, make sure you know what they are to do; then tell them. It seemed a lot fairer and easier than the method my own teachers had used. When we asked what would be on an upcoming test, the answer was usually, "Everything!"

But is it a sensible way to start teaching? Consider the number of things we learn for specific purposes and how quickly we forget them. We learn a telephone number, cross the room, dial, talk, and promptly forget the number. We park our car for three days at the airport and carefully remember that it is at K-14 when we return, but then we forget that bit of information. If kids learn things for a specific test, might not the same thing happen? If the item or skill learned is one that will be practiced over and over again in future learning, the problem of forgetting may not be so great, but teachers and curriculum makers would have to engage in some analysis to ensure that skills learned for an immediate purpose (the test) are actually embedded in future lessons. This has rarely been done.

In many districts, the use of behavioral objectives—often poorly or vaguely written as "competencies"—became the heart of tests for graduation. To assist students who were struggling to pass these tests, educators often broke major topics into tiny subtopics and allowed students to pass the tests in segments. Indeed, educators in a number of schools told me (in my new role as professor) how proud they were of their passing rates. Many of us had worried that students would be unable to pass the new competency tests, but here they were passing. By breaking learning into manageable segments and telling students exactly what they would have to do, educators found they were learning and passing. I was impressed. Surely this new burst of learning must have caused a considerable increase in standardized achievement scores, I said. Well, no, I was told, those had not changed. Kids could add $\frac{2}{5}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ at time x, when that is all they had to do, but by the end of the year when they faced $\frac{2}{5}$ + $\frac{1}{3}$ along with $\frac{7}{8} \div \frac{4}{5}$ they did not do so well. This pathetic result confirmed the earlier intuitive concern I had as a teacher.

Many readers will react to the account I have just given as proof that educational researchers and professors of education are not very bright. But actually, the method I have just castigated has its proper uses. Suppose I am a geometry teacher, and my class will soon study the Pythagorean Theorem and its applications. This is an important theorem that appears again and again in both theoretical and practical mathematical problems. Many of its applications and corollaries require facility with square roots and radicals. Knowing this—having analyzed the major concepts so that I am aware of the skills required to handle them with ease—I may well guide three or four days' instruction with behaviorally stated objectives. I may even test them piecemeal, but not to show that the students have mastered something important. Rather, I test to find out whether my instruction has been adequate, and I tell my students that the purpose of this skill-honing is to prepare them for interesting proofs and challenging problems. I do not want my students to be distracted from central mathematical issues by uncertainty with algorithmic skills. They are not learning how to simplify the square root of 12 and to memorize the squares of integers from 1 to 25 in order to pass a test (and then forget). They are learning these skills, which are embedded in the coming work, to free their thinking for important concepts and problems.

The people who advocated, and still advocate, instructional objectives stated clearly in terms of student performance made a contribution to educational thought. It is important that our efforts at teaching result in something observable in students. But they went too far. Many of them would still insist that the vital conceptual work I mentioned above could itself be approached by stating precise objectives. This is an error so huge that it almost destroys the contribution. To think—to identify problems, define them, solve them, generalize from them—requires freedom from narrow constraints. It is a different sort of learning entirely, and wise teachers know this.

Teachers had additional complaints about the behavioral objectives movement. In working with a large school district where this method was mandated, I was told by elementary school mathematics teachers that they needed help with instruction. What good is it to state exactly what you want the kids to do, they asked, if you don't know how to get them to do it? These teachers protested that they had always known that fifth graders should add ⅖ and ⅓ successfully. How should they teach addition of fractions so that their students would succeed? The behavioral objectives movement was mute on modes of instruction.

Teachers also had ethical concerns. In the district mentioned above, the superintendent had told teachers he "didn't care" how they got

the kids to perform—"You can stand them on their heads in the back of the room for all I care"—but perform they must. His teachers knew the superintendent was not totally serious in his neglect of means, but he seemed too serious for his conscientious teachers. They saw teaching as a moral enterprise, not one in which the end justifies the means. Ostensibly they were free to use their professional judgment in choosing instructional means, but they were forbidden to tamper with the ends. Such constraint is not the mark of a professional, and these teachers resented it. Theorists who wanted to get teaching onto a firm scientific footing failed to consider that students might not want to do the things so carefully stated by their teachers. They ignored the possibility that students might have pressing cares and interests not addressed by the subject matter presented in schools. These theorists insisted that it was up to teachers to motivate students to do what teachers wanted them to do. Yet, even as these recommendations were being made, teachers and students were drifting farther and farther apart as persons. They were becoming "treatments" and "subjects"—part of a concerted drive to find one best way of getting people to learn.

The desire to reduce all teaching and learning to one well-defined method is part of a larger pattern in science, epistemology, and ethics. It has been criticized by many contemporary theorists. Feminist theologian Mary Daly (1973) has called the pursuit "methodolatry," the worship of method. Philosophers, scientists, ethicists, and many other thinkers have tried since the time of Descartes to substitute foolproof method for the situated, living human being who must think and decide. Method became all-important. Naomi Scheman (1989) comments:

> Anyone—so the rationalists and empiricists equally proclaimed—who followed whatever method was recommended would be in a position to know, and what they knew would be the same as what was known by anyone else who followed that method. Thus, replicability became the hallmark of reputable experimentation, as universalizability became the hallmark of reputable moral thought: who you were in particular, to whom you were particularly connected, where you were particularly placed, was supposed to make no difference to how things seemed to you—provided, of course, that you were following the prescribed method, the main features of which were designed precisely to insulate your judgment from all those particularities. (p. 41)

Epistemologists have begun to question whether such single-minded emphasis on method yields the objectivity ascribed to it. Ethicists have

challenged universalizability as a methodological error that undermines moral sensitivity. And some educational theorists argue that teachers should not be regarded as interchangeable "instructional treatments." Who the teacher is, who the students are, what they are trying to accomplish separately and together all matter in designing instruction.

Educational research, like behavioral science in general, has made the error of supposing that method can be substituted for individuals, and this attempt may well have increased the alienation of students. Often when researchers are trying to determine whether A or B is a better method of instruction ("treatment"), they try to strip away the special qualities of teachers and students so that the various settings in which A and B are being tried can be regarded as comparable. As many variables as possible are controlled. But teachers are not interchangeable; they cannot be regarded as delivery systems or treatments. Nor are children interchangeable. One impish grin in the middle of a lesson can change what follows.

It is not just educators who are infected by the mad desire for method. Parents, too, seek a way to raise their children without spending a lot of time with them. We search for—invent—quality time. School principals look for workshops that will make all of their teachers good managers, although some already are, some have no wish to be, and others need patient and persistent help. Administrators assume that there must be a method that will allow teachers to meet 150–200 new students every year and yet establish the atmosphere of caring that teachers such as mine did years ago. A main message of this book is that there is no such method. People are not reducible to methods except, perhaps, in their work with objects. This form of reduction is called automation, and it simply does not apply to interpersonal activities.

The search for a universal method in curriculum was soon accompanied by one in the area of instruction. Given the premises of educational researchers, such a move was inevitable. They did not consider the possibility that students simply did not want to achieve the objectives so carefully laid out. Failure to meet the objectives must be, it was held, instructional failure. Teachers were advised to use a five- or seven-step standard lesson: Briefly review the previous day's work; state the objectives of today's lesson; present new material (in small, manageable steps); check on understanding; provide guided practice; check again on understanding; give independent practice (see Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). This is almost exactly what I did as a math teacher when I decided on three or four days of skill development before tackling the Pythagorean Theorem and its corollaries. Such a procedure

has long been the backbone of every math teacher's instructional repertoire. It is not at all clear that it should be, but it has been.

The problem is that the standard lesson is almost useless for teaching major concepts and engaging students in problem solving, reflection, creative expression, cooperative interaction, or intellectual discernment. Even for some ordinary skill development lessons, it is better to vary the steps. For example, there are times when it makes sense to find out first how students approach a task and then to present, or have *them* present, two or three ways of performing it. In teaching division of algebraic fractions, a teacher might present a problem and ask, How would you do this? Independent (or cooperative) investigation would precede teacher presentation, and the eventual teacher summary or presentation would draw heavily on student contributions. Thus the standard lesson is not only useless for higher-order thinking tasks; it is also unnecessarily limiting as a universal approach to skill development. Finally, if we accept it for skill development and reject it for other intellectual tasks, we fall into the error of supposing that skills and conceptual development are easily separable, and they are not.

Just as workshops blossomed all over the country to teach the writing of behavioral objectives, workshops were next conducted on the standard lesson. In many districts, teachers are still evaluated on their adherence to the standard form. Three questions drive a large part of teacher evaluation: Does the teacher have a clearly stated instructional objective? Does the teacher use the standard five- (or seven-) step lesson? Does the teacher have a well-managed classroom? Now the demand is that every lesson be driven by a "standard" and evaluated on the basis of whether students meet it. The pervasive goal is control: control of teachers, of students, of content.

It is not surprising that the combination of narrowly stated learning objectives and pat, routine lessons induces boredom. And boredom leads to something educators call "random behavior." This is behavior that is not directed to the task at hand. Educators are also fond of talking about "off-task" behavior. Both ways of talking assume that students who are not tuned in to the teacher's goals and tasks have no goals or tasks of their own. When I was a public school student, such behavior was simply misbehavior, disruptive behavior, or—most revealing of all—disobedience. This last said clearly that the student's purposes were at odds with those of the teacher, and the usual remedy was a "good talking-to" either in class or after class. As a teenager who had lots of goals at cross-purposes with my teachers, I received my share of these "talking-tos."

Once again, the search for a method has tried to eliminate both the undesirable behaviors and the need for teachers to talk to their students about the behavior. Workshops on "assertive discipline" proliferated. The idea here is that teachers should not interrupt their standard pursuit of well-stated learning objectives to talk to their students about random or off-task behavior. They should, instead, simply put a stop to the behavior. If Jimmy talks to Barb when he should be listening to Ms. Smith, Ms. Smith writes Jimmy's name on the board. If a bit later, Jimmy sails an airplane to Barb with "I love you" on it (as my husband often did to me in English class), Ms. Smith puts a check next to Jimmy's name. Another check and Jimmy can expect a drastic, standard response: detention or a trip to the office. Assertive discipline was supposed to free teachers for their main task, instruction in subject matter.

My contention is that such instruction is not their main task. It is one task and an important one. As this exploration proceeds, I will ask whether it is helpful to restrict the functions of institutions to one main task. Such restriction is probably a mistake, because all institutions (and people) have multiple goals and purposes, and these shift and take on varying emphases with changes in events. But if the school has one main goal, a goal that guides the establishment and priority of all others, it should be to promote the growth of students as healthy, competent, moral people. This is a huge task to which all others are properly subordinated. We cannot ignore our children—their purposes, anxieties, and relationships—in the service of making them more competent in academic skills. My position is not anti-intellectual. It is a matter of setting priorities. Intellectual development is important, but it cannot be the first priority of schools.

The three approaches I have described to curriculum, instruction, and classroom management illustrate movements guided by an ideology of control and dominated by a search for method. The idea is to make the individual teacher, the individual student, and their relationship irrelevant to the success of instruction, which is posited as the primary goal of schooling. Once objectives are chosen, teachers are not supposed to deviate from them. They are to seek means within a narrowly defined standard form to reach the objectives, and, further, the objectives now established are almost entirely cognitive. The purposes and objectives of students are ignored (indeed denied, as random behavior) unless they happen to coincide with those of the teacher.

Important objections have been raised against this methodical approach to teaching. Early in this century, John Dewey (1902) recommended a mode of associated living as the basis for both education

and democracy. He insisted that students must be involved in the construction of objectives for their own learning; that they must seek and formulate problems, not simply solve ready-made problems; that they should work together in schools as they would later in most workplaces; and that there is an organic relation between what is learned and personal experience (Dewey, 1916, 1938). Much of what I will later recommend is compatible with Dewey's thinking, but I go considerably beyond him in advocating new priorities. Dewey could never escape the charge of anti-intellectualism, and much of his educational thought was mustered to defend his recommendations against that charge. Perhaps as a result, he never really challenged the standard subjects, only their overemphasis and their poor pedagogical handling.

Later attempts to change education have suffered much the same fate. In his powerful introduction to *Crisis in the Classroom* (1970), Charles Silberman corrected his own earlier view that emphasized cognitive goals. He says, "What tomorrow needs is not masses of intellectuals, but masses of educated men—men educated to feel and to act as well as to think" (p. 7). Silberman had come to distrust any program of education that posited intellectual development as the only or main aim. Pointing to the German university and the rise of Nazism, he argued that intellectual development could not ensure against moral perversity. He was right.

The vision articulated by Silberman had a short life. A few attempts were made at open education in elementary schools, and some theorists talked about comparable programs at the high school level. But the same question arose in community after community: If we go this way, what will happen to our achievement scores? This question does not, of course, represent genuine intellectual interest as much as the desire merely to appear intellectually competent.

I was a math–science curriculum supervisor (and doctoral candidate) during the heady days when open education seemed to have a chance. Our district was a high achievement one—98th–99th percentile on most tests, and the parents were supportive of education. They were intrigued with their young superintendent's ideas and gave the go-ahead for radical changes to start in grades 4 to 6. However, they entered a caveat: Go ahead, but don't let our achievement scores drop.

Well, of course, they did fall. (They could not very well have gone up.) I can remember vividly the day on which the middle school principal, the school psychologist, the superintendent, and two curriculum supervisors including myself sat around a conference table scoring the tests in great anticipation and anxiety. The scores had definitely fallen.

Why, why, why? And what were we to tell the kindly board that had said go ahead? Reasons were not hard to find, and the board reacted calmly. They accepted our plea that we needed more time. But the parameters were in place; the priorities had been set. Do nothing in education that might result in lower test scores. Do what you like, but only if you can raise them or at least maintain them.

The so-called swings of the pendulum in American education are tied to these basic dos and don'ts. A real change requires a radical transformation in goals or ends, not simply in means, and the American public has never really understood a call for radical changes in ends. Silberman saw the need clearly but was unable to extricate himself or the open education movement from the traditional entanglement with academic goals. He had to insist that children would learn more and better in this new way. Would anyone have listened if he'd said, "Maybe they won't know as much math and history, but they'll be better people"?

Schools today are probably in worse shape than they were when Silberman wrote. We need the changes he explored. Classrooms should be places in which students can legitimately act on a rich variety of purposes, in which wonder and curiosity are alive, in which students and teachers live together and grow. I, too, believe that a dedication to full human growth—and we will have to define this—will not stunt or impede intellectual achievement, but even if it might, I would take the risk if I could produce people who would live nonviolently with each other, sensitively and in harmony with the natural environment, reflectively and serenely with themselves. To make real changes in education and escape the dull tick-tock of pendulum swings, we have to set aside the deadly notion that the schools' first priority should be intellectual development. Further, we must abandon the odd notion that any institution—family, school, church, business—has one and only one stable, main goal that precludes the establishment and pursuit of other goals.

It may seem odd to some readers that I have charged schools with ignoring social change in their educational planning. Many other critics have made opposite claims, and their worry is that schools cannot accomplish their legitimate academic goals because they have to feed, bus, protect, and pursue students. Schools also have to provide driver education, sex education, career education, drug education, and parent education. It is no wonder that students cannot read or solve mathematical problems, these critics argue; there is too little time left for basic skills. Moreover, these extras usually require special administrators, assistants, and loads of paper work, all of which tax the system further.

The system *is* strained, but largely because it knows only one way to do things: to add courses and routinized services. Students are fed, but the rationale for feeding them is not that loving people compassionately feed hungry children but, rather, that "hungry children cannot learn." The academic purpose of the school drives everything. Kids are fed, but educators rarely consider providing adult companionship with food. At home, in the best conditions, an adult shares meals with a child, asks what the forthcoming day will be like, reminds the child that she really does know her seven-times table, that her story for English is in good shape, and that tonight they will talk about the teacher's reaction. Feeding children's bodies is important; feeding their spirits is even more so. Similarly, when we bus students, we are supposedly aiming at the greatest good for the greatest number. We may—or may not—have a lovely ideal in mind. But we rarely provide the community setting that was once available for large numbers of children. Too often, we do not even think of providing it. We think of providing specialists, computers, advanced math, and remedial reading. We could think of providing an adult at each family-sized meal table. We could think of conversation, continuity, encouraging a sense of belonging.

It is a form of civic mindedness to think of children as precious resources. We teach them math and science so as not to waste our resources and endanger our competitive edge in the world market. Years ago America fell in love with Disney-style kids, freckle-faced little rascals who had trouble with arithmetic and grammar and much preferred fishing to figuring. We loved and still love these kids in a world of make-believe, but in the real world, children are too often valued only for their achievement. They become resources.

A child's place in our hearts and lives should not depend on his or her academic prowess. Lots of young people see through today's educational slogans. We preach constantly that "all children can learn"; we even suggest strongly that they all can learn anything the school has to offer if they are taught well and they try. If they don't try, they are made to feel like traitors, even though they might work very hard at tasks over which they have some control and choice. Thus, despite our determined optimism and insistent everyone-can-do-it, students complain, "They don't care!" They suspect that we want their success for our own purposes, to advance our own records, and too often they are right.

It is time to take full account of the social changes that have swept through the second half of the twentieth century. If the traditional fam-

ily is now an anachronism, or if, for whatever reasons, families cannot meet the needs for caring, other institutions must fill the need. John Silber (1989), the controversial president of Boston University, has written a book purporting to explain *What's Wrong with America and How to Fix It*. Although I disagree with him on a host of matters, I agree with him on this: We must take public responsibility for raising healthy, competent, and happy children. I will argue that the school must play a major role in this task, and I will argue further that the school cannot achieve its academic goals without providing caring and continuity for students.

To fill the need effectively, we need to ask a series of important questions: What does it mean to care? How is care manifested and focused in human life? Can we make caring the center of our educational efforts?

CHAPTER 2

Caring

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962) described care as the very Being of human life. His use of the term is very broad, covering an attitude of solicitousness toward other living beings, a concern to do things meticulously, the deepest existential longings, fleeting moments of concern, and all the burdens and woes that belong to human life. From his perspective, we are immersed in care; it is the ultimate reality of life.

Heidegger's range of meanings will be of interest as this exploration continues, but the meaning that will be primary here is relational. A *caring relation* is, in its most basic form, a connection or encounter between two human beings—a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for. In order for the relation to be properly called caring, both parties must contribute to it in characteristic ways. A failure on the part of either carer or cared-for blocks completion of caring and, although there may still be a relation—that is, an encounter or connection in which each party feels something toward the other—it is not a *caring* relation. Even before I describe the contributions of carer and cared-for, one can see how useful this relational definition is. No matter how hard teachers try to care, if the caring is not received by students, the claim "they don't care" has some validity. It suggests strongly that something is very wrong.

In *Caring* (1984), I described the state of consciousness of the carer (or "one-caring") as characterized by engrossment and motivational displacement. By engrossment I mean an open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for. Other writers have used the word "attention" to describe this characteristic. Iris Murdoch (1970), for example, discussed attention as essential in moral life, and she traced the concept to Simone Weil. Weil placed attention at the center of love for our neighbors. It is what characterizes our consciousness when we ask another (explicitly or implicitly), "What are you going through?" Weil wrote:

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> This way of looking is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all
> its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at,
> just as he is, in all his truth. Only he who is capable of attention can do
> this. (1951, p. 115)

To say that the soul empties itself of all its own contents in order
to receive the other describes well what I mean by engrossment. I do
not mean infatuation, enchantment, or obsession but a full receptiv-
ity. When I care, I really hear, see, or feel what the other tries to con-
vey. The engrossment or attention may last only a few moments and
it may or may not be repeated in future encounters, but it is full and
essential in any caring encounter. For example, if a stranger stops me
to ask directions, the encounter may produce a caring relation, albeit
a brief one. I listen attentively to his need, and I respond in a way that
he receives and recognizes. The caring relation is completed when he
receives my efforts at caring.

As carer in the brief encounter just described, I was attentive, but
I also felt the desire to help the stranger in his need. My conscious-
ness was characterized by motivational displacement. Where a mo-
ment earlier I had my own projects in mind, I was now concerned
with his project—finding his way on campus. When we watch a small
child trying to tie her shoes, we often feel our own fingers moving in
sympathetic reaction. This is motivational displacement, the sense that
our motive energy is flowing toward others and their projects. I receive
what the other conveys, and I want to respond in a way that furthers
the other's purpose or project.

Experiencing motivational displacement, one begins to think. Just as
we consider, plan, and reflect on our own projects, we now think what
we can do to help another. Engrossment and motivational displacement
do not tell us what to do; they merely characterize our consciousness
when we care. But the thinking that we do will now be as careful as it is
in our own service. We are seized by the needs of another.

What characterizes the consciousness of one who is cared for?
Reception, recognition, and response seem to be primary. The cared-
for receives the caring and shows that it has been received. This rec-
ognition now becomes part of what the carer receives in his or her
engrossment, and the caring is completed.

Some critics worry that my account puts a tremendous burden on the
carer and very little on the recipient of care. But we must keep in mind
that the basic caring relation is an encounter. My description of a caring
relation does not entail that carer and cared-for are permanent labels for

individuals. Mature relationships are characterized by mutuality. They are made up of strings of encounters in which the parties exchange places; both members are carers and cared-fors as opportunities arise.

Even in the basic situation, however, the contribution of the cared-for is not negligible. Consider the mother-infant relationship. In every caring encounter, the mother is necessarily carer and the infant cared-for. But the infant responds—he or she coos, wriggles, stares attentively, smiles, reaches out, and cuddles. These responses are heartwarming; they make caregiving a rewarding experience. To see just how vital the infant's response is to the caring relation, one should observe what happens when infants cannot respond normally to care. Mothers and other caregivers in such situations are worn down by the lack of completion—burned out by the constant outward flow of energy that is not replenished by the response of the cared-for. Teachers, too, suffer this dreadful loss of energy when their students do not respond. Thus, even when the second party in a relation cannot assume the status of carer, there is a genuine form of reciprocity that is essential to the relation.

The desire to be cared for is almost certainly a universal human characteristic. Not everyone wants to be cuddled or fussed over. But everyone wants to be received, to elicit a response that is congruent with an underlying need or desire. Cool and formal people want others to respond to them with respect and a touch of deference. Warm, informal people often appreciate smiles and hugs. Everyone appreciates a person who knows when to hug and when to stand apart. In schools, all kids want to be cared for in this sense. They do not want to be treated "like numbers," by recipe—no matter how sweet the recipe may be for some consumers. When we understand that everyone wants to be cared for and that there is no recipe for caring, we see how important engrossment (or attention) is. In order to respond as a genuine carer, one does have to empty the soul of its own contents. One cannot say, "Aha! This fellow needs care. Now, let's see—here are the seven steps I must follow." Caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors.

I have put great emphasis on caring as relation, because our temptation is to think of caring as a virtue, an individual attribute. We do talk this way at times. We say, "He is a caring person," or even, "She is really a caring person, but she has trouble showing it." Both of these comments capture something of our broad notion of care, but both are misleading because of their emphasis on caring as an individual virtue. As we explore caring in the context of caregiving—any long-

term unequal relation in which one person is carer and the other cared-for—we will ask about the virtues that support caring. But for now, it is important not to detach carers from caring relations. No matter how much a person professes to care, the result that concerns us is the caring relation. Lots of self-righteous, "caring" people induce the response, "she doesn't really care about me at all."

Even though I will often use the word *caring* to apply to relations, I will also need to apply it to capacities. The uses should be clear in context. I want to avoid a concentration on judgment or evaluation that accompanies an interpretation of caring as an individual virtue, but I also want to acknowledge that people have various capacities for caring—that is, for entering into caring relations as well as for attending to objects and ideas.

When we discuss teaching and teacher-learner relationships in depth, we will see that teachers not only have to create caring relations in which they are the carers, but that they also have a responsibility to help their students develop the capacity to care. What can this mean? For Heidegger care is inevitable; all aware human beings care. It is the mark of being human. But not everyone develops the capacity to care for others in the way described above. Perhaps very few learn to care for ideas, for nonhuman life, for objects. And often we confuse the forms of caring and suppose caring to be a unitary capacity that transfers easily from one domain to another.

Simone Weil is a good example of an outstanding thinker who seems to have believed that intellectual caring and interpersonal caring are closely related. In the essay from which the earlier passage was extracted, Weil observed that the study of geometry requires attention and that attention so learned could increase students' concentration in prayer. Thence, we may suppose, Weil concluded that closer connection in prayer would produce more sensitive interpersonal relations; that is, she believed that intellectual attention could be transferred to interpersonal attention. This is doubtful. Evidence abounds that people can attain high levels of intellectuality and remain insensitive to human beings and other living things. Consider the Nazi high command or the fictional Professor Moriarty (Sherlock Holmes's nemesis) who attended lovingly to his orchids but was evil incarnate in the human domain. So the varieties of care need analysis.

Unequal caring relations are interesting not only in the human domain but also in the realm of nonhuman animals. It is doubtful whether any animal can be a carer with respect to humans (although there are those who have argued the case for dogs), but many animals are responsive

cared-fors, and taking care of animals can be a wonderful way to learn caring. In our interaction with animals, we also have an opportunity to study the forms of response that we value. Some animals respond with intelligence, and we usually value that. Some respond with affection; they like to be stroked, cuddled, held, or scratched. Still others respond vocally. All of these responses affect us and call forth a caring attitude. Further, certain physical characteristics that suggest the possibility of a valued response also affect us. Most of us feel sympathy for baby seals threatened by hunters, because they look as though they might respond in the ways mentioned. Creatures that are slimy, scaly, or spiny rarely evoke a sympathetic response in us. The nature of our responses will be seen as important when we consider the roots of ethical life.

In another sense of care, human beings can care about ideas or objects. An approach to education that begins with care is not, as I pointed out earlier, anti-intellectual. Part of what we receive from others is a sense of their interests, including intellectual passions. To enhance a student's understanding and skill in a given subject is an important task for teachers, but current educational practices are riddled with slogans and myths that are not very helpful.

Often we begin with the innocent-sounding slogan mentioned earlier, "All children can learn." The slogan was created by people who mean well. They want teachers to have high expectations for all their students and not to decide on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, or economic status that some groups of children simply cannot learn the subject at hand. With that much I agree.

But I will argue that not all individual children can learn everything we might like to teach them. Further, the good intentions captured in the slogan can lead to highly manipulative and dictatorial methods that disregard the interests and purposes of students. Teachers these days are expected to induce a desire to learn in all students. But all students already want to learn; it is a question of what they want to learn. John Dewey (1963) argued years ago that teachers had to start with the experience and interests of students and patiently forge connections between that experience and whatever subject matter was prescribed. I would go further. There are few things that all students need to know, and it ought to be acceptable for students to reject some material in order to pursue other topics with enthusiasm. Caring teachers listen and respond differentially to their students. Much more will be said on this highly controversial issue in later chapters. For now it is enough to note that our schools are not intellectually stimulating places, even for many students who are intellectually oriented.

Few students learn to care for ideas in school. Perhaps even fewer learn to care for objects. I am not talking about mere acquisitiveness; this seems to be learned all too well. I am talking about what Harry Broudy (1972) called "enlightened cherishing" and what the novelist and essayist John Galsworthy (1948) called "quality." This kind of caring produces fine objects and takes care of them. In a society apparently devoted to planned obsolescence, our children have few opportunities to care lovingly for old furniture, dishes, carpets, or even new bicycles, radios, cassette players, and the like. It can be argued that the care of many tools and instruments is a waste of time because they are so easily replaced. But one wonders how long a throwaway society can live harmoniously with the natural environment and also how closely this form of carelessness is related to the gross desire for more and more acquisitions. Is there a role for schools to play in teaching care of buildings, books, computers, furniture, and laboratory equipment?

Caring for ideas and objects is different from caring for people and other living things. Strictly speaking, one cannot form a relation with mathematics or music or a food processor. The cared-for cannot feel anything for or us; there is no affect in the second party. But, oddly, people do report a form of responsiveness from ideas and objects. The mathematician Gauss was "seized" by mathematics. The poet Robert Frost insisted that "a poem finds its own way" (see the accounts in Noddings & Shore, 1998). And we know that well-tended engines purr, polished instruments gleam, and fine glassware glistens. The care we exert induces something like a response from fields of ideas and from inanimate objects. Do our students hear enough—or anything at all—about these wondrous events?

Finally, we must consider Heidegger's deepest sense of care. As human beings, we care what happens to us. We wonder whether there is life after death, whether there is a deity who cares about us, whether we are loved by those we love, whether we belong anywhere; we wonder what we will become, who we are, how much control we have over our own fate. For adolescents these are among the most pressing questions: Who am I? What kind of person will I be? Who will love me? How do others see me? Yet schools spend more time on the quadratic formula than on any of these existential questions.

In reviewing the forms of care, it becomes clear that there is a challenge to care in schools. The structures of current schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care is perhaps greater than ever.

THE DEBATE IN ETHICS

No discussion of caring today could be adequate without some attention to the ethic of care. In 1982 Carol Gilligan published her now famous *In a Different Voice*, describing an alternative approach to moral problems. This approach was identified in the voices of women, but Gilligan did not claim that the approach is exclusively female, nor did she claim that all women use it. Still, the avalanche of response from women who recognized themselves in Gilligan's description is an impressive phenomenon. "This is me," many women said. "Finally someone has articulated the way I come at moral problems."

Gilligan described a morality based on the recognition of needs, relation, and response. Women who speak in the different voice refuse to leave themselves, their loved ones, and connections out of their moral reasoning. They speak from and to a situation, and their reasoning is contextual. Those of us who write about an ethic of care have emphasized affective factors, but this is not to say that caring is irrational or even nonrational. It has its own rationality or reasonableness, and in appropriate situations carers draw freely on standard linear rationality as well. But its emphasis is on living together, on creating, maintaining, and enhancing positive relations—not on decision making in moments of high moral conflict, nor on justification.

An ethic of care—a needs- and response-based ethic—challenges many premises of traditional ethics and moral education. First, there is the difference of focus already mentioned. There is also a rejection of universalizability, the notion that anything that is morally justifiable is necessarily something that anyone else in a similar situation is obligated to do. Universalizability suggests that who we are, to whom we are related, and how we are situated should have nothing to do with our moral decision making. An ethic of caring rejects this. Next, although an ethic of care puts great emphasis on consequences in the sense that it always asks what happens to the relation, it is not a form of utilitarianism; it does not posit one greatest good to be optimized, nor does it separate means and ends. Finally, it is not properly labeled an ethic of virtue. Although it calls on people to be carers and to develop the virtues and capacities to care, it does not regard caring solely as an individual attribute. It recognizes the part played by the cared-for. It is an ethic of relation.

In moral education an ethic of care's great emphasis on motivation challenges the primacy of moral reasoning. We concentrate on developing the attitudes and skills required to sustain caring relations and

the desire to do so, not nearly so much on the reasoning used to arrive at a decision. Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) and his associates, following Plato and Socrates, have focused on moral reasoning. The supposition here is that moral knowledge is sufficient for moral behavior. From this perspective, wrongdoing is always equated with ignorance. Gilligan explicitly challenged Kohlberg's scale or hierarchy of moral reasoning (suggesting a powerful alternative developmental model), but others of us have challenged the whole idea of a developmental model, arguing that moral responses in a given individual may vary contextually at almost any age. (The language used to discuss what one is doing and why may, of course, depend on intellectual development, but moral behavior and its intellectual articulation are not synonymous.)

Moral education from the perspective of an ethic of caring has four major components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings, 1984). Modeling is important in most schemes of moral education, but in caring it is vital. In this framework we are not trying to teach students principles and ways of applying them to problems through chains of mathematical reasoning. Rather, we have to show how to care in our own relations with cared-fors. For example, professors of education and school administrators cannot be sarcastic and dictatorial with teachers in the hope that coercion will make them care for students. I have heard administrators use this excuse for "being tough" with teachers—"because I care about the kids of this state"— but, of course, the likely outcome is that teachers will then turn attention protectively to themselves rather than lovingly to their students. So we do not tell our students to care; we show them how to care by creating caring relations with them.

There is a second reason why modeling is so vital. The capacity to care may be dependent on adequate experience in being cared for. Even while a child is too young to be a carer, he or she can learn how to be a responsive cared-for. Thus our role as carer is more important than our role as model, but we fill both simultaneously. We remind ourselves when we are tempted to take short cuts in moral education that we are, inevitably, models. But otherwise, in our daily activities we simply respond as carers when the need arises. The function of modeling gets special attention when we try to explain what we are doing and why in moral education. But the primary reason for responding as carers to our students' needs is that we are called to such response by our moral orientation.

Dialogue is the second essential component of moral education. My use of the term *dialogue* is similar to that of Paulo Freire (1970). It is not

just talk or conversation—certainly not an oral presentation of argument in which the second party is merely allowed to ask an occasional question. Dialogue is open-ended; that is, in a genuine dialogue, neither party knows at the outset what the outcome or decision will be. As parents and teachers, we cannot enter into dialogue with children when we know that our decision is already made. It is maddening to young people (or any people) to engage in "dialogue" with a sweetly reasonable adult who cannot be persuaded and who, in the end, will say, "Here's how it's going to be. I tried to reason with you. . . ." We do have to talk this way at times, but we should not pretend that this is dialogue. Dialogue is a common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation. It can be playful or serious, logical or imaginative, goal or process oriented, but it is always a genuine quest for something undetermined at the beginning.

Dialogue permits us to talk about what we try to show. It gives learners opportunities to question "why," and it helps both parties to arrive at well-informed decisions. Although I do not believe that all wrongdoing can be equated with ignorance, I do believe that many moral errors are ill-informed decisions, particularly in the very young. Thus dialogue serves not only to inform the decision under consideration; it also contributes to a habit of mind—that of seeking adequate information on which to make decisions.

Dialogue serves another purpose in moral education. It connects us to each other and helps to maintain caring relations. It also provides us with the knowledge of each other that forms a foundation for response in caring. Caring (acting as carer) requires knowledge and skill as well as characteristic attitudes. We respond most effectively as carers when we understand what the other needs and the history of this need. Dialogue is implied in the criterion of engrossment. To receive the other is to attend fully and openly. Continuing dialogue builds up a substantial knowledge of one another that serves to guide our responses.

A third component of moral education is practice. Attitudes and mentalities" are shaped, at least in part, by experience. Most of us speak regularly of a "military mind," a "police mentality," "business thinking," and the like. Although some of this talk is a product of stereotyping, it seems clear that it also captures some truth about human behavior. All disciplines and institutional organizations have training programs designed not only to teach specific skills but also to "shape minds," that is, to induce certain attitudes and ways of looking at the world. If we want people to approach moral life prepared to care, we need to provide op-

portunities for them to gain skills in caregiving and, more important, to develop the characteristic attitudes described earlier.

Some of the most fascinating work in contemporary feminist theory is devoted to the study of women's experience and its articulation. It seems likely that women's traditional experience is closely related to the moral approach described in ethics of care. Women, more often than men, have been charged with the direct care of young children, the ill, and the aged. They have been expected to maintain a pleasing environment, to look after the needs of others, and to mediate disputes in ordinary social situations. If we regard this experience as inseparable from oppression, then we might agree with Nietzsche that what I am describing is merely "slave mentality." But if we analyze the experience, we find considerable autonomy, love, choice, and consummate skill in the traditional female role. We may evaluate the experience as essential in developing fully human beings.

Women have learned to regard every human encounter as a potential caring occasion. In nursing theory, for example, Jean Watson (1985) defined the moment in which nurse and patient meet as a "caring occasion." It is not just that the nurse will provide care in the form of physical skills to the patient. Rather, it is a moment in which each must decide how to meet the other and what to do with the moment. This is obviously very different from defining a medical encounter as a problem-solving event. Problem solving is involved, of course, but it is preceded by a moment of receptivity—one in which the full humanity of both parties is recognized—and it is followed by a return to the human other in all his or her fullness.

If we decide that the capacity to care is as much a mark of personhood as reason or rationality, then we will want to find ways to increase this capacity. Just as we now think it is important for girls as well as boys to have mathematical experience, so we should want both boys and girls to have experience in caring. It does not just happen; we have to plan for it. As we will see, such planning is complex and loaded with potential pitfalls.

Some schools, recognizing the needs just discussed, have instituted requirements for a form of community service. This is a move in the right direction, but reflection produces some issues to worry about. The practice provided must be with people who can demonstrate caring. We do not want our children to learn the menial (or even sophisticated) skills of caregiving without the characteristic attitude of caring. The experience of caregiving should initiate or contribute to the

desired attitude, but the conditions have to be right, and people are central to the setting. This is a major point, to which I will return.

Next, practice in caring should transform schools and, eventually, the society in which we live. If the practice is assimilated to the present structures of schooling, it may lose its transformative powers. *It* may be transformed—that is, distorted. If we were to give grades for care-giving, for example, students might well begin to compete for honors in caring. Clearly, then, their attention could be diverted from cared-fors to themselves. If, on the other hand, we neither grade nor give credit for such work, it may inevitably have second-class status in our schools. So long as our schools are organized hierarchically with emphasis on rewards and penalties, it will be very difficult to provide the kind of experience envisioned.

The fourth component of moral education from the perspective of caring is confirmation. Martin Buber (1965) described confirmation as an act of affirming and encouraging the best in others. When we confirm someone, we spot a better self and encourage its development. We can do this only if we know the other well enough to see what he or she is trying to become. Formulas and slogans have no place here. We do not set up a single ideal or set of expectations for everyone to meet, but we identify something admirable, or at least acceptable, struggling to emerge in each person we encounter. The person working toward a better self must see the attribute or goal as worthy, and we too must see it as at least morally acceptable. We do not confirm people in ways we judge to be wrong.

Confirmation requires attribution of the best possible motive consonant with reality. When someone commits an act we find reprehensible, we ask ourselves what might have motivated such an act. Often it is not hard to identify an array of possible motives ranging from the gross and grubby to some that are acceptable or even admirable. This array is not constructed in abstraction. We build it from a knowledge of this particular other and by listening carefully to what she or he tells us. The motive we attribute has to be a real, a genuine possibility. Then we can open our dialogue with something like, "I know you were trying to help your friend . . ." or "I know what you're trying to accomplish." It will be clear that we disapprove of this particular act, but it will also be clear to the other that we see a self that is better than this act. Often the other will respond with enormous relief. *Here is this significant and percipient other who sees through the smallness or meanness of my present behavior a self that is better and a real possibility.* Confirmation lifts us toward our vision of a better self.

It is worth repeating that confirmation cannot be done by formula. A relation of trust must ground it. Continuity is required, because the carer in acting to confirm must know the cared-for well enough to be able to identify motives consonant with reality. Confirmation cannot be described in terms of strategies; it is a loving act founded on a relation of some depth. When we turn to specific changes that should occur in schooling in order to meet the challenge to care, I will put great emphasis on continuity. Not all caring relations require continuity (some, as we have seen, are brief encounters), but teaching does require it.

Confirmation contrasts sharply with the standard mode of religious moral education. There we usually find a sequence of accusation, confession, penance, and forgiveness. The initial step, accusation, causes or sustains separation. We stand in moral judgment and separate the other from ourselves and the moral community. In contrast, confirmation calls us to remain in connection. Further, accusation tends to produce denial or rationalization, which we then feel compelled to overthrow. But the rationalization may in fact be an attempt on the part of the accused to find that possible motive and convey it to us, the accuser. Because we have to reject it in order to proceed with confession, penance, and forgiveness, offenders may never understand their own true motives. This sequence also depends heavily on authority, obedience, fear, and subordination. We can be harsh or magnanimous in our judgment and forgiveness. Our authority is emphasized, and the potential power of the offender's own moral struggle is overlooked.

I do not mean to suggest that there is never a place for accusation and confession in moral education. It is not always possible for us to find a motive that is morally acceptable; sometimes we have to begin by asking straight out, "Why did you do that?" or "How could you do such a thing?" But it is gratifying how often we really can see a better self if we look for one, and its identification is a first step in its realization.

This whole way of looking at ethics and moral education challenges not only parts of the religious tradition but also the ideas of Freud and like-minded theorists. Freud believed that our sense of morality develops out of fear. The superego, Freud said, is an internalization of authority—of the father's voice—and its establishment results from resolution of the oedipal conflict. Sons fear castration by the father if they disobey or compete with him. Resolution of this desire to rebel and compete involves acceptance of the father's power and authority, and the superego (Freud's guide to acceptable behavior) takes up residence within the son. This account of moral development led Freud to con-

clude that women must be morally inferior to men. Because girls need not fear castration (having been born in that dread condition), their moral voice never attains the strength and dependability of men's.

Recent criticisms of Freud suggest that more attention should be given to the preoedipal period. Nancy Chodorow (1978) has theorized that girls and boys develop different psychological deep structures because females are almost exclusively the primary caregivers for both. Girls can find their gender identity without separating from their mother and, hence, develop a relational personality structure and perhaps even a relational epistemology or way of knowing (Keller, 1985). Boys, however, must construct their gender identity in opposition to all that is female. Here we have the possible roots of the different moral voices described by Gilligan. We will consider other alternatives as well.

Eli Sagan (1988) has also suggested that moral development begins and is strongly affected by preoedipal life. Without rejecting the Freudian framework entirely, Sagan recommends a shift in emphasis. If we give due weight to early childhood, we see that conscience (a sense of right and wrong, not mere internalization of authority) develops as much out of love and attachment as out of fear. Further, the primary fear is not of harm and punishment but, rather, of disappointing a loved parent and, at worst, losing that parent's love. This is a major challenge to masculinist psychology and a suggestion compatible with an ethic of caring and the model of moral education outlined here. Love, caring, and relation play central roles in both ethics and moral education.

I want to suggest that caring is the very bedrock of all successful education and that contemporary schooling can be revitalized in its light. Before describing a broad plan to make caring central in education, I need to explain why the current ideal is inadequate. Liberal education has been the Western ideal for centuries. Even when it is poorly funded in comparison with technical and professional education, it is still the ideal that puts pressure on precollegiate education. It is the form of education—done well or poorly—that most of us experienced. What is wrong with it, and why should it be rejected as a model of universal education?

CHAPTER 4

An Alternative Vision

Suppose education had been planned and school systems constructed by people whose interests and responsibilities focused on the direct care of children, the elderly, ill, disabled, and otherwise dependent. Suppose education was planned by people primarily concerned with the kinds of relations we should establish. For the most part, these people have been women—and much that I recommend can be associated with a feminist perspective—but men, too, often initiate and share in an alternative vision.

In *The School and Society* (1902), John Dewey wrote: "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy" (p. 3). But Dewey disagreed with Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler on what the best and wisest parents should want for their children. He did not advocate the same education for all children. In his opinion, the best and wisest parents would want for each of their children an education that matched his or her needs, capacities, and interests.

Although he actively opposed the notion that liberal education in the Hutchins/Adler style was the best education for all, he also opposed the kind of differentiated schooling based on societal needs and children's "occupational destinies." This sort of teaching, advocated by such influential thinkers as Charles Eliot of Harvard (see Preskill, 1989), had little to do with children's capacities and genuine interests; on the contrary, it represented an attempt to protect the academic education of elites who might be held back by the intellectual incapacities of those "destined" for labor. Dewey nevertheless admired Plato's educational scheme in which children were to be educated according to their talents and demonstrated interests. However, he noted that Plato had erred in supposing there were only three categories of useful and admirable qualities. Dewey clearly favored forms of education that could be tailored to the child, and he recognized a multiplicity of human capacities.

This chapter invites the reader into a thought experiment. Suppose we were raising a very large family of heterogeneous children with different biological parents, of mixed races, and widely different talents. How would we want them to turn out? What kind of education would we want for them? There is a troublesome difficulty in undertaking this thought experiment. Although all parents of good will can consider how they might educate children with different talents, they will necessarily approach the experiment from various cultural perspectives. They will be concerned not only with "intelligences" as Gardner has described them, but also with knowledge and attitudes held to be important by the groups with whom they are affiliated. Strictly speaking, there is no "we" to represent in this writing. What I want for our heterogeneous family may be different from what you want. As I explore these two questions, then, I must keep in mind that a practical translation of what I say must depend on dialogue. The question, "What kind of education would I want for them?" must be supplemented by the question, "What kind of education would you want for them?"

Many of us would respond first that we want our children to be happy, but having said that, we need to say what we mean by happy. Do we wish for them untroubled lives of hedonistic leisure? Probably not. We hope that our children will escape severe illness and harm, that they will exhibit and develop admirable talents, and that they will be decent, loving people who will receive love and appreciation in family, professional, and community life. Each of these values or hopes is complex and invites extended exploration.

Sara Ruddick (1980) has analyzed the demands children make on mothers and the corresponding maternal interests that arise. (For Ruddick, persons of either sex who do the daily work of attentive love are *mothers*. This work involves direct physical and psychological care, and historically it has been women's work—hence the emphasis on *mothers*. When I use "parental" instead of "maternal," it is with the understanding that a *parent* of either sex will do the work of attentive love.) Ruddick suggests that mothers want to preserve the lives of their children, foster their growth, and shape them according to some ideal of acceptability. Again, each of these basic interests needs analysis. Is one interest more important than the others? At first glance, it would seem that preserving the child's life has to be most important. One can, of course, only foster the growth of a living child. But the interests in preservation and growth may come into conflict. We may have to allow or even encourage our children

to take some risks if they are to grow. At the extreme, some mothers have found it preferable for their sons to die in war rather than be branded cowards or traitors. Thus parental interests take on different priorities at different times, and reasonable people differ on what they mean by growth and acceptability.

We have started on a tough task here. Perhaps we can find a way to organize our thoughts. Since no one scheme seems adequate for such a complex analysis, let me suggest several. First, let's use—tentatively and heuristically—Gardner's (1983) seven intelligences as a scheme for discussing capacities; there may not be exactly seven intelligences, but this scheme will help us in guiding the *growth* of our children. Gardner lists logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. Keeping this set in mind should help us in considering what to emphasize in each child's education and how to prepare each for a desirable vocation, but let us keep the set open. As we establish programs designed for the various capacities, someone may identify a new capacity, and we may want to incorporate it in our planning.

There are at least two ways in which this scheme can be helpful: Different programs—especially at the secondary level (7–12)—can be planned for children with different capacities; subjects that all children must learn—for example, reading—can be taught in ways that capitalize on their special abilities. Keep in mind that we are using this scheme heuristically. I am not eager to promote a new round of testing that will be used to determine children's places in school. If tests are used at all, they should be given at the request of children (or their parents) who want to learn more about their own talents. By and large, interests—not tested capacities—should determine placement.

But, even with care to emphasize interests and not tested capacities, something seems to be missing in this scheme. My concern (and Ruddick's) for moral development and acceptability is not included here. And nothing is said about common human tasks, health and preservation, or spiritual development. So we need, minimally, another set of categories. Franklin Bobbitt (1915), the father of modern curriculum theory, suggested that education be organized around human activities: "religious activities; civic activities; the duties of one's calling; one's family duties; one's recreations; one's reading and meditation; and the rest of the things that are done by the complete man or woman" (p. 20). This second scheme concentrates on activities or behaviors rather than capacities (or intelligences) and reminds us that

there are things all of our children must be able to do in order to live productive and acceptable lives.

However, it too is incomplete in a fundamental way. It can easily deteriorate (and historically did) to a long list of specific objectives empty of motivation, feeling, and convincing rationale. Indeed it was the forerunner of the recent behavioral objectives movement. The main difficulty with it is that it assumes not only that there are categories of activities all human beings must engage in, but also that the required skills and knowledge can be transmitted in a "scientific" way. It disregards the deep existential issues that motivate people to do, or not to do, the things so easily listed.

We need a scheme that speaks to the existential heart of life—one that draws attention to our passions, attitudes, connections, concerns, and experienced responsibilities. Here I would like to use the theme of care already developed. Care, as we have seen, can be developed in a variety of domains and take many objects. We will want to consider care for self, care for intimate others, care for associates and distant others, for nonhuman life, for the human-made environment of objects and instruments, and for ideas.

As we consider how education might be organized around domains or centers of caring, we have to recognize that people take different perspectives on each of these domains not only because of individual interests, but also because they belong to different races, nations, sexes, classes, and religions. All of these group associations affect our interpretations of what it means to care in each domain and which domains should have top priority. Therefore we must add a set of "basic affiliations" to our analytic framework.

Armed with these three schemes and Ruddick's maternal interests, let's return to the question of raising and educating our large family. What do we mean when we say that we want our children to care for themselves? From here on, I will have to speak for myself, a white, professional woman with no formal religious affiliation, sharing as best I can my reasons for various choices and inviting readers to continue their own thought experiments as we proceed. Some of the examples I give will be taken from my own actual experience with a large heterogeneous family, and some will be fictional. I will not always say which is which.

In keeping with a basic interest in preserving the lives of my children, I want them educated for physical health and grace. I am using "grace" to emphasize the integration of body, mind, and spirit. It certainly has a physical connotation; we all admire the grace of danc-

ers and gymnasts. But it points also to the spiritual dimension of life, connoting a special relation with spirit. Further, in all its meanings it points to something that is only partly in our control. It recognizes the gifts and limitations with which we are all born, and it draws our attention to appreciative forms of acceptance. It is, especially, an integrative concept. It reminds us that there are mental and spiritual factors in physical grace as well as physical factors in each of the other forms. With this understanding, I will use the word often, and it is a state I hope my children will seek in their educational experiences.

Part of every day should be spent in caring for the physical aspects of self, and this means attention to nutrition, hygiene, exercise, appearance, and all the facets of health care. Some children may have a special capacity for the bodily-kinesthetic, and these youngsters may eventually want extensive experience with athletics or dance. But all children should be helped to adopt a program of exercise that will contribute to lifelong fitness and grace.

I am not assuming any special organization of schooling at this point. Without regard to the standard forms we call subjects, I am simply exploring what should go into an educational program. When I look intensively at caring for self in chapter 6, I will suggest some things we might do within the present structure. This chapter is the place to dream and create, but after this, we will have to deal with reality and the unlikelihood of educational revolution.

Care of the physical self should be a high priority in education. Just throwing students together for forty minutes a day in a game or calisthenics is not what I have in mind. Whatever is done must be integrated with related domains and activities. Teachers and students must talk with each other about health and grace. It may not be necessary, for example, for all children to exercise or participate in games in school. Some children get plenty of exercise outside the school day. I would hope that a teacher or counselor could take note of this possibility and guide children appropriately.

Central to caring for the physical self is understanding and accepting its potential and limitations. Youngsters have all sorts of worries about their bodies, but we rarely approach physical education as a center for care and concern. Instead we vivisect the body and its interests into separate subjects such as physical education (usually sports), health, hygiene, sex education, drug education, and (rarely) nutrition. Although all of these topics are important, they need to be integrated into the central theme. When I was in high school, we spent considerable time studying the various systems of the body. We learned the names of various bones,

the parts of the digestive system, and names for the layers of skin. We never talked about the things that actually worry teenagers: complexion, weight, stature, missed periods, unbidden erections, unwarranted melancholy, and a host of other topics. Everything was kept in tidy compartments and, of course, there was no sex education.

Things haven't changed much, despite the addition of sex education. Many schools have added drug education to their curriculum, because drugs are a problem, and our standard approach is given a problem, add a course. But I would like our children to know that human beings have always sought ways to extend life, enhance sexuality, enhance mental capabilities, and increase physical potential. Our children's temptation to use drugs is not an evil unique to them and their time. The history of humankind is replete with fasts and diets, searches for fountains (and mountains) of youth, and prescriptions for mind- and body-altering substances. It is neither wicked nor unusual to have such interests. It is just unwise to subject one's body to substances or practices that may be harmful. There clearly are connections that can be made here to the subjects we call history, geography, literature, and science, but I would like those subjects to contribute to centers of care, not to substitute for them.

The physical self is only part of the self. We must be concerned also with the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual aspects of self, and clearly these are not discrete. We separate and label them for convenience in discussion, but it may be a mistake to separate them sharply in curriculum. Similarly it is not realistically possible to separate care of self from all the other centers of concern, but it is easier to talk about them one by one.

The spiritual aspect of self, for example, gets almost no attention in today's public schools. Most young people have a host of questions that could be discussed without violating the establishment clause: Is there life after death? Is there a god who cares about me? Am I connected to anything beyond the phenomenal world? Are there spirits with whom I can commune? Will such communion enhance my life? And then, of course, there are all the worries some young people experience over rejecting their parents' religion or exploring new alternatives.

Although we cannot, and I would not want to, teach our heterogeneous family a particular religion in school, I would hope that they might learn something about the human longing for god or spirit. I would hope also that they might eventually be able to ask hard and intelligent questions about existing religions and not become mealymouthed in their acceptance of nonsense—confusing indifference with

respect. Any of Gardner's capacities can be developed with a concentration on spirituality. This transcendent center of care calls upon and can enhance all of the others. A person engaged in a spiritual quest can use and enjoy logic, poetry, fiction, music, art, architecture, archaeology, dance, service, prayer, and introspection.

Another basic interest of the self is occupational. In addition to finding out what kind of people they are and want to become, our children will also have to choose occupations. A parent may be especially concerned for one child whose talents fall within the spatial and bodily categories. Here is a boy who has mechanical aptitude but not much capacity for logical-mathematical or linguistic pursuits. Indeed the school might tell his parents that he suffers from "specific language disability" or some other intellectual ailment. But, the parents protest, this boy can fix things that his parents cannot begin to figure out. Surely this is a bright youngster. How will his talents be cultivated in the system we call education?

Suppose part of every day were spent in technical, mechanical, and manual work of various kinds. Suppose all children learned how to wire lamps, fix common problems with washing machines, repair furniture, hang doors, and the like. These are all tasks required in everyday life, and they fall easily under Bobbitt's "family duties." In all of these activities, children like the boy just described might lead the way, showing others and supervising tasks. How different this boy might feel about himself if he were credited in school for his real talent.

Similarly, I would hope that the talents of all our children would be recognized and developed in a good school. Kids whose main interests are musical or mechanical or kinesthetic need not be subjected to narrow curricula, as Adler and others fear. Those with mechanical interests can learn about the history and development of machinery, build replicas, visit museums, read technical articles and science fiction, be invited to debate problems in the ethics of technology, investigate environmental problems, become involved in conservation efforts, and engage in a host of other activities. Many of the academic skills we deem important can be learned as adjuncts to their central mechanical interests.

So far I have barely scratched the surface in dreaming about what our children might learn in caring for themselves. But, since I will fill the dream out in a realistic way in chapter 6, let's go on to consider caring for intimate others. Clearly, this is not a discrete category because the self is defined relationally. The kind of persons we are at a given

moment affects the quality of relations we enter, and our relations continuously develop the self.

Most of us hope that our children will find someone to love, establish a family, and maintain bonds with friends and relatives. This hope is part of our interest in shaping an acceptable child. What kind of mates, parents, friends, and neighbors will our children be? If we, culturally diverse parents, disagree on this important question, can we find a way to include discussion of the issues in school, or must the children who most need this discussion suffer a lack because we cannot agree?

I would hope that all of our children, both girls and boys, would be prepared to do the work of attentive love. In education today, there is great concern about women's participation in mathematics and science. Some researchers even refer to something called the "problem of women and mathematics." Women's lack of success or participation in fields long dominated by men is seen as a problem to be treated by educational means. But researchers do not seem to see a problem in men's lack of participation in nursing, elementary school teaching, or full-time parenting. Our society values activities traditionally associated with men above those traditionally associated with women. (For an extended and powerful argument on this problem, see Martin, 1985.)

The new education I envision puts a very high valuation on the traditional occupations of women. Care for children, the aged, and the ill must be shared by all capable adults, not just women, and everyone should understand that these activities bring special joys as well as burdens. Work with children can be especially rewarding and provides an opportunity to enjoy childhood vicariously. For example, I've often wondered why high school students are not invited to revisit the literature of childhood in their high school English classes. A careful study of fairy tales, augmented by essays on their psychology, might be more exciting and more generally useful than, for example, the study of *Hamlet*. When we consider the natural interest we have in ourselves—past, present, and future—literature that allows us to look forward and backward is wonderful. Further, there are opportunities for lessons in geography, history, art, and music. (For a marvelous glimpse of what can be accomplished with judiciously chosen literature, see Greene, 1988.)

Our children should learn something about life cycles and stages. When I was in high school, my Latin class read Cicero's essay "On Old Age." With all his talk of wisdom, of milk, honey, wine, and cheese, of

meditating in the afternoon breeze, I was convinced that old age had its own romance. Looking at the present condition of many elderly, I see more than enough horror to balance whatever romance there may be. But studies of early childhood, adulthood, and old age seem central to education for real life. Further, active association with people of all ages should be encouraged. Again, one can see connections with standard subjects—statistical studies in math; the history and sociology of welfare, medical care, and family life; geographical and cultural differences. We see also that the need for such studies is a result of the social changes discussed in chapter 1. Home life does not provide the experience in these areas that it once did, and yet the need is greater than it has ever been (Gordon, 1991).

Relations with intimate others are the beginning and one of the significant ends of moral life. In supportive environments where children learn how to respond to dependable caring, they can begin to develop the capacity to care. Whether their caring will be directed to the people around them, however, depends in part on the expectations of their teachers—the adults who guide them and serve as models for them. In the past, too many young men have grown up with the expectation that women will continue to care for them and that they have a right to turn their care and concern to ideas, objects, and great causes. The situation is, indeed, so acute that many feminists fear promoting an ethic of care because it may aggravate the exploitation of women. (On this fear, see the essays in *Hypatia*, 1990; see also the debate in DuBois, Dunlap, Gilligan, MacKinnon, & Menkel-Meadow, 1985. For a frightening account of women's exploitation as caregivers, see Sommers & Shields, 1987.)

If we regard our relations with intimate others as central in moral life, we must provide all our children with practice in caring. Children can work together formally and informally on a host of school projects and, as they get older, they can help younger children, contribute to the care of building and grounds, and eventually do volunteer work—carefully supervised—in the community. Looking at Gardner's intelligences, we see that children can contribute useful service in a wide variety of ways, each according to his or her special talents. Looking at our list of basic affiliations, we recognize that some children may properly resist some kinds of service because of their long association with forms of exploitation. As educators, we should be sensitive to this resistance and encourage dialogue on it. Black and Hispanic youngsters may object to cleaning the school and girls may object to regular and automatic assignment to child care. The objections are valid and should be respected, but the

tasks themselves are respectable and important, and full discussion should make it clear that we believe this. Better yet, making sure that all youngsters participate in work activities once highly restricted by race or sex will demonstrate convincingly that we do believe it.

Dialogue is also essential in learning how to create and maintain caring relations with intimate others. Unfortunately, there is little real dialogue in classrooms. A typical pattern of talk can be described this way: Teacher elicitation, student response, teacher evaluation. Then the teacher moves on to someone else, and the student—his or her turn over for the hour—breathes a sigh of relief and returns to other thoughts. If dialogue cannot be introduced into formal lesson structures, it must be provided somewhere. There must be time in every child's day for sustained conversation and mutual exploration with an adult.

Part of what is learned in dialogue is interpersonal reasoning—the capacity to communicate, share decision making, arrive at compromises, and support each other in solving everyday problems. The school presently puts tremendous emphasis on logical-mathematical reasoning but almost none on interpersonal reasoning. As we explore this idea more deeply, we will recognize the futility of antidrug campaigns that advise, "Just say no." Kids do not say no to drugs; they have to say no to other human beings. How do they maintain friendships and status in their peer groups and still say no? One has to learn this important and complex skill. It is part of the capacity to care for oneself and for others.

Interpersonal reasoning is necessary in caring that involves associates and members of the community as well as intimate others. Part of the task of shaping acceptable children is deciding on the domain of acceptability. One kind of acceptability is vital for intimate love; we want our children to be acceptable to a loving inner circle. We also want them to be acceptable in a less intimate way to a wide circle of colleagues, friends, and acquaintances. This kind of acceptability requires a description of the groups to which our children will be acceptable and a decision on which groups are worth such preparation. These discussions require, in turn, an adequate level of interpersonal reasoning. Both we and our children need to talk and listen in order to learn what various groups stand for and what they demand by way of acceptability.

It is odd that acceptability is so little discussed even in social studies courses. Students are taught a narrow conception of the rights and obligations of citizens. Even Adler, for all his emphasis on liberal education and citizenship, concentrates narrowly on voting. As a mother

I have never worried much about whether my neighbors voted, although I have a broad, rather abstract concern about participation in voting. I have always been far more concerned about the basic human qualities of my prospective neighbors: Will they rob or harm me? Will they watch out for my children and property as I will for theirs? Will they be reasonably quiet, clean, and cordial? Will my children find friends who have healthy interests? We spend little time in schools talking about civic responsibility at this level, and yet this is the fundamental level of human association.

Part of what children need to learn is that groups need not be accepted or rejected wholly. Something in the way we now educate induces our children to suppose that persons and groups must be either right or wrong—good guys or bad guys. Along with this simplistic notion of human moral status, they often come to believe that loyalty requires total acceptance or rejection. Therefore, if we have pledged our loyalty to one group, perhaps because we believe with good reason that the group generally stands for fine values, then we are inclined to stand with it against all comers. We learn party lines and begin to divide the world into we and they, us and them. One of the school's most serious shortcomings is that it so consistently induces and maintains the creation of rivals and enemies (Noddings, 1989).

If another situation similar to the Vietnam war occurs, I would hope that our children could oppose it more constructively than their earlier counterparts did. I would hope that they would not jeer at nor spit upon young people who found it their duty to serve in a cause considered unjust by those opposed to it. I would hope also that their thoughtful opposition would be regarded as an admirable form of civic responsibility. Further, I would hope that they could see right and wrong when they occur on either side. One can, in an important sense, be on both sides at critical times—working toward more positive relations, refusing to accept intolerable behavior from either group. Why do so few of us ever learn how to assess the groups we encounter critically, appreciatively, and constructively?

Schools today do try to teach something about other cultures, and they often try to promote global awareness. But I am not talking about abstract learning that can dissipate immediately in a crisis. I am talking about an understanding of self and other that recognizes with a heavy heart that we are all vulnerable to error and to evil. I am concerned with reducing the tendency to project evil onto others not only to exteriorize and then destroy it, but also to deny its presence in ourselves. Especially in an era when we almost never hear honest debate in politics, our chil-

dren must learn how to evaluate their national history and how to use what they learn about history to reflect on current affairs. My reference here to history does not mean that all children should be taught a specific course in history. It means that teachers should be prepared to deal with relevant historical topics as the need arises. I reject the notion that formal study of history will make better citizens or policy makers who will not repeat the mistakes of the past. What children need to learn is how to sympathize and empathize with other people and to understand their own inclinations toward cruelty and violence.

We all need to understand ourselves as individuals and the groups with which we affiliate. We affect the ways in which groups operate, and they press us toward conformity. Our children watch a lot of television, but schools rarely help them to watch intelligently. Recently I listened to a group of people confessing that they bought products endorsed by famous people. On one level I could hardly believe that people would actually choose a motor oil or cereal because it was endorsed by a stock car racer or football player. Surely everyone knows that these "stars" are paid for their endorsement. On another level it was easy to believe. Several critics have been warning us for years that the primary function of literacy in capitalist societies is to increase the number of consumers and the quantity of consumption (Freire, 1970; Illich, 1971).

Learning about human relations is one of the toughest tasks any of us faces. Too often we equate interpersonal skill with smooth talking or a form of one-way influence. Even Howard Gardner (1983, p. 239), in suggesting the sort of occupation one might enter with a high interpersonal intelligence, lists "therapist" and "counselor." People in both these occupations may indeed learn to cultivate receptivity and two-way influence, but often they do not. Too many manipulate and direct instead of working with, cooperating, and serving. Teachers, doctors, lawyers, diplomats, and politicians all need high levels of interpersonal skills, and so do friends, lovers, parents, and co-workers.

In addition to learning to communicate appreciatively with people of good will and effectively with people who may be untrustworthy, I want our children to examine the effects of their own lives on others. I hope our children will not suffer from poverty, but I also hope they will not crave riches. Moderation should be taught and discussed enthusiastically. To embrace moderation as a way of life does not mean to reject and condemn every luxury any more than maintaining a healthy body weight requires ultraslimness or anorexia. I do not want them to judge each other harshly for interests in a swimming pool, or a solid automobile, or nice clothing, or even a medium-sized boat for recreation.

Possessions well earned and well maintained can add much pleasure to life. But I would like to hear them admit that they have more than enough, to watch over their possessions as they do their weight, and to remain healthily moderate. When I suggest a virtue such as moderation, I recognize that some parents may reject it. Some may prefer that our children all aim for great monetary success. Indeed, one version of the American dream would have us all striving to be millionaires. But there are surely many parents who will agree with me when I suggest alternative measures of success and open discussion of them.

I am concerned, too, with how our children relate to nonhuman life. Most of us introduce our children to pets and try to instill a sense of responsibility concerning their welfare. Caring for a pet can be a powerful component in moral education. Children learn to relieve pain and discomfort, not to inflict suffering, and to appreciate a range of responses in living things. Sharing the care of pets can bring delight as well as responsibility to parents and children.

But our relations with nonhuman creatures are complicated, and many issues arise as we explore them. Should we wear furs, for example, or is the whole fur trade immoral? Contrary to simplistic defenses and attacks on the fur business, the question is a complex one. Some of us want to argue that suffering should be minimized or eliminated. That would outlaw steel-jaw traps. Others argue that naturally wild animals should not be raised just for their furs on farms or in cages. But can there be a sharp line between domestic and wild animals? What about the possibility of gradually domesticating useful species? For my own part, I just say, "The animals need their furs more than I do," and reject fur garments. But this is a personal decision. Is it *wrong* to engage in fur trade? I hope that teachers concerned with "critical thinking" will stimulate our children to consider a long list of related questions: What happens to animals when their range is overpopulated? Is there a form of killing for fur that is more humane than the natural processes in a stressed population? What effects would an end of fur trade have on human beings? Should we use the furs of some animals but not others?

Our moral attitude toward animals should be a major center of care and concern. Should we stop killing and eating animals? Do animals have rights? Should they be used in research? If so, should such use be restricted to the demonstrably essential? What does this mean?

Let's consider. Not long ago, in writing about evil *(Women and Evil,* 1989), I discussed three forms of evil: natural, cultural, and moral.

Natural evil comprises all those painful and harmful events that befall us naturally: most diseases; accidents from fires, storms, and earthquakes; the decrepitude of old age; death. Moral evil is the harm we do intentionally or negligently to one another.

Cultural evil is the most complex and difficult. In this category, we find all the harmful practices that are variously accepted or rejected in different times and places. Our treatment of animals might fall under this category. Whether it should or not is a fascinating question. We can rarely identify cultural evils from within the culture in which they appear. The classical Greeks, for example, did not see the evils of slavery, a now obvious example of cultural evil. Some early societies saw nothing wrong with killing wives for adultery while punishing husbands more lightly, provided their illicit partners were not married women. Many societies have glorified war, another phenomenon that most of us would label a cultural evil. Poverty is another cultural evil. All of these examples involve an infliction of suffering that does not transgress the laws of a given society. Individuals participating in these are not thought to be immoral. Indeed, just the opposite is usually the case. A man unwilling to go to war might be considered by many to be not only unpatriotic and cowardly but also a shirker and thus immoral as well.

Now the question arises: How will future cultures evaluate ours in terms of cultural evil? It is conceivable that people living in enormously crowded conditions will find it impossible to raise animals for meat and, as the feasibility diminishes, new ethical rationales for abstinence will develop. People in, say, the year 3000 may look back upon us as red-jawed barbarians and find the eating of meat as disgusting as cannibalism. Or they may still chew happily on spareribs. We do not know.

Practices that are candidates for cultural evil are sometimes identified by a few creative and sensitive members of the group engaged in the practice; but often no one sees what future generations or other cultures can see. Our children should have opportunities to discuss and analyze such possibilities. Who is prophet and who pestiferous crank? Here, again, we have a chance to listen to several sides, to see the dangers of fanaticism, and—hardest of all—to come to appreciate honest and well-meaning people who take the other side. Are there nice folks among fur trappers? Are there decent, friendly people among those who picket the fur trade? When we are touched by people with whom we do not agree, we begin to believe in the possibility of nonviolent resolution of conflicts. At the same time, when we recognize the reality of hate in opposing parties, and our love for both helps us to under-

stand their hatred, we begin to understand a basic tragedy of human life.

Our children should also learn an appreciation for plant life. In the past few years, I have had some young people in my kitchen who did not know a cabbage from a head of lettuce. They could identify a "salad" and "cole slaw" but never saw what preceded either dish in the kitchen. This is frightening and a little sad. If our children have experience growing things and learning the uses of plants, they may have a more vital sense of urgency about the conservation of our forests and other national habitats. Again, there are connections to history, geography, biology, nutrition, art, mathematics, literature, and a host of other subjects. Further, there is something existentially satisfying about growing things.

I'll say much more about caring for living things in the chapter devoted to that topic, but here it is important to stress the difference between the traditional approach and the one I am advocating. Traditionally, if students learn anything at all in school about plants, they learn botany: the parts of a plant, the families, photosynthesis, the chemical constitution of plants, and the like. Plants become abstractions, a lot of concepts and nomenclature. I am talking about *caring for* plants—learning to nurture them, not name them. I'm talking about generating a sense of wonder at the vitality and endurance of plants that break through sidewalks, scatter their seeds to spring up after wildfires, and wrap their leaves about themselves to survive drought. I am talking about developing in children what Evelyn Fox Keller (1983) calls a "feeling for the organism."

Then there are objects and instruments. I've come late to an appreciation of these, and even now I have little understanding of machinery. But I have a mixer in my kitchen that was made in 1957. I still have the book of directions and recipes that came with it, and my husband has made minor repairs on it once or twice. This old machine has become somewhat special, and we have come to look upon it as *deserving* care. There are people who feel that way about old cars, tractors, barometers, saws, knives, and a host of other things. And then there are those who care about nothing. They apparently have never wondered: What would we do if we had to start all over? What marvels human beings have produced! I would like our children to have a feeling for artifacts as well as organisms.

Consider for a moment an instrument well known to every school child: the pencil. How are pencils made? We can picture long semitubes of wood on an assembly line. Into the groove goes a continuous stream of graphite. Then another strip of wood covers the graphite

and is sealed. Next the tubes are cut into pencil lengths and a metallic tip with eraser is fastened to one end of each. How is all this done? What sort of wood is used, and how is it prepared for use at the pencil factory? Where does graphite come from? How is it shipped? How is the hardness tested or controlled? What is an eraser? How are erasers formed? For that matter, what sort of machine stamps "No. 2" on the pencil and at what stage of the process? Once we have understood in principle how pencils are made, we can still ask about the wonderful machines that perform all these functions. What did their prototypes look like, and who invented them?

We are surrounded by wonders that we take for granted—wonders that we snap in half, lightly discard, ignore, and throw on rubbish heaps grown so large that we are threatened with inundation. Perhaps we are tackling the problem at the wrong end. Instead of asking what we can do with all our garbage, perhaps we should ask why we have so much of it. Better, we should ask both questions; asked together, the questions point us to a kind of reverence for usefulness and a search for both conservation and innovation.

Having explored very briefly the notion of living things, objects, and instruments as centers of care, I am led back to the central domain of caring—back to the human domain and a concern for one another. My hope is that our children will understand the dangers of extremism. To embrace and revere the living world does not require a total rejection of technology. To be fascinated and engaged by the world of technology does not suggest neglect of the living world. To be against cruelty to animals does not necessarily require condemnation of all those who raise or hunt animals for consumption. Animals, after all, hunt and consume each other. But, having said this, the problem of our moral relations and obligations to animals and plants remains. In fact, the *problem* arises in our realization that no simple response is adequate, and fighting each other introduces an even worse problem.

To complete my sketchy dream of education for our heterogeneous family, I need to consider ideas as a center of caring. Now I am in a domain familiar to my colleagues—the one most academics name as *the* domain of schooling. Obviously this domain is not discrete and entirely walled off from the others we have considered. On the contrary, my discussion so far has concentrated on how ideas are embedded in and connected to the everyday interests of all human beings.

But ideas, concepts, and conceptual systems can themselves be centers of care. Some years ago, I, like most graduate students, took a course in statistics. Most of my classmates complained that there were

not enough relevant examples in the course materials. They were going to be educational researchers, and they wanted to apply statistics to the study of education. I could understand their complaint, but I didn't share it. Coming from a mathematical and philosophical background, I was most interested in the proofs of theorems and derivations of formulas. It was annoying to me that we spent so much time on exercises—relevant or irrelevant. There are such odd students here and there who are captivated by the ideas themselves.

Some of the children in our heterogeneous family may be people for whom traditional liberal education is just right in the sense that its topics will fascinate them. (There are still worries from the perspective of parents and teachers who want to raise their children to be kind, moderate, and nurturing.) Several of my own children fell into this category. One spent an entire evening investigating the family tree of Medea—scattering encyclopedias and other reference books all over the living room, directing her mother where to look next, exclaiming with pleasure as the pattern unfolded. Shortly thereafter, she spent weeks studying Troy. She traced the voyages of Ulysses and drew beautiful illustrated maps. Then she read of Schliemann's excavations and drew profiles of the site. My main task as a parent and teacher of this child was to be sure that she did not go to school too often.

I have to explain that paradoxical remark. Schools today are not supportive places for children with genuine intellectual interests. With rare exceptions, they are not supportive places for students with any genuine or intrinsic interests. Dreaming again, I would hope that children like this daughter could be in classes with other people—students and teachers—who shared intellectual interests. There are many youngsters who could do wonderful things in academic courses if their teachers were not bogged down in administrative trivia, in disciplining unruly students, in "motivating" those whose interests lie elsewhere. What would we do with these others? These others were, of course, my first concern. They should be in classes that treat their own centers of care. These classes can be just as exciting for the students who want to be there as the usual academic classes can be for the few.

Allowing the academically talented (that is, those talented in the traditional logical-mathematical and linguistic categories) to move along as rapidly and as deeply as their energies permit is not necessarily elitist. Here the ideals of our dream and the realities of today's schooling clash. In my dream alternative, there is no hierarchy of capacities. We do not value mathematical or linguistic talent above me-

chanical or musical, and we do not force people to study intensively in any of these areas. But we want these students, like all others, to feel comfortable with their special interests.

In a full discussion of caring for ideas, I will have to face the realities. There are some practical things that can be done to avoid hierarchy and elitism. We could, for example, design open honors courses. I taught such a geometry course for a few years. Any student who had passed first-year algebra could enroll in this class. I carefully explained at the outset that there would be lots of homework, a rapid pace, sophisticated talk about esoteric topics, and challenging tests. But if students wanted to do it, they were welcome regardless of their previous grades in mathematics. We can be consistent in valuing interests over capacities.

In such a setting, one of Mortimer Adler's recommendations becomes wise and useful. He recommends three pedagogical modes: lecture, seminar/discussion, and coaching. Coaching is imperative for mastery, and for youngsters with poor backgrounds it is essential just to stay afloat. But coaches usually work with highly motivated students. The students may vary in natural talent, but most of them want to succeed, and they trust their coach. Adler makes the mistake of assuming that all children want to learn the traditional academic subjects or that, if they do not, a good coach can motivate them to learn anyway. I question whether this is possible. More important, I question the morality of forcing material on people. I would first have to be convinced that there is something wrong with their own interests or that the material under consideration is so vital that everyone must know it. However, I would employ coaching extensively for those who express interest in the subject at hand.

My alternative vision suggests an entirely different organization of schooling. One can only speculate on what the disciplines might have been and how the curriculum would have been constructed if, for example, women rather than men had designed them. Women have traditionally been closer to the everyday cares of life, but their subordination to men has generated twin problems: First, women have not had the power to enact ideas that are generated by traditional female values; second, attributes, values, and tasks associated with women have been systematically devalued—even scorned. If it were possible to redesign education along the lines of our alternative vision, we would see children studying, discussing, exploring matters, and doing things in their various centers of care. Teachers would work with all children on topics of general concern and with small groups of children on more specialized subjects.

The alternative vision, as I have described it, need not be characterized as a feminist or woman's view, although I think a feminist perspective can contribute richly to it. I have already mentioned John Dewey several times. His analysis of schooling suggested almost a century ago that education should begin with and remain closely tied to the actual experience and concerns of students. But his recommendations have been widely interpreted as psychological; that is, Dewey seemed to address questions about how children learn. He did not really challenge the dominance of existing disciplines in the curriculum but, rather, showed how they could be employed in the solution of genuine problems. Indeed, he made strong arguments for science, history, and geography in the school curriculum. He wanted these subjects to serve real human needs and also to be "progressively organized" so that those students who developed interest in them would gradually accept and employ their standard logical organization. My vision, in contrast, assesses the traditional supremacy of the disciplines as fundamentally wrong. Other matters—centers of care—are more important and more essential to full human life.

I have started an argument that I now want to fill out. In its general form, it is an argument against an ideology of control—one in favor of shared living and responsibility. Its first thesis is that there are centers of care and concern in which all people share and in which the capacities of all children must be developed. The second, closely following the first, is that education should nurture the special cognitive capacities or "intelligences" of all children and that this requires a scheme of multiple intelligences resembling that suggested by Howard Gardner. A third is that the focus on centers of care and the development of capacities must be filtered through and filled out by a consideration of differences that are associated with race, sex, ethnicity, and religion. The various perspectives that arise must be treated respectfully, critically, and regularly. Finally, my argument draws on Ruddick's maternal interests. Not only must we respect the various talents of our children and the occupations they will fill as adults but, if we are doing the work of attentive love, we must care deeply for them. We want to preserve their lives, nurture their growth, and shape them by some ideal of acceptability. Our parental interests inevitably guide the choices we make in all the other categories and, indeed, in the categories themselves.