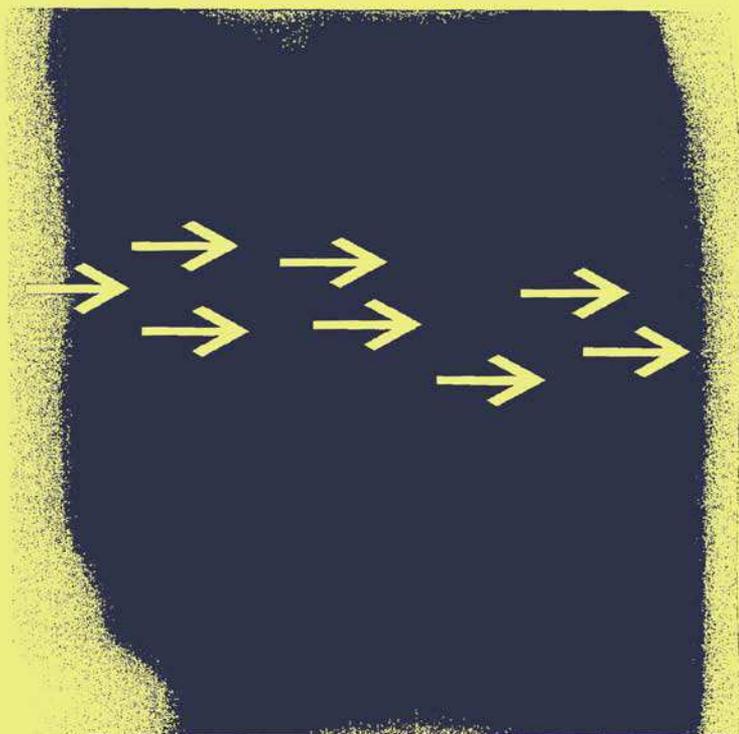# TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS - TOWARDS INTEGRITY

Edited by CHRIS WATKINS, CAROLINE LODGE and RON BEST

Tomorrow's Schools—Towards Integrity

Today's schools are subject to increasing demand and constraint; their work is more complex and fast changing than ever before; politicians and press demand quick fixes. This book paints the picture of a new integrity for our schools as they face a challenging future.

Themes addressed include:

- schools as places of learning and integrity
- the curriculum
- family, child and intercultural perspectives
- community relations
- policy and governance

Tomorrow's Schools—Towards Integrity demonstrates how a connected approach is possible and necessary if schools are to hold themselves together and play a key role in working with young people to construct a future. This is a book for everyone who thinks seriously about the future of schools.

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5 'Now just compose yourselves'—personal development and integrity in changing times

Chris Watkins

In this chapter I consider personal development in modern times. The focus is mainly on young people and their development, but I start by discussing how such development is conceived. The idea I want to exercise is that we think about personal development in an outdated way, more suited to the Victorian era or the factory age. Nowadays our conception needs to change, to include better understandings of the lives young people lead, the way they learn and how they may compose a life. Central to all of that is a different view of what personal integrity should come to mean, in both the senses explored in this book: how will 'wholeness' develop, and how will 'uprightness' emerge? There will be plenty of implications for the role of schools and I hope to spell out key ones.

Introduction: reviewing our metaphors for development

First I wish to examine the taken-for-granted ways in which we currently conceive personal development. When we talk in day-to-day terms about this theme we do not use a particular specialised language: instead we talk in a way which uses images from a range of other sources. Our conception of what 'growing up' means, what supports it, and what are its end points, is constructed through various metaphors—pictures from somewhere else which we use to describe and illuminate the theme. This is not an unusual phenomenon when we discuss complex social matters. For example, the various metaphors we live by have been analysed (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and our formal understandings of organisations are well arranged under various metaphors (Morgan 1986).

I offer a personal collection of five significant metaphors for personal development, and hope to illuminate the particular picture on which

each depends. In trying to 'bring these pictures to life' I include some of the everyday sayings and wisecracks which may relate to them.

- Development as settling down, even 'buckling down'—becoming fastened to something serious. This conjures up the idea that the process is one of subordinating youthful interests and 'drives' in order to arrive at an end-state characterised by a patterned repertoire, which might include the acceptance of current social norms. Settling down also calls to mind the process of sedimentation. This metaphor implies a corresponding view of adulthood: as economic agent (regular breadwinner), as moral agent (s/he who has come to know best) and psychological agent (who has forged an identity through the blooming confusion of adolescence in which internal drives and external constraints are in combat). Adults sometimes express envy created by this image, and remark 'youth is wasted on the young'.
- Development as growth, maturation, expansion. Here the person is viewed in their biological aspect, which of course may be accurate for describing the organic growth and later decline, but the metaphor is extended to the psychological and social. The picture created is of progressive development which seems 'natural': the corollary is that it may become stunted if insufficiently fed. 'Home is the place where teenagers go to refuel.'
- Development as a process of passing through identifiable stages. This characterisation has been used by some psychologists who describe developmental stages, each with characteristic ways of being and comprising a necessary preparation for the next. It has also been used by some sociologists who describe different age-related periods in terms of different legal, cultural and role expectations. 'He's going through his adolescent phrase.'
- Development as a journey. This metaphor brings with it ideas of plans and goals: planning the journey, identifying where we want to reach. Here we talk about 'equipping' or 'preparing' young people for adult life, 'getting a good start', 'helping them find a direction' and so on. The image of the road to the future is a strong one. As one parent commented: 'She's stopped asking where she's come from and started to refuse to tell us where she's going.'
- Development as choosing a vocation. A broad notion of vocation can signify becoming a something—a job, a role, an adult. Adulthood is portrayed as the important state, so that the young person is an adult-in-waiting. But the other element of this metaphor, the idea of choice, can go unnoticed. The classic question:

'What do you want to be when you grow up?' reflects this conception, and the idea that preference for future role will answer everything about personal development. A wisecrack from this view is 'Teenagers today know everything—except how to make a living.'

Together, these images start to unearth the underlying view that development is a process of achieving consistency, significance, sameness and some sort of end-state. But as you read, some flaws might have started to appear in their descriptive power, and a lack of fit with the times in which we currently live. For example:

- Development as settling down. The notion that adult patterns of life are settled has been questioned for an increasing proportion of the population: in post-industrial society adults experience many changes. The associated view of young people simply adopting static values from their environment is increasingly shown to be erroneous: they are involved in adaptation and change, and are sometimes part of much wider patterns in value change. Their experience of development is not one of conflict, or 'storm and strife' as a prelude to consistency—though this might describe the family dynamics for the minority who engage with therapeutic help (Haley 1980).
- Development as growth and maturation. The apparent smoothness of growth in this image contrasts with the non-linear, erratic sense of development which characterises it for many. Defining moments in a life are often the unexpected crises and the unprepared-for transitions. Sometimes adolescents go through transformational changes which this metaphor might underestimate: for example, loss of a parent, moving from the parental home, an accident, a lottery win or even appearance on a TV confessional show. When disequilibrium happens, and a change of state occurs, an element of the random enters in. Adopting a vegetation metaphor, with its agenda for optimal growth, misses the point.
- Development as passing through stages. This metaphor has been challenged by evidence from both ends of the life span: first, young people are often capable of the functioning which was supposed to characterise later stages and, second, many adults do not consistently behave according to the characteristics attributed to that stage. Stage theories may have under-estimated young people's capacities, and over-estimated differences between young people and adults (David, this volume). Trajectories are not so predictable: 'a virtual infinity of developmental forms seems possible, and which

particular form emerges may depend on a confluence of particulars, the existence of which is fundamentally unsystematic' (Gergen, 1982:161).

- Development as going on a journey. The 'maps' for creating a life in modern times are not for sale at the road-side: pathways to jobs and to success are not clear, setting a clear direction may be a recipe for disappointment, and which equipment is needed for the journey is now contested. Whereas up to the mid-twentieth century much of the knowledge required to manage adult life was gained through school, now a much smaller proportion is available through that experience.

- Development as choosing a vocation or job. The notion of a 'job for life' has disappeared in most sectors of employment, and with it has gone a predictable view of the qualifications or previous experience needed to gain access. Indeed the extent to which job advertisements specify qualifications has reduced in recent years, in favour of personal characteristics, working style and attitude to learning. The idea that people choose freely and supposedly 'rationally' from a range of options is known to be wide of the mark. And with the increase in life expectancy, jobs become a smaller proportion of everyone's life.

Each metaphor may have existed for centuries, but the historical social and cultural conditions of particular times may have focused them. While not wishing to promote simplistic versions of history, I speculate the following particular worlds of ideas for the above five. Development as settling down may be drawn from the invention of thermodynamics (the predecessor of psychodynamics) and the growth of industry, giving us images of force and pressure needing external control to create the stable state. Development as growth and maturation may derive from thinking about evolution and from 'normal' biology, the growth of food crops and the 'normal distribution' in statistics, which originated in that field. Development as passing through identifiable stages mirrors the times of defining civic duties, the introduction of age-graded schooling and the invention of adolescence. Development as going on a journey calls up romantic notions of travel and exploration, occasionally extending to images of crusades, colonialism, or the Grand Tour, while development as choosing a vocation or job derives from the industrial revolution, expansion of work and the partial democratisation of jobs achieved by merit rather than ascription.

The historical location of our current metaphors may show their lack of fit to current times, and also reveal other reservations. As with

many other images which we retain from our past, they may apply most to the dominant but minority groups of their time. Patterns of gender and class are not far beneath the surface. They may have applied less to the majority of lives, and even for the dominant minority they were probably over-simplifications.

Our current metaphors have impact: they are more than passing descriptions. They influence the way that we describe, understand and respond to issues where they are invoked. Although their permeation of everyday talk leads us not to notice our unwitting attachment, they play a part in our construction of our realities.

Changing times, changing metaphors?

As the world changes, our ways of understanding and our metaphors may also change. However in times of change, old metaphors could maintain a conservative impact by impeding the recognition and acceptance of change. For example, when someone takes a view that development is not happening according to their expectations, the above metaphors are used actively. Minor moral panics are constructed and particular fears are voiced in terms which contain these images:

- young people not settling down, being 'wild';
- youth being immature;
- adolescents as irresponsible;
- young people getting stuck, or being direction-less; and
- 'he's got no idea of what he wants to be'.

For some individual young people, such statements can indicate real difficulties, but when used more broadly these phrases regularly cast young people as deviant in society, on occasions when they would not themselves be experiencing a felt difficulty. How can we make sense of this phenomenon? At one level it is one generation showing its use of out-dated metaphors for understanding the development of the next generation. This can be seen at the smallest scale in family processes: parents of adolescents are likely to use scripts in relating to their adolescents which their parents used in relating to them, and we know that the period when young people and their families address the independence issue is the time when families most seek help (Haley 1980). In the larger domain of power and social control, these images sustain past ways of thinking and make existing constructions of reality difficult to break, so that current power relations are maintained through their use. Examples are to be found in the discourse of

politicians and other moral entrepreneurs (Cohen 1973) who become engaged in heated ways about 'the youth question', predicting dire consequences for society if young people's deviance is not addressed and 'corrected'.

The process of pathologising youth and its development is not new, and the metaphors in use may always have changed over time, so is there any particular value in highlighting this process now? I think so. Currently the pace of change seems significantly increased, and metaphors (which are always slow to change) may now become conservative forces more quickly than before. I see this in the increasingly broad way that deviance is still attributed to the young at the beginning of the twenty-first century. There seem fewer occasions of appreciation and regard, in a general atmosphere more characterised by compliance and control. So rather than a general recognition and acceptance of change, the usual targets are pathologised.

On some occasions the recognition that things are changing is voiced, yet this in turn creates worries rather than acceptance. It may be that fears of the future are easy to stimulate if and when people feel that they cannot take sufficient of the known into the unknown. For example, the old ways of describing personal development, which emphasised sameness and consistency, might be recognised as outdated, but an acceptable alternative is not yet available. So we hear people voicing a deeper set of fears about young people's development—that it will degenerate into individualism and relativism. I think

we need not jump to that other extreme. We need ideas which might stand us in better stead for thinking about the development of young people in the current context, and these ideas will need to incorporate more of what we know about that context. Since such ideas will be relatively new, they may not link to an available metaphor in our language, but they may resonate with the wisecrack 'The problems of the world today are so complex that even teenagers don't have the answer.'

The metaphors for development also imply our beliefs about how integrity is achieved. If we are in a context where old predictabilities now seem less valid, what will it mean to have a sense of coherence to person-hood and to life? The challenge is to leave behind old certainties which have become unsafe, and seek safe uncertainties in what is emerging. In these times when change is apparent on social, technological, economic, ecological and political dimensions, it would seem a logical corollary that the dynamics of personal identity will also change.

In the remainder of this chapter I will consider growing up as composing a life in complex and increasingly fast-moving ways, in which the processes of learning and advancing complexity will be central themes. I also indicate how a new understanding of personal integrity emerges.

Personal development and the development of complexity

Metaphors from the industrial age and the romantic era, which privileged sameness and consistency in the person, are now less tenable, so how can we conceptualise development, and what constitutes progression? Here I remember the words of a noted headteacher and public figure, at an otherwise boring seminar on personal-social education, saying 'the issues and dilemmas I face now at 60 are fundamentally the same as the ones that I experienced at 15—but the complexity is probably different'. As a key guiding concept, complexity has been identified as a characteristic of advances in many fields of intellectual endeavour (Waldrop 1994), and in some ways has been applied in understanding persons.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has studied optimal experiences in everyday life, in a wide range of people from champion figure skaters and Navajo shepherds to Japanese teenage motorcycle racers and chess masters. Common features have been identified. Optimal experiences are characterised by 'flow', episodes of concentration, absorption, deep involvement, joy, and a sense of accomplishment. These occur in situations of high challenge and high skill. Some people, including some young people, achieve higher proportions of flow in everyday life than do others. Such people are likely to set goals, have surplus psychic energy to invest in everyday experience, and do things for their own sake rather than in order to achieve some later goal. Adolescents who are characterised in this way 'learn to experience flow by getting involved in activities that are more likely to provide it, namely mental work and active leisure' (Csikszentmihalyi 1997:120).

With this background, Csikszentmihalyi also considers the processes of personal development as the development of complexity. Complexity is an increase in both differentiation and integration. Differentiation refers to the degree to which elements of a system differ from each other. Integration refers to the extent to which elements of a system are connected with each other. A system that is more differentiated and integrated than another is said to be more complex. Increased complexity is the goal of much important learning, in which fine-grain

differentiation can be made at the same time as understanding much wider integration of concepts. It is in a similar vein to the notion that in the process of learning what is learned is variation (Marton and Booth 1997). It reminds us that earlier theories which emphasised differentiation in identity formation were only highlighting part of the picture: difference and connection must both develop.

Domains of complexity in personal development

From the perspective of developing complexity, personal development can be considered in a number of domains. I propose to discuss three: interpersonal repertoire, sense of self or selves and interpersonal relations.

Descriptions of another person have tended to reflect the perspective of an outside observer. We describe the other in terms such as they're this or that sort of person, whereas we explain our own behaviour by referring to the context or circumstances. An effect of this has been the tendency to talk of others in ways which emphasise them as self-standing individuals, separate from context and from relations. This is also reflected in the grand narratives of philosophers' 'what does it mean to be a person?' and the static 'characteristics' or 'virtues' which that discourse gave us.

In order to reflect better the interpersonal rather than the personal, a more dynamic way of describing is needed, something which emphasises the person in relation. We might conceptualise the person as their cluster of relationships, thinking of them as a node in a web of relationships. Similarities and differences in the features of this web (its extent, the quality of relationship, degree of connectedness and so on) turn out to make sense of many important similarities and differences between people, of the changes that may occur in their lives, and also of how change can be made in their lives. In an analysis of contemporary life and the changes since the romantic age and the modern age, Gergen (1991) has suggested that the very idea of individual selves each possessing mental qualities is now threatened with eradication. Our relational embeddedness is crucial, which leads to a focus on interpersonal repertoire.

A young person's interpersonal repertoire could be considered in terms of its range and complexity, and development viewed as increasing the complexity of situations encountered and handled. This would reflect what we know about our changing context: according to Gergen 'the number and variety of relationships in which we are engaged, potential frequency of contact, expressed intensity of relationship, and

endurance through time are all steadily increasing' (1991:61) mainly as a result of the technologies of the century such as travel, film and the explosion in communication technologies. In this increasingly saturated situation, the variety of contexts in which we find ourselves has an impact on identity: the wider range of different contexts triggers people to be suddenly propelled by a wider range of alternative impulses. 'They seem securely to be one sort of person, but yet another comes bursting to the surface—in a private activity or a turn of interests' *(ibid.: 68)*. One of his examples: You work as an executive in the investments department of a bank. In the evenings you smoke marijuana and listen to Grateful Dead.

The experience of increased variation promotes the acquisition of multiple and disparate potentials for being. Our conceptions become not an individual self, but multiple selves, each with relations and contexts; not solid centres and unified wholes, but constructions in their different contexts. Young people often convey the sense of inhabiting multiple worlds, in ways which may reflect what adults are now coming to re-discover in fast-changing times. Markus and Nurius (1986) have described how important dynamics of the person may be viewed in terms of the dynamics between aspects of multiple selves.

In this context is there a new notion of integrity? If the notion of a simple sameness is given up, will multiplicity only engender self-contradiction? I think not, because the shift is away from self as object, and towards thinking of self as process, and reconstructing self as relationship. As a result our sense of multiple selves can build a coherence which is not a static one. Connectedness for the person is likely to derive from the dynamic qualities of the relationships and narratives which are constructed, and the goals and futures they embody. This is an alternative view to the potentially reductionist 'developing social skills': although enhanced skills may play their part in areas such as handling change and accepting safe uncertainties, this is likely to feel an outmoded contribution, since adding a skill seems somehow less than expanding a life.

A focus on relationships may be extended from young people's selves through community connectedness, to wider societal collaboration. Here the notion of trust takes on a special significance, as a concept for describing pro-social aspects of relationships and illuminating how society functions. Fukuyama (1995) has analysed how wider layers of trust, from family through civic society to state, are related to key concerns such as the economic performance of countries. Sadly in Britain the expressed level of general trust in society has fallen since the 1960s (Abramson and mglehart 1995).

Nevertheless, the move from individual selves to multiple selves and relations, with the person exercising increased linkage through communications, requires a new conception of progression. Rather than the stage-defined individualist beliefs of the modern age, progression in interpersonal relations might come to be seen as the increasing complexity of contributions a person's relations make to the development of trust. A person might ask of themselves or of others 'what have my relations added to the commonwealth?'.

The contribution of interpersonal relationships to community and trust may also address the fears of fragmentation which are currently strong in many people's views of the future (Watkins 1996). Social exclusion and division are concomitants of strong individualism: the relational perspective offers more inclusion and a distributed definition of progress. It may also lead to a relational view of morality, and of moral uprightness, that second sense of integrity. If morality is removed from the heads of individuals, it can be conceptualised as a relational phenomenon of contribution to a common good, contributing to a relational or communal benefit.

So the relational self contributes to a dynamic new complexity of social cohesion and to a new more networked than hierarchical form of social capital. This is where a further analysis offered by Csikszentmihalyi (1993) links complexity with harmony. In evolutionary terms, simple individual selves try to control far more energy than his/her biological system requires for survival, whereas complex relational selves may require less energy than biological drives would prompt him/her to acquire. This idea bears similarity to the distinction between belongingness identities and process identities (Curie 1972). The distinction suggested that those young people who defined themselves in terms of what belonged to them or what they belonged to, engaged in different forms of social action from those who defined themselves in terms of their here-and-now processes and priorities. It also raises the theme of materialism in personal development and identity. Kress (1995) suggests that 'The world of tomorrow may offer its inhabitants a lesser level of material well-being, and yet an at least equal and perhaps greater level of satisfaction.' This certainly provides a more attractive vision than the scenario of future disintegration. But how could it be? Evidence in Western Europe suggests that there is a consistent shift, generation by generation, towards what Ingelhart (1990, 1997) has termed 'post-material values'. This is a 'shift from emphasis on economic and physical security above all, toward greater emphasis on belonging, self-expression, and the quality of life' (1990:11). And contrary to

views which are heard from some commentators and some teachers, 'the basic values of contemporary youth are not more materialistic than those of their counterparts a decade or two earlier'. Indeed the value map of British society (Synergy Brand Values 1994) suggests that young people are developing the values needed for these changing times and to suit them for the future world, i.e. the leading edge values include androgyny, internationalism, balance, complexity and excitement. These values are a reflection of their identity formation rather than a simple outgrowth of what has been 'passed on' to them.

Will tomorrow's schools embrace such a perspective and will they leave behind the too simple notion of consistency which currently underlies their practices? Can they support young people in the development of multiple selves and help them forge complexity? On occasion encouragement to seek diversity, to extend range, and to be non-standard will be needed! Schools will need to regain their ability to expand the number of perspectives on a given question and help young people actively choose the option that will enhance complexity. They will need to help young people prepare for what is not known. Can our schools enhance the development of such values, and celebrate complexity and connectedness? Can they recognise that the new values which are emerging do not put young people into conflict with the preceding generations? Instead they offer increased synergy at the exact time when societal development needs it. Young people seek new forms of belonging, experience or attachment in a fast-expanding scene.

It is no coincidence that this discussion has started to focus on the future. If multiple selves, multiple relations and multiple contexts are the order of the day, then their dynamics are importantly informed and influenced by what Markus and Nurius (1986) have described as 'possible selves'. These are the multiple conceptions people hold of what they might become, would like to become, or are afraid to become. This surely is something which school experience should be able to enhance—the constructive development of possible selves and the goals to match.

Goals and their social nature are crucial to a dynamic integrity. Studies of social competence have highlighted key elements: goal-directedness, an interest in social goals, and ideas about improvement. Using a very open and contextual view of social competence, Ford concludes: 'Adolescents who are judged as able to behave effectively in challenging situations…assign relatively high priorities to interpersonal goals (such as helping others, getting socially involved, and getting along with parents and friends) and are likely to describe themselves

as possessing the intrapersonal resources to accomplish these goals. They also tend to be more goal-directed than their peers' (1982:340). This conclusion links with the conclusion from Csikszentmihalyi: the person who can set goals, become involved, and direct their attention gains most from immediate experience, and in the context of others is open to enhancing those gains with others.

Can schools help young people to become proactive and diverse in their personal goal-setting? This would be a far more impactful contribution than the current scene of defining the goals of schooling as exam performance and promoting limited forms of target-setting. It would need to recognise that personal effectiveness now includes a sense of goal-setting which includes doing things for their own sake rather than for some deferred achievement. This may be asking schools to give up too much: the beliefs in 'delaying gratification' are no less strong just because they are out-dated. It requires the radical shift to learning as a way of being, rather than learning as a means to doing (Vaill 1996). Puritan fears of young people as hedonistic would doubtless emerge and have to be handled, but they are clearly a product of a previous age.

So where's the future for young people in schools?

With this provocative question, I am not asking about young people's prospects after they leave school, nor about the prospects for the future of schools (although both are good questions). Here I am considering how and when the experience of school stimulates and supports young people in thinking ahead to their own futures.

People who function effectively and with satisfaction in the modern world have a developed attitude towards the future. This is not to say they have a fixed attitude, but they do consider and embrace the future and what it may bring, thereby constructing hope. The contrast is the various pathologies of the future: denying it, ignoring it, narrowing it, over-planning it. Boscolo and Bertrando (1993) have clarified that many aspects of well-functioning families can be traced to the developed and synchronous views of family members regarding time and the future. Karniol and Ross (1996) have reviewed the psychology of time orientations and Binks (2000) has developed evidence that teachers who are proactive and comfortable about their futures are more effective classroom managers and learners in their own right. A vision of the future is also influential on wider social relations and connections. Axelrod (1990) demonstrated that the conditions for people cooperating with each other (without a third party telling them to) included that

each party could see the future implications of their actions on the other, and in this way the 'shadow of the future' fell back on to the current behaviour.

As the pace of change increases we grow more frustrated with stories of the past, and in this context people who are comfortable with their future are well suited to their context. Yet the current condition of our schools seems to offer little or no stimulus for young people to develop a view on the future, in its personal and broader senses. The curriculum is overcrowded with subject knowledge generated by previous generations. The styles of pedagogy which are officially encouraged are about instruction rather than construction or co-construction. The end purposes have been narrowed to a view of performance indicated through public examination results. This will need to change for schools to have a future.

What would we need to see in any school which helped young people develop their future orientation? Some of the elements would be extensions of the themes encountered in this discussion: the extension of multiple selves to possible selves, the promotion of appropriate goal-setting rather than target-setting, and helping young people develop how their contribution will make a difference. Extending these into the core theme of composing a life would mean helping young people develop their reflexivity, their knowledge of selves in relation to context, and their future orientation through exploring questions such as:

- What might your life be like in ten years' time?
- When might you be ready to leave home?
- When might your parents accept you are able to go?
- How might you make a difference to the world you live in?
- What will matter most for you in composing a life?
- How will you be in the world you wish to see?

As schools help young people learn about themselves in contexts, and about how social systems beyond the family work, they make a major contribution to personal development. Through the forms of social and learning relations which are created in school, and in the relations with social systems beyond the school, they have the potential for contributing greatly to young people's complexity and resilience for an unknown but certainly changing future. There is much to be done in updating schools to the changed world. Tomorrow's schools need to play a significant part in the future, and in regard to personal development their motto could usefully be to help young people compose a life and make a difference.

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