

Chapter 2

Hope, Happiness, Teaching, and Learning

Robert V. Bullough Jr.

Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to explore *hope*, as a virtue—one of three Christian martyrs, daughters of Sophia (Wisdom)—and as an emotion, and *happiness*, an especially complex emotion, in relationship to teaching, learning, and school improvement. My desire is to broaden the conversation about teaching and learning to include greater attention to the central but underappreciated place of hope and happiness in all things educational. Being taken for granted, hope and happiness have been dismissed to the sidelines in debates of school of improvement with the result that a great deal of harm has been caused to teachers and to children. Up front it is important to mention that neither hope nor happiness can be made sense of without their opposites, hopelessness, despair, and sadness. In addition, I should mention here the perspective that underlies this chapter is a view consistent with positive psychology, of humans as self-directed and adaptive beings that, when they can, “choose behaviors that make them feel fully alive, competent, and creative” (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p. 9).

The Problem

Across much of the industrial world teachers are under attack as incompetent, selfish, and self-serving. Aggressive reform—not renewal—efforts are underway based on a set of generally false assumptions about teacher motivation (increased competition promises higher levels of teacher and school performance), intentions (teachers are selfish and self-serving), the nature and difficulty of the work of teaching (aims can be prescribed in advance and almost anyone can teach), evidence of performance (test scores are meaningful representations of the essential school aims),

R. V. Bullough Jr. (✉)

CITES (Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling),

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, USA

e-mail: bob_bullough@byu.edu

the power of schooling (that setting standards and tinkering with curricula can resolve persistent social problems), and responsibility (teachers are wholly responsible for student learning). The driving assumptions of school reform are grounded in a punishing rather than a positive psychology, a view fixated on weaknesses and deficits rather than on learning and growing. The result, as Bottery (2003) argues, may be the creation of a “culture of unhappiness” in schools, where, in the attempt to create “error-free, risk-less organisations where trust is unnecessary because everything is so controlled and micro-managed” (p. 196), hope weakens and teachers are left increasingly anxious, fraught with self-doubt, and lacking control over their work-lives.

Behind the scenes, Ball (2003) observes the rise of a modernist specter, a new managerialism supporting a narrow professionalism in education and moored to a naive and tenacious but misplaced faith in the development of a science of human engineering. On this view, as Gadamer suggests, the person of “practical wisdom” and, I would add, of deep compassion, is replaced by the “expert”: “What becomes important is not the capacity to make responsible decisions on one’s own but rather the willingness to adapt to decisions others have made for one, decisions that, in addition, largely follow the logic of technological imperatives.... [G]oals and purposes are...dictated by technological demands and possibilities” (Warnke 1987, p. 163). These are the origins of “best practices” in education, free floating rules of action—just the sort of rules that Dewey (1929) argued were “objectionable and destructive” of the art of education (p. 14) and that have the consequence of distancing teachers from those they teach and of undermining the sources of happiness found in teaching.

There is no doubt that the signs of “performativity” are increasingly evident across the educational landscape as are signs of teaching becoming more stressful and, for many educators, much less satisfying. When “valued for their productivity alone” authentic social relations, the sort that encourage hope and happiness, are replaced by “judgmental relations” (Ball 2003, p. 224) and “fabrications” follow—“versions of an organization (or person) which [do] not exist.... [Rather] they are produced purposefully in order ‘to be accountable’” (p. 224). Judgmental relations enhance vulnerability and undermine trust by encouraging deceit. As I have written elsewhere, under such conditions a kind of schizophrenia results among teachers, a deep “double-mindedness,” a “condition resulting from feeling or being compelled to work against what one believes and of being pulled in multiple directions by conflicting but always insistent claims. Under such conditions, work slowly becomes joyless” (Bullough 2008, p. 5). Being required to be other than self is clearly numbing (Bullough and Knowles 1990). Where educational ends are test-score dominated, narrow, and uninspiring, educators find investing fully in their work difficult, and aspirations lower and performance flattens (Valli and Buese 2007). Under such conditions, exceptional teachers are domesticated, and a stultifying sameness sets in yet, happily, not for all teachers (Day et al. 2006). Despite deteriorating work conditions many teachers not only avoid burning out but actually thrive, demonstrating “high levels of commitment and agency, often against the odds” (p. 314). These are teachers of hope and happiness, heroic in their resistance and resilience.

Remarkably, despite their importance to teaching and learning hope and happiness are rarely topics of discussion among educators and most especially among those who seek to influence educational practice through policy pronouncements or by legislative enactment. This is so even though, as almost every beginning teacher knows, to teach is inevitably to be in the hope and happiness business, for hope and happiness are essential conditions for life, living, and learning, and most especially for the well-being of those, like teachers, who live with and for the young (see Elbaz 1992). The centrality of hope and happiness to teachers is evident in studies of teacher motivation; mostly, teachers teach for intrinsic reasons, the “desire to make a social contribution, shape the future, and work with children/adolescents” (Richardson and Watt 2006, p. 44). Every parent knows of the importance of hope and happiness to a child’s growth and development. Yet, when it comes to the hope and happiness of children and their teachers, generally there is a deafening silence when what is needed is a consistent and robust institutional commitment.

Efforts to create greater effectiveness among teachers, more learning among students, and higher performing schools that ignore the hope and happiness of children and teachers will inevitably fail. Worse, they will be harmful.

On Hope

Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. Others have called this deepest quality *confidence*.... If life is to be sustained hope must remain, even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired. (Erikson 1964, p. 115)

Surveying the results of various attempts at educational change, Fullan (1997) concluded that mostly teachers’ experience was profoundly negative, leaving behind a “sense of hopelessness, either because they are on the defensive from external attack or because they have been part of small groups of reformers who have burned themselves out” (pp. 229–230). Perhaps in frustration, he urged that teachers must “stay hopeful under negative conditions” (p. 230), that “we are down to our last virtue: hope” (p. 221). Fullan did not call for increased optimism but for hope, despite the two terms often being used interchangeably (Gillham and Reivich 2004). What he seems to have noticed is that unlike optimism, which brings with it an expectation of a best outcome, at least as commonly understood, hope may be present even in the most dire of circumstances and despite recognized limits in one’s ability to change a situation, a point made by Frankl (1970), among many others. Hope serves as a basis for remaining not only positive but actively engaged in life. For this reason, hope, as a virtue to be sought and practiced, like faith, may be merely a matter of tenacity, as Bertrand Russell once argued, but acting hopeful, even as a matter of stubbornness or of will, can and does encourage positive changes in life circumstances.

Typically, in Western cultures, hope is thought of as a state of mind; when understood as closely related to optimism it is thought of as a personality trait, a matter

of temperament; when times are desperate, it is spoken of as a coping mechanism most clearly recognized when lost or missing; and, as previously noted, its deepest grounding is as a virtue to be cultivated and cherished, something taught first by parents and later by teachers (Bullough 2001), among others. Hope also is an emotion, or what Lazarus (1999) calls an “affective blend” (p. 655), a mixture of emotions including fear, anxiety, and happiness, each anticipating possible outcomes and all wrapped to one or another degree in a quiet but determined confidence that enables action and encourages persistence. Hope, then, has a distinctive “feel” about it, distinctive in its emotional blend even as its intensity and duration may vary. Given so many senses of hope, some sorting is required and some digging to identify its educationally important qualities and characteristics.

Lazarus (1999) provides a helpful departure point when he describes hope as involving and following from an appraisal of a situation and as being about “our well-being and the well-being of those about whom we care” (p. 658). In appraising, we seek a realistic assessment of the situation we find ourselves in which guides action and enables coping while simultaneously we seek “the most favorable spin possible on our plight in order not to undermine hope [and thereby avoid falling into the passivity of despair]” (p. 659). As a virtue hope is usually first learned in infancy and childhood and develops in maturity to become the “capacity not to panic in tight situations, to find ways and resources to address difficult problems” (Fullan 1997, p. 221). When facing a troubling situation, we desperately seek reasons to sustain hope even when or especially when to do so seems foolish. We look outside ourselves to others for help and strength, sometimes invoking Providence. Giving up or giving in may be the rational, easy, or even the expected thing to do, but to do so is to act without virtue, courage, or integrity, to be found lacking in an essential way as a human being. To be hopeful is not to *expect* a perfect outcome, yet because hoping takes us beyond our normal abilities, favorable—although often unexpected—outcomes may follow, and to receive them is in a profound sense to live in a state of grace for a time. Relief and happiness then follow; and streams of hope, faith, and gratitude flow together.

Hope is both taught and learned—or not learned—and is often conditional, dependent for its vitality on who and what is involved in the troubling situation faced. Who is involved is important for several reasons, among them that hope, like pessimism, fear, and anger, is contagious (McDermott and Hastings 2000). Remarkably, as Carter (1999) observes, the sight of persons experiencing strong emotions, like disgust, actually “turns on the observer’s brain areas that are associated with [the] feeling” (p. 87). That hope is taught to children early and usually by example and through stories, has far reaching implications for those who lack hope as well as for those who care for and about the well-being of the young. As Lasch (1991) suggests:

Hope implies a deep-seated trust in life that appears absurd to those who lack it. It rests on confidence not so much in the future as in the past. It derives from early memories—no doubt distorted, overlaid with later memories, and thus not wholly reliable as a guide to any factual construction of past events—in which the experience of order and contentment was so intense that subsequent disillusionments cannot dislodge it. (p. 81)

Hence, hope cannot be taught by those who do not possess it and in abundance. Like optimism, to a degree hopefulness is also a matter of temperament, disposition, or personality, a matter of the interaction of rearing with genetics and evolutionary biology. As a trait or disposition, hope has been extensively studied by researchers at the University of Kansas who developed the Hope Scale (Snyder et al. 1991, 2005). Deeply anchored in the assumption that humans are goal directed, the Hope Scale combines self-reports of two elements thought to capture the essential nature of hope: *agency*, a “sense of successful determination in meeting goals in the past, present and future” and of *pathways*, a “sense of being able to generate successful plans to meet goals” (p. 570). Proven valid and reliable, scores on the Hope Scale, like personality measures, remain relatively stable across time and across situations. The model emphasizes cognition, where emotions are:

the sequelae of cognitive appraisals of goal-related activities. The quality of emotion for a particular goal-related setting depends on the person’s perceived hope in that setting. More specifically, the high-hope person’s analysis of sufficient agency and pathways in a given goal setting should lead to the perception of relatively high probability of goal attainment, a focus on success rather than failure, a sense of challenge, and a relatively positive emotional state as goal-related activities are conceptualized and undertaken. (p. 571)

Studies by Snyder and his colleagues point toward a wide range of differences between individuals with higher and lower hope scores, each having consequences for teachers and students. (Which side of the equation can claim causality is, of course, uncertain.) For example, individuals with higher scores reported higher self-esteem, greater optimism, less depression, tended to present themselves in a more favorable light, revealed more positive and less “negative affectivity” (p. 575), better problem-focused coping, greater sense of agency even in the face of negative feedback, more pathways to problem solution when blocked, seeking more difficult goals and, importantly, higher overall “self-reported well-being” (p. 577). Respecting the last point, higher hope individuals are reportedly happier than lower hope individuals. The authors conclude that the instrument, even when compared with measures of optimism, “contributes some unique predictive variance in relation to other cognitive- and emotion-based dispositional measures...supporting the robustness of the Hope Scale” (p. 582).

When discussing the “Future of Optimism” Peterson (2000) characterized Snyder and his colleagues’ conception of hope as one of three approaches to optimism, uniting elements of the other two models: expectation of goal accomplishment and agency. For Peterson (2006), hope and optimism are nearly identical concepts; hope is “dispositional” or “big optimism.” The difficulty with this conclusion, as Lazarus (1999) observes, is that hope cannot be equated to successful agency nor to positive expectations. “I consider this erroneous because we can hope even when we are helpless to affect the outcome. Self-efficacy, or a sense of competence and control, facilitates hope, and it certainly aids in mobilizing problem-focused coping actions, but it is not essential to hope” (p. 674). I agree. Implicitly *to hope* is to acknowledge one’s own limitations and dependency even while longing for outcomes beyond one’s own understanding, influence, or ability. Nevertheless, facilitating agency and pathways provide promising avenues for educators to encourage hope

and happiness in the young and in one another. Others have criticized the agency/pathways conception of hope as reflecting “more egotistical than collective concerns” (Snyder et al. 1997, p. 107). Responding to this charge, Snyder and his colleagues point toward “how high hope individuals enjoy competition and the process of testing themselves and of interacting with others” (p. 114). Hope, they argue, is embedded in social processes; and so it is.

As an emotion, hope has some unusual features. Normally, among the distinguishing characteristics of an emotion is that it is of brief duration, comes on quickly, and has a distinctive physiology, generally including a high state of system arousal. On this view, hope may be more of a mood or an emotional attitude than an emotion. By emotional attitude, Ekman (1992) means emotions like love and hatred that are sustained and “typically involve more than one emotion” (p. 194). This said, as a positive emotion or emotional attitude, hope, like happiness and many other emotions, is more difficult to distinguish than negative emotions like anger, fear, and disgust. In contrast to such emotions, which Fisher (2002) aptly describes as the “vehement passions,” hope often brings an acute awareness of others. Generally, the vehement passions tend to “extinguish the reality and claims of others while creating, as illness does, an almost painfully pressing awareness of self—to the point that only the self, and, even more, only the self as it is in its current state of panic, or grief, or rage has any reality at all” (p. 60). By implication, hopelessness is selfish; and selfish teachers are unlikely to be effective educators.

On Happiness

On the surface, the connection between hope and happiness seems obvious: “In the context of hope theory, barriers [to achievement of goals] produce negative emotions, especially when a child encounters profound blockages. However, the successful pursuit of goals tends to produce positive emotions, especially when barriers are overcome” (Snyder et al. 1997, p. 108). Hence, both hope and happiness have a great deal to do with stress, with the persistent and daily challenges of living, and how those challenges are met such that happiness or sadness follow and hope is strengthened or diminished. Arendt (1958) makes the point this way:

There is no lasting happiness outside the prescribed cycle of painful exhaustion and pleasurable regeneration, and whatever throws this cycle out of balance—poverty and misery where exhaustion is followed by wretchedness instead of regeneration, or great riches and entirely effortless life where boredom takes the place of exhaustion and where the mills of necessity, of consumption and digestion, grind an impotent body mercilessly and barrenly to death—ruins the elemental happiness that comes from being alive. (p. 108)

Peterson (2006) argues that hope leads to happiness: the “strengths ‘of the heart,’” among them gratitude, hope, and love, make humans happy because they “orient us toward others” (pp. 154–155). Peterson’s point, in part, is that greater happiness follows a life of engagement, of being deeply connected to and invested in

others and their well-being (see p. 74), and so hope is inevitably and ineluctably tied to happiness. From another angle, Fullan (1997) suggests that hope and the emotions share an “intimate two-way link” (p. 221). In effect, hope disciplines the passions, offering means for avoiding despair and containing fear and anger. As a coping mechanism, hope keeps open the door to the positive possibility of being, in C. S. Lewis’ phrase, “surprised by joy.” On this view, the hopeful are prepared for the worst yet remain open to the best of possible outcomes and proof of openness comes in their acting in ways that suggest this possibility is not fanciful but genuine.

As an emotion, happiness is understood in multiple ways, “brief events, extended moods, and stable predispositions to particular emotional states” (Bates 2000, p. 382). Such multiplicity adds to the difficulty of saying something meaningful about the relationship between hope and happiness. Nettle (2005) helps sort out the confusion by positing “three increasingly inclusive senses [of happiness]” (pp. 16–17). The first level represents the most immediate and direct sense of happiness as a feeling “brought on by a desired state being (perhaps unexpectedly) attained, and there is not much cognition involved, beyond the recognition that the desired thing has happened” (p. 17). Level 1 is all about feeling good. The second sense, Level 2, mostly centers on general or over-all well-being and arises “When people say that they are happy with their lives.... They mean that, upon reflection on the balance sheet of pleasures and pains, they feel the balance to be reasonably positive over the long term.... It concerns not so much feelings, as judgements about the balance of feelings. Thus it is a hybrid of emotion, and judgement about emotion. Its synonyms are things like contentment and life satisfaction” (p. 19). Level 3, Nettle suggests, is represented by Aristotle’s ideal of the good life, *eudaimonia*, which is often translated as happiness but more nearly means flourishing, the fulfilling of one’s full potential. Nettle writes: “Contemporary psychologists and philosophers have sometimes talked of happiness when they really mean the good life or *eudaimonia*.... Note that ‘level three happiness’ has no characteristic phenomenology since it is not an emotional state. There is no single thing that it feels like to achieve *eudaimonia*, since everyone’s potential is different” (Nettle 2005, p. 20). This conclusion, however, is not fully justified as studies of the development of expertise suggest (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993): There are moments, sometimes extended, when humans flourish and these are well-remembered and immediately recognized as possessing commonly experienced qualities. Such happiness, a kind of deep satisfaction that comes after the fact, is evident during the experience of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), times when one is working at the very edge of one’s ability and is fully and deeply invested in a valued activity such as teaching, studying physics, playing the guitar or even watching children at play.

Speaking about Level 2 happiness, what researchers frequently describe as “subjective well-being” (SWB) (Diener and Lucas 2000), Nettle raises serious questions about the widely recognized conclusion that most people report themselves as being relatively happy. The definition of happiness used in such studies, unlike the concerns of Level 3 happiness, is “simply whatever people mean when describing their lives as happy” (Myers 2000, p. 57). While not dismissing the importance of these

conclusions, nor of the strong correlations between reported happiness and a range of positive behaviors—less self-absorption, less hostility, more loving, more creative and healthy (see Myers 2000, pp. 57–58)—Nettle (2005) concludes that “the finding that most people are pretty happy is in part a reflection of an endearingly unrealistic psychology with which we address the world” (p. 54). Studies of Level 2 happiness, he asserts, generally rely on the use of instruments that lack a frame of reference and are overly dependent on recent events and feelings, especially when those events are judged positive or strongly negative. For educators, that studies of subjective well-being generally lack a frame of reference is a serious criticism that goes straight to the heart of our deepest concerns, as Noddings (2003) has noted.

Education, of all enterprises, cannot neglect...the normative aspect of happiness.... We hope that children will learn to derive some happiness from doing the right thing, from satisfying the demands of their souls. We shrink from people who are happily untroubled by the misery of those around them. There is a kind of happiness that creeps through, even in the presence of pain and misery, when we know that we have done what we can do to improve things. Thus education for happiness must include education for *unhappiness*. (p. 36)

Nettle raises additional and important questions about the nature of Level 2 happiness, suggesting that “no organism should ever be completely satisfied for anything more than a short time” (pp. 57–58). In his and in Noddings’ views, dissatisfaction and unhappiness have important parts to play in human motivation not so much in terms of what is felt when facing significant blocks to meeting life’s goals but rather in the sense of recognizing that a situation might be *better* and not only for us. Furthermore, Nettle observes that while most persons are reportedly happy in general, when specific contextual questions are posed things often seem different. When internalized as an imaginative and positive ideal, a vision of another way of being and of being more deeply satisfied and happier inspires and invites human striving. Happiness does not only require meeting goals, but worthy goals of ever increasing significance. Else why seek happiness; why not be satisfied with physical pleasure?

Ultimately, Nettle argues we are hard wired to seek happiness; there is a drive toward happiness built into humans and into the operating systems of the brain that form a “happiness system” which keeps us moving, searching, for ever larger and enduring satisfactions and enjoyments. Nevertheless, Nettle (2005) concludes, “people will never be completely happy, whatever their external conditions” (p. 63). It is, he asserts, the striving that is most important for the future of humanity, not the achieving of happiness, and striving is sustained by hope and stands as proof of its existence.

Support for Nettle’s conclusion comes from Kegan (1982) and his conception of human development and self-formation. For educators, Kegan’s argument deepens the linkage between happiness Levels 2 and 3 by broadening what counts as motivating and underscoring the centrality of growth to being happy. A key to his argument is how hope and happiness are bound together in identity, the kind of person we take ourselves to be and that others take us to be (as hopeful and happy or not). Seeking to make sense of how humans develop over time, Kegan locates then describes an

inherent tension within human beings of two drives both essential to the survival of the species and to the individual's well-being: a drive toward self-preservation and another toward transcendence—contentment and satisfaction on one hand (Level 2 happiness) and growth and learning on the other (Level 3 happiness). One result of this view is recognition of patterns of adaptation in every life such that what is found to produce contentment at some point comes to be experienced as flatness or staleness at another; following adaptation and feeling flat, a healthy person seeks a higher state of happiness (see Bullough and Baughman 1997).

While this evolutionary process may be described in purely biological terms, it is as true that the same ongoing tension between self-preservation and self-transformation is descriptive of the very activity of hope itself... “a dialectic of limit and possibility.” Were we “all limit” (all “assimilation”), there would be no hope; “all possibility” (all “accommodation”), no need of it. That “energy field” which to the evolutionary biologist may be about “adaptation,” is as much as anything about the very exercise of hope. Might we better understand others in their predicament if we could somehow know how their way of living reflects the state of their hoping at this depth?—not the hopes they have or the hoping they do, but the hoping they are? (Kegan 1982, p. 45)

For the individual lacking hope, the tension fails and self-preservation dominates self-transformation and striving ceases. Speaking of happiness under such a condition is misleading, as other emotions come to fill life and characterize the self—boredom or perhaps sadness, fear, and anxiety. Certainly, for such a person there may be episodes of laughter and moments of pleasure and of feeling good, signs of Level 1 happiness, but it is unlikely that contentment can be sustained nor is it likely that the happiness of eudaimonia will follow (Bullough 2009). In part this is so because lower-hope compared to higher hope individuals tend to avoid complex and especially challenging goals and situations if they can while higher hope individuals pursue “stretch” goals (Snyder et al. 1997, p. 110). Stretching involves choosing enjoyment over pleasure, the “good feelings people experience...when they do something that stretches them beyond what they were” (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p. 12). Stretching implies a frame of reference and points toward avenues for experiencing self-transcendence and thereby the happiness of eudaimonia.

A Culture of Unhappiness

That measures of hope and happiness tend toward stability suggests external contextual differences have little influence over their formation and strength. Mostly internal over external factors determine outcomes. In part an artifact of measurement, including the tendency to focus on adults (whose life habits and personalities appear rather fixed) than children (a large body of the theory and research on hope and happiness relies on tests of undergraduate psychology students), such conclusions might lead to a kind of determinism, an acceptance that outside of gene splicing and childhood there is little that can be done to strengthen hope or increase happiness. Common sense suggests otherwise even as recognition of the power of early

rearing practices sets the difficulty of the challenge. Erikson (1968) is helpful here: “The ontological source of faith and hope [is] a *sense of basic trust*: it is the first basic wholeness, for it seems to imply that the inside and the outside can be experienced as an interrelated goodness” (p. 82). Such trust forms very early in life, and tends to persist. Yet, as Peterson (2006) writes, contextual differences matter and in part because basic trust comes in degrees and fortunately is not usually wholly lacking; there is, in short, something to build upon: Most children are hopeful, at least about some things and some relationships.

Clearly, it is much easier to recognize the ways in which hope and happiness are undermined than to understand how they are built institutionally. Peterson (2006) writes (speaking of optimism but here the point holds for hope and happiness as well):

Constant striving for control over events without the resources to achieve it can take a toll on the individual who faces an objective limit to what can be attained regardless of how hard she works. If optimism is to survive as a social virtue, then the world must have a causal texture that allows this stance to produce valued rewards. If not, people will channel their efforts into unattainable goals and become exhausted, ill, and demoralized. Or people may rechannel their inherent optimism into attainable but undesirable goals. (p. 127)

There is little doubt but that the hope and happiness generally brought by children and teachers into schools is more easily destroyed than sustained and enhanced. This is so because within and without families the enduring strength of hope and happiness depend largely on the depth, quality, and variety of human relationships, and relationships formed within schools are inevitably unstable, and, particularly in the upper grades, to a degree intentionally guarded. Goodlad (1984) observed this tendency more than 20 years ago, and his conclusion still holds: “[The picture is] of rather well-intentioned teachers going about their business somewhat detached from and not quite connecting with the ‘other lives’ of their students” (p. 80).

Building and Renewing School Cultures of Hope and Happiness

Most schools are not places of either hopelessness or despair, except occasionally. But, consistent with the argument made here, all schools might become more hopeful and happier places for both teachers and students. The importance of such efforts is underscored by Kelchtermans’ (1999) observation: one of the more prominent coping mechanisms for teachers facing exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, the three signs of burnout (Maslach 1999), is to leave teaching, and leaving often is not especially difficult even in harsh economic times. At some point, hope must be joined by happiness and longer-term well-being to convince a teacher to persist in teaching—there must be a positive point to teaching and continuing to teach despite what Margolis (2008) aptly describes as the “ugly stuff” (p. 179). For students there is a parallel point: there must be a positive point to staying engaged in schooling.

As means for building hope and encouraging happiness among educators, the growing interest in professional learning communities (PLCs) appears promising. Generally linked to “reform” efforts, the concept gains in power when bound to a different and competing language tradition, namely “renewal.” “Reform” dilates attention on organizational and institutional features and blocks recognition of the ways in which educational improvement is most fundamentally a matter of learning and of development. Renewal offers a much more hopeful alternative, representing a way of thinking that not only recognizes but respects the historicity and humanity of those who work within schools—children and adults—and their need to learn and to grow (Goodlad et al. 2004). All change, of course, is embedded in the past, growing out of established ways of thinking and behaving, and ignoring these only assures failure.

Definitions of PLCs vary (see Cox and Richlin 2004), but the concept is generally taken to mean a group of educators who “continuously seek and share learning, and act on their learning” (Hord 1997, p. 6). A key component of the concept is that decisions are data driven (DuFour 2005) and efforts are consistently directed toward creating conditions that support continuous problem solving and inquiry. Stoll et al. (2006) describe the essential features of a PLC as including “shared beliefs and understandings; interaction and participation; interdependence; concern for individual and minority views...; and meaningful relationships” (p. 225). Such conditions, it is believed, benefit children and educators. Shade (2006), whose concern is for developing school cultures that build hope, would add an additional and generally overlooked feature: that it is likely that the most powerful and morally centered learning communities are those that explicitly develop what he terms, “habits of hope” (p. 196). Raising test scores without attending carefully to the kind and quality of life lived within schools by teachers and students and whether or not that life encourages hope and enables happiness is an empty accomplishment. Data of a different kind are called for—of teacher and student investment in learning and of hope and happiness.

Persistence, resourcefulness and courage are among the habits of hope (Shade 2006). Of these three habits, Shade writes:

Each of hope’s habits is itself a complex of other habits. Persistence requires habits of patience and self-control to maintain focus without losing commitment to a hoped-for end. Trust also proves important as an acknowledgment that other forces contribute to our ends; humility is similarly relevant in that we typically do not know all possible routes to our end.... Resourcefulness, which enables us to expand our abilities, is similarly constituted by a variety of abilities. These include habits that enable us to identify real conditions, to explore new means and abilities in a knowledgeable, skilled, and imaginative manner, and to intelligently formulate and adapt means and ends.... Realizing hope’s ends involves transcending antecedent limitations.... Finally, courage also displays complexity. Hoping illuminates our limits and vulnerability and so calls for us to face weaknesses, dangers, and risks. Intelligence functions in courage as it does in other contexts to assess means and ends in the light of one another, though courage involves more than intelligent appraisal. It also indicates the willingness and ability *to act* on that appraisal. Those who are courageous must summon the energies to overcome risks and play an active role in bringing about conditions necessary to realize desired ends. (2006, pp. 196–197)

Noting that habits are developed through interaction with the environment, including with those sharing it with us, Shade calls for creation of a curriculum and a school culture characterized by experiences and human relationships that inspire and sustain hope and happiness not as afterthoughts but as a central aim of education.

Shade's "habits" relate directly to Snyder's goal of encouraging agency and pathways as means for strengthening hope. Building on Snyder's insights, McDermott and Hastings (2000) offer several promising means for encouraging greater hope in families, classrooms, and schools. Their position is framed by an important insight, that "Hopeful thinking...is more than a set of shared behaviors. Rather, it flows from core self-beliefs that the individual is capable of generating pathways and of sustaining the energy necessary to pursue goals" (p. 196). Moreover, they observe that developing hope, especially when it is weak, is a slow and demanding process, a point of importance for both teachers and children—for teachers not only because they are called upon to model hope for the young but because they too may need help becoming and being hopeful. For teachers, suggestions include learning how to guide children in setting, parsing, and prioritizing goals and helping locate and pursue alternative solutions, including learning how to get around intractable problems. Teachers must demonstrate patience and learn to be realistically encouraging, helping children learn to pool their resources and work together to realize their goals. From a content perspective, building a curriculum of hope includes use of stories about "high-hope protagonists" (p. 196) with whom children can identify and who serve as models of hopefulness. Children's own stories have a place here. Shade (2006) adds that teachers can "cultivate hope by explicitly focusing on it as a regular resource in student learning and classroom behavior" (p. 207).

Shade underscores the importance of how children are helped when facing difficult learning challenges, such as learning to read and write. Failure, as I have written elsewhere (Bullough 2006), must become "smart". The point here is that failure can be an opportunity to celebrate honest effort and clever but not wholly satisfying solutions to nagging problems. Rather than scorn those who try and fail, failure presents the opportunity to learn about and develop some of the most significant qualities of hopefulness. Stories of failure and triumph such as biographies of Churchill, Lincoln, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, and Barack Obama are particularly dramatic and compelling. The happiness of *eudaimonia* is the promise of activities of these kinds, where with the help of skilled and strongly invested and hopeful teachers children confront their limitations and are supported in their effort to move beyond present capabilities and emotional habits. This said, classrooms and schools ought to also evidence Level 1 and Level 2 happiness—lots of laughter, feelings of well-being produced by living within a safe environment and being valued and trusted. But challenge is as important as support if transcendence is to follow.

Fullan's (1997) argument, noted previously, that hope is crucially important to educational renewal, raises a difficult question: Under current social, economic, and work conditions, how are teachers to be helped to avoid disenchantment and to remain or become more hopeful themselves? In most respects the principles for building hope among teachers are the same as those for the young. To build hope

and to maximize teacher happiness necessitates work conditions that enhance agency and pathways and, importantly, encourage engagement and invite and inspire self-transcendence. Teachers need to be encouraged to do what they believe is best for children and build to their strengths. Respecting agency, Nettle (2005) makes a particularly telling point, that “Personal control is a much better predictor of happiness than income is (in statistical terms, it accounts for twenty times more of the variation)” (p. 74). Moreover, he observes that autonomy—which is closely related to agency—is related to health and well-being. Looking at the available data, he concludes, “People really don’t like being told what to do, whatever the material inducements” (p. 75). For teachers facing ever greater and mean-spirited accountability measures, the point is perhaps obvious: Happiness is dependent on having a relatively high degree of control over one’s own work life, rich and loving relationships with those they teach and those with whom they work, and being supported in pursuing highly valued ethical goals. Moreover, happiness, most especially Level 3 happiness, like hope, is related to increasing competence and, importantly, teacher as well as student learning. Surely, such aims are within the reach of most schools.

When hope is lacking, both children and teachers need help developing explanatory styles that strengthen agency and blunt the threat of helplessness. Teachers, like students, may need help to recognize the place of prior beliefs in the judgments they make about experience and that guide their actions. As Gillham and Reivich (2004) suggest, hopefulness is promoted by understanding that there are multiple takes on reality, not just one, and that our sense of the world might be distorted, even wrong. Such insight is a first step toward recognizing that changing beliefs also can and often does change how we understand problems and shape the outcome of our efforts to improve our situations. Greater hope and happiness likely follow, and resiliency may grow. The goal is not to exchange positive for negative attributions, however, but to learn to think more deeply, accurately, and realistically about situations and resources and thereby to locate genuine points of action where agency holds most promise. Importantly, where hope is concerned, the goals set and plans made are most promising when widely shared and inspiring, and when realizing goals requires reaching beyond one’s own capability and inevitable shortcomings. The point here is supported by studies of distributed cognition (Moore 2007). In effect, in a classroom or within a faculty, the thinking that takes place is greater than the total of the individuals’ cognition and thereby hope becomes realistic and powerful not quaint or fanciful.

This said, temperaments differ. Some teachers and some children are not naturally hopeful while others seem always to have an inner strength, the confidence noted by Erikson, that lightens even the darkest disappointment. In varying degrees temperament forms the boundaries of emotionality, yet what emotions are activated and expressed and how they are expressed is influenced by learning and by the social and economic contexts within which we live. Institutions are characterized by different ways of living, thinking and acting and they support certain preferred ways of feeling, as Zembylas (2002) has suggested. As institutional cultures form and evolve, intentionally or unintentionally, they come to embody “structures of feeling” that shape emotion and normalize experience. Some schools embody cultures

of hope and happiness, and from such schools a great deal can be learned. As noted, hope and happiness, like hopelessness and despair, are infectious. If the work of school renewal is to produce higher achievement among the young and increase the quality of teaching there is probably no better long-term strategy than to work to create conditions that invite and inspire greater levels of hope and happiness at each of the three Levels discussed by Nettle. Noddings (2003) underscores what is at stake in such efforts: “Children (and adults, too) learn best when they are happy” (p. 2). But, there is no lasting happiness without hope.

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