

**What happens
when you put
empathy at the
heart of a school?**

HEALTHY SCHOOLS NETWORK
MARCH 2nd 2020

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I'm just pretending to listen to you.

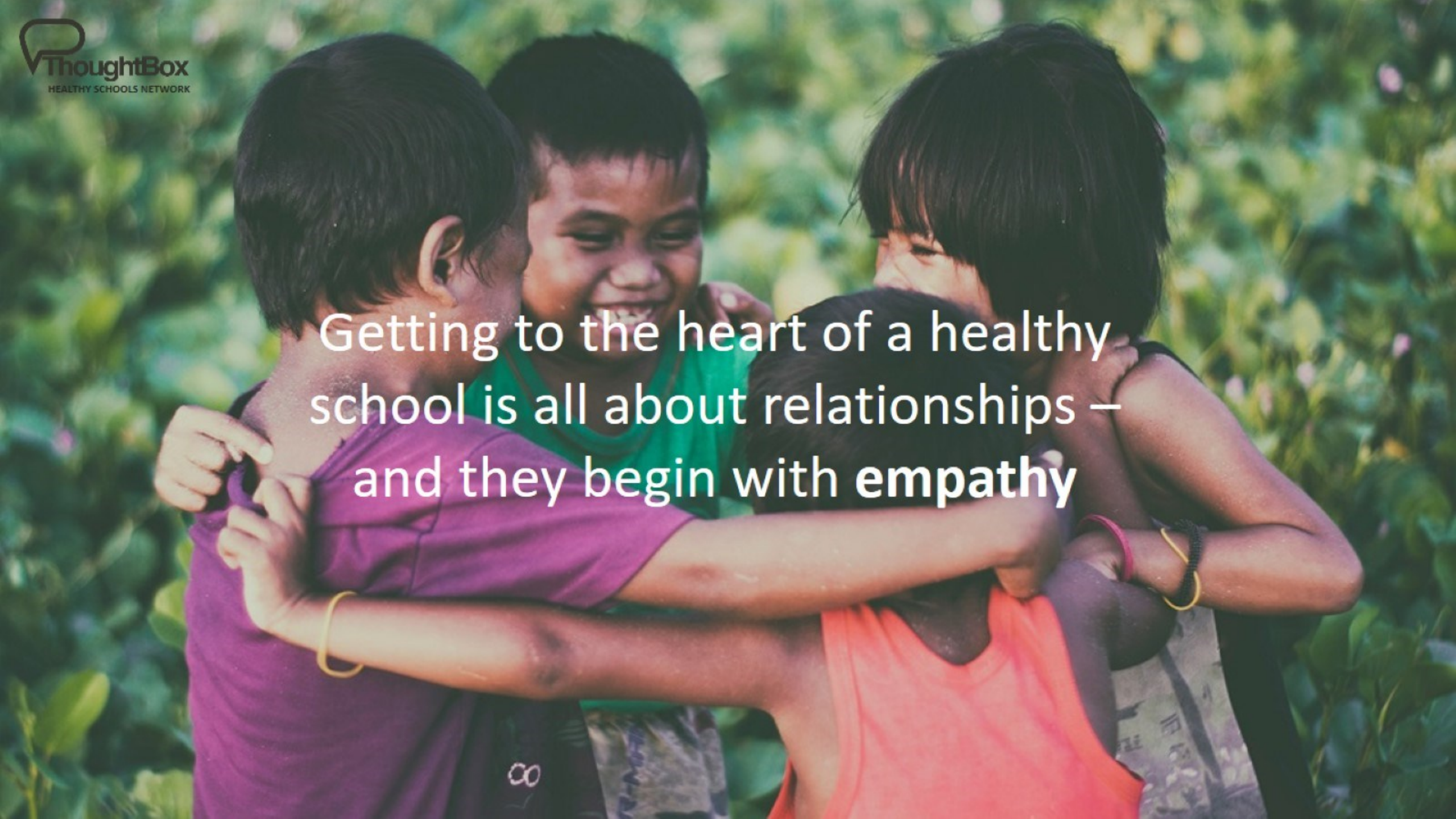




- x Negative relationship with colleague
- x Negative feelings about own self worth
- x Continued anxiety going home

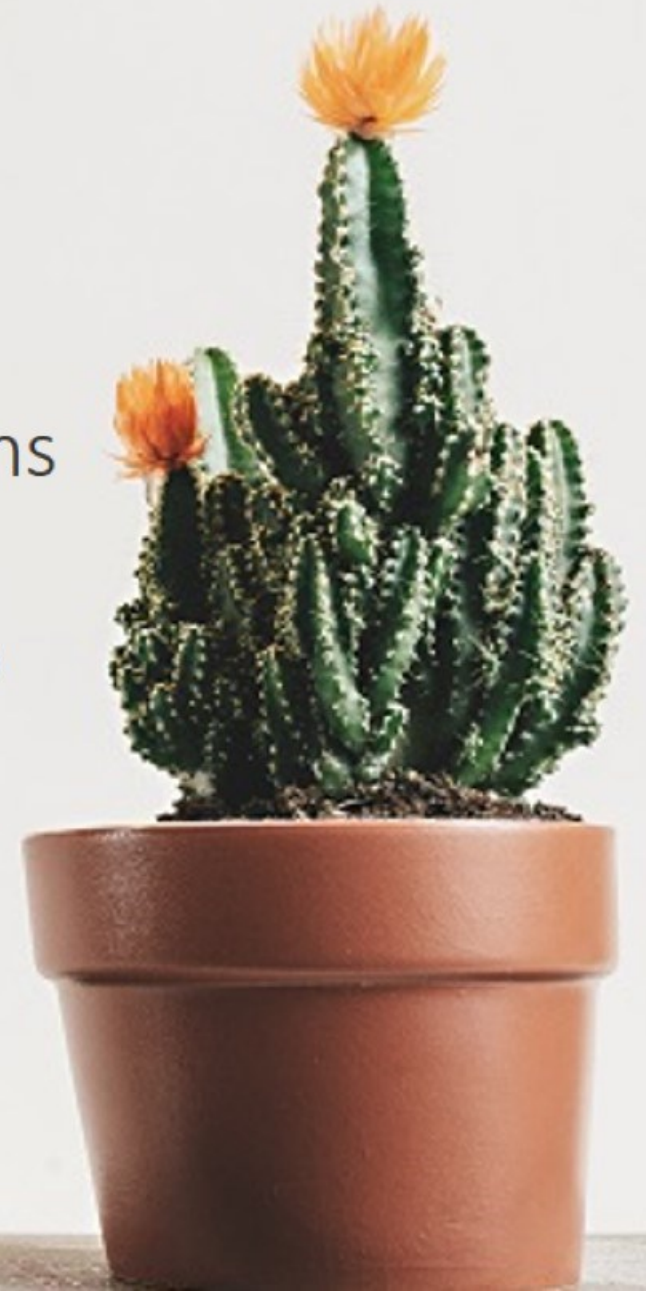


- ✓ Better relationship with colleague
- ✓ Sense of relief about sharing feelings
- ✓ Renewed inner strength to take home

A photograph of three children hugging each other in a lush, green garden. The child on the left is wearing a purple t-shirt, the child in the middle is wearing a green t-shirt, and the child on the right is wearing a red tank top. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The background is filled with green foliage and small pink flowers.

Getting to the heart of a healthy school is all about relationships – and they begin with **empathy**

1. What is empathy?
2. How (and why) to develop healthy connections with ourselves, others and the natural world
3. How can we nurture empathy in our schools?
4. What are the potential ripple effects?



1. What is empathy?





Empathy is **feeling *with* people**

Perspective taking

Staying out of judgement

Recognising emotion in other people

Communicating that recognition

PAYING ATTENTION

Why is empathy a good skill to nurture?

Key element of emotional intelligence

Supports an awareness of the needs and emotions of other people

Helps us understand how to motivate & encourage people around us

Strengthens our ability to **connect** with other people

Empathy helps us to CONNECT

Rarely can a response
make something better,
what makes something
better is connection.



Empathy is...

Compassion
Understanding
Paying attention



“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity you can give.” TERENCE MAURI



2. How | why to develop healthy connections with ourselves, others and the natural world






Interpersonal Neurobiology
Daniel Siegel

“There is no such thing as a separate human”
UBUNTU – I am because you are

A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of three people standing on a sandy beach. The person on the left is wearing light-colored shorts, the person in the middle is wearing a blue and white striped skirt, and the person on the right is wearing dark shorts. Their feet are bare and have some sand on them. The background is a soft-focus view of the beach and sky.

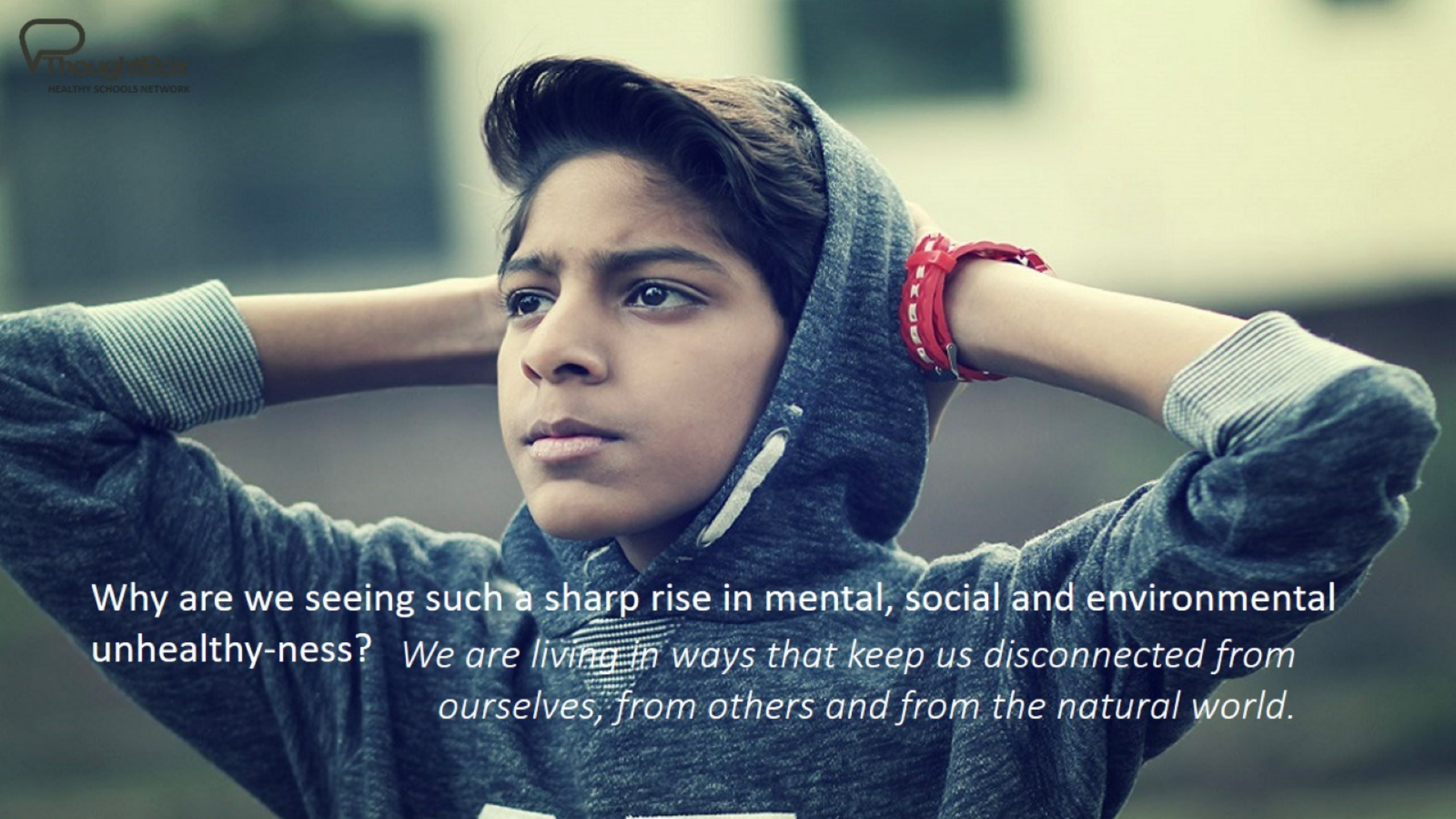
INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY

We are built for connection



Biologically, psychologically and neurologically
we are **designed to connect.**

We cannot be well if we are not **connected.**
It is that simple

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue hoodie, is shown from the chest up. He has his hands behind his head and is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a red wristband on his left wrist. The background is blurred.

Why are we seeing such a sharp rise in mental, social and environmental unhealthy-ness? *We are living in ways that keep us disconnected from ourselves, from others and from the natural world.*



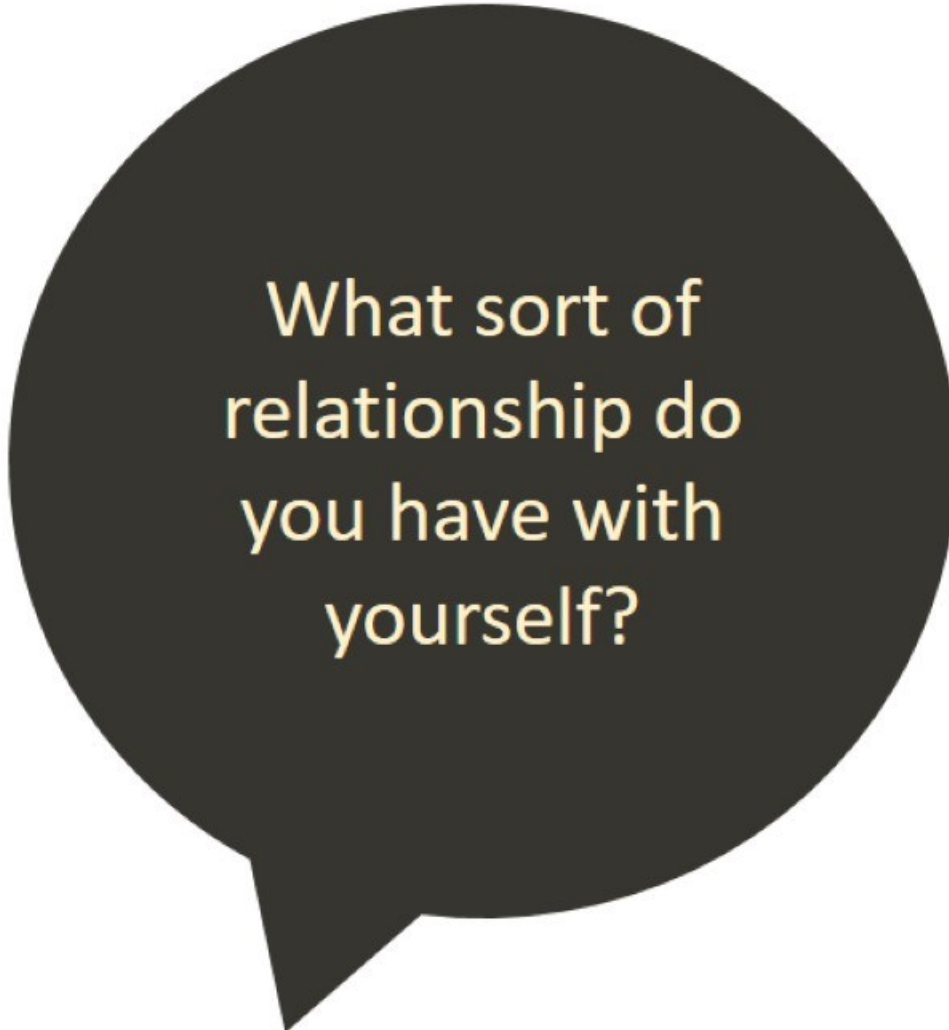
TRIPLE WELLBEING

Connecting to ourselves, others and the natural world

1. EMPATHY FOR OURSELVES

The importance of connecting to and building a healthy relationship with ourselves





What sort of
relationship do
you have with
yourself?



I feel...

Why do we matter? Why do we need to be well?

- ✓ Children attune to our behaviours
 - *Senses, nerves, neuro-chemicals, neuro-signals
- ✓ How we regulate our stress and emotions matters
- ✓ Behaviours are often a response to what is happening in the classroom
- ✓ For our kids to be well, we have to be well first. It is that simple

Teaching is an act of love.

To love well we first have to love ourselves.




2. EMPATHY FOR OTHERS

The importance of connecting to and building a healthy relationships with the people around us

Who makes you feel like you matter?

Who is your tribe?
Who is your champion?
Who is in your corner?





How is your **relationship** with the kids that you teach?
Why is this paramount to a **healthy classroom**?

DISCIPLINE

What was I doing?

1. Liking children
2. Being empathic and seeing the little humans
3. Paying attention



How do we make children feel? How do we make other people feel?

1. Children attune to our behaviours
2. Children need to feel safe and feel that they matter
3. How we feel around people impacts how we behave around them

Who was your
favourite teacher
at school?

How did they make you **feel**?



I've learned that people
will forget what you said,
people will forget what
you did, but people will
never forget how you
made them feel.

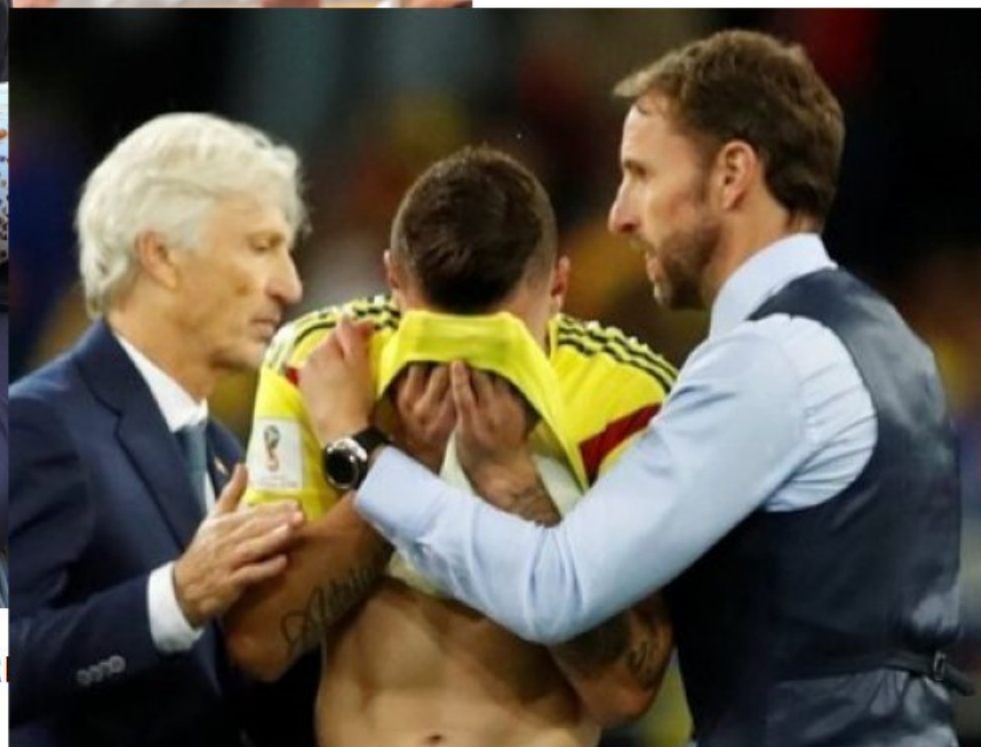
MAYA ANGELOU



EMPATHY IN LEADERSHIP



JACINDA ARDERN | NEW ZEALAND PR



**GARETH SOUTHGATE
ENGLAND FOOTBALL MANAGER**



KOLINDA GRABAR-KITAROVIC | CROATIAN PRESIDENT



3. EMPATHY FOR THE NATURAL WORLD

The importance of connecting to nature and building a healthy relationship with the natural world

Nature and mental health

<p>Reduction in depression, stress & anxiety</p> 	<p>Increased social contact, inclusion & feeling of belonging</p> 
<p>Improved self esteem, confidence & mood</p> 	<p>Increase in meaningful activity & personal achievement</p> 



Nature and wellbeing

IMPROVE YOUR FOCUS



Your brain can only focus on a subject or task for so long before experiencing Directed Attention Fatigue.

Research shows that looking at nature and allowing the eye to wander and the mind to rest restores the brain's ability to focus.

BRIGHTEN YOUR MOOD



More natural light means a more positive outlook. It also can elevate levels of Vitamin D, which is good for your overall sense of well-being.

TREES BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM...

Scientists have found that trees release chemicals called phytoncides. When we breathe in phytoncides, our body responds by upping the production of white blood cells - which boosts immunity.



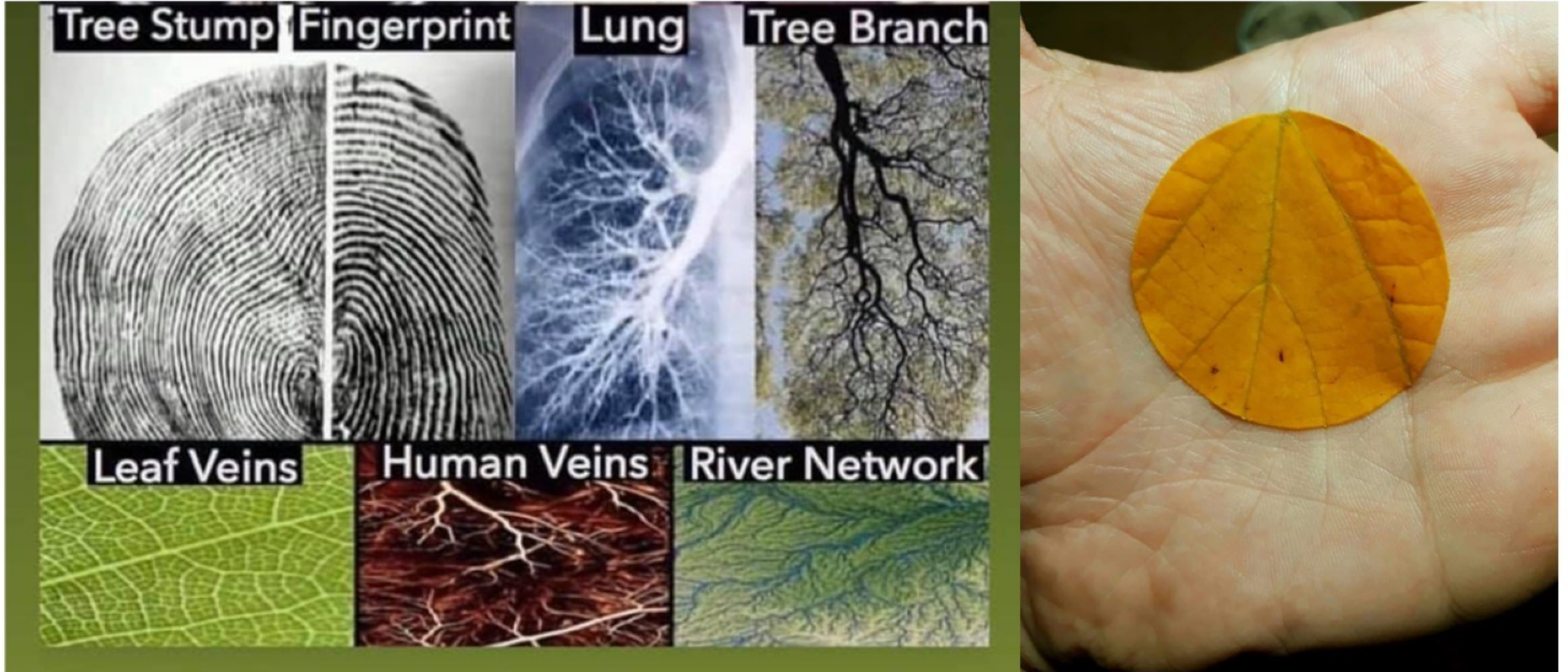
...AND LOWER YOUR STRESS

Gaze at a tree. It's good for you.

Researchers have found that looking at trees lowers adrenaline and cortisol - the main culprits behind elevated stress levels.



Nature and Ecosystems



Nature and DNA



96%
gene match



90%
gene match



85%
gene match



80%
gene match



60%
gene match

Eco anxiety
= Eco empathy

SKOLSTREJK
FÖR

ACT NOW
OR
WE WIT
STATE COLLEGE, PA



The good news about nurturing triple wellbeing...

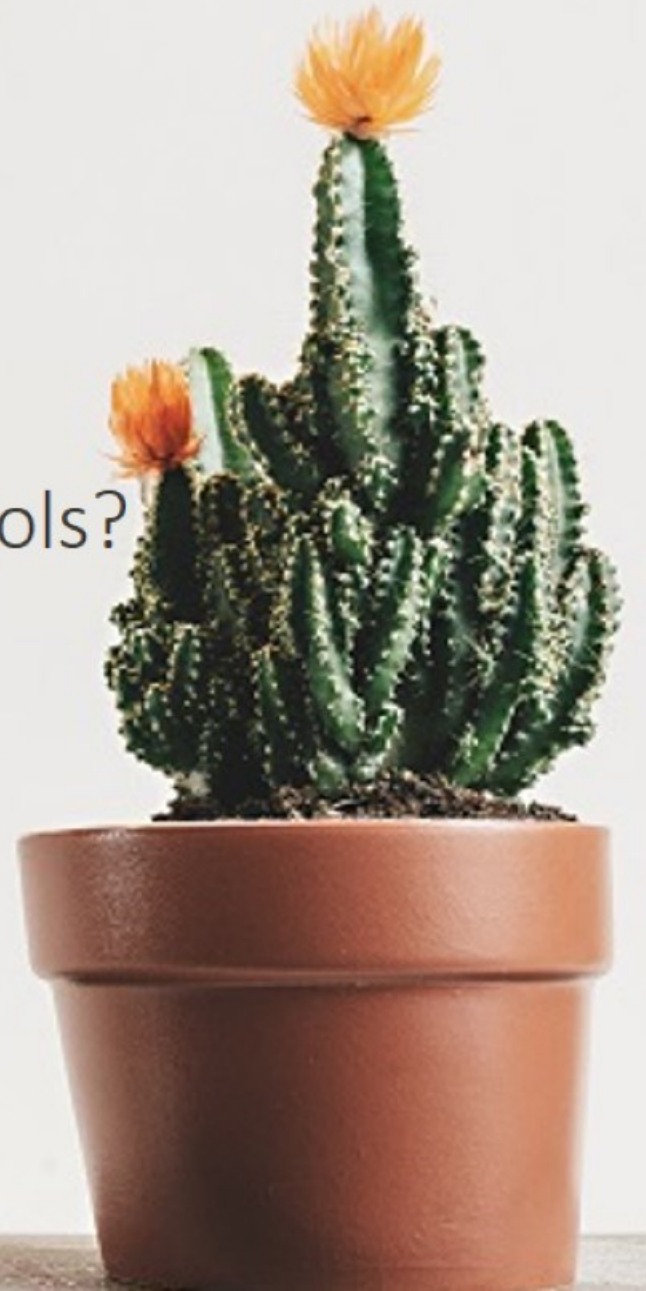
Connection is a natural human quality

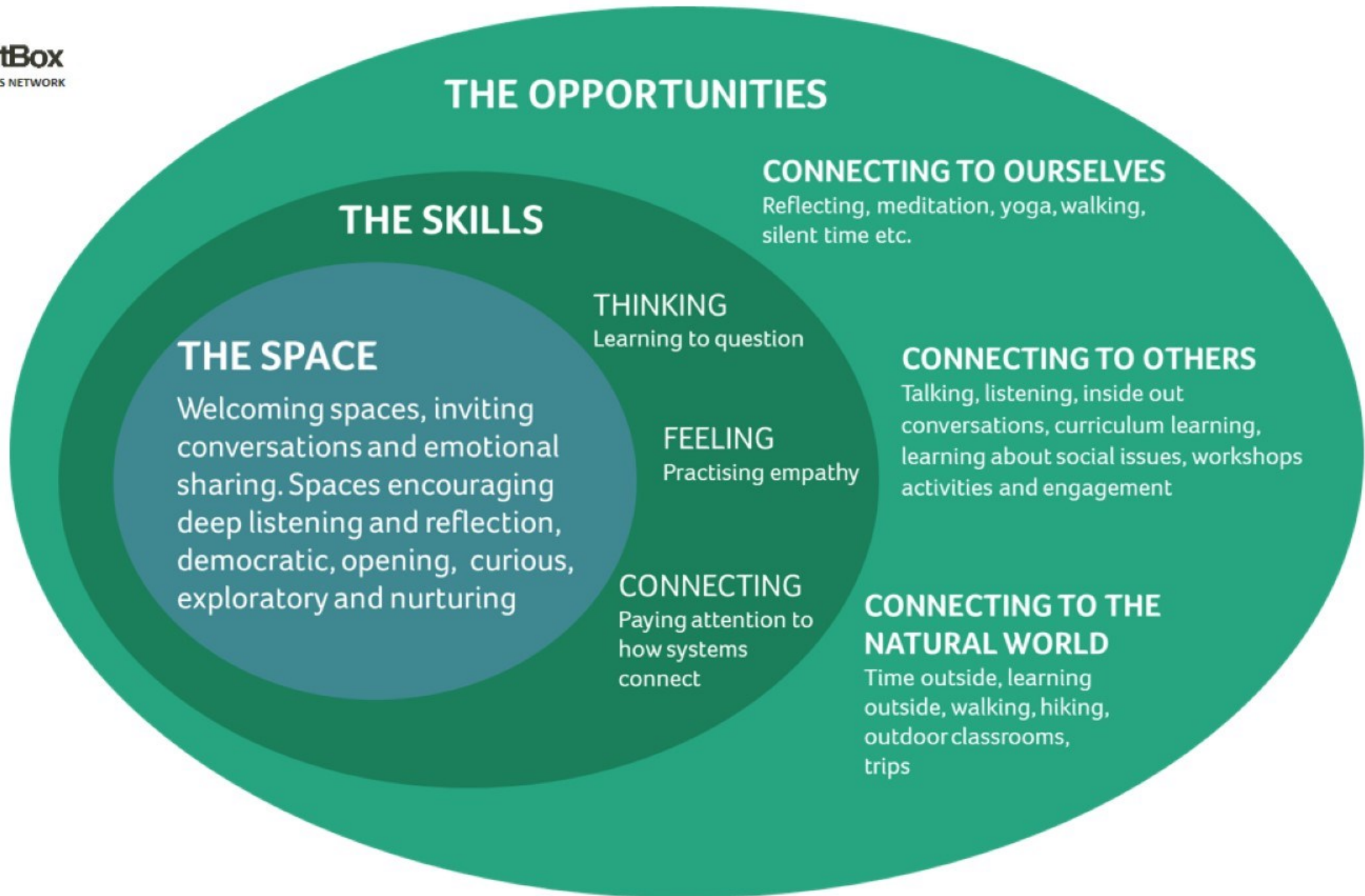
Young children - curious | loving | adaptable | engaged | emotionally honest | connected



Children behave this way not
because they're children but
because they're **HUMAN**

3. How can we nurture empathy in our schools?

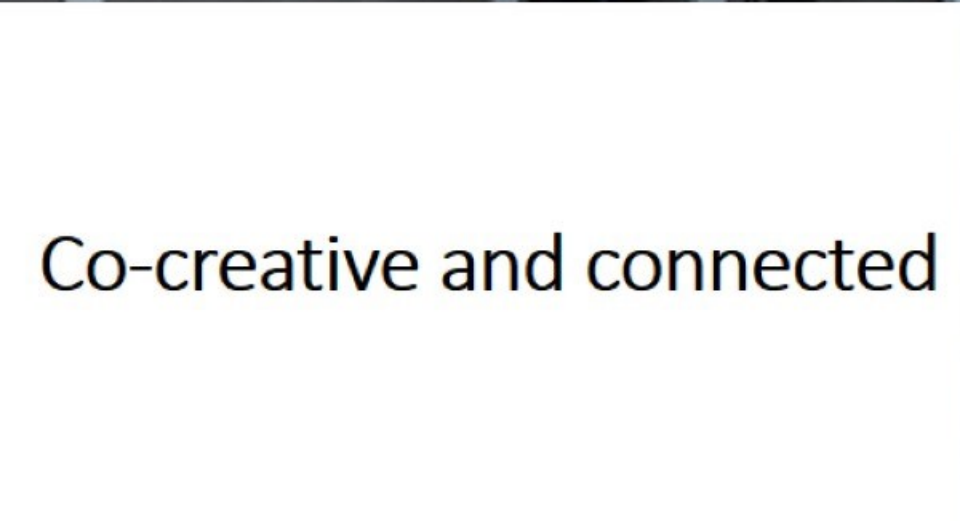




The space




Structured but disconnected



Co-creative and connected

- Create spaces to talk | spaces to listen
- Look beyond the labels | see the little humans
- Be empathic | 'Do empathy around people'
- Introduce opportunities to practice empathy & relationship building

- 
- Create spaces to talk | spaces to listen
 - Look beyond the labels | see the fellow humans around you
 - Be empathic | 'Do empathy around people'
 - Introduce opportunities to practice empathy & relationship building

The skills

THINK | Critical Thinking

Learning to question

FEEL | Empathy

Developing compassion

CONNECT | Systems Thinking

Paying attention to how systems connect



The opportunities

TRIPLE WELLBEING

Connecting to ourselves, others and the natural world

CONNECTING TO SELF

Talking about our feelings, reflecting, thinking, checking in with emotions, quiet meditation, walking, silent time, mindfulness etc.

CONNECTING TO OTHERS

Talking, listening, inside out conversations, curriculum learning, class discussions, learning about social issues, learning about other cultures, workshops, social activities, community activities

CONNECTING TO THE NATURAL WORLD

Time outside, learning outside, forest schools, walking, hiking, outdoor classrooms, school trips, learning from natural objects, star gazing, forest bathing

ABC

The importance of **empathy** for learning



Dr. Richard Davidson - Neuroscientist

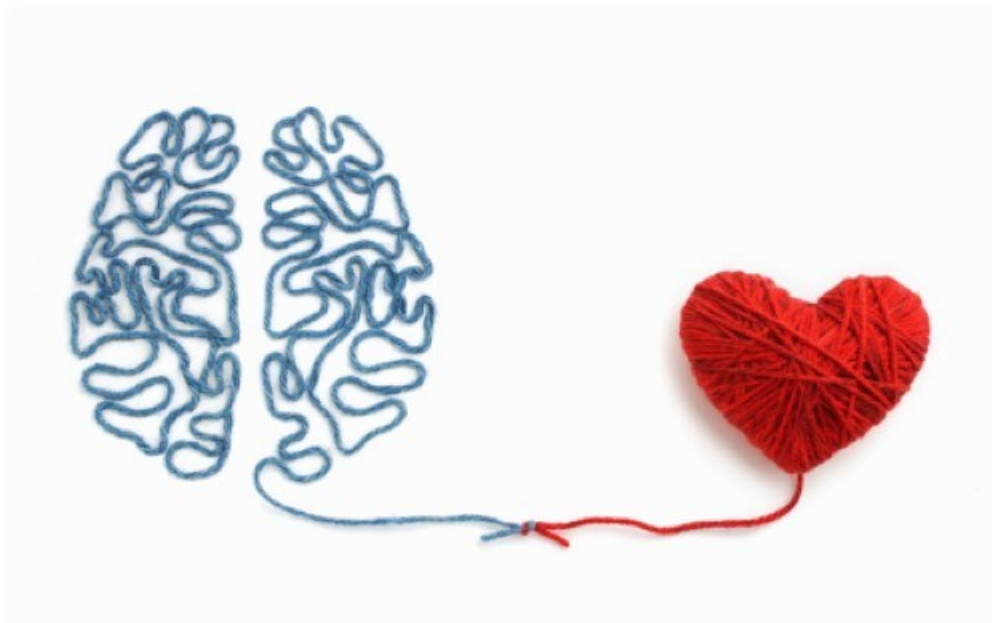
- Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin
- Founder and Director of the [Centre for Healthy Minds](#).
- Best known for his ground-breaking work studying emotion and the brain | neuroplasticity



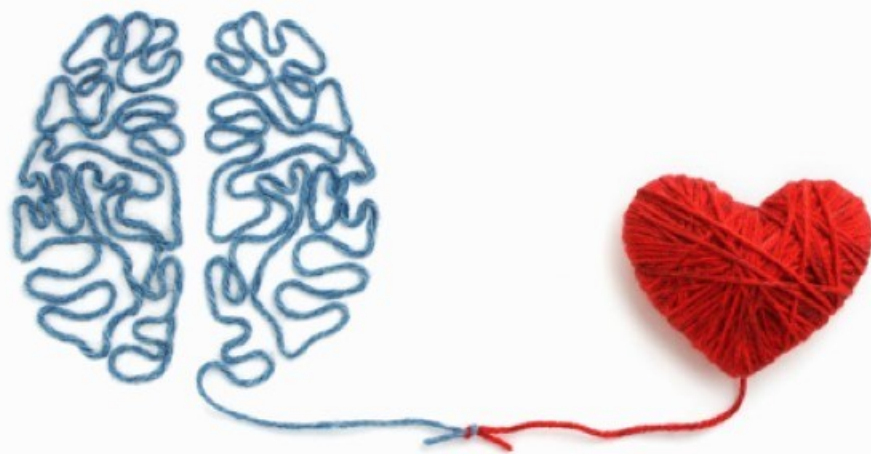


Thought & feeling | The cognitive connections

RICHARD DAVIDSON ON LOVE AND LEARNING | ONBEING PODCAST



Brain circuits that are important for social-emotional learning interact with brain circuits that are responsible for cognitive learning.



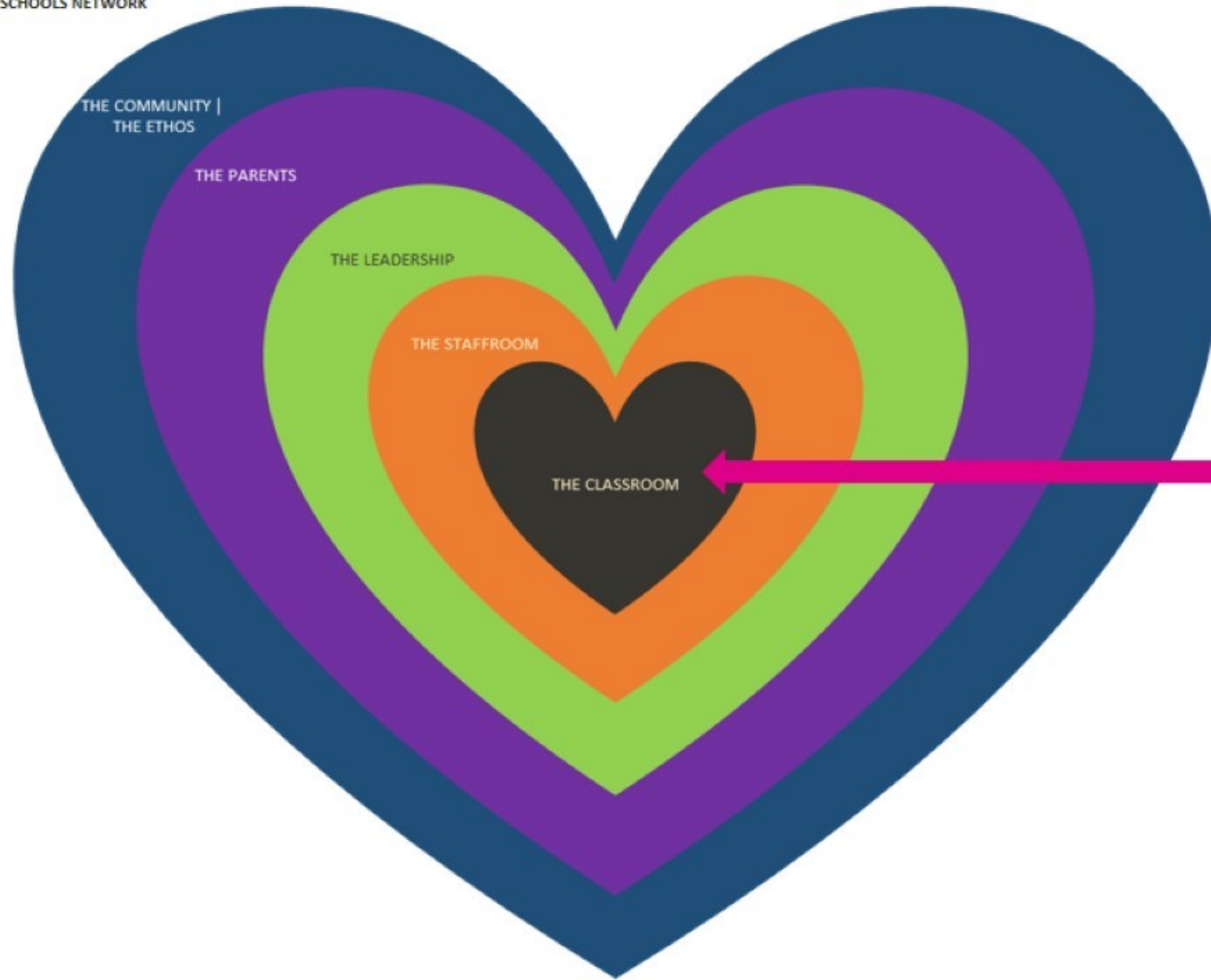
Emotions are facilitators and / or disruptors of our cognitive functions
HOW WE FEEL INFLUENCES HOW WE LEARN.

4. What are the potential ripple effects of embedding empathy in your school?





EMPATHY = CONNECTION

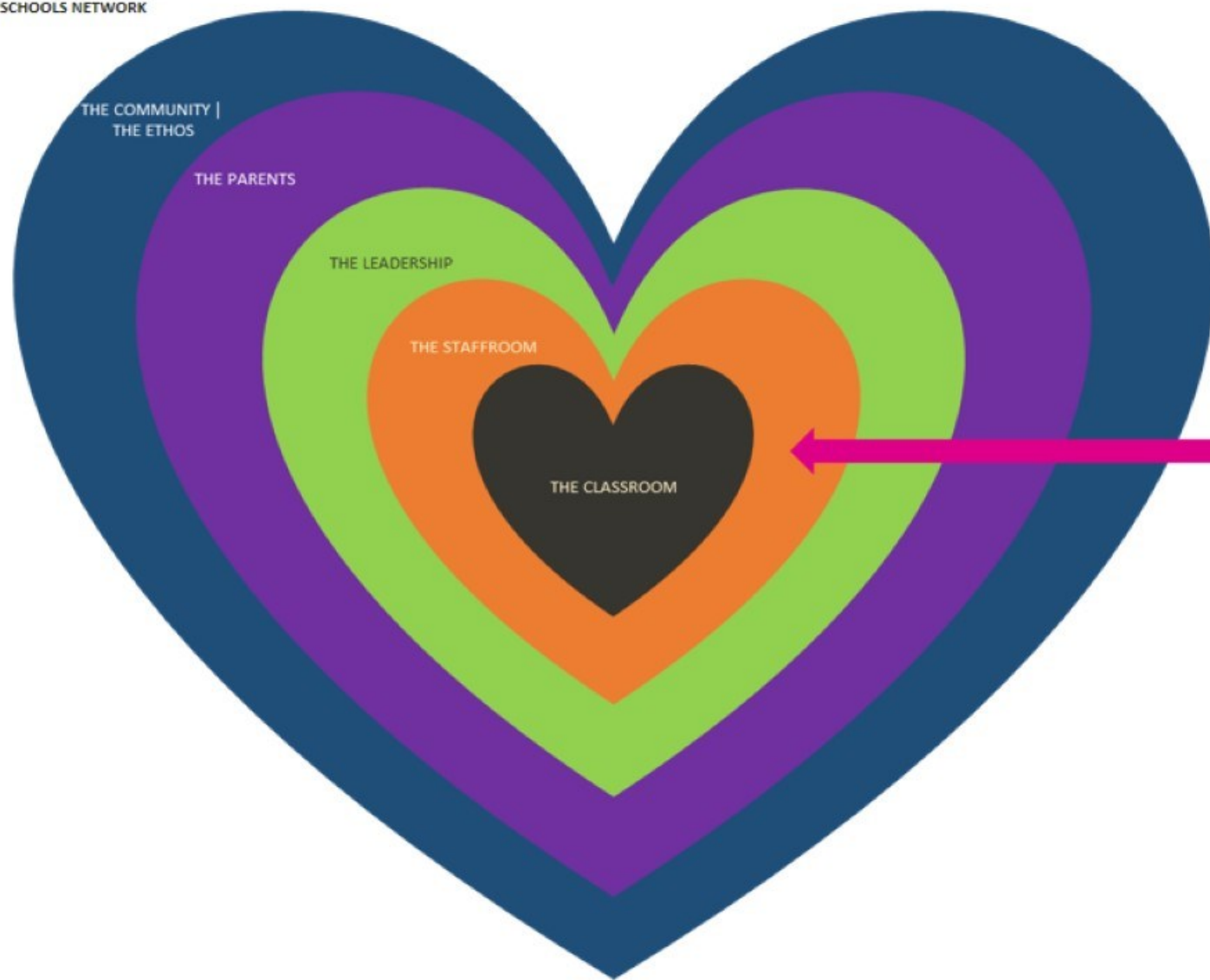


CONNECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM:

Teachers & Students
Students & Students
Students & themselves

BEHAVIOUR
ATMOSPHERE
RELATIONSHIPS
RESULTS



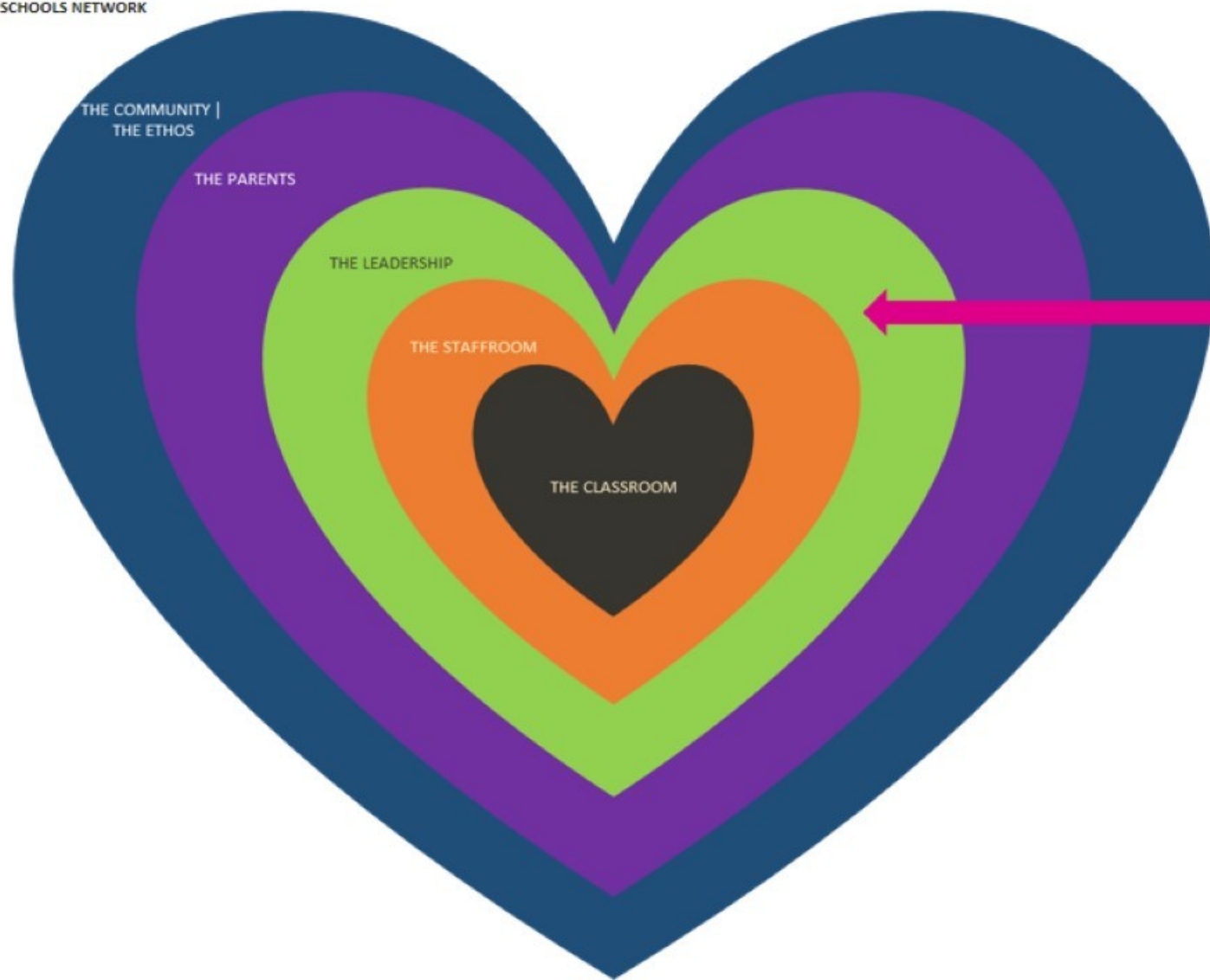


CONNECTIONS IN THE STAFFROOM:

- Teachers & Teachers
- Teachers & Leaders
- Teachers & Parents
- Teachers & themselves

WELLBEING
ATMOSPHERE
RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY
STAFF RETENTION





CONNECTIONS IN MANAGEMENT:

Leaders & colleagues
Leaders & students
Leaders & parents
Leaders & new teachers
Leaders & new parents
Leaders & themselves

WELLBEING PROMOTED
INCLUSIVE ATMOSPHERE
RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY
STAFF RETENTION
CLEAR VISION AND ETHOS





CONNECTIONS WITH PARENTS:

- Parents & children
- Parents & teachers
- Parents & parents
- Parents & community
- Parents & themselves

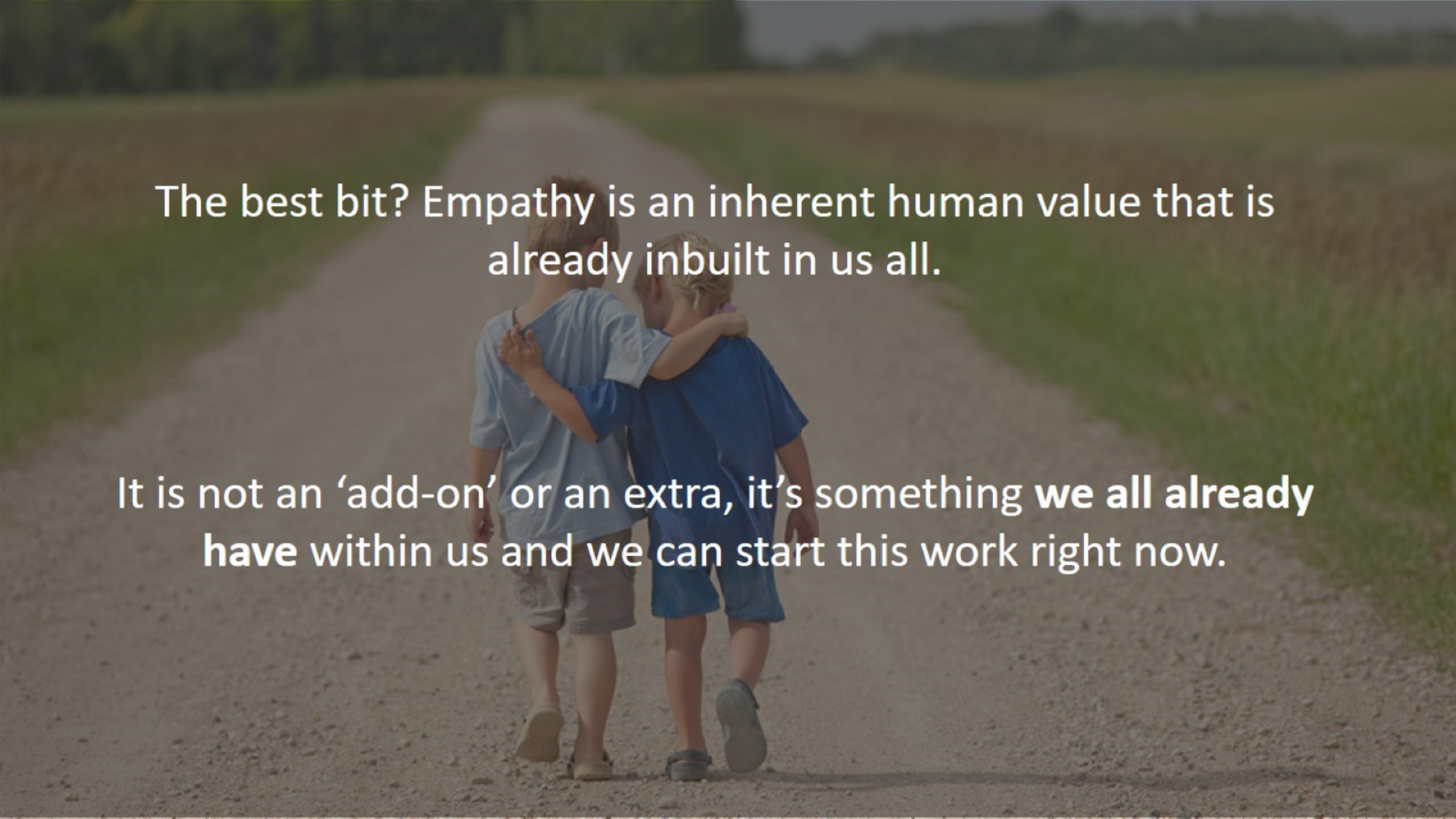
INCLUSIVE ATMOSPHERE
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS ENCOURAGED
COLLABORATION & CONNECTIONS
PARENT SUPPORT
NEW PARENT ENGAGEMENT
CLEAR VISION TO ENGAGE WITH





CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITY:

School & local community
School & new teachers
School & new parents
School & other schools

A photograph of two young children walking away from the camera on a gravel path. The child on the left is wearing a light blue t-shirt and grey shorts, and the child on the right is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and shorts. The child on the right has their arm around the child on the left. The background is a blurred green field under a bright sky.

The best bit? Empathy is an inherent human value that is already inbuilt in us all.

It is not an 'add-on' or an extra, it's something **we all already have** within us and we can start this work right now.



THE SPACE

THE SKILLS

THE OPPORTUNITIES

THOUGHTBOX IS A LEARNING JOURNEY FOR SCHOOLS OFFERING THE SPACE, SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO DEEPEN CONNECTIONS WITH OURSELVES, OTHERS AND THE NATURAL WORLD



GLOBAL THINKING CURRICULUM

We offer schools a skills-based curriculum for Primary & Secondary, supporting key requirements for PSHE, SMSC & Global Citizenship.



SCHOOL OF THOUGHT TALKS & WORKSHOPS

We deliver a series of interactive talks and workshops to KS1-KS5, inspiring young people to become active socially, emotionally and globally.



CONNECTED CLASSROOMS TEACHER TRAINING

We support teachers through regional and in-house CPD programmes, exploring how & why to develop empathy and connection in the classroom.





THOUGHTBOXEDUCATION.COM

WE'RE CULTIVATING CONNECTION