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Classroom

Recognizing and Valuing Good and Innocence

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Last session:

- Reframed the challenge faced by our education system (educators)
- Began to focus on the solution relationships that center innocence –
 in our daily work
- Chose three children to focus on during our work together in order to understand and develop the practice of Innocent Classroom
- We began to have initial ideas about the Good of each of the individual children we are focused on

Today:

- Understand the practice of centering Good in your relationships with children
- Learn the Practice of Discovering and Engaging the Good of individual
- Identify the Good of the individual children you are focused on and build an initial set of strategies for engaging their Good
- Reflect on how this practice is making sense (or not) for our individual roles and spaces

As we think about our students, how might we see this guilt manifest in what we are seeing and hearing from them?

Remember, guilt is the cumulative impact of stereotypes, negative narratives, and iconography.

Be specific - how might a child "show up" in your classroom when they have heard this about themselves?

What We See

- Cynical
- Apathetic
- Uninterested
- Angry
- Silent
- Violent
- Bullying

- Taunting
- Disruptive
- Intimidating
- Sad
- Detached
- Protective
- Argumentative

- Nervous
- Overly competitive
- Clownish
- Sullen
- Hyperactive
- Afraid
- Unresponsive
- Unemotional

The Guilts

Untrustworthy

Criminal

Nonacademic

Lazy

No support

Combative

Defiant

Behavioral

Poor

Less than

Undocumented

Drugs

Alcohol

Irresponsible

Gangs

Terrorist

Separate

Promiscuous

Angry

Distracted

Violent

Loud

Single parents

Argumentative

Dishonest

Uneducated

Apathetic

Oppressed

Victims

Scared

Watched

Dangerous

Sassy

Distrusting

Smart

Model minority

Family oriented

At risk

Care for siblings

Complacent

Dancers

Laborers

Athletes

Protective

Late

Mistrusting

Poverty

Drama

The Good

- Belonging
- Connected

• Cared for

• Free

• Successful

• Survival

• Smart

Accepted

• Normal

• Safe

Validated

• Respected

Untroubled

• Hope

Leadership

Happy

• Seen

• Stable



Guilt

The cumulative impact of negative stereotypes that affect attitude and behavior. The absence of innocence.

This feeling of guilt is more of a translation of the negative expectations that envelop their lives than it is a statement of fact.

Unfortunately most of our children are aware, at a very early age of this feeling of guilt and exhibit its negative consequences before they even know what it is that motivates their behavior.

Innocence

Our new definition of innocence can be understood as the condition that results from the reduction, minimization, neutralization or elimination of the guilt that develops from stereotypes, popular negative narratives and iconography

Good

"Perhaps we may define it as that for the sake of which everything else is done."

To put it another way, there is a reason why a child does what it is they are doing. Why they think the way they do. Why they respond to us in a particular fashion. We can't understand what that is if we consciously or unconsciously rely on stereotypes to discern the origin of their impulses. We must seek out that child's Good.

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- As educators, we must embark on a journey to know the "Good" of the children we teach.
- We must commit to a way of interacting with our children that keeps these narratives from entering our relationships.
- We start by slowing down we start by making sure we have a set of "tools" that are readily available to each of us for every interaction we have with a child.

What is the Educator Practice of Discovering and Engaging Good?

- Observation
- Understand and accept the child's reality
- Identify with them
- Relate to them
- Engage with them





Observation

- Intentional ways of getting to know an individual child with the express purpose of discerning their Good
- Find ways to learn new things about the child you haven't known before
- Focus on moving outside of your own epistemology, gather information without evaluating academic potential or the veracity of any suspicion about the behavior

Understand and Accept

- We have to slow down to do this part
- Through our observation, we can begin to know the child well enough to begin to see how they see the world
- This understanding must be disconnected from the expectations and vision you have for this child - we aren't going to compare it to anything



Epistemology

The way you think about what you think about

Recognizing Good: Epistemology

Start again with one educator sharing about one child

- Reflect on your epistemology of the child:
 - What are you seeing from the child?
 - What do you know about who this child is beyond your classroom?
- Based on your observations, try to answer the following questions from the child's epistemology:
 - Why does he enjoy what he enjoys?
 - Why do specific things challenge her?
 - Why do they respond to you the way they do?

- How do I think about myself as a learner?
- How do I think about my relationship with you?
- How do I want others to see and receive me?
- What is this child's Good?
 - From the child's perspective what is the one thing they are seeking through all of the things we know and see about them?

The Good

Belonging	Validated
Free	Hope
Smart	Seen
Safe	Stable
Untroubled	Cared for
Happy	Survival
Connected	Normal
Successful	Respected
Accepted	Leadership

Discovering a Child's Good

- Our relationships with children begin to change as we work through the process and deepen as we continue to repeat the process with our new learnings
- Again, the point here is that this relationship does not have to be left up to chance. The actions that are required to construct the Innocent Classroom will lead to the potential for transformation in both the teacher and the child.

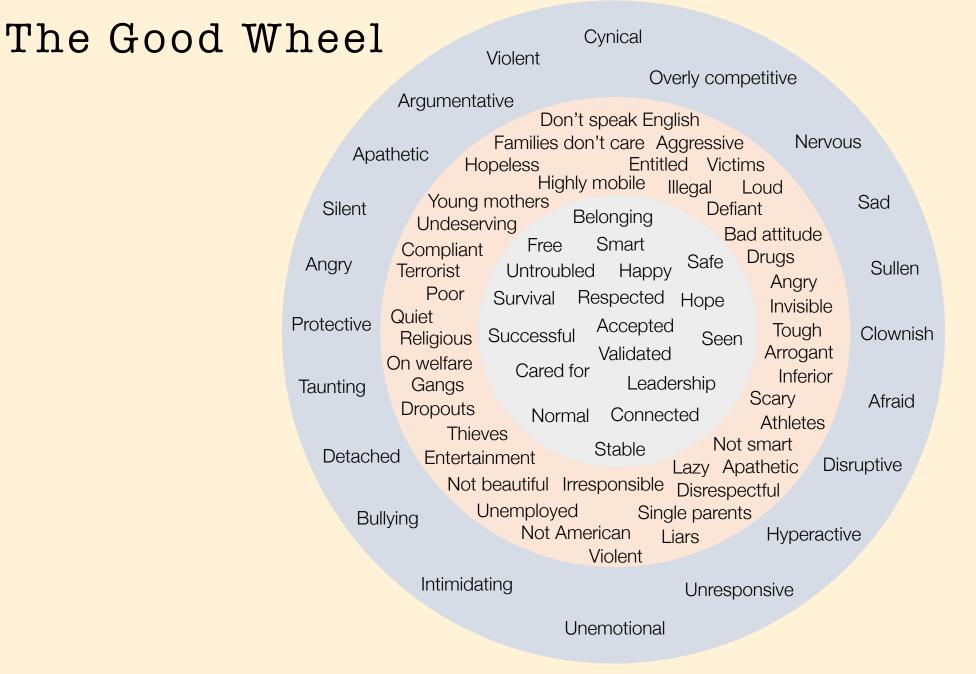
Our realization of their Good represents a critical moment in our relationship with our students.

- Our relationships with our students are not failed relationships.
- They are incomplete relationships.
- When we discover and acknowledge a child's Good we learn to empathize with them and this makes the relationship complete.
- This is different from sympathy.





- Empathy is a skill. It can bring people together and make people feel included.
- Sympathy, however, can lead people to feeling more disconnected and isolated.
- Empathy means staying out of judgement suspending our own epistemology to understand how a child is experiencing the world.



The Good Good Wheel

Listens

Нарру

Learns new things

Excited about school

Raises hand

Creative

Invested

Gentle Belonging

Free Smart

Patient Untroubled Happy Safe Volunteers

Survival Respected Hope

Tries new things Successful Accepted Seen

Validated

Dedicated Cared for Leadership

Normal Connected

Hopeful Stable

Confident

Participates

Laughs

Hard worker

Helps others

Responsive

Does homework

Honest

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An Educator's Gift

We have to believe three things:

- That Good exists in each of them
- That it is possible to discern a child's Good
- That responding to their Good will affect their level of engagement and lead to an innocence infused environment.



Engaging Good:

- 1. Start with one educator talking about one child.
- 2. What do I know about this child?
 - What do I see from them? (behaviors)
 - What do I truly know about them?
- 3. Everyone else listens through the epistemology of the child. Is this the child's reality?
- 4. Take a guess at the individual Good of the child.
- 5. What are at least three ways I can engage that Good?
 - Unique to what I know about this child
 - Specific to how I am thinking this child needs to receive their Good

The Good

Free Hope
Smart Seen
Safe Stable
Untroubled Cared for
Happy Survival
Connected Normal
Successful Respected
Accepted Leadership

Building a Practice:

- Intentionally use the Process of Discovering Good
- Continue to get to know the 3 children you picked and identify each of their Goods
- Prioritize the epistemology of a child's Good as you engage with each individual child – come prepared to talk about what you have learned

