Tikkun Olam

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Adolescence is a paradoxical time marked by confusion, joy, discovery, and pain, as children transition into young adults. Adolescence is traditionally defined as a time between the ages 10 and 18, and an age marked by physical, social, emotional, cognitive changes; a maturing process that includes differentiation, independence, initiation, and other rites of passage. This time between childhood and adulthood was not always so pronounced. The child labor laws in the US made clear distinctions between adults and children, and resulted in an extended childhood and adolescence. This period between childhood and adulthood has further been institutionalized with the marketing of teen-age clothing, music, films, and the development of junior high schools and middle schools that embody teen-age culture.

The adolescent or teenage years are a time of crisis when many "fall through the cracks," and begin patterns of destructive behavior. There are few curricular spaces that allow for adolescent emotions, feelings, and matters of the soul to surface and have validity. Recent episodes of school and domestic violence point to adolescents living at the borders of real and virtual time, belonging and alienation, and hope and despair without sufficient ways to cope, relate, and connect.

The fact is that not all young people have a trusted adult or mentor with whom to share their fears, hopes and dreams. They may not be able to express themselves creatively, and they may not be coping well with depression or anorexia. For many young people, their inner chaos remains hidden. A lack of real and meaningful rituals into the adult community for many young people results in their creating their own rites of

passage. As Sontag writes in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2002, 19), "we are spectators of calamities," and exposure to calamities taking place in the world, as seen through the media, often compounds their confusion and pain.

Yet, secondary curriculum typically avoids discussion and deep questioning about things that matter to adolescents. Secondary curriculum is still centered on subjects, such as, math, science, and English; art remains marginalized, yet sports maintain high visibility and status. The legislation of *No Child Left Behind* has strengthened the focus on testing, and curricular emphases upon the 3 R's. Places within the curriculum for adolescents to explore their identity remain minimal and marginalized.

The consumption of media, goods and services by adolescents, such as, technology, fashion, music, teenzines, and films serve their needs for self-identity, cultural initiation, and entertainment.

The image below was taken in Vancouver, B.C. (with permission) during the summer of 2004. I was really impressed with her hair, how much attention she gave to her appearance and the expression of her personal values. I was delighted when she told me that she thought my sunglasses were "cool." Her hair had subtle changes in value ranging from yellow, yellow-green to green.

The highly social lives of adolescents that include consuming, socializing, and working, may offer little time for the development of an inner life. Popular magazines are increasingly offering tips for reducing stress, finding a balance between life and work, and having more meaningful personal time. Contemporary life has been described as a spiritual void where people have turned their attention toward entertainment rather than nourishment of the soul through engagements with nature, art, music, books, family, and friends. It is not surprising that polls indicate people are reading less despite there is a Borders bookstore in practically every community! The paradox is that as the inner life calls, there are a number of other diversions to pull us away.

What exactly is an inner life? An inner life not something we can point to, or hold in our hands; it is manifested in Energy that is ever changing, fluid, and dynamic. As we enter into Life, our soul, or the eternal Essence of our Being, is joined with our earthly personality and dispositions. Resulting from the union of soul and personality is Spirit. Spirit, as the Energy of our inner lives, is the wind of our inner spiritual landscape and soul.

Rachel Kessler's *Soul of Education* is a book about how secondary education can and should be more soulful for adolescents, and it offers many insights and practical applications. If a case is to be made for the addressing the soul in education, teaching, learning and curriculum, the soul must be understood as Energy, and that attention to the inner lives of students will not engage them in religious or devotional practices in the classroom, but rather in the development of intuitive, emotional, creative, artistic, cognitive ENERGY. Kessler proposes that attending to the soul in education can develop

more caring and vital human beings who understand themselves in relation to their worlds. The sensitivity that is needed to navigate this inner landscape is evidenced in Kessler's patience, compassion, and wisdom that she demonstrates with her students in the scenarios that she presents.

Drawing from her experiences in developing programs for adolescents over the past twenty years, and serving as a consultant to public and private school settings, Kessler, like other educators, such as, John P. Miller in *Education of the Soul*, and Robert Cole's *The Spiritual Life of Children*, honor children's lives and stories as a path to a more soulful curriculum. Kessler's book pointedly addresses issues of addressing soul in public education, and discusses ways to engage students to develop their inner lives while supporting the separation of church and state.

The Seven Gateways that Kessler proposes support the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual and artistic development of students through engagements that offer opportunities for silence, alone time, meditation, dialogue, writing, art making, and movement. The seven gateways that Kessler proposes are as follows: The first gateway is the yearning for deep connection-to self, community, lineage, nature, or higher power. The second gateway is longing for silence and solitude that can be introduced through reflection, contemplation, breathing exercises, and outdoor education. The third gateway is the search for meaning and purpose through exploring big questions, such as, "Why am I here?" "Does my life have a purpose?" "How do I find out what it is?" "What is life for?" "What is my destiny?" The fourth gateway is the hunger for joy and delight that can be addressed through acts of play, celebration, and gratitude. The fifth gateway is the creative drive that can be nourished through the other gateways and

acts that result in awe and mystery. The sixth gateway is the urge for transcendence or the desire to understand the extraordinary, whether it is found in art, science, sports, or poetry. Finally, the seventh gateway is the need for initiation that deals with the desire of adolescents to transition into adulthood and the ways that parents and community can support these transitions. The seven gateways are paths of inquiry to an inner search that is truly personal and unique to every individual. The gateways offer a spiritual path, as a "deep process of self-awareness and a search for order within our consciousness" (Gallegos-Nava, 2001, 19), and a path for development of the soul. The gateways could be used as a curricular framework, in part or in its entirety, or be utilized as an organizational framework for a school.

Each of the chapters is organized around one of the seven gateways, and Kessler provides specific examples as to how each of these gateways can be addressed. Three school-based models that Kessler has developed include Council, Senior Passage Courses, and the Rite of Passage Experience. In Council, students use class time to acknowledge themselves and others. Students use talking stones, tell stories, and engage in discussing the big life questions. The Senior Passage Course is a one-semester high school course that has been implemented for over 15 years across the country. The premise of this course is to allow students to recognize and honor the changes occurring in their lives as they transition from high school to young adulthood. This course ends with an outdoor retreat that focuses on deep connection to nature and community. Lastly, the ROPE, or the Rite of Passage Experience is introduced in eighth grade and focuses on oral presentations, communication, and decision-making skills through engagements in poetry, autobiography, portfolio development, and ceremonies. The ROPE experience

was developed in a Walden II School in Racine, WI. Some examples of student projects in the ROPE experience include writing a "I Have A Dream" speech, writing poems about emotions, writing an essay that addresses what students think their personal responsibility is to stand up for causes, and against bias and discrimination. These examples support Kessler's belief that school should be a place for rest and renewal, discovering meaning and purpose, and connecting to self, community and the world.

Examples of how other teachers are using the "Passages" within their own curriculum and communities include, for example, a high school English teacher in Washington, DC who integrates art to interpret literature and the stories of her students' lives. Another eighth grade teacher organizes her entire curriculum around love and relationships, using literature to engage students in the topic. Another second grade teacher integrates art and movement while a teacher in the Bronx uses Kessler's principles in a church youth group. Kessler has even worked with adults to develop trust building skills, such as, members of the US Congress, using strategies from Council and Rites of Passage!

As a reader, I appreciate Kessler's articulation of soul as a way to call attention to the inner life. In her view, nourishing the spirit or soul is not connected to a religious view or devotional practice, or in any way a violation of the First Amendment. She connects and legitimizes the need for spiritual development with adolescents to the work of Daniel Goleman and emotional intelligence, Howard Gardner and multiple intelligences, and other brain-based research. Placing importance on social, emotional, and integrated learning, Kessler's "Passages" offer a viable and rich process for student actualization. Like Nel Noddings, she advocates for caring as an imperative in education,

that is, caring by acknowledging and tending to the inner life. The pedagogy that Kessler presents is also politically transformative because it challenges the standardized curriculum and foci on academics at the expense of other learning modalities and ways of knowing.

Despite reforms with holistic and progressive education in the past three decades, contemporary educational practices are quintessentially modernist, fragmented, and intellectually pessimistic. For the past twenty years, since *A Nation at Risk* (1983) warned of the failures of public education, critics of public education, such as Diane Ravitch in *Left Back: A Century of Battles Over School Reform* (2000), have endorsed more testing, more accountability, and more standards on teachers and students as a means to achieve "excellence." Teaching to mandated (and mandatory) tests has become the norm, and teachers have been over-bureaucratized. Students are rarely asked what they want to learn and inquire about, and they are rarely asked to make connections between experiences and content. They are taught not to deeply question, and teachers are acculturated to maintain the status quo, and also not deeply question. We can see this in teacher education programs where pre-service teachers often seek out recipes for curriculum and tips for classroom management.

Holistic education movements have offered alternative paradigms to education where the soul and spirituality are recognized as integral to learning. Some educational examples of holistic thinking include Dewey's laboratory school in Chicago, Montessori schools, Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf Schools, and the Albany, NY Free School. These movements, however, have made the greatest impact in private schools and alternative settings rather than in public schools. The public schools have been primarily concerned

with the economic effects of schooling at the expense of educating the whole child. I addition, private and alternative schools have not been imprisoned by stringent accountability processes and standards to the extent that public schools have. Holistic education in the public schools has been dissected and adopted as cooperative learning strategies, extracurricular activities, or community service serving as appendages to a dominant curricular structure that perpetuates fragmentation, and limited ways of knowing,

Moral and character education within the public schools in the last 100 years has come the closest to addressing the soul, or the inner lives of students using Kessler's definition. Predating the public schools in Colonial America, education was closely tied to religious orthodoxy where moral behavior was reinforced through Christian text. The beginnings of public education in the US as we know it emphasized moral behavior with the aim of socializing the masses and creating good citizenship. Textbooks, such as *Dick and Jane* and the *McGuffey Readers*, as well as the study of masterpieces of European art, known as picture study, served to reinforce values of goodness, respect and civility. Character education of the 1970s and 1980s, supported by political and pedagogical conservatives, was an attempt to address social ills, such as, teenage alcohol and drug use, crime, and unwanted pregnancies. The threads of character and moral education continued through the 1980s with "Just Say No" phrases and writings of William Bennett and others. However, these initiatives could not adequately address the complexity and diversity of adolescent experiences. Moral and character education essentially imposed white-middle class beliefs about moral conduct and character rather than ask students to explore their own moral landscape.

The attention to the soul in education as Kessler sees it asks that students explore their moral and spiritual landscape. This process can raise hackles for public school educators, parents, atheists as well as fundamentalists because of students' questions that could surface in a class discussion, such as "Why do people commit suicide? Why am I so cruel? When will I know myself?" Kessler acknowledges the arguments that others may have in implementing her suggested teaching strategies. She says:

> For some educators and parents, the teaching strategies suggested here will be considered a violation of private religious beliefs or even a violation of the law-no matter how careful I have been to respect these concerns. Traditionalists may feel that some methods are "New Age" or "relativistic." Secular humanists may be offended at providing the option for prayer or speaking up about a student's faith or religious passion in the classroom. Progressive or holistic educators may feel the suggestions are too limiting for cultivating spiritual growth. …My goal has been to provide a framework that allows educators to honor, evoke, and nourish the souls of students in ways that do not violate deeply held convictions or religion (160-161).

If we could, as John Miller (2000, 24) describes in *Education and the Soul*, understand the soul as "not an entity or thing, but animating energy or process," then addressing the soul in education could be viewed as a way to develop inner or soul intelligence (intuition, imagination, and insight). If we could, as I discussed in *Curriculum as Sacred Space* (Klein, 2000), restore enchantment, wonder, awe, and caring into curriculum and classrooms, children then could begin to satisfy their innate thirst for meaning, direction, and connection to the sacred.

The continued focus in education on cognitive understanding over all other forms of reasoning and knowing, and an attainment of knowledge, not wisdom, remain barriers to teaching holistically and addressing the body, mind, and soul connections. In addition, increasingly conservative trends in public education related to *No Child Left Behind* will

pose threats and impediments to moving forward with holistic teaching and learning in public schools. These modalities demand our attention because as we look at the problems in the world today it is evident that isolating the body, mind, or soul in education hinders a full understanding of self and others. It is not enough for us to know, but also to feel. It is not enough for us to feel, but to act to change the world for the better. It is not possible for understanding to occur solely through logical reasoning; problems are too complex and situations are too unyielding. The human experience and the mysteries of the natural world require us think in diverse and interconnected ways. If you believe, as chaos theory has suggested, that there is no separation from the observed and the observer, and that our thoughts influence change, then educators must honor body/mind/soul connections in the classroom.

As Kessler has indicated, addressing the soul does ask teachers to be sensitive, caring, and skilled at facilitating discussion, group work, and asking thoughtful and probing questions. They should be role models for imaginative, intuitive, and insightful knowing, and embody patience and compassion. Isn't this the kind of teachers we want teaching our children and adolescents? Yet, these may be roles that many teachers may not want, or be prepared for.

Kessler's *Passages Program* requires a shift in teaching where learning is contextual, social, and dialogic. Kessler's methods and approaches warrant examination because they offer a path for education as transformation. Like other holistic educators, Kessler warns of potential risks, controversy, and resistance by students, teachers, parents, or administrators. She acknowledges that teachers need to reflect on issues of vulnerability, student privacy, comfort levels with caring and sharing, and the differences

between being at teacher, a counselor, or healer. Reflection on these roles have relevance as classroom discussions may yield unwanted, unexpected, or difficult questions that students, classmates and teachers may be unprepared for. In her concluding chapter, Kessler acknowledges the risks while presenting that opportunities in her view outweigh the risks with the aim of moving from "fear to dialogue."

Reading Kessler's *Soul of Education* demanded my own reflection on my beliefs about the purpose of education, the act of teaching, the needs of adolescents, and the role of secondary curriculum. Philosophically, I resonate with holistic educators such as Kessler, as I believe that the purpose of education is to orient the whole student (body, mind, and spirit) toward living life fully and consciously. This kind of teaching requires being present for, and with, students. Teaching for soul becomes spiritual work for both students and teachers, and there is no doubt that this work will be demanding, if not exhausting.

Yet, the alternative is too risky, and immoral, that is, leaving students' lives at the classroom door. I agree with Kessler (xi) that 'we can no longer pretend that banning spiritual questions is feasible," and that good teaching cannot be reduced to technique. Adolescence is a pivotal time where spiritual questions are being asked: Who am I? What is my purpose? Why is there so much suffering? Why do bad things happen to good people? Kessler suggests that teachers remain open and responsive to students' questions, or as Zen educators have described as mindfulness or being present.

The Hebrew term *lech lecha* literally translates as "go to yourself." This is the beginning of being present. In Norman Cohen's *Hineini in Our Lives* (2003), he gives an example of Abraham' life and trials, particularly, the Binding of Issac, to illustrate

Abraham's response of *hineini,* or his readiness to respond and act on another's behalf. Teaching requires that we utter *hineini,* or "here I am." It is a call to be mindful, to be awakened to others, to be present for others, and in serving others, we may better know ourselves. In many ways, *hinein*i is a sacred response to the call of students, and an opportunity to create a sacred space within the classroom.

Last semester, I asked my freshman art education majors to respond to a call to go to themselves, and to create a piece of artwork that embodied their hopes for becoming a teacher and what kind of teacher they envisioned themselves to be. The artwork was to be a portable altar that they could bring to class. They were asked to write a statement about their altar and present them to the class. The altar was used as a formal device for organizing artistic elements and principles because it has been a symbol of a place where gifts are both given and received.

The altar was discussed as sacred space where special objects are gathered to honor and hope for people and events of the past, present and future. Altars can be found in secular and religious spaces and often contain plants and flowers, fruit, statues, herbs, symbols, light, photographs, drawings, manmade and natural objects, and/or fabric. Not all altars are religious or directly expressive of a religious dogma. Vernacular altars can include informal arrangements made in public and private spaces (domestic, work, or roadside spaces). These arrangements often symbolize key moments, such as, a death or loss, vacations, holidays, etc., reaching important milestones, or acknowledging important people and events. Often these arrangements change over time with objects and images added or subtracted.

Each student created a portable altar that they brought to class. Their responses were all unique, personal, and spiritual. For example, T.H. stated “I want to be a light where there may be darkness.” Her altar includes reference to a proverb that she finds comforting, and that she had engraved on the mirror. Her hope is to “provide a stable, strong, caring and nurturing environment for students. I want to make a positive difference in their lives; to be a light where they may be darkness.. I plan to do this with my faith.”

S. L. writes about her portable altar that, “The altar expresses my want to hope as a teacher to be an inspiration. Like the quotes of other artists, I hope to inspire my students. To start a fire, it only takes a spark, which is represented by the candle. I hope to be that spark that ignites thought and creativity in my students. The mirrors also just emphasize my hope of reflecting, and being able to look at myself and improve.”

T. B. writes about his altar (below) that, “My area of hope was to keep the pure love of art that kids have alive and help them build off that. Another hope was to improve my patience and that is symbolized by the elephant. Art has always been a form of healing for me and I hope to show kids that it can for them.”

The notion of *hineni* suggests that classroom spaces can also be more mindful, and sacred. The sacred is the extraordinary made from the ordinary, and not confined to religious spaces. Yet, current designs of schools mitigate against such aims as noted in the sterile, drab, alienating, unappealing and neglected classrooms we all grew up in and

currently teach in. Relationships are now being made between an aesthetic environment and student learning and achievement; that an ugly school is like a body without soul! http://asbointl.org/EducationLinks/LinkList.asp?I=249 . Kessler invites us to think about more carefully crafting spaces between students and teachers in the learning environment.

Kessler's examples of making the classroom more special or sacred through creating interactions of trust embrace the concept of a classroom as an altar where students and teachers convene to both give and receive gifts. The classroom can become an altar when the soul is acknowledged, where students and teachers can bring their gifts of ideas, questions, wisdom, dreams, fears and hopes to share and place before others, and where students can receive gifts of encouragement and trust, and connect to others and the higher self. Kessler's Seven Gateways does provide a path for a more soul-ful and sacred classroom.

As a visual art educator, I wish that Kessler had presented the arts more prominently in her book as a path for students to find connection, compassion and character at school. After all, art and the soul have long associations. Modernist artists, for example, used the formal principles of art and design, such as line, color, shape, and texture to express the spirit of place. Mark Rothko's paintings of layered and mesmerizing colors appear to float on the surface of his canvases that suggest the sky or what one would see at a spiritual awakening. Georgia O'Keefe's paintings of the desert, sky, and natural objects breathe the spirit of the New Mexico landscape. Kandinsky in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1977) in 1914 outlined his beliefs on the spiritual qualities of color and form in painting in that "color influences the soul." (p.25). He went on to describe how "every artist is impelled to express the spirit of his age (p.33) and that

"just as the body, if neglected grows weaker, and finally impotent, so the spirit perishes if unattended." (p. 36). Postmodern artists are equally concerned with soul and spirit in artworks that address politics and spirituality, environments and public works, and spiritual object making. A recent article on art and spirituality generously discusses contemporary artists who address spirit in their works. (Morgan, 2002).

When we encounter a work of music, architecture, or visual art, that enables us to stop us in our tracks, capture our attention, mesmerize us, take us to a place of joy, enchantment, or lost-ness, we are in the presence of works that touch and energize our souls. We pause as we enter a state of grace and sacred time. We can experience what is called aesthetic rapture when we lose track of time and ourselves and dream. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a psychologist, wrote about this state as "flow." Photographer, Emmet Gowin, talks about the power of pictures to connect us to our souls:

> When I say a picture is like a prayer, it's because it is offered as a place where the heart can stand, or better still, rest….It is a call for reflection, meditation, and consideration to be on a more intimate basis with the world" (2003, p. 57).

Secondary education has the potential to stop students in their tracks. Sadly, so much of education involves taking students further away from soul work. Students need sustained and deeper connections with content, that include the arts, in ways that can stir

> *The presence of Haida totem poles (B.C) made me stop in my tracks. I was transported into sacred time. The sheer size of these sculptures that were carved with such simplicity vigor, and clarity overwhelmed me. I was in awe. I felt the gravity of their uniqueness. While their total meaning eludes me, I could not help but feel that the carving of this totem was a form of prayer, and that I was in the presence of Great Energy.*

their souls and allow for their deepest questions to surface. As Ramon Gallegos-Nava points out in *Holistic Education: A Pedagogy of Universal Love* (2003) that a spiritual curriculum is a holistic education that recognizes connections between self, community, planet, thought and intuition, mind and body, bodies of knowledge. Kessler's seven gateways allow for such understandings and awakenings and a renewal of education towards love and hope.

Educating for hope, as Kessler suggests, is possible when teachers and students together locate sources of injustice, inequity, pain, conflict, disconnection and fragmentation. Educating for hope is a spiritual and political path that requires courage, compassion, fortitude, and leadership of teachers. Attention to the inner lives of students must become more of a priority in education if it is to enable the development of compassionate and imaginative persons who do not turn away from themselves and others. We know that children have questions that cannot be left at the classroom door. I

concur with Fromm's definition of a true curriculum that " is an enormous store of questions; not questions regarding information or technical questions, but rather questions which are worthwhile answering, and which do not have readily available answers." (Cohen, p. 33). One task is to create curriculum that allows for soulful questions to be posed, pondered, and answered and that we surrender to our deepest questions. Questions lie at the very heart of learning and soul work.

Kessler weaves students' questions throughout the text as a powerful example of a question/inquiry-based curriculum. For example, some of her senior level students have asked: Why am I so angry? What is normal? What is our purpose in life? Her middle school students have asked: Does it hurt to die? What is it like to be old? Why do people kill? Why are people so cold in taking care of our planet? (pp. 12-13). These questions are discussed unedited with the understanding that not all questions can be answered. These examples support that students do hunger for a space to share their questions. While Kessler does provide quotes from students that support her strategies, she does not provide much testimony from students who do not resonate with her classes, strategies, or methods. She does give a few examples of students who may be uncomfortable with silence, speaking and sharing, and listening. Educators need to look at both Kessler's success stories as well as her stories about students who have difficulty connecting in classrooms that provide spaces for trust building and communication. These students may need extra space and time to gain a comfort level with themselves and others.

Teacher education programs must also begin to address the soul in ways that allow future teachers to expand their capacities to be present for others and to create sacred spaces for teaching and learning in Krishamurti's (1981) view that can bring about

an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole. Teachers can then be a model for spiritual intelligence that enables them to help students find connection, compassion and character. This kind of aim is not typically part of a teacher's job description, nor do teacher education programs typically pay attention to the development of the pre-service teacher's soul, or spiritual development.

Kessler's *Soul of Education* is a reminder that attending to the soul in education is not just academic work--but spiritual work. Teaching as spiritual work involves being present for others and responding with *hineni*, or "Here I am*!"* What Kessler proposes, that is, teaching for the development of students' inner lives, cannot take place unless teachers begin to honor their own voices and inner lives. This is one area that Kessler does not address at all in the *Soul of Education*; that is strategies for teachers to engage in their own spiritual work.

Educators such as Parker Palmer (1993) and others have addressed the spiritual nature of teaching. Teaching as spiritual work requires that teachers must commit to self-actualization and personal transformation that leads to greater sense of knowing, caring. relating, and loving. The image of a blossoming lotus illustrates learning and self-actualization of teachers and students as a process that Rudolph Steiner defines as purposeful and magical. Teaching as spiritual work is on-going work, and like life, our teaching changes as we change, grow, and evolve.

Teaching as spiritual work requires that teachers attend to engagements that renew their souls. Whether these engagements are in solitude or in community with others, attention to the inner life is critical for engaging in the kind of teaching that Kessler proposes, and the development of *spiritual literacy*—how to read the sacred in

everyday life and the classroom. A call for teachers is necessary to prepare for the work ahead in dealing with the emotional and spiritual lives of adolescents. The following are some examples that I have found meaningful:

- Find one thing to engage your soul that can keep you interested with nuances and details.
- Find a ritual that brings us joy, whether it is creating an altar, having tea at 3 pm, running at 7 am. In doing so we can create a space for t*eshuva* (Hebrew) for return to thyself to renew and reach out once more.
- Attending to knowing through intuition is an important ways of knowing the world. Listen to your inner voices as they surface. Don't discount them as trivial.
- Attending to the everyday. Contemporary art historian and author James Elkins in *How to Use Your Eyes suggests* that everything visual has meaning if we take the time to find out. Take time to look at the everyday-postage stamps, skies, grass, light, shadows, sidewalks and other objects of everyday life.
- Attend to the crafting of spaces, whether they are classroom spaces, offices, ideas, relationships, or curricular spaces. Imbue them with magic, mystery, and enchantment.
- Attend to art by looking and living with art and other visuals that bring joy, peace, intrigue to our lives. In *Creative Spirituality*, Robert Wuthrow (2001) discusses how contemporary artists works and lives reveal their spiritual journeys; "that artists have much to teach us." (p.276).
- Attend to our deepest questions that may lead to greater inner knowing and *tikkun olam (Hebrew)*, or repair of the world.

- Attend to *hineni*, and being present for others through attentive listening, slowing down.
- Attend to visualization, meditation, or any other practice that can activate inner peace and calm.
- Attend to clocks less, and the heart more. Reach for sacred time in the here and now.
- Travel to enchanting places across the globe or travel through reading or the arts!

Meditating in a cedar tree in the forest in Vancouver, B.C. I remember looking up and seeing a circle of sky and light and feeling embraced by this big, old tree. Though only in the tree for a short time, it felt eternal and sacred.

Holistic educators, such as Kessler, support education as a webbed-set of relations and a culture of teachers and students who no longer are served by a mechanistic/dualistic/fragmented paradigm. We are all evolving souls and spiritual lives

in process. Disorientation, pessimism and cynicism are signs of the times that can be shifted to connection, optimism, and hope with attention to the inner life. We are on the cusp of change in the world and in education where the desire for greater meaning, connectedness and living in the Light will take hold. It is only a matter of time.

As the Jewish New Year approaches, and I write this in the Days of Awe, between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I pray that the sinful acts being committed in the name of education, namely the suppression of imagination and students' inner lives, as well as lost opportunities for self-actualization will be atoned for. Maybe then education may be renewed with teachers, parents, and administrators who envision pedagogy of soul that is infused with love, hope, and sacredness. Kessler's *Soul of Education* provides workable, accessible, but challenging approaches to teaching. Whether readers are ready to bring soul into the curriculum, at the very least, Kessler asks readers to examine their pedagogic role, the role of schools as sites for education as transformation. I believe as David Halpin in *Hope and Education* (2003) that we can and should take hopelessness seriously. Through our own personal t*eshuvas*, we can return to ourselves, and the renewal of soul in education. Students deserve nothing less.

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