

Sustainable Wellbeing Primer

Heesoon Bai (Simon Fraser University) &
Avraham Cohen (City University of Seattle in Vancouver)

Abstract

An account of what it is for humans to lead a life of sustainable wellbeing in the globalized world of the 21st century needs to be grounded in some close understanding of irreducible human nature and context-sensitive human conditions. In this presentation we attempt an approximation of such an account, and then we propose relational and pedagogical guidelines for educating humanity.

Human being everywhere and anytime share certain truths about themselves: 1) Secure childhood attachment experiences are foundational to mental and physical health; 2) developing as unique and irreducible individuals and at the same time communally belonging as a member of a group (family, community, society, world) are two essential human needs both of which must be met equally, not one or the other, not one over the other; 3) whole human beings are physical, mental, emotional, and soulful beings. Marginalizing or denying any of these being-dimensions lead to imbalanced development and negative individual and societal consequences; 4) who we are and how we are has far reaching influence on how we apprehend the world; 5) humans participate in the world and life as subjective, intersubjective, and objective beings; 6) humans are discursive and non-discursive, and reflective and pre-reflective; 7) the capacity to be empathic is built into us, but this capacity is frequently underdeveloped and unfulfilled even in those who think otherwise; 8) breakdowns, mistakes, unexpected and unwanted experiences are inevitable in human life; 9) intergenerational caring, teaching, and support are of paramount importance to the sustainability of a culture; 10) compromising and eroding the carrying capacity of the planet threatens the very survival of humanity.