

WHAT'S POSSIBLE: THE TIDES BLOG

Interview with Linda Lantieri of The Inner Resilience Program

Posted by **Hannah Russin** in **Education, Tides Projects & Grantees, Tides.org** on Nov 19, 2012



PROJECT DETAILS:

The Inner Resilience Program is helping to cultivate the inner lives of students, teachers & schools by integrating social and emotional learning with contemplative practice. The program provides professional development workshops, weekend retreats, classes in stress management, as well as yoga and other contemplative practices, educational workshops for parents, and training in our K-8 curriculum: Building Resilience from the Inside Out.

HOW DID THE INNER RESILIENCE PROGRAM GET STARTED?

This program was launched in response to the effects of the events of September 11, 2001 on New York City schools – especially for the children and educators in the schools in Lower Manhattan who ran for their lives on that day. Our aim was to equip school staff and parents with the skills necessary to build back their inner strength, and to model these skills for the children in our care. At first, we focused on recovery and healing for students, teachers and parents, and in particular, the for those who were attending schools in and around Ground Zero.. We soon realized that what we were doing in terms of nurturing educators' inner lives—helping them with their own self-care and stress management—allowed them to be better able to teach young people these same skills. We like to say these were the skills that they also needed on September 10²⁰¹¹. It was three to four years into the project when we realized that the work we were doing had much larger ramifications in the world of education.

WHAT DREW YOU TO WORK IN EDUCATION?

I grew up in the sixties when there was a lot of social activism happening. I felt that the field of education was a place where I could use the interest I had in social responsibility to make a difference. It was a very exciting time in education in the sixties and seventies when we were trying new things out in schools—things that we're still working on in terms of innovation and equality today.

WHAT IS INNER RESILIENCE FOCUSING ON NOW?

We are helping adults who serve young people in k-12 schools be their best selves by helping them balance their inner lives with their public outer lives. The other end goal is for young people to pay attention to all the parts of who they are and, in doing so, that they gain the skills they need to succeed in life—skills of self-awareness and managing emotions and social interactions with others. We

work to make sure that young people learn those skills as a normal part of their educational experience by explicitly teaching them these skills

TEACHING RESILIENCE

The Inner Resilience Program helps contribute to a larger vision of education focused on the heart as well as the mind. When we pay attention to nurturing young people's inner lives, we know they're going to be better at what they do in school. In terms of quantifying that, we've done research in the field of social and emotional learning. When young people are taught these skills in a purposeful way that is also culturally and developmentally appropriate, their behavior changes in positive ways. They exhibit more pro-social behavior and are less likely to engage in at-risk behavior. They are also more connected to school and do better academically.

WHY IS LIFE BALANCE CHALLENGING FOR TEACHERS?

The hardest thing for educators is convincing them that they deserve to have balance in their lives. The demands are great, and a teacher always has their social and emotional life in public display just by the nature of the job. It's hard sometimes for educators to take in the reality that it's not a selfish act to take the time and effort to balance yourself; it's an act of fine-tuning the instrument through which we serve the world. That's the part that I forget and many others forget, that we need to spend time nurturing our inner lives if we're going to feel good about the job we do in the outer world.

TAKE ACTION TO FIND YOUR BALANCE

Know that it's worth doing. You have to do work on yourself to be the person you want to be in the world of your personal relationships and your work. Being is as important as doing. When we don't stop to think and reflect, we often "do good badly" as my friend Wayne Muller says. Being reflective and introspective helps us fine-tune what we're doing in the world. We're hoping that more of the field of education starts to think this way. Each of us needs to take the time to slow down and be more reflective and nurture ourselves.

I try to ask myself each day where I am taking my breaks. How am I balancing the doing and the being? Having a routine and making some things non-negotiable helps. Whatever the thing is that you feel is nurturing, pay attention to what that is and make that happen regularly.

WORKING WITH TIDES:

Working with Tides has been a very positive experience. They help me so that I am using my time most effectively. Growing a program within a strong infrastructure gives you more time to focus on how you want to serve. They handle my infrastructure needs, and they do it well and it frees us up to "be the change we want to be in the world," I am grateful for our collaboration.

<http://blog.tides.org/2012/11/19/interview-with-linda-lantieri-of-the-inner-resilience-program/>