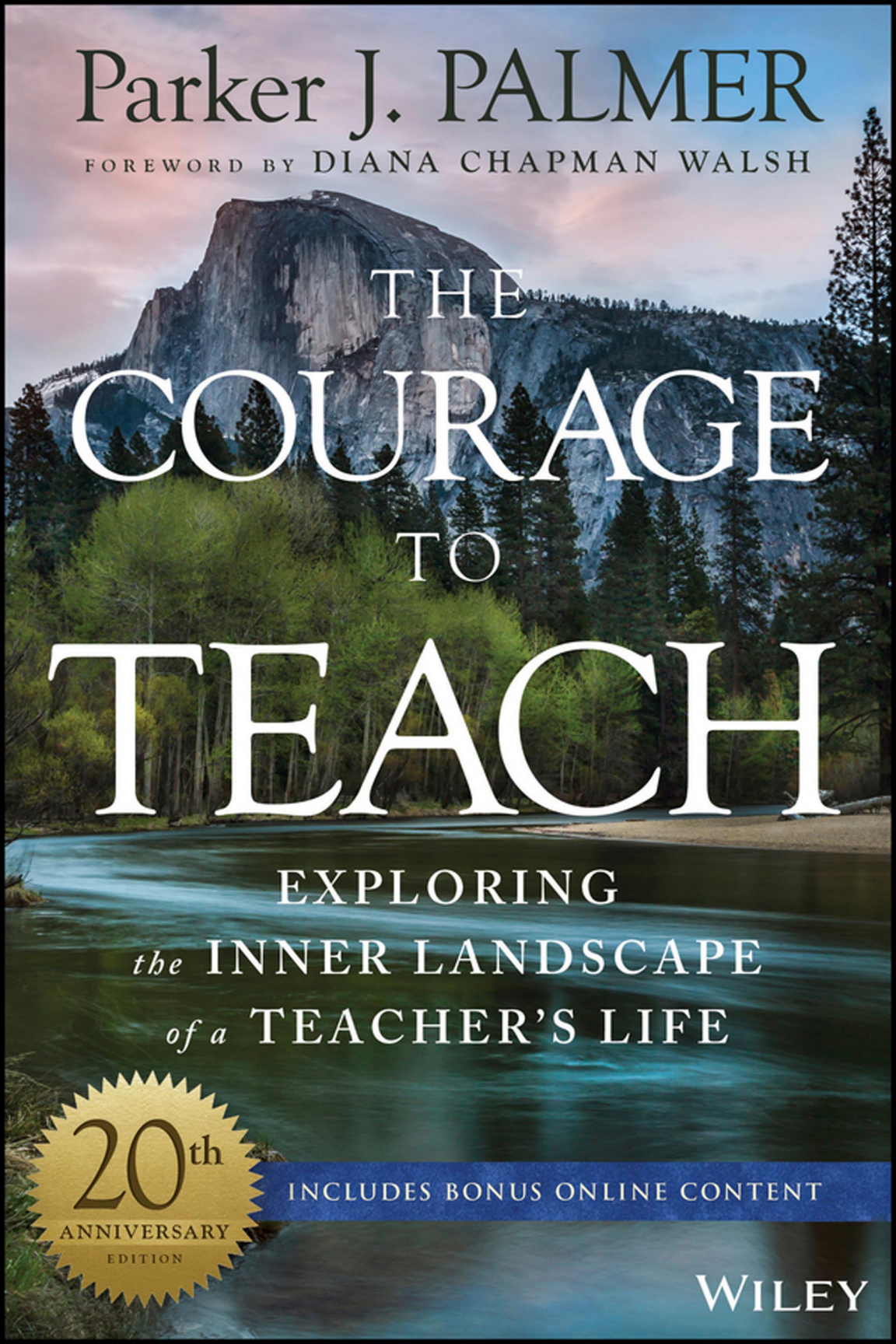
Parker J. PALMER
FOREWORD BY DIANA CHAPMAN WALSH
THE COURAGE TO TEACH
EXPLORING the INNER LANDSCAPE of a TEACHER'S LIFE
20th ANNIVERSARY EDITION
INCLUDES BONUS ONLINE CONTENT
WILEY

## CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR
## *The Courage to Teach . . .*

"This is the best education book I've read in a long time. Palmer provides a powerful argument for the need to move from our overreliance on technique toward a learning environment that both honors and truly develops the deepest human capacities in children and teachers. It's about time we remember that it's the person within the teacher that matters most in education, and Palmer makes the case eloquently."

—*Teacher* magazine

"If teaching is just a chore, and you are content to just 'do chores,' this book is not for you. You will be challenged to go beyond the minimum and pursue excellence. But rather than approaching teaching as something we just tolerate, Parker Palmer holds out the promise of it being something we can celebrate."

—*Academy of Management*

"Wisdom literatures have brought us important insight over the years. Who thought more deeply about teaching and learning than Alfred North Whitehead? I reread his short book *The Aims of Education* . . . every two or three years. I think also of the wonderful books on teaching from Gilbert Highet and Kenneth Eble. And, good as any of these, Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach*."

—Theodore J. Marchese, vice president,
American Association for Higher Education

"Parker Palmer is a teacher's teacher, and it is when he writes as a teacher that this book is a remarkably inspiring, almost religious companion for anyone who has taught or might be thinking of teaching as a vocational journey for life. This book can change your life if you are a teacher."

—*Religious Education*

"I recommend this book. . . . Just substitute 'management consultant' whenever the book says 'teacher.' With that, most all of it works and is useful. . . . [T]his is a book of philosophy, a book on character, on the kind of people it takes to be great management consultants. No platitudes; rather, a serious exploration into the heart and soul of teaching by an eloquent and thoughtful master. Serious, yet completely understandable and engrossing."

—*Journal of Management Consulting*

"Through a series of vignettes, Palmer encourages reflection and strives to bolster readers' initiative and confidence. *The Courage to Teach* is an awakening, and a gentle, directive touch that reaches out to teachers of all levels and ages."

—*Childhood Education*

"This book provides a great deal of insight and new ideas on good teaching which cannot be reduced to techniques because it comes from the identity and integrity of the teachers. The book balances the concerns on the thread of connectedness. . . . [T]he spiritual dimension is explored in a unique way by relating with other fields of study."

—*International Journal on World Peace*

"With *The Courage to Teach,* Parker Palmer challenges us to recall our original motives for becoming teachers, and he seeks to guide us in the process of reclaiming the sense of vocation capable of sustaining us in that striving."

—*Transformations*

"It takes courage to teach in today's schools. But what kind of courage? This question is seldom asked and, if asked at all, is usually framed in terms of violence prevention, dealing with overzealous parents and defending the profession against government spite. So to read that educational courage is an affair of the heart is a welcome change. For, as Parker Palmer argues in *The Courage to Teach,* teaching is about commitment and connections. It is about relationships among students and subjects and the world that connects both. It is about living and learning. Ultimately it is about the kind of community necessary in classrooms for authentic education to take place. And the key to this kind of education is the human heart."

—*Catholic New Times*

*From leaders, teachers, thinkers, and writers . . .*

"To go on this journey with Parker Palmer into the uncharted territory of 'the self' in teaching is not only viewing teaching from a thrilling new perspective. It is also to be in the presence of a great teacher who, by sharing himself so openly and honestly, engages us in the very kind of teaching he so eloquently describes."

—Russell Edgerton, director of educational programs,
Pew Charitable Trusts, and past president,
American Association for Higher Education

"A profoundly moving, utterly passionate, and inspired articulation of the call to, and the pain and joy of, teaching. It is must reading for any and every teacher, at any level."

—Jon Kabat-Zinn, author, *Wherever You Go, There You Are,* and coauthor, *Everyday Blessings*

"This book is good news—not just for classroom teachers and educators, but for all of us who are committed to the healing of our world."

—Joanna Macy, author, *World as Lover, World as Self*

"Parker Palmer has taught me more about learning and teaching than anyone else. *The Courage to Teach* is for all of us—leaders, public officials, counselors, as well as teachers. It compassionately and insistently asks us to recognize that our capacity to do good work springs from our recognition of who we are."

—Margaret J. Wheatley, author, *Leadership and the New Science,* and coauthor, *A Simpler Way*

"This is a profoundly satisfying feast of a book—written with a rare mix of elegance and rigor, passion, and precision—a gift to all who love teaching and learning."

—Diana Chapman Walsh, president, Wellesley College

"Evokes the heart of what teachers really do, and does so in a vivid, compelling, and soulful way."

—Robert Coles, University Health Services,
Harvard University

## OTHER BOOKS BY PARKER J. PALMER

*The Promise of Paradox*

*The Company of Strangers*

*To Know as We Are Known*

*The Active Life*

*Let Your Life Speak*

*A Hidden Wholeness*

*The Courage to Teach Guide for Reflection and Renewal*

*The Heart of Higher Education*

*Healing the Heart of Democracy*

JOSSEY-BASS

# *The Courage to Teach*

EXPLORING THE INNER LANDSCAPE OF A TEACHER'S LIFE

*Twentieth Anniversary Edition*

Parker J. Palmer

WILEY

Published by Jossey-Bass
A Wiley Brand
One Montgomery Street, Suite 1000, San Francisco, CA 94104-4594—www.josseybass.com



Credits are on pages 247–248.

Jossey-Bass books and products are available through most bookstores. To contact Jossey-Bass directly call our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-956-7739, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3986, or fax 317-572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at http://booksupport.wiley.com. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Palmer, Parker J., author.
Title: The courage to teach : exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life / Parker J. Palmer.
Description: Twentieth anniversary edition. | Hoboken, NJ : Jossey-Bass, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017030406 (print) | LCCN 2017042731 (ebook) | ISBN 9781119414230 (pdf) | ISBN 9781119414117 (epub) | ISBN 9781119413042 (hardback)
Subjects: LCSH: Teachers. | Teaching. | Learning. | BISAC: RELIGION / Christian Education / General.
Classification: LCC LB1775 (ebook) | LCC LB1775 .P25 2017 (print) | DDC 371.102—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017030406

Cover design by Wiley
Cover image: © Marion Faria photography/Getty Images

Printed in the United States of America
FIRST EDITION
*HB Printing* 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# Contents

# *Foreword to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition*

Words matter. Now perhaps more than ever, as we watch them being "weaponized" in warring "tweet storms" of alleged and "alternative" truths. Here is a book whose every word auditioned for its place on the page. The craftsmanship of a master word carver who has guarded his spirit and refused to expend it on trifles or vanities.

Books matter. Some more than others. This one has been read by millions of appreciative readers, many who found here new resolve to carry on. It has been underlined, quoted, loaned, then retrieved to be savored again, writer and reader bound together in a mind-heart communion.

Some writers start revolutions as Thomas Paine did with *Common Sense*. This book has more the quality of a great flaring forth, a first energy event that has fueled a gradual unfolding, in synchrony with an expanding movement on which it may not be *too* great a stretch to suggest that our uncertain human future may depend. I will try to back up that claim, but first, let me simply back up.

I first met Parker Palmer in March 1990 at a week-long retreat he facilitated for a small group of Kellogg National Fellows in Taos, New Mexico. We connected deeply on that occasion, which was transformational for me, and we have remained dear friends ever since. He spoke at my inauguration as president of Wellesley College in 1993. I wrote the preface and a chapter for *Living the Questions,* the 2005 *festschrift* volume in his honor. We have participated

together at retreats and meetings and bookended as keynote speakers, opening and closing conferences.

This anniversary edition of *The Courage to Teach* invites reflection on the evolution of Parker's body of work as writer, teacher, and scholar, and its embodiment in the Center for Courage & Renewal, which, under his committed guidance, has been elaborating and disseminating his ideas across the country and, recently, around the world. Parker Palmer's dozen books have introduced a great diversity of readers to his vision for a saner world. They have brought him a wide and devoted following—real-time and online—as well as numerous awards and accolades. The range and impact of his words and his work have expanded dramatically since 1997 when *The Courage to Teach* first appeared.

At the heart of it all is the idea of vocation—vocation as the unification of "who we are with what we do," and how we project that inner identity out into the world, whether consciously or not. This is a choice that Parker helps us see is ours to make. In leaner language he uses with receptive audiences, he speaks of the integration of "soul and role," and likens the soul to a wild animal that will take flight into the woods should we come crashing after it trying to wrestle it down. It was with *The Courage to Teach* that Parker deftly extended the reach of ideas that had originated in the Quaker tradition and his own spiritual quest, infusing them with a more universal secular appeal. He has remained ever faithful to bedrock ideals and their origins, sharpening and reshaping them with his poet's ear.

The focus on vocation and what he calls "the inner work of leadership" has striking social implications in Parker's hands. He wrote in a seminal early essay entitled "Leading from Within" that leaders, by virtue of their positions, can project darkness or light on the people around them. They, therefore, bear a special obligation to tune into the dark and light forces within themselves. Otherwise, they will do great harm. The salience of this message could not be more painfully obvious than it is right now, at a time when reckless leadership is threatening the pillars of our American democracy and the values on which it rests.

Parker writes with a rare mix of analytic rigor and linguistic elegance, posing questions that are multilayered, complex, intensely

personal and yet universal. He speaks with profound moral authority, leavened with an infectious Midwestern sense of humor and a self-deprecating levity rooted in genuine humility. He mocks himself when "the shadow of self-righteousness" slithers up on him, as from time to time it does on us all. He invites us to laugh with him at our all-too-human foibles.

The individual's ceaseless inner search for integrity and equanimity meets the outer world in "courage work" as teachers come to see more clearly the personal price—the "loss of heart"—they are paying, as are the alarming numbers of American children for whom ghetto schools are the deathtraps Ta-Nehisi Coates miraculously escaped and wrote about in Between the *World and Me*. Parker helps teachers come to terms with the fact that society has situated them in a "tragic gap" between what is and what should be.

As a graduate student, Parker Palmer was a colleague of the sociologist Robert Bellah, whose imprint is visible in an emphasis on the interior qualities (the "habits of the heart" identified by Tocqueville) on which "a good society" necessarily depends. Parker's writing and public speaking are vehicles for advancing his nuanced thinking about teaching, vocation, leadership, dialogue, democracy, and the dynamics of social movements. What distinguishes his work from other scholars, though, is the extent to which he personally has attended to its application and spread, initially in the education field and increasingly in other professions that attract their members "for reasons of the heart," and therefore cannot afford their practitioners to lose heart.

Although he sets out from the only place any of us can authentically begin (or end), our own identity and integrity, our own evolving lives—and although he adamantly opposes making anyone a means to an end—his work is animated by a desire to "heal hearts" not only of individuals but, metaphorically, of institutions, be they schools, hospitals, churches, colleges, and universities, even American democracy itself.

The Center for Courage & Renewal aspires to help people find the courage to bring themselves more fully into their own work, and, having made the inmost personal decision to live "divided no more," to create or find the "communities of congruence" that Parker argues have nourished the liberation movements through which ordinary

citizens have developed the power to oppose structures and systems that have become "death-dealing" rather than life-enhancing.

I have on dozens of occasions sat with Parker in "Circles of Trust" organized by the Center. The gatherings adhere to "touchstones" he and colleagues—especially Marcy and Rick Jackson, the Center's founding co-directors—have tested and refined in many settings, meticulously-designed soft technologies documented in Parker's 2004 book, *A Hidden Wholeness*. Participating in such circles with groups that differ across every conceivable axis, it never ceases to amaze me how quickly people who begin as strangers come to develop a measure of mutual trust that frees them to speak and to hear buried yearnings and heartfelt concerns, fears and hopes—their own and others'.

They sit in stillness, welcome silence, discover wonder and mutual gratitude, bring their patience, inquire together, and build fresh confidence in their ability as fellow humans to create spaces in which to hear and speak their unique stories and find their common truths. They learn to "hear another into speech," with the non-invasive, non-evasive disciplines Parker and his colleagues teach, asking only sincere and respectful ("honest, open") questions that may enable another to hear more fully what s/he is saying, or wanting to say.

In a Circle of Trust, "differences are not ignored, but neither are they confronted in combat," Parker writes. Rather, they are "laid out clearly and respectfully alongside each other," so that individuals "can grow together toward a larger, emergent truth." The voice of truth one hears from within is checked and balanced by those of others so that all "may gradually become more receptive to its implications for [their] lives."

In the years that Parker was incubating the writing that would become *The Courage to Teach,* Jonathan Kozol was writing his searing critique of the American public educational system, *Savage Inequalities,* published in 1991. It was in this context of shocking shortcomings of American urban education that the first edition of *Courage* was set, in 1997. The tenth anniversary edition, in 2007, came out five years after the passage of the "No Child Left Behind Act," emphasizing an elaborate regime of accountability, standards, and high-stakes testing.

Riptides of educational reform to address significant and widening "achievement gaps" between subgroups of U.S. students, and between the U.S. and other nations, have roiled the oceans within which American teachers have strained to sustain the courage to teach. Reforms have had a whiplash effect in schools and classrooms, scapegoating teachers for the impoverished living conditions that deliver American kids to the schoolhouse doors hungry, fearful, haunted, unprepared to learn. Now we enter what a recent Brookings Institute paper has labeled "the era of Trump and ESSA," the 2015 "Every Student Succeeds Act," which shrinks the federal government's role in addressing dramatic disparities across U.S. states in the performance and the progress of their public schools.

For the current era, again, we have a searing critique, Robert Putnam's arresting 2015 book, *Our Kids*: *The American Dream in Crisis*. He conveys in stories and statistics the reality that 25-million U.S. children born in the last generation are being left behind by an educational system that is "economically wasteful, destabilizing to our democracy, and morally unjust." These are words from the Saguaro Seminar, at the Harvard Kennedy School, in a 2016 report inspired by Putnam's research that issues a compelling and detailed call to action.

Which brings us back to the implications of Parker Palmer's work for our uncertain human future. We are witnessing breakdowns and betrayals of trust across the landscape of essential institutions and structures of our society, and they reflect political and economic conditions we can no longer ignore. To see them more clearly, though, Parker teaches us, we must first begin with conditions of the human heart.

Schools and teachers cannot fix the savage inequalities that continue to bedevil our educational system. They are ours as a society to rectify. For that that we need activated citizens with "the courage to create a politics worthy of the human spirit," as Parker writes in *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. It reminds us that just as we Americans have failed to face squarely the widening wealth gaps that are the real problem beneath the urgent need for education reform, so too have we have been unable or unwilling to respond adequately to other looming threats. Among those the most urgent is

the grave threat we now know our behavior is posing to the Earth's fragile ecosystems on which all life depends.

Decisions we make now—opportunities we face or fumble—will determine how our children, and theirs, will look back years from now at this moment in world history—the dawn of the Anthropocene—a time when we possessed compelling evidence that the human species was doing irreparable harm to the Earth's vital life support systems. Will they have seen the global community rally and respond effectively? Or will we leave them groping to make any sense of our blindness and self-absorption, distracting and deluding ourselves as their future hung in the balance?

Parker Palmer sees the world without delusion, appraises it analytically, penetrates its paradoxes, knows its dark underside, knows the shadows all too well. And yet, as a teacher at heart, he trusts that knowledge can set us free, but only a particular kind of knowledge, knowledge that sustains connections and affirms life. "A knowledge that springs from love," Parker writes here in *The Courage to Teach*, "will implicate us in the web of life; it will wrap the knower and the known in compassion, in a bond of awesome responsibility as well as transforming joy; it will call us to involvement, mutuality, accountability."

This is the healing social path that emerges out of the creative body of work seeded by *The Courage to Teach* and followed by *The Heart of Higher Education,* and *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. It is the path being walked by a network of more than 300 active Courage & Renewal facilitators throughout the United States, and in Australasia, Canada, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and Spain. Trained by the Center for Courage & Renewal, they in turn are nurturing connections into myriad other networks of civic activism, part of a growing global movement, with the potential, as Parker Palmer writes, to "take us beyond ourselves to become healers of a wounded world."

With that hopeful image in mind, there is no better place to close this Foreword to the 20th anniversary edition of *The Courage to Teach* than at the closing page of *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. There Parker enjoins us not to settle for "mere effectiveness as the ultimate measure of our failure or success." If we do, he predicts, we

will "take on smaller and smaller tasks . . . and abandon the large, impossible but vital jobs we are here to do."

> We must judge ourselves by a higher standard than effectiveness, the standard called faithfulness. Are we faithful to the community on which we depend, to doing what we can in response to its pressing needs? Are we faithful to the better angels of our nature and to what they call forth from us? Are we faithful to the eternal conversation of the human race, to speaking and listening in a way that takes us closer to truth? Are we faithful to the call of courage that summons us to witness to the common good, even against great odds? When faithfulness is our standard, we are more likely to sustain our engagement with tasks that will never end: doing justice, loving mercy, and calling the beloved community into being.

*President Emerita,*
*Wellesley College*
Diana Chapman Walsh

# *Foreword to the Tenth Anniversary Edition*

During the decade it took me to write *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life,* I spent many hours pondering the past and peering into the future.

My Buddhist friends tell me this is not a good way to live. Every wisdom tradition urges us to dwell in the reality of the "eternal now," not in the illusion of what once was or might be. And yet, past and future are sources no writer can do without, rich as they are with memory and fantasy, which calls into question the credibility of anyone who writes about the inner life, not least myself!

But the truth is that I wrote this book while looking back on thirty years in education, trying to understand why teaching had always thrilled and terrified me. I was exploring the inner landscape of *this* teacher's life, hoping to clarify the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dynamics that form or deform our work from the inside out. I wanted to find ways to deepen the self-understanding and thus the practice of anyone who cares about teaching as much as I do.

As I wrote, I was also looking ahead. In the midst of a culture that devalues the inner life, I hoped to do more than make the case that good teachers must live examined lives and try to understand what animates their actions for better and for worse. I wanted to anticipate the impact of our society's growing obsession with educational externals—including relentless and mindless standardized testing—and find ways to protect and support the inner journey at the heart of authentic teaching, learning, and living.

As the past recedes, we can gain perspective on it. So writing the Foreword and Afterword for this tenth anniversary edition of *The Courage to Teach* has helped me see more clearly how this book emerged from my own teaching experience. It has also given me a chance to check the accuracy of my predictions and the aptness of my prescriptions for a future that at the time this book was first published still consisted of events that had "not yet gone through the formality of taking place."[1]

## Prehistory Revisited

Because I began writing *The Courage to Teach* a decade before it was published, this book's tenth anniversary feels more like a twentieth to me. In fact, throughout the book's decade-long prehistory—during much of which I had only a title, a swarm of half-baked ideas, heaps of scrap paper covered with scribbled notes, and page after page of unusable text—I gave so many talks referring to my book in progress that some people got the impression it was a *fait accompli.*

I began getting calls from librarians: "Someone is trying to borrow a copy of *The Courage to Teach,* but I can't find it anywhere. How can I get my hands on one?" My callers were generally not amused when I told them that I, too, wished I had a copy but that we would both have to wait until I actually wrote the thing.

That it took me a decade to write this book is due partly to the fact that I am a very slow writer. When people ask me what I do for a living, I tell them I am a rewriter. I doubt that I have ever published a page that has not been refried eight or ten or twelve times. As is true of many writers, I do not begin with a clear idea and then commit it to paper. The very act of writing helps me discover what I feel or know about something, and since each succeeding draft drives that discovery a little deeper, it is hard to know when to stop.

But the fact that it took me a decade to write this book is not due only to my slow hand. I also credit a generous providence for giving me time to accrue and assimilate two experiences without which the book would have been less grounded, less honest, and

hence less helpful. One of these was a failure, the other a success. Today I count both of them as blessings.

Of course, the failure did not feel like a blessing at the time. Four years before *The Courage to Teach* was published, while the book was still a gleam in my eye—or a stone in my shoe, depending on the day—I spent a year as the Eli Lilly Visiting Professor at Berea College in Kentucky. By the end of that year, I had been reminded of two things related to this book: why the title was on target (at least, for me) and why I needed to write about teaching with as much humility as I could muster.

Berea College has served the young people of Appalachia since 1855. Its liberal arts program is offered tuition-free to students from one of the most impoverished regions of the United States, all of whom are given on-campus jobs to help operate the college and finance their own education. I had felt drawn to Berea ever since my graduate school days at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1960s, when higher education was roundly and rightly criticized for ignoring the victims of poverty. Teaching at a college with a social justice mission had long been high on my vocational wish list.

"Be careful what you wish for" is a cliché worth attending to. The year I taught at Berea was one of the most difficult of my life. As an affluent northerner who had only read about Appalachia, I was unprepared for the depth of the culture gap between my students and me, and I was often unable to teach across it. My own "capacity for connectedness"—a key concept in *The Courage to Teach*—frequently failed because I lacked personal knowledge of "the other." Worse still, I was slow to acknowledge and repair my own ignorance.

These professional struggles were amplified by personal loss, and as I insist in this book, the personal can never be divorced from the professional. "We teach who we are" in times of darkness as well as light. In the middle of my year at Berea, in the small hours of a subzero January morning, I learned that my beloved father had suddenly and unexpectedly died. Far removed from the consolation of family and old friends, I was devastated.

Every day of my second semester at Berea I had to climb a mountain of personal grief and professional failure to drag myself

back into the classroom while "the courage to teach" ebbed and flowed in me, mostly ebbing. I would not repeat that year for fame or money, but it left me with a pearl of great price: deepened empathy for teachers whose daily work is as much about climbing mountains as it is about teaching and learning.

My other pivotal experience during the ten-year prehistory of *The Courage to Teach* was an unqualified success, not because of me but because of the people with whom I shared it. From 1994 to 1996, at the request of the Fetzer Institute and with its generous financial and staff support, I designed and facilitated a program called "The Courage to Teach." Working with twenty-two K–12 teachers from southwestern Michigan, I became an "inward-bound" guide, helping them explore the inner landscape of their lives through eight quarterly retreats of three days each, following the cycle of the seasons.

Technically, I led this program. Truthfully, those teachers led me. I learned lasting lessons from them about the discouraging, oppressive, and sometimes cruel conditions in which too many public school teachers must work; about the willingness of these good people to look within themselves for sustenance instead of waiting for someone to supply it; about the heart-deep commitment that keeps them coming back to the classroom—their commitment to the well-being of our children.

My two-year journey with public school teachers persuaded me beyond doubt that they and their kin are among the true culture heroes of our time. Daily they must deal with children who have been damaged by social pathologies that no one else has the will to cure. Daily they are berated by politicians, the public, and the press for their alleged inadequacies and failures. And daily they return to their classrooms, opening their hearts and minds in hopes of helping children do the same.

The hard times I had with teaching and the good times I had with teachers in the decade before *The Courage to Teach* was published helped me write this book from a place of passion in myself. The word *passion,* of course, can mean intense love or intense suffering or both. The two go hand in hand in language as well as life.

## The Future Is Here

Today, a decade after *The Courage to Teach* was published—now that ten years' worth of events have "gone through the formality of taking place"—how accurate was my crystal ball regarding the future of education, the needs of teachers, and the service I hoped this book might render?

My instinct that education would become more obsessed with externals, shrinking the space needed to support the inner lives of teachers and students, was, I'm sad to say, all too accurate. Of course, one hardly need consult the Oracle at Delphi to make such a prediction. The excesses of No Child Left Behind (NCLB)—a set of unfunded, even unfounded federal mandates that have done much to undermine teacher morale and stifle real teaching and learning—are the inevitable outcomes of a mind-set that cares about weights and measures more than meaning.

To those who say that we need weights and measures in order to enforce accountability in education, my response is, yes, of course we do, but only under three conditions that are not being met today. We need to make sure (1) that we measure things worth measuring in the context of authentic education, where rote learning counts for little; (2) that we know how to measure what we set out to measure; and (3) that we attach no more importance to measurable things than we attach to things equally or more important that elude our instruments.

Otherwise we will find ourselves—as I think we do—in the tragicomic situation that John Dewey lampooned some seventy years ago. Dewey was asked what he thought about the IQ test. His response, drawn from his childhood years on the farm, could easily apply to many of the "measures of learning" required by No Child Left Behind:

> Dewey . . . likened [the IQ test] to his family's preparations for taking a hog to market. In order to figure out how much to charge for the animal, his family put the hog on one end of a seesaw and piled up bricks on the other until the two

balanced. "Then we tried to figure out how much those bricks weighed," said Dewey.[2]

Today we say, in effect, "This child weighs seventy-six bricks' worth of language skills, while that one weighs eighty-three bricks." But we still don't know how much the bricks weigh—and the kinds of bricks we use differ from one setting to another! As much as I wish I had been wrong, I was right in 1997 about our continuing obsession with educational externals.

On a happier note, I was also right about the way inner work can help teachers connect with their students (thus aiding and abetting learning) and empower them to resist the forces that threaten to undermine real teaching (of which NCLB is only the most recent example). In the decade since this book was published, I have heard from many teachers that its approach to teaching has helped them deepen, renew, and sustain their vocations in trying times. And later in this Foreword, I will cite some research that supports my anecdotal evidence.

But I was wrong about the potential audience for this book. Although I had worked intensively with a group of K–12 teachers several years before the book's publication, I thought my readers would come almost exclusively from higher and adult education. These were the domains in which I had worked for three decades and had some degree of name recognition and from which I drew most of the book's examples and illustrations. So it has been a source of surprise and delight to me that *The Courage to Teach* has been read by many public school teachers and administrators, to whose world I was a relative newcomer in 1997.

Equally delightful and even more surprising has been the readership this book has attracted in worlds other than education, including medicine, law, politics, philanthropy, ministry, and organizational leadership. Ever since the book came out, people have been asking me, "Why don't you write a book called *The Courage to Lead* or *The Courage to Serve* or *The Courage to Heal,* since so much of what you say here applies to work other than teaching?" Every profession that attracts people for "reasons of the heart" is a profession in which people and the work they do suffer from losing heart. Like teachers,

these people are asking, "How can we take heart again so that we can give heart to others?"—which is why they undertook their work in the first place.

But my most gratifying surprise of the past decade, related to *The Courage to Teach,* has been the extent to which we have been able to "put wheels" on its ideas by creating vehicles that bring the ideas to ground and provide transport for people who want to explore them.

By "we" I mean the people who joined me following the initial two-year "Courage to Teach" program to create the Center for Teacher Formation—which, because of the growing demand for its work from people outside education, has changed its name to the Center for Courage & Renewal.[3] That "we" includes Marcy Jackson and Rick Jackson, the center's founding and continuing codirectors; Tom Beech, Rob Lehman, Mickey Olivanti, and Dave Sluyter of the Fetzer Institute; and Sam Intrator, professor at Smith College, and Megan Scribner, freelance editor, who have done most of the heavy lifting for a series of edited books that flowed from *The Courage to Teach,* helping put our work on the map.[4]

Today, the Center for Courage & Renewal, working through a "Courage Collaboration" of one hundred fifty trained facilitators, offers programs in some thirty states and fifty cities to help people in many walks of life "reconnect who they are with what they do." In what we call "circles of trust"—identical in spirit and practice to the circle of teachers who met at the Fetzer Institute from 1994 to 1996—the center works with physicians, lawyers, clergy, foundation executives, politicians, and nonprofit leaders while continually expanding its core work with K–12 educators.[5]

As I argue in the Afterword, much has happened over the past decade to affirm and advance this book's emphasis on the inner lives of teachers and learners. One of those developments is a 2002 study by Anthony Bryk and Barbara Schneider published under the title *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement.*[6] Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, these scholars from the University of Chicago "set out in the early 1990s to explore the dynamics of reform unfolding in Chicago schools as a 1988 law that profoundly decentralized school governance was taking effect."[7]

Believing "relational trust" to be a vital but neglected factor in school success, Bryk and Schneider examined the impact of that variable on student achievement, as measured by standardized tests, comparing "the performance of schools with high levels of trust with that of schools where relations were not as strong." As reported in *Education Week:*

> They found that schools performing in the top quartile on standardized tests were more often schools with high levels of trust than those performing in the bottom quartile. They also examined the 100 schools that had made the greatest and least annual gains on standardized tests between 1991 and 1996, and matched those results against the teacher-survey data on trusting relationships.
>
> They found that schools reporting strong trust links in 1994 were three times more likely to report eventual improvements in reading and mathematics scores than those where trust levels were low. By 1997, schools with high levels of trust had a one in two chance of being in the "improving" category, compared with lower-trust schools, which had only a one in seven chance. Schools whose staffs reported low levels of trust both in 1994 and 1997 had "virtually no chance of showing improvement in either reading or mathematics," the authors write.[8]

Bryk and Schneider also found that relational trust—between teachers and administrators, teachers and teachers, and teachers and parents—has the power to offset external factors that are normally thought to be the primary determinants of a school's capacity to serve students well: "Improvements in academic productivity were less likely in schools with high levels of poverty, racial isolation, and student mobility, but [the researchers] say that a strong correlation between [relational] trust and student achievement remains even after controlling for such factors."[9]

If the capacity to educate students well depends heavily on relational trust, on what does relational trust depend? Clearly, it depends on an educator's capacity to "explore the inner landscape" of his or

her own life, learning how to negotiate that tricky terrain in a way that keeps trust alive.

Relational trust is built on movements of the human heart such as empathy, commitment, compassion, patience, and the capacity to forgive. If the inner work necessary to cultivate such dispositions and counteract whatever undermines them is not seen as vital to educational success—and if institutional support for inner work is lacking—then this critical variable is left up for grabs. We know what its fate will be in a culture that is consistently corrosive of trust.

Bryk and Schneider have rendered a great service with their study. But I need to say—not as a critique of their work but of our mentality—that *Trust in Schools* reveals a secret that is hidden in plain sight. Who does not know that you can throw the best methods, the latest equipment, and a lot of money at people *who do not trust each other* and still get miserable results? Who does not know that people *who trust each other and work well together* can do exceptional work with less than adequate resources?

We all know these things, privately and personally. But in our public life, we refuse to credit what we know—indeed, we actively deny it—constantly succumbing to the institutional illusion that the logic of the human heart is irrelevant to "real-world" operations that must produce a strong "bottom line." It is hard to know whether to call this disconnect, this denial, self-defeating or stupid or tragic or simply boneheaded balderdash. I think it would take all those words *and* some really strong ones to name with precision this particular form of institutional insanity.

I am grateful to Bryk and Schneider for pressing their findings into the public arena by advising educational policymakers to embrace "the importance of trust in the drive to deliver results." They write, "From a policy perspective, we constantly need to ask whether any new initiative is likely to promote relational trust within school communities or undermine it."[10]

We might begin that process by looking at the impact No Child Left Behind has had on relational trust in our schools. Once we have seen the damage it has done—and have understood what happens to an institution's capacity to pursue its mission when we ignore the dynamics of the heart—we might learn how to craft policies that

bear real promise of educational reform because they appeal to "the better angels of our nature," are rooted in common sense about how the world works, and take seriously the inner landscape of teachers' and learners' lives.

## With Gratitude

Finally, a word to my readers: thank you! Thank you for purchasing well over three hundred thousand copies of the first edition of *The Courage to Teach* and sharing them with students, colleagues, and friends. More important by far, thank you for taking this book's vision of teaching and learning off the printed page and onto the front lines.

Today, I am even more hopeful about the potential for education reform than I was ten years ago because this book has introduced me to so many people who are teachers or administrators *and* reformers—people who care passionately about education, schools, and the learners they are meant to serve, who are willing to take the risk of acting on their passion.

Grounded in that hope, I have written an Afterword for this edition titled "The New Professional: Education for Transformation." In it, I explore ways of educating the kind of person we need if professional work of any sort is to serve the world well. The new professional will not only master the core competencies of a field like teaching or medicine or law. He or she will also have the skill and the will to help transform the institutions in which that work is done—institutions that too often threaten our highest professional standards.

As many readers of this book have testified, "exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life" allows us to return, grounded and renewed, to the outer landscape of our lives. Having taken heart in the work to which we are called, we can give heart once again to our students, our colleagues, our schools, and our world—a world where heartlessness yields only to gifts and graces that come from within.

# Gratitudes

In 1983, I published *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey.* That book opened opportunities for me to meet and work with teachers in diverse settings across the country: colleges and universities, public schools, continuing education programs, retreat centers, religious institutions, and "learning organizations" of many sorts—businesses, foundations, and groups working for social change.

In dialogue with this remarkable array of educators, I was challenged to write a book that would go beyond *To Know as We Are Known* in two respects: it would have a sustained focus on the practice of teaching and an approach to the inner life that is open to the varied paths of the devoted teachers I have met. *The Courage to Teach* is that book, and I thank the kindred spirits who have encouraged me along the way.

My special thanks go to Robert F. Lehman, president of the Fetzer Institute, where I am senior adviser. Through a series of institute projects, he made it possible for me to lay down my travels long enough to finish this book. Even more generous has been his faithful companionship on the inner journey from which this book emerges. Rob Lehman understands the inner life and its impact on the world of action at a depth rare and heartening. For his insight, friendship, and witness I am profoundly grateful.

Working with the Fetzer Institute has enlarged my experience of education. My own teaching has been primarily in universities and