

***The Soul of Education: Helping Students Find  
Connection, Compassion, and Character at School  
By Rachael Kessler***

**Table of Contents**

**FOREWORD**-- PARKER J. PALMER

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

What does "soul of education" mean?

Can we come together to address soul in schools?

Doesn't the "separation of church and state" mean leaving all this alone?

How do we nourish spiritual development appropriately in public schools?

**CHAPTER ONE: HONORING YOUNG VOICES**

Ground rules

Games and symbolic expression

The mysteries questions

The council process

The map emerges

FIGURE 1.1 SEVEN GATEWAYS TO THE SOUL IN EDUCATION

**CHAPTER TWO: DEEP CONNECTION**

Deep connection to the self

Deep connection to another

Deep connection to community

Deep connection to lineage

Deep connection to nature

Deep connection to a higher power

**CHAPTER THREE: SILENCE AND STILLNESS**

Rest and renewal

Silence and emotional intelligence

Introducing silence into the classroom

Encountering resistance

Silence is for teachers, too

Solitude

Common misperceptions

How to use solitude

Respect for privacy and personal timing

The benefits of solo time

Cautions and exception

## **CHAPTER FOUR: MEANING AND PURPOSE**

Loss of meaning: how it affects learning and risk  
Safely inviting the big questions  
Exploring individual purpose  
Service learning and the search for meaning and purpose

## **CHAPTER FIVE: JOY**

Hiding joy  
Gratitude and celebration  
When joy and sorrow intersect  
Joy and humility  
Awe, wonder and reverence for life  
Joyful release in rhythm and movement  
Play

## **CHAPTER SIX: CREATIVITY**

Creativity in exile  
Definitions of creativity: product and process  
The process of creativity: steps and stages  
Welcoming creativity  
Being open to the unknown  
Bridging differences  
Integrating ways of knowing  
Dancing the paradox of form and freedom  
Holding the tension of safety and risk  
"Pandora's box": when creativity exposes suffering or danger  
Other obstacles  
The transforming power of creativity

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: TRANSCENDENCE**

What is transcendence  
Athletic, academic, and artistic performance  
Adventure learning  
Transcending prejudice and stereotypes  
Transcending gender polarization  
Transcendence through suffering  
Transcending despair through empowerment  
Optional only: On the razor's edge  
Sharing the mystery

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: INITIATION**

The need for initiation

Three passages

Contemporary models within the broader community

What is a rite of passage

School-based models

Curriculum vs. transformation: A framework for a comprehensive rite of passage

## **CONCLUSION: FROM FEAR TO DIALOGUE--FROM STANDOFF TO COLLABORATION**

Acknowledging the risks

Teachers: risk and opportunity

Parents: from fear to dialogue

Saboteurs and kids at-risk

Words and deeds of teachers and other "elders"

## **REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **INDEX**

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**