

# Reclaiming Youth and a Possible Paradigm Shift

Donna L. Johnson

University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

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## Abstract

Within a systemic view of the ontological world, we can view the effects of choices, thoughts and behaviours. Using the Socratic method of inductive reasoning and illustrating the interrelatedness we have with others such as at-risk youth, and inviting new thoughts regarding commonly held societal views and beliefs regarding those relationships, we can make connections between seemingly unconnected things that can have the power to influence our views of the world. Blending the science of quantum physics and the science of compassion, we can attend to the multitude of connections between people and the effects of their interactions. When doing so, we can view the connectedness to all things including those that are seemingly not a part of us. In viewing people in this way, one gains a substantial attribute of connectedness and impact on our interactions.

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**Keywords:** At-risk youth; school climate; quantum physics applications; learner self-esteem.

## Introduction

Connections with others and our relationships with them are the backbone of an alignment with ourselves. Each person fuels our beliefs about our world. We learn and take on our beliefs from many people, from family, to everyday people we encounter, and most we take on when very young and unaware of the later impact. The beliefs that we have about ourselves shape who we are. They are the fabric of our world, and our interactions with others are the fallout. They are the internal workings of our lives, the program if you will. How deeply does this go?

In this paper, I will attempt to make connections between many things that are seemingly not connected and yet they are; for if those connections can be made, it will be a small step for us to connect with others who seem to be so different from ourselves. I will show, how, through connections unseen, the importance of viewing our world with compassion. For in doing so, we are all enhanced. We can all make a difference in our lives and in the lives of others. For what we do for others, we do for ourselves. The science of quantum physics connects us to the unseen threads between people and the compassion that is necessary in viewing our world. In doing so, I will strive to illustrate the importance of the invaluable connections that are needed towards some of our most vulnerable, our troubled and at-risk youth. Some youth lash out at the world in various ways while others turn inwards, forging a pit of despair. What can we do? We can examine our beliefs about ourselves and our world and how they impact our relationships with those around us. Then, we can examine how those beliefs contribute to our views of those we encounter on an everyday basis, and the role that compassion plays in expanding our worldview.

## Connections within People

The relationships we have with others can reveal the relationships we have with ourselves. If there is a part of us that we reject in some way, there is a possibility that part will be represented by someone we meet and do not like. Others become mirrors for us and can reflect back to us who we are. This includes reflections of our beliefs. Braden (1997) has written extensively on the mirrors of relationship

and how each forges a path for us towards understanding ourselves more fully.

Further, Lipton (2005) has described the intricate nature and the internal threads of our very DNA as being connected to the power of our unconscious and conscious minds and linked to include quantum knowledge in multidimensional layers. Those layers include who we are as multilayered beings. The qualities of us include much more than simple matter and

mere biology. We are a combination of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, viewpoints and layers of multicellular and interconnecting energy fields. Each one of these elements can have an affect on the others. In a simple biological format, each cell connects with many other adjacent cells in an entangled network of connections. Yet, if we apply quantum physics to this equation, the system expands to include a flow of information in all directions, creating a holistic complexity. These are elements of quantum physics and have been written about and studied for decades by many theorists including Einstein.

In contrast, in classical Newtonian physics, the paradigm exists where there is the understanding that one thing acts upon another leading to the following equation:  $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ , which is a linear graphic and perspective. There is so much more according to Einstein's theories of quantum physics.

Einstein revealed that we do not live in a universe with discrete, physical objects separated by dead space. The Universe is *one indivisible, dynamic whole* in which energy and matter are so deeply entangled it is impossible to consider them as independent elements (Lipton, 2005, p. 102). This is a quantum view of the connectedness that we are a part of.

A quantum view introduces multidimensionality, where an expansion of understanding is necessary as it includes our thoughts and beliefs and their affects upon others and ourselves. Our beliefs about our world and ourselves present themselves to us and to others every day. One thing affecting another in a myriad of ways has the capacity to have an effect upon the outcome, in many ways and over time. The simple act of helping another can have far reaching effects not only for the other person but also for ourselves. For as we are connected, the effects move in many directions, including in ours. Therefore, what we do for others we do for ourselves.

## Evidence of Connections

***The Pygmalion Effect.*** The Pygmalion Effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Rosenthal, 1985, 1991, 1994) is another means by which to view the interactions between others. "When we expect certain behaviours of others, we are likely to act in ways that make the expected behaviour

more likely to occur" (Rosenthal and Babad, 1985, p. 36). This means that our beliefs and expectations about others can come across with the effect of either helping or hindering. There is a feeling that is sent in verbal and non-verbal cues regarding the expectation towards others (Woolfolk & Brooks, 1985). White & Locke (2000) reflected that this "effect operates subconsciously and is therefore out of conscious control" (p. 390). These are reflections of the beliefs that permeate our being and can have an effect on others.

Emoto (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2010) stated that he photographed many images of water that had been acted upon by various intentional emotions such as 'Love and Gratitude' and words like 'Thank you' and 'Fool'. Each revealed clear images of the effects on the water. The positive emotions and words were described as beautiful and exquisite. Negative words and emotions created malformed crystals.

Emoto (2004a) described "the spirit of words" (p. xxvi) as a Japanese belief with the effect of the words' vibration having either a positive or negative effect. If simple water can be changed when negative or positive words are used, there is now evidence of effects that we actually have control of. With the human body being composed of about 75% water (Hwai-Ping, S., & Huggins, R., 1979), the possibilities are enormous. Therefore, promoting compassion and gratitude with intention, through verbal and non-verbal means towards others, has the capacity to form bonds of connection between them.

## Quantum Theory

This Pygmalion effect is very real as how people view others has an effect upon what or who is viewed and our expectations; verbal or nonverbal effects have an effect upon others. The verbal effects are easier to quantify. Can we utilize quantum physics theory to explain the energy that we "send" out to others via an invisible entanglement web? The Copenhagen Interpretation described quantum theory in terms of wave and particle functions and behaviour and has been studied since the 1920s, most notably by Bohr and Heisenberg. Stapp (1972) discussed this at length in terms of quantum theory. Orion & Laitman (2010) explained

clearly the particle-wave-duality of energy where energy can be both a particle and a wave. What is novel though is their interpretation, that the observer of the experiment has an effect on the outcome denoted as the “Participatory Anthropic Principle . . . there is no way to separate between the experiment and the observer, which gives an air of ‘You see what you decide to see’ to the whole physical reality” (p. 91). This effect on a quantum level includes the smallest particles of energy. Physicists have documented this phenomenon again and again. If the smallest particle can be affected by viewing it, we, as a collaboration of billions of particles can be affected by how we are viewed; therefore, every one of the particles is important.

***The Butterfly Effect.*** The butterfly effect is another piece of evidence, which can be understood to be “that tiny changes in initial conditions can lead to big changes in a later outcome” (Braden, 2000, p. 104). This evidence suggests a connection between the small steps we take and the effects that take place later on. Yet, the effects can be understood to be in a multitude of quantum directions. Physicists have described the possibilities to include parallel universes (Ryan, 2006; Schwartz, Stapp & Beauregard, 2005) whereby each choice, decision, thought and feeling continues in quantum directions with their accompanying effects. We may not fully be aware of the effects, yet this is the premise of the butterfly

effect. A person’s intention, according to these theories, can have far reaching consequences. If this is so, we may have the capacity to experience and witness the effects years later. The old adage, “what goes around, comes around” surfaces here. What we put out to the universe comes back to us in so many ways. Usually we forget a choice or decision we have made unless it is significant. Yet, all have a trajectory or movement. For example, in the movie, *Gladiator* (2000), Maximus played by Russell Crowe, utters the words, “What we do in life, echoes in eternity.” This illustrates the echoes of our choices, thoughts and behaviours for an ontological and multidimensional viewpoint.

For if we decide that we like someone, or wish to help them in some way, our thoughts and behaviors towards them will move further in that direction, creating a positive momentum for change and a relationship of connectedness, that, multidimensionally, forges feelings of well-being and compassion for both giver and receiver in many directions that we are either foreign to or unaware of. That is a basic primer of quantum theory. We reap what we sow and gain the benefits of doing for others because we are all connected. The law of cause and effect applies here. The connections and changes that can occur are staggering. We can all make a difference. This is a belief that can alter our interactions with others and have an affect on those who want to change.

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## **Systemic Views**

Smith (1990) discussed this further in terms of physics and the dynamics of the map of effects. Perhaps it would be useful to view it in terms of a system, even though we might not be fully aware of the full array of possibilities within that system. Perhaps it is a multidimensional system that Einstein and others have attempted to describe in various experiments; the quantum connections that are invisible to many, and yet have been experienced in many ways. Perhaps there is a time delay that hasn’t been fully measured or understood in terms of the visible effects of changes. Perhaps then, there is an element of faith that needs to be a part of making changes or affecting the system itself. But that is my conjecture. Einstein’s insight that “the significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them” (Lueddeke, 1999, p. 240) leads me to believe that if things are to change, we need to understand more fully how to make changes in ourselves, which will have the capacity to change the world around us, for we are the only ones that can do the changing.

## **Our Beliefs**

Why is this important in terms of beliefs? We can change them. It is the internal structure of the very fabric of who we are – which is much greater than we have ever imagined including any positive and negative emotions having the capacity to affect our bodies. If, in a drop of water, as Emoto (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2010) found there can be change when positive

thoughts and emotions are processed, the shifts that can affect our entire bodies when we change our negative thoughts and beliefs within us to positive ones, can be transformative.

We are quantum beings ourselves, which leads to the need to re-view how we see ourselves and treat others. For example, if we believe ourselves to be in survival mode, we will clamour to get what we need for ourselves, stepping over others, forgetting that it is our beliefs that forge the shoes with which we do so. And with this belief there would be the absolute need to fight for what we need instead of the understanding that it is the belief in ourselves that we took on internally that moves us to behave in such a manner. We need to understand ourselves to be beings who exist beyond the flesh, and look to the innermost parts of who we are – creators of our lives and connected to others.

In viewing ourselves in this empowering way, we may come to the realization that if we have taken on beliefs about ourselves, we have the capacity to change those beliefs, to get to the core of all regarding self-worth.

## System of Social Interactions

Beliefs abound surrounding this core worthiness system. Our system of social interactions seemingly revolves around enticing people to like us – if not, we reshape ourselves to become more pleasing and likeable. Underlying this is the fear, sadness and anger that follow – for remodeling ourselves into something we are not confuses ourselves and others and we do this unconsciously, forgetting the core belief that beguiled us to begin this journey of redefinition.

Our beliefs according to Lipton (2005) become a part of us, integrated and entangled into our circuitry so that we become triggered by old patterns, decisions and beliefs with the accompanying emotions. We rarely understand where they come from. Intellectually, we can understand them at a surface level only. Yet, the biological basis and the quantum make-up, remain.

Can this change? Of course. We are creators. If the answer was no, neuroplasticity would be invalid and change would be at its most simplistic level. Can we help ourselves? Yes, we can view ourselves differently and by doing so we can recreate ourselves.

## Survival Mode

What has this to do with children and youth at-risk? Perhaps they have grown up with challenging histories, some of whom have beliefs about themselves and others that have contributed to their present state. We need to be clear about whom we are on a societal level to assist in creating change. For when we change ourselves in the inner world, we change the way we respond to others. When youth grow up in a belief system of not feeling good enough, or not worthy of enough compassion, food, attention or care, the needs will still be there; but they will be fulfilled in other ways, by taking what they need in any manner, to fill the bucket of emptiness.

Lipton (2005) shared this way of thinking in terms of children's growth. In discussing brainwave patterning, he has written:

Between birth and two years of age, the human brain *predominantly* operates at the lowest EEG frequency, 0.5 to 4 cycles per second (Hz), known as *Delta* waves. Though *Delta* is their predominant wave activity, babies can exhibit periodic short bursts of higher EEG activity. A child begins to spend more time at a higher level of EEG activity characterized as *Theta* (4-8 Hz) between two and six years of age. . . . This gives us an important clue as to how children, whose brains are mostly operating at these same frequencies between birth and six years of age, can download the incredible volume of information they need to thrive in their environment. . . . Young children carefully observe their environment and download the worldly wisdom offered by parents directly into their subconscious memory. As a result, their parents' behaviour and beliefs become their own. (p. 163)

From this information, we can see that those around them can profoundly affect children when they are young.

## **Systems in Schools**

What societal beliefs do we carry and persist about youth, their social interactions and how do we get what we want or need in the world? These are beliefs regarding how to move within the world. There are many texts that have been written over the decades about how to be successful which have as their underlying themes a map for success, for example, Robbins (1986; 1991). The derivatives of those tenets are within the educational systems and surround the internal culture of schools.

The beliefs of administration and teachers have the capacity to lay the groundwork and foster or hinder the development of the internal climate of schools. McCluskey (2000) discussed the importance of the relationship within schools among teachers, administrators and students, which included the elements of trust, freedom and autonomy as being of utmost importance. Within that model, movement forward can be expected. This is a paradigm shift from a power and control model, to one that includes compassion for others, with the inherent connectedness that has been previously discussed in this article.

As well, in learning, one may try out new innovations and find a need to make adjustments along the way, as change has its own process. The culture that accepts it with adults, can promote it with students. The social cost of power and control can be debilitating, for if one is required to be other than who they are and relinquish or hide their talents and gifts that they have come to the world to share, one becomes a slave to the manner in which the organization works.

## **A New Paradigm**

There is a new way, a softer, gentler way of teaching, utilizing creativity, and the innate curiosity of people to understand their world more fully. A culture that fosters a search for innovation has the capacity to create the building blocks of change. As all ways of knowing and understanding our world are important and valid.

How do we begin? We can start by listening to each other, sharing ideas and creating a climate of support in trying new things, taking a risk in making mistakes and learning from them. Nary has there been any innovation that didn't have its first few attempts described as speed bumps. Perseverance and persistence in trying something new or in viewing something in a new way can begin with one person who finds another and work together to create change. A belief in change needs to be present, and a belief and willingness to stumble and retry without judgment is of utmost importance. Within this culture of fairness and an egalitarian format, it is possible to change, with the added inclusiveness of diversity and culture.

## **Reclaiming Our Youth**

Returning to reclaiming our at-risk youth – perhaps they could be viewed as the canaries in the cave – as a litmus test of what can happen when outside influences impact their lives in ways that need to be understood with compassion. For if there is a sense of separateness that people in society perceive between themselves and others such as at-risk youth, the element of judgment comes into play, which reinforces those feelings of difference. Perhaps these youth can be the indicators of how far astray we have gone from connectedness to separateness. One needs to remember that we all come from the same stuff. “Buddhism holds the basic premise that, at the most fundamental level, there is no qualitative difference between the material basis of the body of a sentient being, such as a human and that of, say, a piece of rock . . . [and that] the atoms in our body once belonged to stars far away, in time and space” (The Dalai Lama, 2005, p. 97). We are connected in so many ways. The first step is to educate those who can nurture the development of students to include success within a framework of knowledge, with the capacity to enliven a system that has historically had as its model, a factory ideal of conformity and sameness.

If, as observers, we can have an effect on what is observed and if our intentions and beliefs are in an entangled state within us, then our beliefs can affect what we observe. Further, if our beliefs and

intentions about people can have an affect on them, we need to be cognizant of what we put forth. For if we believe we are born of the same “stuff” as others, then others are born of the same “stuff” as us, and Euclid’s axiom of “things that are equal to the same thing are also equal to one another” (McCoy, 2002) applies. If we are connected in multidimensional ways, we are all family. “All things are interconnected in the “families” of galaxies, stars, planets, nations, and people” (Edwards, 2004, p. 15).

Therefore, the principles of simple mathematics such as the geometry of Euclid and the quantum physics of the Pygmalion and Butterfly effects apply here to our philosophy of viewing others as connected to ourselves. If we examine the beliefs that we carry within and recognize that some of those beliefs may be doing a disservice to others, such that we judge others to be not a part of ourselves, we can make the decision to make changes in how we conduct our relationships and in doing so, recognize that it is the belief in separation that created that disservice. When we do this, we may bring the intention of connecting with another part of ourselves as well as to those around us of any age, with compassion, instead of separateness.

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## About the Author

**Donna Johnson** is a former elementary school teacher from the Lord Selkirk School Division in Manitoba with 27 years of experience. She graduated with a B. Ed. (1981) and a M. Ed. (1996) degree from the University of Manitoba and most recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a Masters Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy (MMFT) in 2009, which provided the credentials to open her private practice, Soul Work Therapies, in Winnipeg. As well, she holds an Advanced Diploma in Art Therapy from the Vancouver Art Therapy Institute (2006). At present she is an instructor at Aurora Family Therapy Centre, which is affiliated with the University of Winnipeg, and has done so since 2012. Donna incorporates a holistic quality into her work, bringing a belief system of conscious compassion towards all those she interacts with.

## Address

### Donna Johnson

Aurora Family Therapy Centre;  
The University of Winnipeg;  
Sparling Hall, 2nd Floor;  
515 Portage Avenue;  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9, Canada.

e-Mail: [aurora@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:aurora@uwinnipeg.ca)