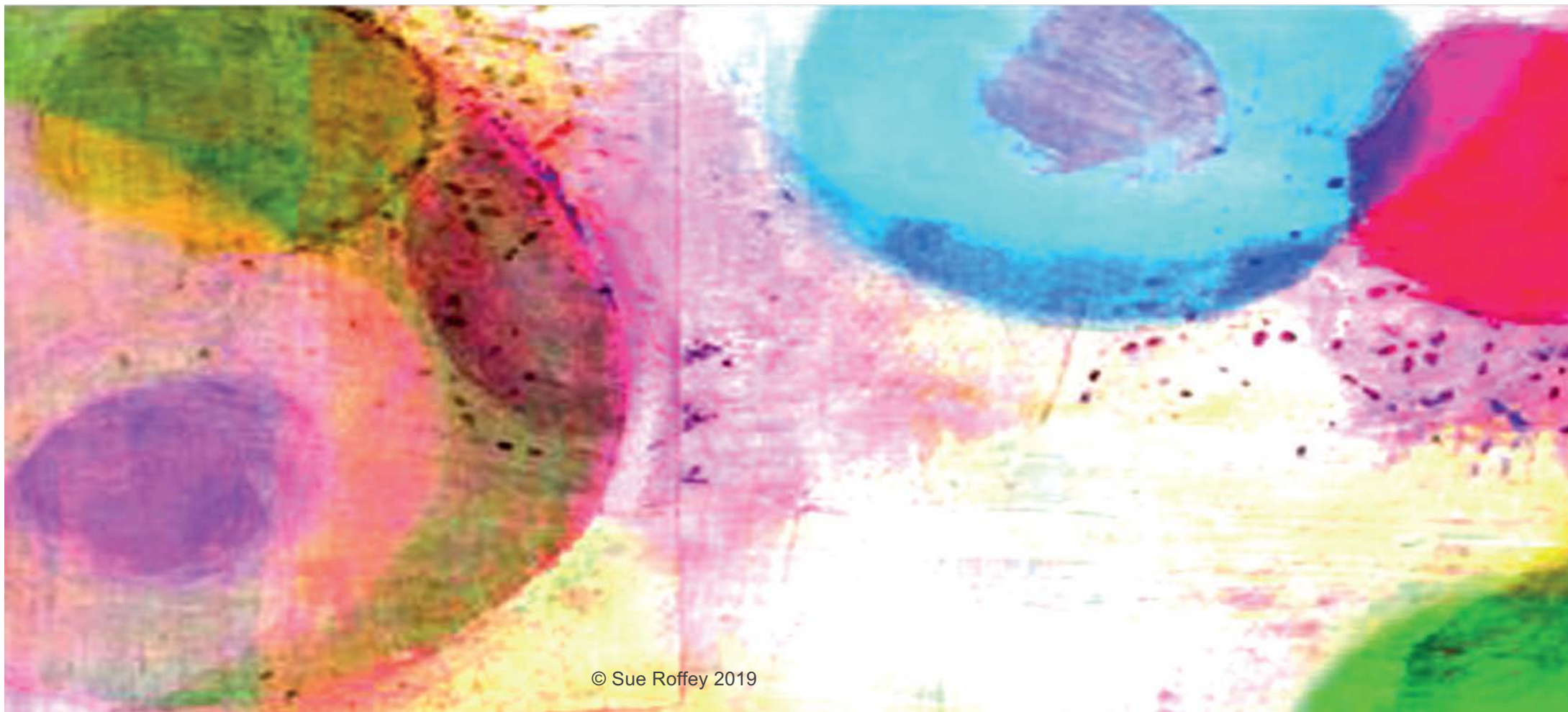


# ASPIRE TO A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP





## FOUR PILLARS OF LEARNING UNESCO DELORS REPORT 1996

- Learning to know
  - Learning to do
  - Learning to be
  - Learning to live together
- 
- If we do not actively address the last two. the negative may be the default position – and then it is harder to address the first two.

## WHAT IS WELLBEING IN SCHOOL?

- Welfare what you do for those who come to the attention of staff because of their learning, behaviour or mental health concerns
- It is often the province of senior or specialist staff
- Wellbeing is what happens in a school for everyone
- It is a universal, pro-active and builds the best for each student
- It promotes the positive wherever possible
- Strengths and solution focused
- Wellbeing is not additional, it is reflected in every policy and every practice
- This includes how people interact and how they feel about themselves, other people and their school experiences



# WHEN WELLBEING IS CORE SCHOOL BUSINESS

- Students are happier, more engaged and more likely to learn
- There is better mental health and resilience
- There is more pro-social behaviour
- Teachers see their role as meaningful and can rely on others for support – this helps to keep them in the profession.



## NOT AN EXTRA...

- Relationships and emotions exist all day every day in schools, families, communities – here and now.
- There is a symbiotic interaction between how people feel about themselves and the world they are in and the quality of the relationships they experience
- Without both awareness and action negativity can be the default mode
- It makes sense to promote the positive



# THE QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

- is rarely about doing more... It is about doing differently
- It is a way of thinking and a way of being
- Relationships can be high quality if people have the knowledge of what works and the skills to put this into practice - but they also need the belief that this matters and the commitment to take action



# EVERYDAY MAGIC CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

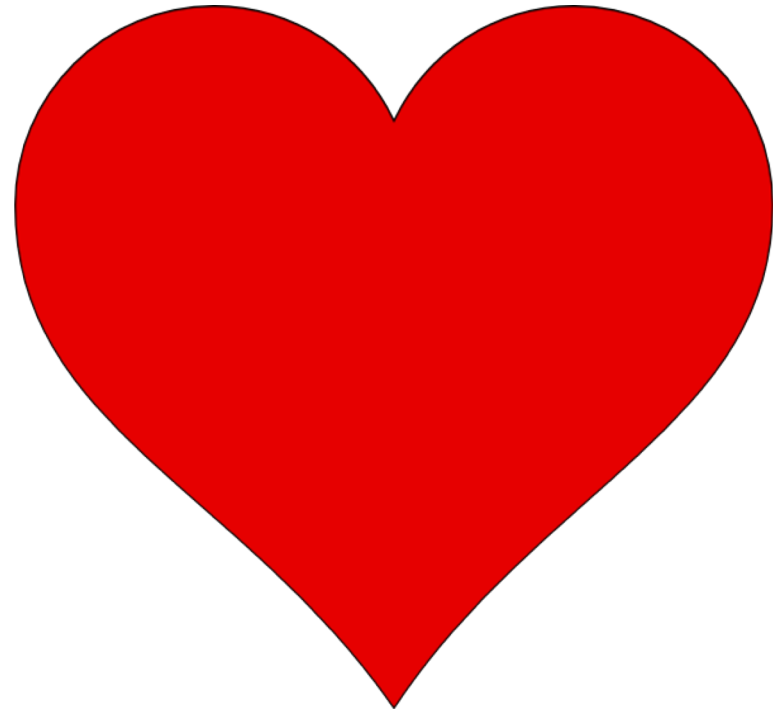
- Ordinary magic needs ordinary magicians : The power and practice of positive relationships for youth resilience and wellbeing

Published in Kognition&Paedagogik (2017) No. 103.

- You can download the English version from [www.growinggreatschoolsworldwide.com/publications](http://www.growinggreatschoolsworldwide.com/publications) or [www.sueroffey.com](http://www.sueroffey.com)



# ONE GIRL'S STORY







## RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOL

- Teacher : Student
- Teacher : Class
- Student: Student
- Teacher: Teacher
- Executive: Staff
- School: Families
- One on one
- One and a group
- Group interactions

## A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

- Ignoring the culture of your school is like letting the water in your aquarium get dirty!
- Creatures might thrash about but nothing really thrives



# THE OPPOSITE OF A TOXIC ENVIRONMENT IS ONE WITH HIGH SOCIAL CAPITAL

- One definition of high social capital is the quality of relationships - can be within an organisation, community, family or school
- Positive psychologist Jane Dutton refers to high quality connections – relational micro-moments that promote trust and respect and enable people to reach mutually agreed goals
- They enable people to be more emotionally expressive and communicate more openly
- They enable resolution of difference and are more flexible and responsive
- They have a strange dual effect...
- They make people more energized but also more relaxed
- More vulnerable and able to admit difficulty – but also more resilient



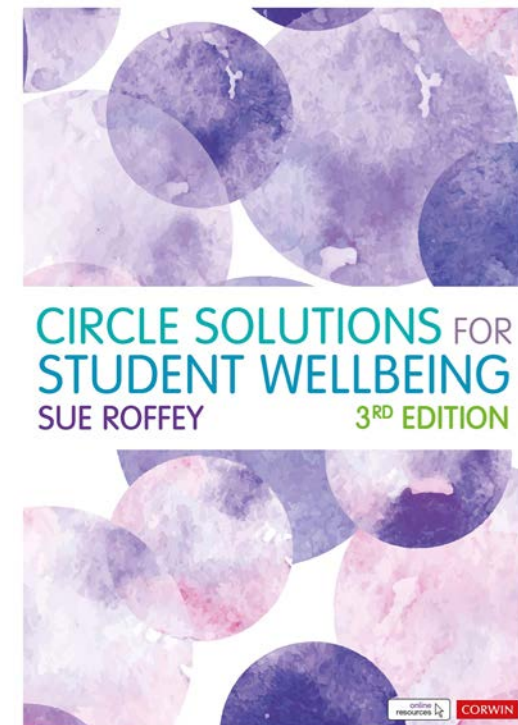
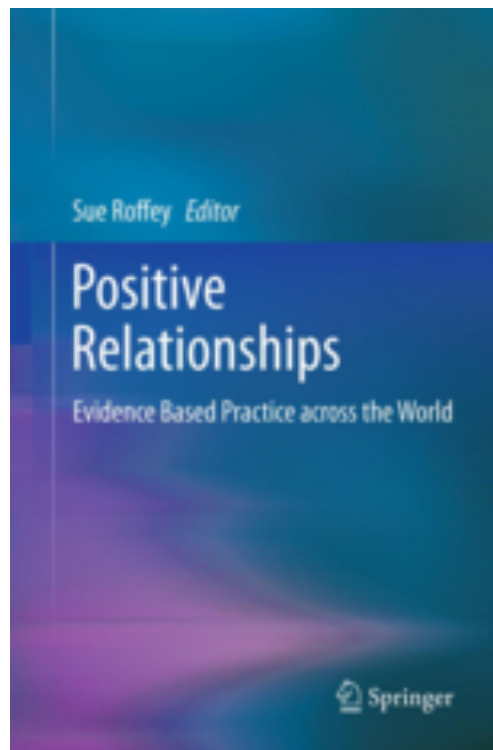
# THE ASPIRE PRINCIPLES FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

- **A**GENCY
- **S**AFETY
- **P**OSITIVITY
- **I**NCLUSION
- **R**ESPECT
- **E**QUITY

Although given separately these are all interactive

You aspire to  
great things?  
Begin with little  
ones.  
- Augustine Saint

## WHERE FROM AND WHERE TO...



- Ryan and Deci talk about the importance of self-determination to wellbeing
- This means having a say in what happens to you
- Not feeling that you are a victim of fate
- You do not blame others but feel empowered to act
- Not feeling controlled but making your own decisions
- When you have agency you take responsibility for actions
- The opposite of agency is being told what to do by someone else.
-

## AGENCY IN SCHOOLS

- Teachers being in charge of situations but not controlling students
- Giving chances and choices : Changing behaviour from the inside out – not the outside in
- Maximising student responsibility
- Not micro-managing teachers but leaving them to fulfil their responsibilities in the ways that makes sense to them
- Controlling relationships are unhealthy – at one end of the spectrum they can lead to domination, bullying and abuse.
-



# AGENCY IN ACTION

## THE ABORIGINAL GIRLS CIRCLE



- Deciding on the ground rules
- Games and creative activities to identify community strengths
- Discussions on what they want their future to look like
- Identifying issues
- Voting for what they want to do
- Taking action
- Community projects

## S IS FOR SAFETY

- Physical, Psychological, Emotional
- Being accepted for who you are
- Being able to take risks
- Mistakes are part of learning
- Being able to trust others
- Not being singled out
- Feeling someone has your back
- Children cannot learn well if they don't feel safe

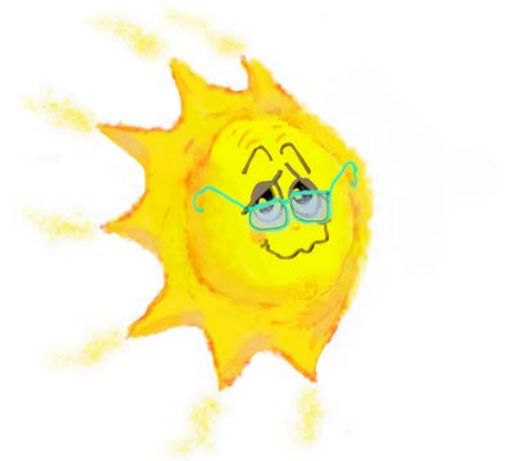


# SCHOOL MIGHT BE THE ONLY PLACE...

- where some young people feel safe
- that is stable and predictable and people do what they say they will do
- where they feel wanted, valued, acknowledged.
- where they get opportunities to succeed
- they matter

## P IS FOR POSITIVITY

- Where others focus on strengths not deficits
- Where people look pleased to see you, smile and show warmth
- Solution focus not problem focus. What can we do to make this better?
- Constructive problem-solving in times of conflict
- Where people acknowledge each other and show gratitude for effort
- Where kindness is the default mode of interaction
- Where shared laughter and playfulness happen regularly





# INCLUSION CONNECTION, CONNECTION...

- Feeling you belong, you are accepted and you matter is one of the strongest factors for wellbeing
- Resilience research
- Behaviour research
- Prevention of violence research

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# EXCLUSIVE BELONGING

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# INCLUSIVE BELONGING

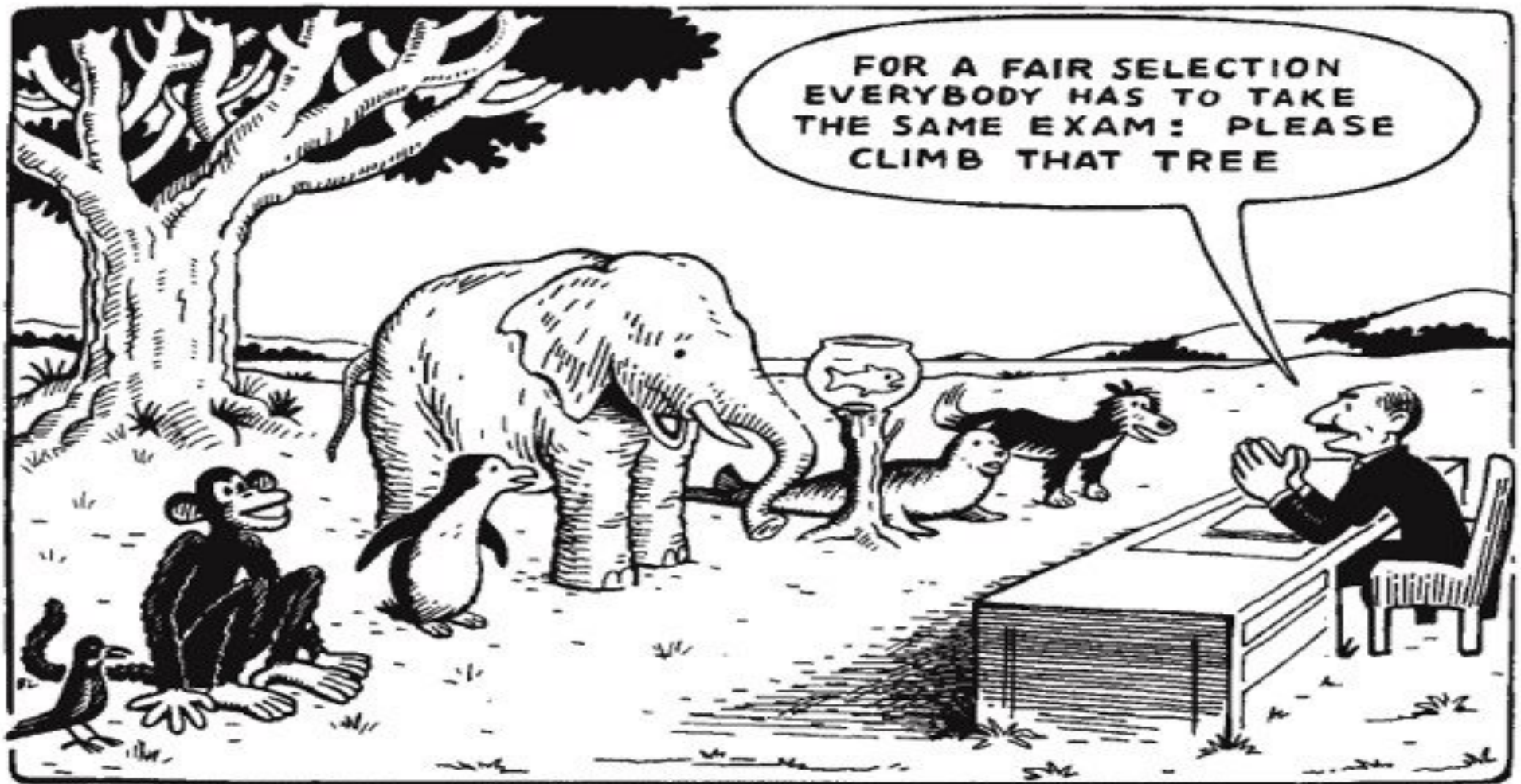


- All are welcome, all are accepted, all are valued
- Everyone gets a chance to participate and contribute
- The expectation is that everyone will work with everyone else
- Students are regularly mixed up so they get to know each other



- Respecting voices, choices and culture
- Not imposing
- Being accepting and non-judgmental
- Listening
- Being reliable
- Taking account of someone's situation
- Disagreeing respectfully
- Self-respect does not lie in others being compliant – it lies in integrity, acting in accordance with your values

- The worldwide evidence (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010, Huppert and So,) is that the more equality there is in a society the more wellbeing there is for everyone.
- Over four decades Denmark has been rated as one of the happiest countries in the world – and has the least difference between the haves and have-nots.
- But equality does NOT mean treating everyone exactly the same = it means thinking through how everyone can have an equal voice and an equal chance.





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# EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

- Ideally...
- Less competition – more collaboration
- Personal bests and personalised learning
- Flexibility and support for those who need it
- Being aware of issues and practices that may inhibit opportunities for some students
- Flat hierarchy so all are approachable



# RELATIONSHIPS ARE ABOUT A CONTINUUM OF FEELINGS

- Feeling valued or taken for granted
- Feeling heard or ignored
- Feeling in control or feeling helpless
- Feeling confident or intimidated
- Feeling comfortable or anxious
- Feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness or feeling marginalised / excluded
- Feeling positive or feeling miserable





# POSITIVE EMOTIONS BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

- A feeling of being valued enhances cooperation
- A feeling of being cared for enhances understanding and compassion
- A feeling of being respected promotes respect for others and willingness to listen to them
- A feeling of being included enhances commitment and motivation
- A feeling of fun relieves stress and fosters belonging
- A feeling of belonging enhances resilience
- Feeling good improves creative problem-solving abilities

All of this promotes well being and caring communities



## MORE INFORMATION

- [www.growinggreatschoolsworldwide.com](http://www.growinggreatschoolsworldwide.com) - information, research, good practice and links with others who seek an education to meet the needs of the whole child and every child.
- This site includes links to book and journal publications and Circle Solutions for Social Emotional Learning – based in the ASPIRE principles
- [sue@sueroffey.com](mailto:sue@sueroffey.com) or [s.roffey@exeter.acu.uk](mailto:s.roffey@exeter.acu.uk)
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