

ANIMAL VOICE'S



Education
REWIRED

EQUIPPING EDUCATORS FOR A WORLD WHERE ALL BEINGS MATTER

Can Empathy be taught?

**Economist calls for reform
in education**

Earth Emotions

**Nature deficit disorder – a
new mental health issue**

**Healing children who are
psychologically wounded
by violence**

**Unlearning some of what
we've been taught**

ISSUE 1: JULY 2019

Published by



“Humane Education is a bastion for change”

- Chris John, internationally acknowledged psychotherapist
specialising in trauma reduction

CONTENTS

Page 4: Nature deficit disorder – a new mental health issue

Page 5: Earth Emotions

Page 6/7: Unlearning some of what we've been taught

Page 8: Global business consultancy alerts clients about food consumption in 2040

Page 9: Leading SA financier comments on Beyond Meat's big NASDAQ listing

Page 10/11: Economist calls for reform in education

Page 12/13: Can Empathy be taught?

Page 14/15: Healing traumatised children

Page 16: Redefining our humanity

The Humane Education Trust
P O Box 825
Somerset West
7129
South Africa
avoice@yebo.co.za
Tel: +27 21 852 8160



EDITORIAL

A New Sense of Place in the world ...

Dear Friends,

We are hurtling towards Destination Unknown. At our current trajectory, scientists pronounce that our planet is fast becoming too hot to handle, our seas too polluted, our animals too close to the sixth mass extinction. They say we have 12 years to change the impact of our human activities or else the next 10 000 years on earth will not represent life as we know it.

This is not the world we envisage for our children. But there's a flip side to all of this – a flip side that can bring us together as one people, one purpose, in a single-minded mission: to do what we have to do to make it right.

Aimed at schools and education institutions nationally, **Education Rewired** brings together some of the best minds in the world to tell us why, how and what to do to become part of the solution right now in this short window of opportunity scientists say we still have at our disposal.

Neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to reconfigure and change itself, confirms that we can reorganise

and rewire our brains. This is why it is so important to present a different world view, one accommodating empathy and kindness, to our young ones and indeed, to society at large.

We as humans often leave it to the 12th hour to rise to the occasion. We also thrive and are at our best when we experience a 'calling' or 'sense of purpose' in our lives. And we have the intelligence to create light in the dark. No purpose or calling has ever been greater than the one we face now. Let's empower our children to become part of the solution, let's learn from the wisdom of nonhumans how to be better humans. Let's strive towards a world devoid of prejudice, where the fundamental right of any living being is the right of passage through life, unhindered by exploitation and greed-driven destruction of habitat by a single species.

Pie in the Sky you say? That's what we thought about all the other prejudices and exploitations before we toppled them.

Kind regards,
Aleks Tasic
Production Editor



www.caringclassrooms.co.za
info@caringclassrooms.co.za



Tribute to Dr Felix Schneier

24 June 1926 - 29 June 2019

Dr Felix Schneier's heart was big enough to embrace all suffering. Whether human or nonhuman, he gave all he could to heal the world and all those who share the journey of life alongside ourselves.

I share his passion. Through his generosity, support and inspiration, The Humane Education Trust has striven against all odds over three decades to bring about better lives for farmed animals, and tens of millions have indeed benefited enough to enjoy life's basic gifts of sunshine, soil and freedom to move about.

We reach into schools too. Through Felix's generosity and our Caring Classrooms programme, thousands of children understand what we mean by the words 'rekindling the spirit of care and respect for life'.

Now, as we launch this our first issue of **Education Rewired**, intended for schools and education institutions nationwide, we dedicate it to you, dear Felix.

Thank you for what you brought to my life and to the lives of so many – whatever their shape or form.

The world you have left behind is a different place to the one we started in. Now, our awareness grows daily that all of life is interconnected. You left us before I could gladden your heart by telling you about the new words that are entering the world's vocabulary.

Words like...

- Symbiocene: an era when human action, culture and enterprise will nurture the mutual interdependence of the greater community and promote the health of all ecosystems
- Sumbiocracy: A form of government where humans govern for the mutually beneficial and benign relationship of earth inhabitants

Dear Felix, may your spirit soar across the African bushveld you loved so much. With your inspiration in our hearts, we will continue to strive towards the kind of world you dreamed of... a Symbiocene world... the kind you dedicated your life to help create.

- Louise van der Merwe
Managing Trustee
The Humane Education Trust





New mental health issues emerge as young people lose touch with the Earth



A new mental health issue called **nature-deficit disorder** has been added to the already long list of mental health issues facing young people today. Scientists warn that our dislocation from nature is resulting in **biophobia** (fear of nature) where fears and anxiety of the natural world

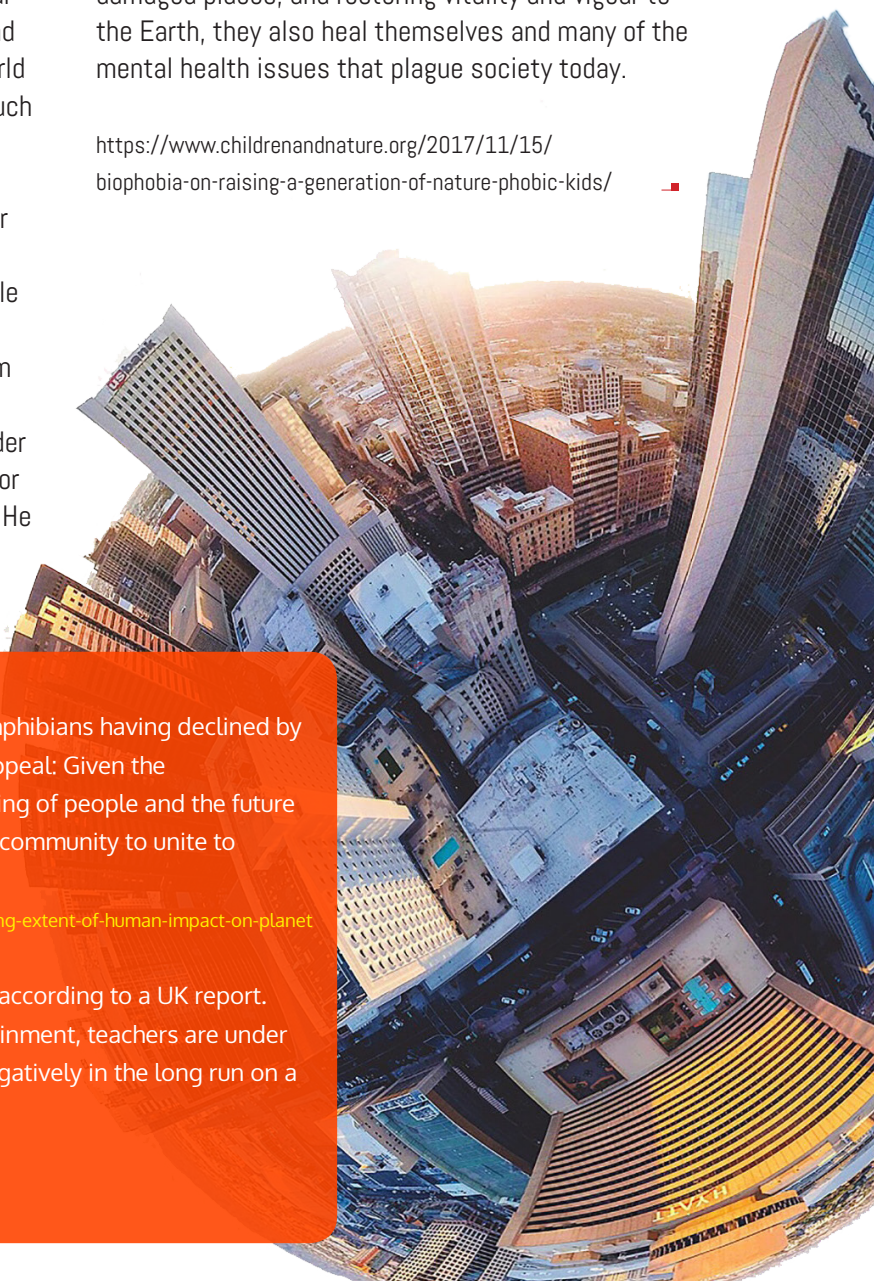
are triggered by seemingly trivial circumstances such as a strong wind, or a flock of noisy birds.

The tragedy, says geoscientist and eco-philosopher **Glenn Albrecht** in his new book **Earth Emotions**, is that as humans become more and more comfortable with artificial intelligence and robotic companions, each subsequent generation separates further from nature, widening the gulf so that an impoverished nature becomes accepted as the norm. Little wonder then, that children grow up with no understanding or empathy for the natural world, nor their place in it. He says this is why education needs urgently to equip school children with knowledge of the **science of symbiosis**, making them the first generation to

walk out of the Anthropocene (Age of man) epoch and into the Symbiocene (the interconnectedness of life) epoch.

Social scientists believe that as humans become involved in a Restoration of Earth project, healing damaged places, and restoring vitality and vigour to the Earth, they also heal themselves and many of the mental health issues that plague society today.

<https://www.childrenandnature.org/2017/11/15/biophobia-on-raising-a-generation-of-nature-phobic-kids/>

- 
- With populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians having declined by 60% in 40 years, the World Wildlife Fund has issued this appeal: Given the interconnectivity between the health of nature, the well-being of people and the future of our planet, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) urges the global community to unite to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/press-releases/wwf-report-reveals-staggering-extent-of-human-impact-on-planet>

- Outdoor learning in nature boosts a child's development according to a UK report. The report states that with so much focus on academic attainment, teachers are under pressure to stay in the classroom. However this impacts negatively in the long run on a child's physical and emotional development.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-36795912>

Living in the age of Solastalgia - and how to enter the age of the Symbiocene

Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World is a brave new book that identifies and gives names to the emotions of our time. One of them, already in use, is **Solastalgia**.

Solastalgia is the distress and pain we experience with the realisation that our home Earth is under assault and is becoming unhomely for all its inhabitants whether by climate change, deforestation, sea pollution or loss of biodiversity.

But there is hope and remedy as author **Glenn Albrecht** invites everyone to step out of the current Anthropocene era (where human self-interest dominates and destroys) and become part of the Symbiocene era in which all human activity supports all life.

He himself experiences a deep sense of solastalgia, he says, to be "associated with a period in Earth's history where the dominant people in one species wipe out the foundations of life for all other humans and non-humans."

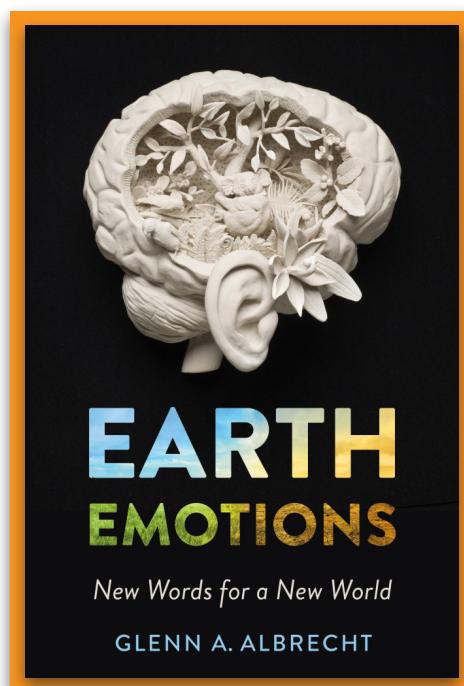
The United Nations has endorsed Albrecht's new word 'Symbiocene', stating: "Concepts such as the Symbiocene, an era when human action, culture and enterprise would nurture the mutual interdependence of the greater community and promote the health of all ecosystems, are promising and solution-oriented."

Says Albrecht: "We are beginning to understand that the actions of trillions of symbiont bacteria of many different kinds, work with us to nurture and protect our health as well as theirs. This is more than an entanglement of different but interdependent beings; it is the sharing of a common property, called life. We must slow down, share, and reunite ourselves with (all) other beings if we are to achieve evolutionary longevity..."

"To repair and restore this Earth before mass human and nonhuman misery and death is now the highest good that I can think of. There is nothing else that comes even close."

"Children born today will be here on this Earth in 2100, all things being equal. As the grandfather of a little girl, I am outraged that some humans prefer to invest in outer space rather than ensuring that this Earth remains a haven for life in a heartless cosmos."

- Read **Earth Emotions** for a host of new words that explore and identify emerging emotions we feel today. ■



"To repair and restore this Earth before mass human and nonhuman misery and death is now the highest good that I can think of. There is nothing else that comes even close."

See the trailer to **Anthropocene: The Human Epoch** due for release on 25th September 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqocRZoF3VI>

Whose knowledge matters?

The challenge is to unlearn some of what we have learned

In a traumatised world where humans have separated from nature and each other, internationally acknowledged academics weigh in on how to transform education for a better future

Professor Karin Murris is Associate Professor at the School of Education, University of Cape Town. Her recently published book **The Posthuman Child** is a radical proposal to turn the focus of education away from Westernised *Humanism*, towards Posthumanism with its understanding of the "connectivity and interdependency between all earth dwellers including human animals, other animals and nonhumans (e.g. machines)."



Murris believes that one of the significant injustices of Westernised education is the positioning of children

as lesser beings with the promise of becoming fully human as knowledge is gained. "Children bring something new to the world in their own right," she says. "At the moment the child is not listened to and can make no claim to knowledge. The child is denied."

Murris suggests we have to ask ourselves 'whose knowledge matters?' The knowledge we have depended on for more than 2 millennia is now disproven in many ways. Plato's philosophy separated mind from body. Cartesian philosophy identified animals as mostly automatons. Both were wrong. "The challenge," says Murris, "is to unlearn what we have learned and distance ourselves from outworn vocabularies and attitudes."

She adds that Education founded on Humanism is a contradiction of justice. Posthumanism, by contrast, "welcomes females, slaves, children, disabled, animals and other dispossessed 'others' who have been exiled from the land of knowers for more than 2000 years."

Posthumanism moves beyond the individual and focuses on interdependence, providing a unique opportunity for humanity to reinvent itself affirmatively.

Murris proposes that philosophy should start at primary school, allowing children to gain knowledge much like an earthworm making compost, turning the soil over and over, ingesting it and excreting it, burrowing through it, doing everything possible to aerate the soil, to allow oxygen in and thereby breathe new life into it.

The Posthuman Child: ISBN: 9781138858442

Professor Kai Horsthemke is a visiting lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education.

In his latest book, **Animal Rights Education**, he suggests that virtually all education leaves students with the idea that there is a clear division between humans and nonhumans and that nonhumans are subordinate. Education, says Horsthemke, emotionally desensitises children to the suffering of animals, reinforcing the prejudice that the value of an animal is dependent on its usefulness to man. Any display of empathy for animals is all too often equated with anthropomorphism.



"Denial of guilt is part of the socialisation process," he says. "They learn that horses and donkeys are meant to pull carts, that cows, lambs and pigs are meant to be eaten, that experimentation on living animals is justified by advances in biomedical and other sciences, and that it is necessary to protect only certain animals, primarily those who are members of a species threatened with extinction."

Conversely, he says, while animal rights education would involve a substantial rethinking of existing educational curricula, it would also hold substantial benefits for the intellectual and emotional development of humans. It would facilitate human growth and enhance learners' capacities for empathy, sympathy and critical reflection.

See next page...

"Animals, like humans are conscious individuals with many possessing cognitive abilities. Like humans, they have a life that can be better or worse for them and they deserve to be treated and given consideration in accordance with their particular characteristics.

"Excluding animals simply on the basis of their not being human, is an irrational prejudice not unlike that involved in sexism and racism."

Horsthemke concludes: "Animal rights and emancipation implies human liberation, the act of humans freeing themselves from the role of subjugators and from dependence on animals at the expense of their lives, freedom and well-being."

Animal Rights Education: ISBN: 9783319985923

ADVERTISEMENT



ALOE COTTAGE NOW AVAILABLE

Rustic need not be uncomfortable or expensive. Aloe cottage sleeps four and is available for volunteers as well as nature lovers looking for an affordable self catering farmstay in the Klein Karoo.

Solar power, gas water heater and stove; fridge, plunge pool and more.

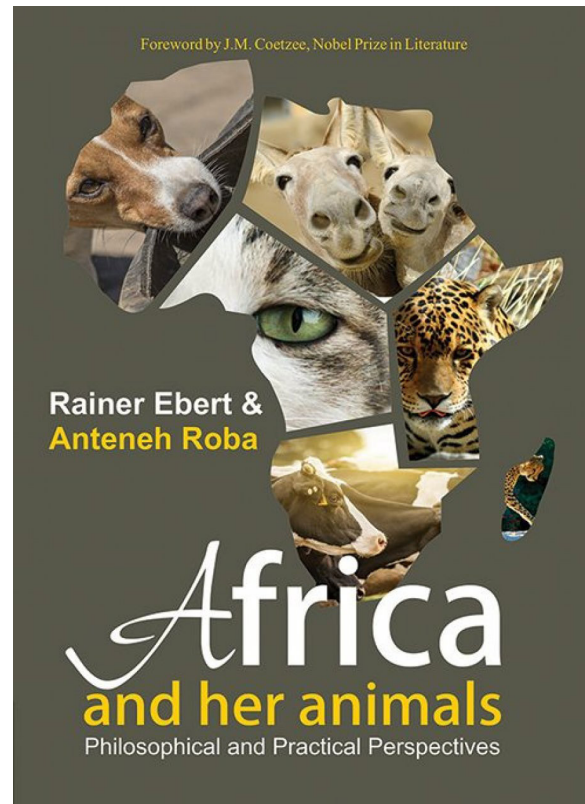
The funds raised will help cover the costs of running the wildlife sanctuary. Fortunately we live in a particularly attractive part of the world and the scenic views are spectacular.

www.karoo62.co.za

Chris Mercer

Director; Campaign Against Canned Hunting.

The University of South Africa Press speaks out for animals



Africa and her animals brings together the thoughts of 28 of the world's leading thinkers on our relationship with nonhumans. The first of its kind on the African continent, this 358-page resource is edited by **Dr Rainer Ebert**, lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Dar es Salaam, and **Dr Anteneh Roba**, physician and president of the International Fund for Africa.



Dr Rainer Ebert

In the preface, Ebert and Roba state: "This book is intended as a call upon the reader



Dr Anteneh Roba

to take nonhuman animals seriously, as individuals and as members of our moral community. We want to challenge the common view that animals are essentially inferior to humans by showing that there are alternative views, and thereby spark a sustained and authentic conversation on the African continent." – *Africa and her animals* is published by University of South Africa Press. ISBN: 9781868889006

Global business consultancy alerts clients: 60% of the meat people eat in 2040 will not come from slaughtered animals



Global business consultancy **AT Kearney** has alerted its clients that "it is only a matter of time" before the advantages of cultured meat and vegan meat replacements capture a substantial market share. The consultancy estimates 35% of all meat will be cultured by 2040 and 25% will be vegan replacements.

Rosie Wardle of the Jeremy Collier Foundation which focuses on sustainable food systems, agrees. "The shift to more sustainable patterns of protein consumption," she says, "is already under way, driven by consumers, investors and entrepreneurs, and even pulling in the world's biggest meat companies. If anything, predictions that 60% of the world's 'meat' will not come from slaughtered animals in 20 years' time may be an underestimation."

Tyson Food, largest meat producer in the USA, is one of many meat companies to have climbed onto the meat-free bandwagon with its launch of vegetarian nuggets that taste like chicken. Called Raised and Rooted, the nuggets are made primarily of pea protein.

The move away from meat is driven by the environmental impact of meat production together with public concern for the welfare of farmed animals.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/12/most-meat-in-2040-will-not-come-from-slaughtered-animals-report>

<https://gizmodo.com/tyson-launches-its-first-plant-based-protein-brand-to-c-1835476740>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/13/business/tyson-alternative-meat/index.html>

6 million South African children regularly go to bed hungry according to UCT's Children's Institute...

Yet, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), almost half of the world's harvest is fed to farmed animals so that we can eat their meat, milk and eggs. It estimates that the world is currently sustaining: 1.4 billion cattle, 1 billion pigs, 20 billion poultry and 1.9 billion sheep, lamb and goats. ■



Saudi billions are set to boost the meat-free revolution

One of the Gulf's top venture capitalists, **Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal** is set to boost the meat-free movement having become vegan for health reasons.

Listen to his story here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6mDiMV2b4k> ■

The single biggest way to reduce human impact on Earth? Avoid meat and dairy.



Beyond Meat's Big NASDAQ listing: Is it a harbinger of the end for factory farming?

With Beyond Meat setting the pace, Big Business is heading into a new world order. Leading South African financier, **Andrew Canter is Chief Investment Officer of Futuregrowth**, an asset management company with R180 billion of clients' assets under management. Here he gives his thoughts on Beyond Meat's big Nasdaq listing...

"It can take generations to change human habits, practices and beliefs. But change can occur suddenly when tipping points are reached.

There is a growing cognisance amongst investors of the wider social and environmental consequences of their investment decisions. For example, a tipping point has been reached as regards global warming. Not only is capital being allocated towards cleaner energy and transport, but capital is also being intentionally shunted away from carbon-emitting industries and products.

People's cars are close to their hearts, but people's food is very close to their stomachs! There is an increasing flow of information, research and commentary about the raw immorality and environmental impact of factory farming; the blatant inefficiencies of growing animals for consumption; and the health effects of an animal-fueled diet. But there is a counter-revolution in the form of a well-organised, well-funded and well-connected food industry, which speaks directly to what people want to hear, and reinforces their old choices and habits (e.g. "you need protein to survive"). Indeed, the agri-industry lobby can legitimately argue that they've produced much more meat, at a much lower cost, for many more people, than ever before (while deflecting mention of the adverse consequences).

The enormously successful NASDAQ introduction for plant-based meat-maker BeyondMeat (+163% on its first trading day) is sure to draw in additional investment capital to the industry. Indeed, science,

technology and capital fuels investment, which ultimately allows for products, distribution and economies of scale.

However, without a true cost-advantage to the consumer, the meat-substitute business won't break through the barrier of human habit and agri-industry opposition. As a corollary, we have known for decades that wind and solar power are clean alternatives to fossil fuels, and that global warming is occurring. But only recently has such energy become price-competitive with fossil fuels, and thus the financial (and political) world has reached the tipping point to begin to phase out polluting power (which will still take decades to complete).

For consumers, plant-based meat competes head-on with real meat – which is considered the 'premium' product. Consumers are likely to willfully ignore the (well known) adverse consequences of factory farming (as they have for decades) until they are able to pay less for the plant-based meat than for animal protein. However, when the meat-substitute industry reaches the scale and efficiency for prices to come down – to be truly price-competitive – we may achieve a tipping point for consumers and governments. We may finally see the ratcheting down of factory farming."

"In economics, things take longer to happen than you think they will, and then they happen faster than you thought they could." Rudiger Dornbusch

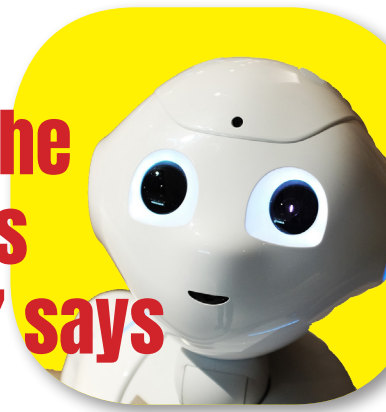
<http://www.futuregrowth.co.za/newsroom/responsible-investing-in-2019-some-tipping-points-and-some-not/>
For further reading see:
<https://www.engadget.com/2019/05/19/impossible-foods-burger-sausage-empire/>

Beyond Meat went public in May this year with a \$1 billion valuation. Since its IPO Beyond Meat's stock has surged 500%.



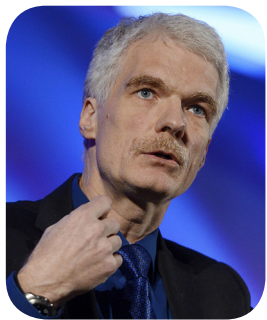
Andrew Canter

Education must reform to prevent the system churning out “second-class robots and not first-class humans” says leading economist



What happens when Artificial Intelligence (AI) gradually takes over many of the jobs that keep us busy now, appropriating our livelihoods and purpose, and leaving us stranded in our own comparative deficiency?

The solution, say leading economists, lies in actively cultivating in our children that special thing that sets us apart from AI, the very thing that makes us uniquely human – our capacity for empathy and creativity. If we don't, says German data scientist **Andreas Schleicher** who heads the Education Division at the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, the world will be educating “second-class robots and not first-class humans.”



Schleicher believes our education system is a relic of the industrial age. He explains: “The kind of things that are easy to teach, and maybe easy to test, are precisely the kinds of things that are easy to digitize and to automate. The advent of AI should push us to think harder about what makes us human... our capacity to take responsibility, to mobilize our cognitive and social and emotional resources to do something that is of benefit to society.”

Schleicher's call is supported by business mogul **Jack Ma**, former head of the Chinese e-commerce giant *Alibaba*. At the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland in 2018, Ma predicted “big trouble for the world 30 years from now” if education continues along its current path.



Giancarlo Brotto, global education strategist for *Smarttech.com*, added his voice during the *LearnIt* conference held in London in January this year. The audience applauded when he said: “I want my son to come home complaining about his empathy mark!”



Social Scientists agree



Simon Baron-Cohen, professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the University of Cambridge, would agree. In his book, *The Science of Evil*, he suggests that there is growing evidence “that instead of using the term evil, we should

talk about reduced (or even absent) empathy.” He continues: “The critical role of empathy in our society has been overlooked. Empathy is the most valuable social resource in our world... It is puzzling that in school or parenting curricula, empathy figures hardly at all, and in politics, business, the courts, or policing, it is rarely, if ever, on the agenda. The erosion of empathy is a critical global issue of our time.”



South African social worker **Dr Magdie van Heerden** believes that animals have a crucial role to play in the nurturing and development of empathy. “In today's age of technology,” says Dr van Heerden, who specialises

in the Human-Animal Bond, “animals have a greater role to play than ever before in the well-being of people.”

She adds: “Technology has a real down-side. It is ironic that while people around the world have never been more connected through social media, they have also never felt more isolated and disconnected from each other. If you think about it, one little emoji with hands and a smiling face often replaces our very deep need for the real thing – the physical contact of a big hug.” Dr van Heerden suggests that the erosion of empathy in society is a major factor in the prevailing epidemic of anxiety and depression. “Humans have a deep-rooted need to care, and to be cared for, and this is why the nurturing and development of empathy should be a focal point in education.”

See next page...

"It starts with the teddy bear in the cot and with the companion animals in our homes. Most children relate easily to companion animals because they are not judgmental and if treated well, they are positive role-models for companionship, play, laughter, love, and having fun. Child welfare and animal welfare are intertwined and we cannot split the one from the other if we want to heal our communities and strive towards emotional health."



South African education reformist **Louise van der Merwe**, managing trustee of The Humane Education Trust, agrees. "Ours is the first era that cannot escape responsibility for its reckless abuse of nature, each other, and the beings that share this earth with us because for the first time, everything is on record," she says. "Society mistook for soft or weak, some of the most powerful and unique aspects of the human experience. Historically these innate skills and qualities – empathy, compassion, kindness – have been overlooked, dismissed and even ridiculed in education."



Sources of information:

- + Quartz: 'The Unlikely champion for testing kids around the world on empathy and creativity', by Jenny Anderson, February 22, 2019
<https://qz.com/1540222/how-changing-the-pisa-test-could-change-how-kids-learn/>
- + <https://qz.com/1557308/psychoterratica-is-the-trauma-caused-by-distance-from-nature/>
- + The Science of Evil by Simon Baron-Cohen published by Basic Books





Can empathy be taught?

by Louise van der Merwe

While social scientists around the world agree that the erosion of human empathy is a critical issue of our time, few offer insight into how exactly we can nurture, resuscitate and develop this innate and vital social emotion with which we are born.



Vivienne Rutgers

The US-based **Latham Foundation** believes it starts with the animals in our care. Says Latham's **Phil Arkow**, co-author of *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention*: "Kindness to animals is the first and truly foundational step that supports all the other steps above it in the building of empathic communities, countries, nations and a new world ethos."

that these qualities become 'second nature' as the child matures. Based on the UN-endorsed *Five Freedoms for Animals*, the Caring Classrooms programme starts with companion animals because most young children have contact with dogs and cats. However the learners demonstrate that they spontaneously extend their understanding of the *Five Freedoms* to other animals too."

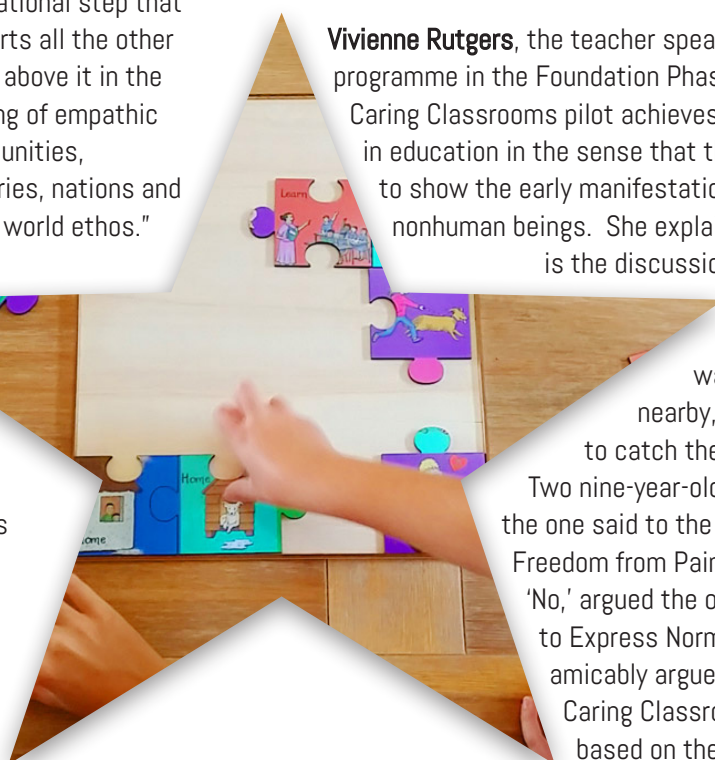
Van der Merwe says that what makes the Caring Classrooms programme unique is that each of the professionally developed resources requires active learner participation. "Through the resources, they are required to become actively engaged in discussing and working out positive relationships in our interaction with others who share this amazing journey of life with us."

Vivienne Rutgers, the teacher spear-heading the programme in the Foundation Phase, says the Caring Classrooms pilot achieves a breakthrough in education in the sense that the learners begin to show the early manifestations of empathy for nonhuman beings. She explains: "An example is the discussion I overheard in

Putting this belief to the test, Latham has sponsored a pilot **Caring Classrooms** programme at a primary school in the northern suburbs of Cape Town. Currently underway, the outcomes will be academically assessed by education philosopher, **Dr Kai Horsthemke**.

Says education reformist **Louise van der Merwe** who developed the Caring Classrooms programme: "Early Childhood Development, those years in a child's life when neuroscience shows our brains to be the most malleable, is a crucial window of opportunity to teach the basic principles of ethics, integrity and empathy, so

the playground recently. A dove was sun-bathing nearby, extending its wing to catch the rays of warmth. Two nine-year-old boys saw this and the one said to the other: 'See! That's Freedom from Pain, Injury and Disease'. 'No,' argued the other. 'That's Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour.' They amicably argued the point. Our Caring Classrooms programme based on the *Five Freedoms* had opened a whole new window of curiosity for them that would otherwise have remained closed. It was really heart-warming. Without the programme, they probably would not have even noticed the bird or, based on my experience, they may well have decided to chase it away by throwing stones at it."



See next page...

"On another occasion recently, we unlocked the classroom for the day's schoolwork to begin, only to find a little bird had somehow been shut in all night. It perched on a rail on the wall and was clearly traumatised by the sudden surge of 46 children into the room. Before the Caring Classrooms programme, I believe the children would have caused pandemonium trying to catch the bird. Instead, they heard me... I said 'sit quietly, I'll open the window, and we will be patient while the bird finds its way out'. The little bird took a significant amount of time to do this but as it hopped nearer to the open window, one child whispered 'nearly there', as encouragement. To hear that whisper, all 46 children had to have been as quiet as mice. Then several of the children whispered 'nearly there' with every hop the bird took in the right direction. And we all whooped when it finally flew out. That 'nearly there' whisper of encouragement was empathy in action."

See more at www.caringclassrooms.co.za

Sponsor a Classroom

Help heal our young ones

What we teach our children in their first seven years becomes second nature as they grow older.

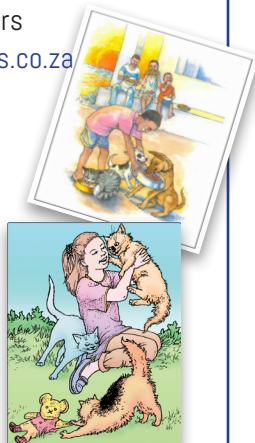
In a world where children are crying out for healing, teaching empathy is a crucial first step.

Our **Caring Kids pack** is a fun-filled box of curriculum-aligned resources designed to build empathy.

For more information and to reserve your pack please contact Vivienne Rutgers
vivienne@caringclassrooms.co.za

Your **Classroom Pack** includes:

1. Instructions on how to use the kit
2. 74-page guide manual
3. 6 mini story books
4. mini colouring-in book
5. 40-card snap game
6. 20 large piece wooden puzzle
7. reader: six stories
8. puppet play script and 4 dog puppets
9. 50-piece felt cut-out 'animal care' pack and board
10. 'The Five Freedoms' A3 laminated poster



Veterinary endorsement of our programme

The Caring Classrooms programme for Early Childhood Development is endorsed by one of South Africa's leading veterinarians, **Dr Annelize Roos**.

As Principal of EnviroVet CVC (a satellite of SAVA Community Veterinary Clinics), Dr Roos is a recipient of the Henry Schein Cares International Award for outstanding service in animal health and welfare.



She says: "I wholeheartedly endorse the Caring Classrooms programme as a vital and primary step in the nurturing and development of empathy. What makes this programme unique is that each of the very professionally developed resources requires active learner participation. They're not required to sit still and listen, or watch and remember. They are required to become actively engaged in discussing and working out positive relationships in our interaction with others who share this amazing journey of life with us."

Visit **Caring Classrooms**

at www.caringclassrooms.co.za

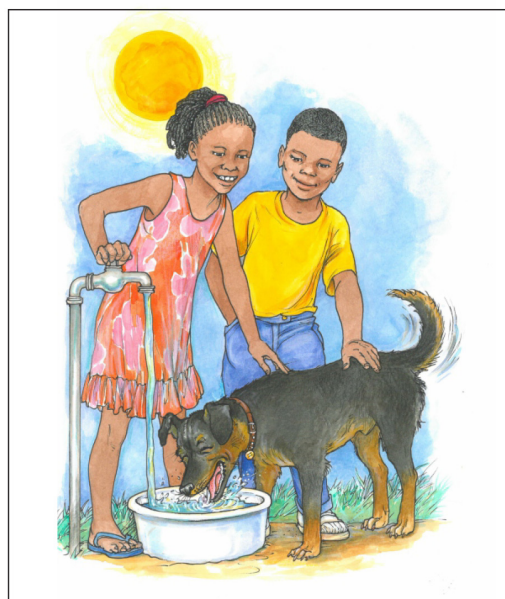


Illustration: Pandora Alberts

SEE BACK PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS ON HOW TO SPONSOR

Healing children who are psychologically wounded by violence

Chris John is a London based psychotherapist who is internationally acknowledged for his specialisation in trauma reduction. We asked him for his thoughts on healing the trauma that besets so many children in South Africa today.

Education Rewired:

Many of our children are exposed to traumatic levels of violence such as domestic violence in the home, gang warfare on the streets and sexual abuse on a staggering scale. Your research shows that traumatic memories from early childhood become locked deeply within the limbic area of the brain and, as a result, these children are likely to experience 'developmental immaturity' in adult life. You say the 'wounded inner child' remains locked within the adult and manifests in characteristics such as...

Feelings of being 'less than'

A sense of being vulnerable and victimised

Struggles in taking responsibility for the self

Immature and uncontrolled behaviours

CHRIS JOHN:

Yes indeed. Until about age 5, the more active parts of our brain are the brainstem and limbic system which are impervious to understanding, language or logic. One of the functions of the limbic system is the scanning for potential danger and consequently, it is in the limbic system that associations develop – for example, between trauma and authority figures. The memories in this survival area of the brain, **are felt** more than remembered and their intensity can be triggered right the way into deep adulthood. We must become aware that children between the ages of 0 - 5 are susceptible to traumatic emotional wounding that will have lifetime implications.

Education Rewired:

You say that traumatised children develop defensive and adaptive coping mechanisms. Between the ages of 0 – 3 they minimise their psychic discomfort and pain through regression and withdrawal. Around age 3, they suppress their feelings and act out their thoughts in fantasy and play. By age 4, most children are successfully repressing their feelings without these feelings



having been tempered by any form of understanding from the cortical regions of the brain.

CHRIS JOHN:

Yes, the frontal cortex of the brain is where thinking takes place and comes into play only from about the age of 5. The frontal cortex is responsible for most of our analysing, learning, planning, paying attention and certain types of memory. So early traumatic experiences before the age of 5 that the child has now repressed, put him/her at risk of developmental immaturity in adulthood. However, with therapy, the traumatic imprint from this deeper part of the brain can be detoxified and discharged.

Education Rewired:

So you are saying South Africa is correct to bring Early Childhood Development into sharp focus and indeed that much of the violence and abuse in society is

perpetrated perhaps by adults suffering from developmental immaturity?

CHRIS JOHN:

Absolutely. Trauma is passed down through the generations. Therefore, in order to stop it we need to work with the children who have suffered at the hands of major caregivers. I fully believe the extreme violence in many countries, not only South Africa, is the legacy of attachment trauma which includes abuse, neglect and enmeshment. These youngsters are not given 'good enough care' as many are parented by adults who are themselves victims of abuse and suffer from developmental immaturity.

Education Rewired:

In our Caring Classrooms programme, we interact with young children who are often withdrawn or are already displaying violent behaviours. Yet, learning to care for the pets in their lives and to become guardians of the natural world, seems to have a profoundly healing effect on them. They become animated and our research shows that their confidence and sense of self-worth grows significantly. What are your thoughts on how humane education supports young children in their development? Is it an important mechanism for trauma reduction?

CHRIS JOHN:

Traumatised children develop what I refer to as '**silent or violent**' behaviour. Their need for human connection is what has been lost or denied. In this process children carry a sense of shame. Therefore they develop in equal measure a fear of wanting and rejecting connection.



Humane education is essential in today's world as it helps to bridge the gap in our longing for belonging. We now live in a traumatised world and I believe the state of the planet is a symptom of human trauma. We have been disconnected for far too long. Working with these youngsters, educating and helping them develop emotional clarity and self-regulation skills is essential.

Doing something beneficial and of service helps us develop a greater sense of purpose. Humane Education is a bastion for change and a beacon of hope and normality in the often violent world of children.

Education Rewired:

We thank you for your valued insights. ■

ADVERTISEMENT

GREAVES TEXTILES

Neva.Letha

**Alternative Leather
Animal Free**

**Environmentally
Friendly**

Solvent Free : No harmful solvents used in manufacture.

Toxic Free : No Nox, Dioxins, or VOC, Free of Phthalates.

Waste Free : 100% recyclable. 100% polyester fabric.

Physical Properties :

UV Resistant – High Abrasion resistance, durable, Stain, Chemical, Heat Resistance with excellent Hydrolysis Resistance.

Contact :

Greaves Textiles - Neva.Letha - Alt.L Leather
Lynn Greaves

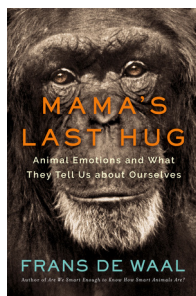
Telephone : + 27 82 893 0554

E-Mail : lynn@greavesdiamonds.com

Mama's Last Hug: Animal Emotions and What They Tell Us about Ourselves



Author: **Frans de Waal**, leading international behaviourist who also authored *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?*



Mama's Last Hug is a fascinating book that puts emotions at centre-stage. Here below are some of the insights gained from the book.

Emotional Intelligence – Acknowledging the role of the body, as much as the mind, in all decision-making.

Pent-up emotions. We all have them. We try to hide them because we like to present ourselves as clear-headed, dispassionate, rational beings, inspired by logic and reason.

People tend to look down on emotions. We associate emotions with illogicality, weakness and wrong decisions. We warn people not to become 'too emotional', and sometimes we even apologise for ourselves if we display emotion. We are criticised for wearing our feelings on our sleeves instead of keeping them to ourselves. It's as if emotion conflicts with human dignity.

But, however much we try and hide them, we display emotion, detectable by others, through involuntary facial expressions and body language. Emotions make our hearts beat faster, our skin gain colour, our chins tremble, our throats tighten, our voices rise, our tears flow, our stomachs turn, our legs give way, and so on.

When we are conscious of our emotions, we are able to express them in words and make others aware of the reasons behind the emotion. Thus, we **show our emotions**, but the power of language enables us to **talk about our feelings**.

If we were to rely solely on science and reason, and exclude emotion from what we think and do, we run the risk of making grave mistakes. Science and reason alone, without the influence of emotion, can be used to justify abhorrent practices. Slavery is an example. Slavery made perfect sense in economic terms but was a disaster in every other way. Body and mind – emotion and intelligence – go together and each needs the other to navigate our decision-making.

Redefining our Humanity

American brain surgeon, **James Doty**, believes we are entering an age of compassion. Says Doty: "Deep emotions are expressed in the heart and there is a powerful mind-heart connection. We now know that there is an immense amount of neural innovation that comes from the brain stem into the heart – and that it's a two-way street."



"Ultimately the mind and heart are part of one unified intelligence with the neural net around the heart being an essential part of our thinking and reasoning." While science has made great strides in treating pathologies of the human mind, he says, far less research exists on the positive qualities of the human heart including compassion, altruism and empathy.

"Yet these pro-social traits are innate to us and lie at the very centrepiece of our common humanity. When we embrace the 'other', our physiology works at its best and it is an understanding of this reality that is ultimately going to define whether our species survives or not."

Dr Doty is founder and director of the **Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE)** at Stanford University School of Medicine.

He is author of *Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart*.

Edward O. Wilson, the world's leading expert on myrmecology – the study of ants – offers an intriguing solution to our imperilled world. In his impassioned book **Half-Earth – our Planet's Fight for Life**, he argues that the situation facing us is too large to be solved piecemeal and proposes a solution commensurate with the magnitude of the problem: dedicate fully half the surface of the Earth to nature. He suggests we still have time to do just this and he identifies actual spots where Earth's biodiversity can still be reclaimed.



Read *Half-Earth* (ISBN 9781631490828) and be inspired.

"Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction."

– Edward O. Wilson.



Sponsor a Classroom

Help heal our young ones

What we teach our children in their first seven years becomes second nature as they grow older.

In a world where children are crying out for healing, teaching empathy is a crucial first step.

Our **Caring Kids pack** is a fun-filled box of curriculum-aligned resources designed to build empathy.

For more information and to reserve your pack please contact

Vivienne Rutgers

vivienne@caringclassrooms.co.za

R10 000 (£550 pounds sterling) supplies a primary school with an Early Childhood Development pack of curriculum-aligned resources **and a full year of teacher support by Humane Education**. Donors also receive quarterly reports on learner progress for one year.

To sponsor via an online payment gateway facility, go to:

<https://caringclassrooms.co.za/sponsor/>

or

Donate to:

The Humane Education Trust

ABSA Bank, Somerset West

Area Code: 632005

Swift Code: ABSAZAJJ

Account No.: 9094070046

Your **Classroom Pack** includes:

1. Instructions on how to use the kit
2. 74-page guide manual
3. 6 mini story books
4. mini colouring-in book
5. 40-card snap game
6. 20 large piece wooden puzzle
7. reader: six stories
8. puppet play script and 4 dog puppets
9. 50-piece felt cut-out 'animal care' pack and board
10. 'The Five Freedoms' A3 laminated poster



Marching for change



Learners from Beaumont Primary School in Somerset West, South Africa

Children from 1400 cities across the world took to the streets in May 2019 to protest against the lack of definitive action in combatting the climate crisis. The protest, initiated by 16-year-old Swedish student Greta Thunberg took place in 110 countries and involved more than a million children

<https://www.facebook.com/beaumontprimary/videos/2119078021540755/>