

Chapter One

Introduction

Here I shall say nothing that has not been said before
And in the art of prosody I have no skill.
I therefore have no thought that this might be of benefit to
others;
I wrote it only to habituate my mind.

My faith will thus be strengthened for a little while,
That I might grow accustomed to this virtuous way.
But others who now chance upon my words
May profit also, equal to myself in fortune.

(Shantideva, 2006, p. 51-52)

The Beginning of Things – Belonging, Being and Becoming

The day I held the draft of the Australian early childhood curriculum document, *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF)* (Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009), I felt the coming together of two parts of myself that I had never consciously realised that I held as separate. The first part was working with young children and their families. I have found the way children learn and develop fascinating and I have been inspired when working alongside them.

I began working in early childhood education as a family day care provider after the birth of my first daughter. It is now twenty-nine years later and my commitment in this area continues to grow. I have engaged in formal study for

much of this time while working in the profession. I have undertaken many roles including child care assistant, trained educator, early childhood teacher, and centre director. I currently have the privilege of collaborating with educators while facilitating their work with young children. I have continued to be inspired by the educators' commitment and the unique perspectives children bring to the world.

At the same time I also have a keen interest in Buddhism and have pursued personal and formal study in this area. In a sense what I have learned of Buddhist philosophy has underpinned how I aspire to live my life. Over the past twenty-five years I have engaged in meditation, self-reflection, and attended discussion groups in an effort to develop my understanding of this approach to living. I am drawn to the philosophies of Mahayana Buddhism (Dalai Lama, 2003; His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, 2012b), which is focused on the development of compassion and loving-kindness for others.

There was some overlap between these two areas, early childhood education and Buddhism, which led me to develop and sustain such a keen interest. As I learned to view the world with greater compassion through Buddhist training, my perspective on young children and their families came more frequently, from this same place. In a similar way, working with young children provided me with many opportunities to practice the things I had learned in my Buddhist studies. However, I had never consciously seen deep connections between these two interests until I read the title of the then new Australian curriculum framework,

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia.

It seemed extraordinary to me that this early childhood framework so strongly aligned with my understandings of Buddhist philosophy. The document highlighted that children needed a sense of where and with whom they *belonged*, while Buddhist philosophy had taught me about the concept of and importance of understanding our interdependencies with others. The curriculum framework emphasized the importance of *being* in the moment for children and aligned closely to the Buddhist concept of being. This concept also underlies Buddhist philosophy. Much of my training in Buddhist practice consisted attempting to be in the moment through a focus on meditation. The final word in the title of the document outlines the process of *becoming* and the importance of understanding that what children experience will influence who they become. It also has recognised children ‘are shaped by many different events and circumstances’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 7). This final concept demonstrates links to the complex Buddhist concept of karma ‘which means “action”, [and] refers to an act we engage in as well as its repercussions’ (Dalai Lama, 2001, p. 66). Put simply, it means that actions have consequences (Burns, 2007).

I began to think deeply about why these two seemingly unrelated areas should have such strong synergies. As I continued to study Buddhism, while simultaneously working alongside children, the significance of the concept of compassion began to crystallise for me. The Buddhist training I was engaged in continually

emphasized compassion. One of the practices that was recommended was to try to capture myself engaged in a compassionate manner each day. This was already commonplace for me in early childhood environments as I worked with young children feeding them, comforting them when they cried, and settling them to sleep. These were all tasks that I frequently enacted as part of my professional role. I came to believe that the concept of compassion was not only central to Mahayana Buddhist traditions (His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, 2013), but was also positioned similarly within the early childhood profession's philosophy and practice. I became aware this was what allowed these two divergent fields of study to so closely align.

The Research Question

I began to wonder about the place compassion held in the early childhood years. How was it experienced by children? How was it practiced by educators? How could we promote the development of compassion in the children we cared for? I began to search in Buddhist teachings, but finding little guidance I took my question to the recognised head of Buddhism, His Holiness, The 14th Dalai Lama.

I was attending a five-day teaching workshop on The Stages of Meditation by His Holiness at The Dome in the Sydney Showground (His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, 2008). Throughout the five days participants were encouraged to ask the Dalai Lama questions by writing them on paper and placing them into a box. On the first day I wrote the question: 'How can we best support the

development of compassion in young children?’ Then I placed it into the box. At the end of each day His Holiness would answer a number of the questions, often relying on his interpreter as he clarified complex Buddhist concepts. I waited each day for my question to come up, but it wasn’t until the last question, on the very last day, that it was read. After the interpreter read the question the Dalai Lama became very animated and leaned forward in his chair saying:

This is very important. Young children, very important. But, we don’t know enough about this area. What we need is for someone with the correct mental disposition to research this area.

I felt like he was talking directly to me and I took his insightful words as a personal recommendation to pursue further study in this area.

Searching for Method

The research focused units of study I was undertaking as part of the coursework for my Master’s degree in Education facilitated a deepening of my understandings of a range of different methodologies that could be used to answer the questions I had. As I worked my way through the methodologies I held each one up alongside my interest in compassion in early childhood. I was always searching for a methodology that would allow me to closely interrogate understandings about compassion and young children.

At the outset of their studies, researchers are often drawn personally to either quantitative or qualitative research and ‘bring(s) to this choice ... assumptions about knowledge claims’ (Cresswell, 2003, p. 13), which proved to be an accurate description of my experiences. I was drawn to a qualitative paradigm as

I had a keen interest in human responses and human nature (Punch, 2013). On reflection, I also felt that qualitative methods would be more suitable for my study. In general terms quantitative studies demonstrate how often a behaviour occurs and/or for how many people it was important. Such studies are valuable and I have used some to inform my own practice. As I spoke to other professionals about the role of compassion in the lives of young children, they typically responded by asking for clarification about what the word meant to me. Our conversations often included aspects they believed were related to compassion, such as pro-social skills. I felt it would be important at the outset to describe the concept I was talking about and how it was experienced before any attempts at quantifying it would be successful (Punch, 2013).

While a number of qualitative methodologies presented as possible vehicles for my study, I soon came to believe that phenomenology offered the most potential for exploring the types of understandings I was seeking. Phenomenology embraced the tools needed to study a phenomena and my search was for understandings about the phenomenon of compassion. In addition, phenomenology aimed to look closely at the identified concept as it occurred in everyday life. Finlay (2012, p.17) states its 'central concern is to return to embodied, experiential meanings'. This was where I wanted to see compassion, as part of each young child's day. The aim of phenomenology is to bring to research writing its essential nature, so it can be understood, acknowledged and examined (van Manen, 1990; 2014). The confusing conversations I had with

other professionals motivated in me a further desire to bring compassion to this point of in-depth phenomenological examination or analysis.

In the early stages of exploring this methodology, I became aware of the complexity of the underlying philosophical framework as described by Minichiello and Kottler (2010). In fact, the way it had evolved into a methodology had further complicated researchers' choices about where to place themselves within such a framework. I needed to make decisions about my own relationship with and understandings of the philosophy, and to engage with writers who best facilitated these emerging knowledges.

Phenomenology

I began by exploring the way phenomenology had developed. Husserl had been credited with developing the philosophy of phenomenology during the twentieth century. His philosophy was aimed at returning to the 'essential and general structures of phenomenon' (Finlay, 2012, p. 20). Husserl 'believed that by concentrating on different components of what he was investigating, its most characteristic properties (or essence) would eventually shine forth' (Fox, 2009, p. 126). He proposed that it was possible to get to the truth of a phenomenon by the philosopher making use of analytical tools such as bracketing. This required the putting aside of his/her own prejudices and biases to allow an examination of the phenomenon, without overlaying a personal interpretation (Finlay, 2012).

Heidegger was a student of Husserl. After Husserl retired, Heidegger took on the professorship and began to evolve the philosophy of phenomenology. He used the term hermeneutics to describe his view that phenomenological inquiry, rather than presenting a universal essence, described texts as both a written form and an enactment of a phenomenon. Heidegger claimed that phenomenology serves to 'recover our roots in being' (Fox, 2009, p. 148). The line between these two philosophical positions is not concrete and understandings of phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology are not stationary (Finlay, 2012).

Phenomenology has evolved and the evolution of this philosophy may be due to the use of phenomenology within a research context rather than being used in a purely philosophical sense. Husserl-inspired phenomenology aims to be descriptive and to reveal 'essential and general structures of phenomenon'. On the other hand Heidegger inspired hermeneutic phenomenology 'argue[d] for our embeddedness in the world' (Finlay, 2012, p. 22).

Reflecting on these two schools of phenomenology as they related to my study was complex. I was drawn to the philosophy of hermeneutic phenomenology. I agreed with Heidegger's assertion that all experience is interpreted through our own knowledges, experiences and histories. However, it was my intention to employ Buddhist philosophy to inform my interpretation of this study alongside phenomenology. My understanding was that the concept of compassion in Buddhism was fixed, an absolute truth aligned more closely with Husserl's phenomenology.

This problem was resolved when I attended training by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama called: *Awakening the Mind*, held in Sydney in December, 2009. The Dalai Lama described phenomenon, including compassion, and how they arise through causes and conditions. I realised my understanding of compassion in Buddhist philosophy was erroneous and that this philosophy too considered the phenomenon to be relational (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2009). At this point the philosophies of hermeneutic phenomenology and Buddhist philosophy aligned and I felt confident that hermeneutic phenomenology would help me explore compassion to develop deeper understandings.

Writing in the Dark

van Manen has been an influential writer on hermeneutic phenomenology for over three decades with a particular focus on education (van Manen, 1990; 1991; 2002; 2005; 2007; 2014). It was his work that gave me the support, guidance and courage I needed to begin to use this qualitative methodology. He used the phrase writing in the dark to describe the difficulty of phenomenological writing (van Manen, 2005, p. 2). I am unsure how, but instead of feeling intimidated by the concept of writing in the dark, I was comforted. At that point I accepted that I needed to start investigating without knowing everything, without yet fully understanding this complex methodology, and without having the clear hypothesis that typically guide other research methodologies. I had to begin, acting almost on faith, that by working with the guidance of past researchers I would move forward and gain the understandings and skills I needed.

I was particularly motivated by the way phenomenology explored the phenomenon within lived experience. van Manen stated that ‘the world of lived experience is both the source and the object of phenomenological research’ (1990, p. 53). These words gave me a starting place and I planned the methods I would use to move forward with this perspective always at the forefront of my thinking.

Aim of the Study

van Manen’s work (1990), *Researching Lived Experience*, guided me as I considered how to undertake my study. I wondered about the way compassion was experienced by young children and wanted to illuminate the way it existed in everyday life. Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the rich detail of everyday life. Rather than focusing on extraordinary events, it seeks information about the phenomenon as it occurs naturally within the day-to-day life of the individuals studied (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The results of a phenomenological study give rich information about human responses, inform us about human nature and what it means to be a human having a particular experience. ‘In contemporary human science, “lived experience” remains a central methodological notion ... that aims to provide concrete insights into the qualitative meanings of phenomena in people’s lives’ (van Manen, 2014, Chapter 2, Section 4, para. 3). Hermeneutic phenomenology is ‘more a method of questioning than answering, realizing that insights come to us in that mode of musing, reflective questioning’ (van Manen, 2014, Chapter 2, Section 1, Para. 2).

I hoped it would allow me to explore my wondering about the way compassion occurs in the lives of children.

Methods

In order to gain deep insights into the quality of compassion I have used a number of methods, including my own personal reflections, which combined together provide rich detail of how compassion is experienced.

My Place in the Study

van Manen (2014) encouraged researchers to use personal experience as the starting point of their study. He believed researchers needed to place themselves, their understandings and the experiences they have of the phenomenon studied within their research. His intention was not only to make evident the perspective of the researcher and to make visible the filters through which they made interpretations of information, but importantly to provide valuable data to illuminate the subject studied. This was not viewed as self-indulgence, but rather as authentic evidence of how the phenomenon was experienced in the human condition (van Manen, 1990).

I had been a young child, a mother of three young children and the grandmother of three children. In addition, I had worked in the early childhood field for twenty-nine years in a variety of roles and settings, and I have had a great deal of experience working with young children. Each chapter of this thesis will give

detailed descriptions of my personal experience which will shape the first layer of data to inform my writing.

Observing Young Children

The use of social science methods of empirical data collection has, according to van Manen (2014) become part of phenomenological research. These methods give us an opportunity to gather ‘examples and varieties of lived experiences’ (Chapter 11, Section 1, Para. 5) that we can use to enrich our understanding of a phenomena. He cautioned that we must realise that this collected data was ‘never truly identical to the prereflective lived experiences themselves’ (Chapter 11, Section 1, Para. 1) yet they may ‘allow us to become more experienced ourselves’ (Chapter 11, Section 2, Para. 2).

Collecting detailed observations is an effective way of gathering data for phenomenological analysis and reflection. It is appropriate to use with young children who are unable to give detailed descriptions through other methods (van Manen, 2014). As the focus of phenomenology is around detailed descriptions, observing a small group of children in detail seemed to be more appropriate than less detailed data from larger groups. I decided to invite three to four children for the study.

Having decided to make observations of small numbers of children, I thought deeply about who to recruit. My final decision was based on what I proposed would give the most valuable data. Firstly, I wanted to observe children as young

as possible, but was working at this point from my understanding that compassion was action-oriented. I decided to work with children aged between eighteen and twenty-four months. I was aware at this age the children would be less dependent on a caregiver for routines and better able to take action for others in their own right (à Beckett, 2007).

I also wanted to collect observations from both the children's homes and the early childhood service they attended, to enrich the observations collected and give greater scope to the data. Finally, I wanted to recruit families with more than one child as I had often seen siblings acting to help each other. I considered the inclusion of siblings would enrich the home environment, giving the observed child opportunities to interact with and help others closer in age to themselves.

I decided to recruit two to three families and would observe each child for eight one-hour sessions. Two would be at the family home and six at the early childhood service. I advertised for families to join the study at an early childhood service in my local area where I had no connections either personally or professionally. I advised potential participants that I was undertaking a study on compassion and asked for volunteers from families with children aged between eighteen to twenty-four months at the time the study commenced.

I felt very privileged that three families agreed to join the study, especially that they were prepared to allow me to enter their homes and observe their everyday lives. One of the families had only one child, but as they were keen to be part of

the study I included them, considering it would primarily increase the diversity and richness of the data collected.

When making visits to the families I decided to schedule them during routine periods of the day (such as mealtime, bedtime and bath time) to ensure that the child was interacting with the parents. I was conscious of the risk that observing children outside of daily routine times may see them engaged primarily in solitary play and interacting little with their parents (Pellegrini, Symons, and Hoch, 2004). I planned my visits to observe the child in the early childhood service at different times of the day so I could capture data based around different routines, plus the child playing alongside and interacting with other children. The observations I collected from the three children and their families would be used as the second source of data for reflection within the study. Where the raw data is reported it will be indented and italicised to signify its positioning prior to analysis.

Introducing the Children and Their Families

I would now like to introduce the children and families who invited me, into not only their homes, but in a very personal way into their lives. Their names and any identifying details have been changed for the purposes of this study. Ethics approval was obtained for the study and the approval number was HE10/095. In addition permission to observe the child, their parents, siblings and early childhood educators was gained prior to commencing visits (see appendices A-

F). Knowing the children well will support the reader to understand their contexts, and begin to get to know something of each of the three children.

Ruby and Family

The first child I visited was Ruby. She was twenty-three months old and lived with her mother and father. She did not have any siblings. Ruby's father worked full-time and her mother worked outside the home three days per week. On these three days, Ruby attended the early childhood service.

Pearl and Family

The second child I visited was Pearl. She was twenty-one months old and lived with her mother and father. Her mother worked full-time and her father worked at home caring for the children. Pearl attended the early childhood service two days per week. She had two siblings, Jack who was four years old and Belle who was seven years old.

Jasper and Family

The last child I visited was Jasper. He was nineteen months old and lived with his mother and father. His mother worked full-time and his father primarily worked at home caring for the children. His father was also employed outside the home. Jasper attended the early childhood service two days per week. He had one sister, Holly, who was five years old and had just started formal schooling.

The Early Childhood Service

All the children observed attended the same early childhood service where I had advertised for participants. It was a long day care service that cared for fifty six children aged birth to six years. The children observed were all in the same room,

which was designated for use by very young infants from their time of enrolment to 24 months. An average of 12 children attended daily and were engaged in early childhood education and care programs in this room.

How to Observe

Before I made any of the research visits, I needed to make decisions about the types of observations I would make. As an early childhood educator, I was very experienced in observing young children, though I was aware that the aims of my observations in early childhood services were different to my objectives for this study. I researched observation methods and identified participant and non-participant approaches to be used. I was aware that during participant observation, the researcher would join in with what is occurring, perhaps playing with children or helping out with the routines they were taking part in. I avoided this position as I felt there was a risk of bias in the data as a consequence of my significant experience in engaging with young children, mentoring educators and planning professional learning experiences for educators. I was concerned that if I joined in while collecting observations, I would unconsciously guide responses from either the child or from the parents or educator. For these reasons I elected to use non-participant observation, where I would take a passive position, actively removing myself from what was occurring by remaining inconspicuous. By not engaging the child, parents or educators (Punch, 2013).

About twenty minutes into my first observation at Ruby's home, my planned observation style was challenged. As soon as Ruby was free to move (when I

arrived she was in her highchair eating dinner) she climbed onto the lounge next to me, looked me in the eye and said: 'Ruby'. There was a second of hesitation on my part (I was conscious that to be a non-participant meant not interacting with the children) and then I replied: 'I'm Trish'. I smiled in response as she indicated what she was watching on television.

I immediately realised that I had been using the researcher part of my brain when I had planned to use non-participant observation. As an early childhood professional, I strongly believed in the rights of the child and have always strived to work with young children in a way that acknowledges their rights and humanity (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 1989). Sitting and ignoring a child to distance myself from the observations I made was totally anathema to this belief, and did not survive the first challenge. While I could justify my position to adults, I could not communicate this to children as they would not understand why I was ignoring them. From this point on in this observation visit, I took a different position in relation to the participants. I still stood or sat on the periphery of what was happening but was relaxed and responded to what was happening, at times smiling at Ruby, joining in some simple activities or responding to something her parents had said.

To Participate or Not to Participate

Following this first visit I began to review the information I had on participant and non-participant observations. After reading and reflecting on my experience during the visit, I gained a better understanding of the difference between these

two forms of data collection (Punch, 2013). I had chosen non-participant in the belief that to do otherwise might affect the response of children and families. However, after the first visit I could not justify the position of non-participant observer and realised it would not suit my study.

van Manen (2014) discussed the way observations of young children could collect valuable information for a phenomenological study. He warned about the quality of phenomenological observation being distinctly different to participant or non-participant observation. He described the observation style of the phenomenologist as

close observation involv[ing] an attitude of assuming a relation that is as close as possible while retaining a hermeneutic alertness to situations that allows us to constantly step back and reflect on the meaning of those situations ... close observation requires that one be a participant and an observer at the same time, that one maintains a certain orientation of reflectivity while guarding against the more manipulative and artificial attitude ... that a reflective attitude tends to insert in a social situation and relation (Chapter 11, Section 2, Para. 1).

This style of observation also described the way we collect information from children in early childhood environments. It is a process of constant balance, a stepping back and forth, between being part of the experience and reflecting on its meaning. During my subsequent observations of the children I engaged as skilfully as possible in this style of close observation.

During these observations I decided to make short notes, primarily of the interactions I had seen, with as much detail as possible. I focused on recording information about interactions and experiences where I sensed compassion

occurring. Once I left the centre or family home, I would write the observations in detail, using the notes and my memory of the felt experience. As the observations would be of young, primarily non-verbal children, I recorded them in a written form and then asked the primary carers of the child (either the parents or educators depending on where the observation was made) to read and respond as to whether they considered it an accurate account of what had occurred.

Embedding Shantideva

Literature has a role to play in providing information for a hermeneutic phenomenological study as it can contain valuable information about the lived experience of a phenomena. van Manen (2014) recommended the use of fiction literature as it can give insights into ‘fundamental life experiences that are available to our interpretive reading’ (Chapter 11, Section 1, Para. 2). Since my knowledge of compassion has been informed by Buddhist teaching I explored a number of written texts that I felt would support my understanding. I chose to use *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, by Shantideva (2006). This ancient text has been described as an artefact of the human experience.

It was originally delivered as an oral teaching and was aimed to be a description of what it meant to be a bodhisattva (a warrior of compassion) from one person’s perspective. It is reflective of Shantideva’s experience and understandings and as such would enrich my study by giving a different perspective of compassion (van Manen, 1990). Each chapter of this thesis opens with a segment of Shantideva’s

verse, part of the Buddhist teaching which related to the theme of the writing. It was anticipated that these would facilitate my interpretation of compassion, giving another layer to my reflections and understandings.

The Shantideva (2006) verse that opened this chapter described in a sense the phenomenological method. It is focused on gaining deep insights into a phenomenon by the researcher and a belief that these would be of benefit to others (van Manen, 2014). In addition, the verses that opened this chapter had encouraged me to approach the study with humility and a wish to improve myself. I attempted to maintain this perspective throughout my research writing.

Writing as Method

At its core the aim of phenomenology is to attempt to describe ineffable concepts. It does this by combining rich and detailed observations that provide glimpses of the phenomenon described. Interpretive writing supplies a tool to bring attention to the nature of the phenomenon so it can be understood, acknowledged and examined (van Manen, 1990). Its primary aim being to evoke an emotional response in the reader that, when combined with the writing itself, leads them to understandings about the phenomenon (van Manen, 2005).

By its nature hermeneutic phenomenology is reflexive and involves a cycle of observation, analysis and writing aimed at deepening understandings of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). I intended to engage in a process of interpretation and writing following the collection of each observation, or

consideration of each anecdote, so that the analysis of each piece of data was informed by the understandings that have emerged from previous investigation. This reflexive cycle happened alongside another cycle that involved visualization of the work up close, an examination of each part, and then looking on it from a distance, as a whole. In this way, understandings emerged from the intimate details of the work and from considering how these were woven together to tell a story (van Manen, 1990).

Emerging Themes

As this has been an interpretive phenomenological enquiry, the reflection inherent in the lived experience has given it meaning. The direction the interpretation took was grounded in the concepts and themes that emerged from the data, rather than being predetermined and embedded in an existing theoretical perspective. van Manen (2014) described the way themes have been used in phenomenology as being very different from the thematic positions used in other methodologies, such as grounded theory. In these methodologies, themes are used as a way of framing research and as an analytical tool to guide the collection and understanding of data. However, in phenomenology, the researcher is sensitively searching for the meanings that emerge from the data:

“analyzing” thematic meanings of a phenomenon (a lived experience) is a complex and creative process of insightful invention, discovery, and disclosure. [It is not] a rule bound process but a free act of “seeing” meaning’ (Chapter 11, Section 2, Para. 1).

While reflecting on my experiences, observations of children and Shantideva's (2006) text I attempted to remain open, without expectations of what I would see, and sensitive to the themes that emerged. These themes form the framework of the thesis in an effort to support myself as researcher, and the reader, to explore the phenomenon of compassion through the lens of the experiences that it existed within and has emerged from. Following the introductory chapter which gives an overview of the research and a description to position the study in context, each chapter examined a theme that emerged: chapter two considered attachment; chapter three care; chapter four nature; chapter five pedagogy; chapter six spirituality; and finally, chapter seven discussed peace and draws the thesis to a conclusion.

This openness to what emerged also impacted the way philosophy and theory were used. Unlike other academic writing, phenomenology does not begin with a literature review that explores the breadth of information on the studied topic. Hermeneutic phenomenology requires the researcher to engage with information that emerged as relevant, just as the themes they observe seem to appear. In this way the literature that supports understandings and reflections have been embedded throughout my writing as they informed my exploration and journey (van Manen, 1990).

Defining Compassion

Embedded into the roots of phenomenology has been a search for meaning within language. Many of the concepts explored using this method are ineffable,

describing and defining them can be problematic (van Manen, 2014). It is suggested that an investigation of the etymological roots of words can shed light on their meaning and place in our language. This can promote understanding of a phenomenon, and this search for meaning is commonly used by phenomenologists in an attempt to get to the heart of what they are investigating (van Manen, 1990). Throughout this study, I have used this strategy to gain insight and I began by using it to understand compassion.

Compassion has been used commonly in the narratives of our day. Listening to Australian radio one morning, I heard compassion listed as a positive personality trait of a president, a plea for a compassionate response to the refugee crises and a call for compassion to be embedded into school curricula. As the word is used commonly why has it been that when I have spoken with other early childhood professionals about the role of compassion in the early childhood education the discussions have often become clouded and confused? The words empathy, kindness or pro-social skills are often discussed in this context, however a shared understanding of what compassion means remains difficult to find.

The words empathy and compassion are closely related and are more often than not used interchangeably by authors. Gonzalez-Mena (2010), when writing for early childhood professionals, stated that the word compassion and empathy were the same, yet my investigations have found a significant difference in the definitions and roots of the two words. I began by investigating empathy, as this

is often the word that others suggest or use when I discuss compassion with them.

A simple definition of empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010). The word entered the English language from the German word *emföhlung*, which means someone sharing the feelings of another (Stevenson, 2015). The word was originally used in English from an aesthetic viewpoint, to describe the act of enjoying artworks by the viewers projecting themselves into the artwork. In a similar way when working with young children I often apply the concept of empathy. I describe supporting children to understand the perspective of others to increase their understanding about how others think and feel. I believe this is never more essential than when I am scaffolding children to manage their emotions and behaviour. Early childhood educators often attempt to promote empathetic understandings in children about the impact of their behaviour on others. In an attempt to attune children into what others are feeling, we use sentences like: How would you feel? Recent studies suggest that empathy is an innate response in humans according to De Waal (2009).

The word compassion has its roots in the Latin word *compati*, to suffer with (Stevenson, 2015). Definitions of compassion are about shared experience(s), not just through feeling empathy for what another is experiencing, but through an understanding of our interconnectedness with others, to suffer with them and to wish to alleviate their suffering (Ferrucci, 2006). In his work, *Wisdom: From*

Philosophy to Neuroscience, Stephen Hall (2010) described eight neural pillars of wisdom. One of these pillars was compassion. He defined compassion as ‘being attuned to the suffering ... of another person’ (p.116). He described it as being action-orientated and inspiring us to act altruistically towards others with kindness, sympathy, charity, generosity, caring and cooperation.

The Dalai Lama (2005) offered the following definition to further support our understanding of compassion:

Compassion is an aspiration ... wanting others to be free from suffering. It’s not passive – it’s not empathy alone – but rather an empathetic altruism that actively strives to free others from suffering (Chapter 5, Section 1, Para. 2).

He clarified what is meant by compassion by stating that there are many forms of compassion that are mixed with feelings of desire and attachment. Compassion may emerge from an emotional response to others such as the love of a mother for her child or the love that develops between a husband and wife. However, this type of compassion is contingent on the way the other behaves and it may change when the relationship changes. Genuine compassion is not just an emotional response, but a firm commitment that is founded on reason (His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, 2012a).

Conclusion

With this understanding of compassion as a guiding compass, I embarked on my study. I practiced close observation and reflection, and delved into areas of my own personal experience that I had forgotten existed. I began in the dark (van

Manen, 2005), and at times it felt I was in a blackened world, at the bottom of a well, covered in stones, but I persevered and ultimately gained some insights into the complex philosophy that underpinned my chosen methodology and a greater understanding of the phenomenon of compassion.

Chapter Two

Let compassion lead and attachment will follow

Today my life has given fruit.
This human state has now been well assumed.
Today I take my birth in Buddha's line,
And have become the Buddha's child and heir.

(Shantideva 2006, p. 84)

Introduction

As I observed the children and their families to collect data for my study, the way they related to each other emerged as significant. In particular, the way attachment relationships existed between the children and their parents appeared important. Many of the observations I made contained nuances of the way these relationships existed. The observations had a sameness of content across the three homes that was perhaps a result of the observations being embedded into family routines around dinner and bathing for example. However, the quality of the observations was different. In the area of the attachment relationship this difference was evident, although describing what the variance was did not prove to be easy. Words such as tone or warmth began to give a particular shape or form to the different ways the parents related to their children. The unique role compassion played in each instance was felt, but a challenge to describe.

Routine Relationships

The phenomenological strategy of holding variations of an experience together was used in this chapter to illuminate and examine the relationships of the three children and their parents. It began with a description of an experience between each child and her/his father collected together below. Each father was similarly involved in caregiving experiences for their child, but describing them together allowed small differences to become visible and to be examined in-depth. By perceiving these differences, understandings about the phenomenon of compassion and its role within parent-child relationships emerged (van Manen, 2002).

Dad came into the room and Jasper stood up and moved toward him with his hands up. Dad picked him up and then sat on the lounge with Jasper on his lap looking out towards the room. Dad leaned into the chair and Jasper leaned back into Dad. Dad picked up a book sitting on the lounge next to him and began to read it to Jasper. Jasper looked at the pages of the book as Dad read, touching them occasionally and making sounds. Once Dad had read the book he read it again with Jasper turning the pages. Mum asked Holly to set the table and Dad got up with Jasper on his hip and began to clear room on the table for dinner. Then he sat back on the lounge with Jasper on his lap. One of the family cats came over and sat near Jasper on the arm of the lounge. Jasper lifted his hand up to him and screamed. Dad said: 'Don't scream, that's not nice.' Jasper relaxed back into Dad and Dad wrapped his arm around him and cuddled him.

Dad took Pearl upstairs to dry and dress her on the change table. As he dressed her Dad chatted about what was happening. Pearl and Dad began to talk about a book they were familiar with. Pearl asked: 'Will read leaf?' Dad replied: 'And then we'll brush your teeth'. Dad found the book and took Pearl to the bed, laid her down on it and then lay down next to her. Pearl cuddled her body close to Dad's. Dad said: 'We'll read leaf.' Pearl said: 'Wheels on Bus, Wheels on Bus'. Dad said: 'Okay, Wheels on the Bus first then leaf'. He began to sing and Pearl sang along with a line in each verse. When he had finished singing Dad said: 'Brush teeth.' Pearl pointed to the book and said: 'No'. Dad began to read the

book with Pearl making comments about different pages ... When they had finished reading Dad maintained the closeness with Pearl and said: 'Guess what? It's time to brush your teeth.' Pearl said: 'No. More story.' Dad said: 'No, teeth first, then more story'. Pearl asked: 'Snip?' Dad said: 'Snip your nails? Okay, we'll brush your teeth and clip your nails'. Dad paused then said: 'Okay, we'll brush your teeth.' Pearl said: 'No'. Dad said: 'Yes'. Pearl said: 'No'. Dad said: 'Yes'. Pearl and Dad looked at each other silently for a few seconds then Dad said: 'Let's brush your teeth'. He got off the bed and lifted Pearl up, she wrapped her arms around his neck and he carried her to the bathroom.

Ruby heard Mum running water in the bathroom and ran into the room saying: 'Shower?' Mum said: 'You're going to have a bath tonight, I'm cleaning it out'. Mum began to fill the bath with water and Ruby tried to pull her clothes off. Mum began to undress her and took her nappy off saying: 'Go sit on the potty'. Ruby sat on the potty and said: 'Do wee'. Dad came into the room and knelt down next to the bath and checked it was the correct temperature. He said: 'Get in Ruby'. Ruby said: 'Mummy'. Mum held onto Ruby and lifting her into the air put her into the tub. Mum left the room and Dad said: 'Sit down'. He helped Ruby to sit down and swished the water around her and picked up a handful of bubbles. He blew the bubbles at Ruby and she laughed. Dad began to wash Ruby. He placed the pump of soap in front of her and said: 'More soap'. Ruby pumped soap onto her hands and began to rub her belly. Dad pumped soap onto his hands and began to wash Ruby all over. He picked up a sponge and began to wash Ruby with it then he passed it to Ruby saying: 'Ruby do'. Ruby rubbed her belly with the sponge. Dad filled a jug with water and poured it over Ruby's body. Ruby picked up a toy and filling it with water began to drink from it. Dad said sharply: 'No, don't drink water'. Ruby filled the toy with water and held it up to Dad who pretended to drink it. She filled the toy again and held it to her mouth. Dad said: 'Don't drink it'. Ruby continued to fill the toy and empty it back into the bath. Sometimes when the toy was full she would lift it to her mouth and Dad would say sharply each time: 'Don't drink it'.

Human Relationship Theory

Human relationships by their nature, involve more than one person. They form when people open themselves to each other, when they begin to communicate in a special space which develops between them (Metcalf & Game, 2002). Within this space, knowledge and understandings of each other creates something that exists beyond either of them individually, something that can exist only when

they relate to each other. These relationships take time to grow and to become something that nurtures and supports those who are part of them. They are built from numerous exchanges, comprising give and take interactions and a developing care and concern for each other (Degotardi & Pearson, 2009).

The three narratives that began this chapter described an observation that was evidence of each child's relationship with her/his father. It was quite apparent that these relationships were complex, multi-layered and had developed over time. They were typical of the types of observations I made while at the children's homes. The quality or tone of the relation between each child and her/his father were similar throughout my time with them. These particular observations were selected for examination as they all were related to caregiving by the father for the child. It was evident from the beginning of my time with each child that they had generally positive relationships with their fathers. However, the tone of the relationship that existed between Jasper and his Dad, plus Pearl and her Dad differed from Ruby's relationship with her Dad.

Jasper and Pearl consistently appeared to be relaxed and comfortable in their Dad's company and to seek their Dad out for comfort and play. While they were both redirected by their Dad in relation to their behaviour, the redirection was calm. Each Dad used strategies that ensured the interaction maintained positive relations, such as holding their child close while redirecting the behaviour or by using a calm tone of voice. For example, when Jasper screamed at his cat, Dad said: 'Don't scream, that's not nice', but at the same time he increased the

strength of his cuddle of Jasper. In the same way, Pearl and Dad argued back and forth about whether to brush her teeth, but all the time her Dad maintained close physical contact with her and used a calm tone of voice. Watching them together it was evident that they remained in their relational space throughout their interactions (Metcalf & Game, 2002). The physical closeness that both Dads created maintained the positive tone of the relational space even when conflict arose.

The observation between Ruby and her Dad appeared to have a very different quality. During parts of the observation it seemed that a warm relational space existed between them. However, whenever Ruby moved the toy full of water to her lips, her Dad sharply reminded her not to drink from it. At this point it was as if her Dad had stepped out of the relational space. This type of interaction between them was typical of the observations between Ruby and Dad. While helping her eat a meal, he frequently and sharply reminded her not to use her hands to pick up food. When the two were engaged in rough play, he suspended the play abruptly because a piece of food had fallen from her clothes.

Ruby's Dad was a self-declared neat freak, admitting this when I first entered the house, while he swept the floor. I said: 'I hope you didn't feel you needed to clean up because I was coming.' He replied: 'No, I do this all the time, I'm a bit of a neat freak.' His wife nodded and agreed. This focus on cleanliness and hygiene seemed to be an overriding characteristic of his interactions with Ruby and with his wife. Metcalfe and Game (2002) proposed that when we relate to

others we are ‘simultaneously connected to and separated from’ (p. 13) them with the relation being built on what each participant brings. They also stated that during interactions ‘there is a play of differences and similarities in which we lose a clear sense of borders’ (p. 13). Lively, warm, mutually responsive relationships rely on the parties letting go of their own positions and stepping into a shared space where warmth, intimacy and trust can grow.

This shared relational space that is part of everyday interactions cannot be neutral. It is the relational aspect of the space that ensures it is always a product of what each person brings to the interaction and the rules and shared social habits that are an agreed part of that space (Vuorisalo, Rutanen & Raittila, 2015). The context of the relation is ‘not an external structure, setting or event, but an internal changing phenomenon that is constantly reorganised through the lens of each person’s affective experience’ (Brennan, 2014, p.285). During this observation Ruby’s Dad held very tightly to his position in relation to cleanliness and the tone of the relational space he occupied with her was profoundly affected by this. He brought a rigidity to his relation that consistently impeded his interactions with Ruby and seemed likely to affect their ongoing relationship.

Attachment Relationships

When I first met each of the families in their homes I was struck by the importance of the way they related to each other, to the atmosphere of the space. However, what was very evident was that the interactions I observed were often expressions of attachment relationships that had developed between the children

and their parents. As Vuorisalo et al. (2015) state, ‘because of the relational nature of the space, it is visible only by observing actions within its context’ (p. 68). While it appeared that the way Ruby’s Dad held tightly to his position on cleanliness had negatively affected the way their relationship developed, it was true that each of the fathers held a position in some way. Pearl’s Dad insisted she brush her teeth and Jasper’s Dad told him not to scream at the cat. The actions and interactions I observed demonstrated a real difference in the attachment relationships the children had with their fathers.

Hinde (1992) talked about the unique characteristics of the attachment relationship and how these related to the positional places we hold within them. As attachment relationships involve a child and an adult, a difference in cognitive ability is inherent that may not exist in other relationships. Within relationships each party makes adjustments to their goals to suit the other, however children may not yet have the cognitive capacity to do this skilfully and need greater support. The adult partner to the relation may also hold differently to goals than they would when relating to another adult as they bring to the relational space aspirations for their child.

Brennan (2014) discusses the particular qualities necessary for the development of secure attachment relationships stating that ‘secure adult-infant attachments ... depend on the adult’s ability to attune and respond to the infant in a sensitive way ... which depends on the caregiver’s internal state’ (p. 285). So while some personal positioning was to be expected from the parent in the relationship, it

seemed that Ruby's Dad's position was rigid and consistently impacted on his interactions with her.

Reflecting on the definition of compassion, to suffer with, I wondered if positioning yourself *with* another while in the relational space affects the quality of the relationship? If you positioned yourself as an equal with the other, motivated by care and concern for the other, it seems likely that the quality of the relationship would be different. On the other hand if you have a very rigid position in relation to the child you were relating to, this may mean you have difficulty letting go of that position and being *with* the child in the moment.

Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1953; 1969) developed the theory of attachment following close observation of young children. He described two types of attachment relationships; secure and insecure. A secure attachment relationship was said to develop when a child's signals were responded to with consistency and when their needs were understood and met. Insecure attachment patterns were likely to develop when young children received insensitive and inconsistent care (Degotardi & Pearson, 2009). Further research has identified a disorganised attachment pattern that may develop in children whose parents have experienced unresolved trauma and loss. Such an attachment pattern has been reported to result in the most negative outcomes for children (Dumont & Paquette, 2013). It is now well demonstrated that 'failure to establish early parent-infant attachments puts infants at risk' (Brennan, 2014). Further, attachment relationships and

relationships in general are more complex than the simple two person experiences that have been described in these observations. Children grow and develop within a complex web of relationships, each of them with differences in tone, intensity and significance (Degotardi & Pearson, 2009).

All three of the children I observed demonstrated a number of behaviours that indicated they had a secure attachment relationship including:

Ruby sat next to her Mum at a small table drawing. She dropped a pencil under the table and crawled under to get it out. While under the table she banged her head. She climbed out and stood up rubbing her head and began to cry. Mum said: 'Oh you've bumped your head'. Ruby came over to her and she lifted Ruby onto her lap and cuddled her. Ruby stopped crying quickly.

Pearl walked into the early childhood centre with her Mum, staying close to her as an educator said hello to them. Mum took Pearl's hand and led her to the playdough table, pulled out a chair and lifted her to sit on it. She pushed the chair under the table and lifted a blob of playdough and placed it in front of Pearl. Pearl began to play with the dough while Mum stood behind her for a few minutes. Mum then leaned over, kissed Pearl on the cheek and said goodbye. As she left the room Pearl watched after her until she went out of eyesight then went back to playing with the dough ... Pearl turned to an educator and touched her arm and asked: 'Mummy?' ... The educator said: 'Mummy's gone to work hasn't she?' Pearl went back to playing with the play dough.

When I arrived at the door Jasper saw me and ran away into the house. His Mum followed him and he cried and put his arms up to her. His Mum picked him up and gave him a cuddle. She said: 'He's just woken up, he's a bit clingy'.

The difference, that was evident throughout my observations of the children in relation to their attachment relationship, was in the preference they displayed when seeking comfort or affection. Pearl and Jasper seemed happy to have either their mother or father comfort and care for them. They sought either parent out

throughout the observations, generally going to the parent who was physically closest. During care routines they seemed comfortable with either parent bathing or dressing them.

Ruby was different. She showed a preference for her mother and if she was nearby Ruby sought her out for comfort. In fact she showed some discomfort when separated from Mum during a care routine when Dad was dressing her after her bath:

Dad wrapped a towel around Ruby and lifted her out of the bath. He held her over his head saying: 'Shake, shake, shake.' He put her on the ground and finished drying her off. Dad lifted Ruby up and took her to her room wrapped in a towel and placed her on the change table to complete drying her. Ruby asked: 'Mum?' Dad said: 'She's getting her dinner'. Dad blew raspberries on Ruby's tummy and she said: 'No, please?' He blew another raspberry and Ruby laughing, said: 'More'. Mum came into the room and Ruby cried saying: 'Mum'. Dad said sternly: 'Mummy, leave please?' Mum said: 'I'm going'. Dad said: 'Go Mum'. Mum left the room. Ruby began to cry for a few seconds saying: 'Mum'. Then she settled. Dad continued to dry her and Ruby began to cry again saying: 'Mum'. Dad said: 'In a minute, Mum in a minute'. Ruby stopped crying. Dad began to dress her. When he had finished Dad put Ruby onto the floor and she ran out to Mum in the kitchen saying: 'Cuddle'. Mum bent down and gave Ruby a cuddle.

Perhaps the differences in the way Dad related to Ruby, as discussed previously, have impacted on her attachment relationship with him. She certainly appeared to feel less secure and confident when alone with him. Throughout the observation Ruby showed a clear preference for spending time with Mum and immediately moved to her when she was released.

Attachment and Fathers

As stated earlier, both Jasper and Pearl seemed comfortable with either their father or mother and would seek whoever was closest to them when they wanted comfort or reassurance. Ruby on the other hand, consistently sought her Mum when she needed comfort. It was clear that her sense of security relied on Mum's presence. Paquette (2004) has researched the area of father-child attachment and theorised the concept of an activation relationship, which is an affective bond that allows children to open up to the outside world. This theory proposes that a 'child's confidence would result not only from the sensitive response of parent to child for comfort but also encouragement during exploration' (Paquette & Bigras, 2010, p. 33). The activation relationship occurs during play and exploration when a parent encourages a child to take reasonable risks to explore and understand the world. While all parents would 'establish with their child a unique balance between [the attachment and activation] relationship' (Paquette & Bigras, 2010, p. 36), fathers are more likely to stimulate the activation relationship as they play more and engage their child in more active and challenging games (Dumont & Paquette, 2012).

Historically the role of fathers has often been to play with their children rather than provide caregiving, however, we are currently seeing an increase in fathers providing care across Western societies (Paquette & Bigras, 2010). Both Pearl and Jasper's fathers remain primarily in the home to care for the children while Ruby's father works full-time outside the home. Paquette and Bigras (2010) state that traditional fathers often act within attachment relations to open the child to

the outside world. Even fathers who have taken on non-traditional roles like Jasper and Pearl's fathers generally are 'less comforting, more playful' (p. 442) than mothers however, they are 'more comforting and engage in less physical play' (p. 442) than more traditional fathers.

If we consider Ruby's interactions with her Dad within the concept of an activation relationship, the way he relates to her could often occupy this space. He engaged in rough and tumble games and while caregiving activities were enacted he brought a more playful attitude, such as blowing raspberries (putting his lips on her belly and blowing) while dressing her after the bath. However, even during these activation type events his focus on cleanliness overrode his playfulness. When giving Ruby a horsey ride he very abruptly stopped the game when a piece of food fell off her and in this case she ran to her Mum for comfort.

Seeing compassion in the caregiving activities that developed into attachment relationships was easy, as the sensitive and reflective parenting required to establish these relationships sits well within the idea of being *with* another and having the sensitivity to meet their needs. However, I believe that compassion is also required during the activation relationship. Perhaps it is not as easy to see, but this relationship also required the parent to enter into a space *with* the child where they can make a sensitive judgement about what is appropriate for the child in that interaction. This may be even more relevant during this style of relationship since the potential for harm and fear are more likely. Being sensitive in this space was important as 'children who are under stimulated by their fathers

during play may be less confident ... [those who are] overstimulated are more likely to have more externalised behaviours and be neglected by their peers' (Dumont & Paquette, 2012).

Internal Working Model

While developing his attachment theory, Bowlby (1979) used the term internal working model to describe the way the development of individuals was formed by her/his relationship with the primary carer in their lives. He described how children developed an internal working model of the world made up of their experiences and interactions in infancy. The child who received responsiveness, not only developed a secure attachment to her/his caregiver, but also developed an internal working model that sought and expected this type of gentle loving care from all contact they had with others. The child who was at risk from her/his caregiver and who had developed a disorganised attachment pattern would utilise an internal working model that related to others with distrust and fear. The quality of the attachment relationship is 'thought to crystallise into stable working models of self and others' (Dumont & Paquette, 2012, p. 431).

When this concept of internal working models is considered and teased out, the threads of what occurs within an attachment relationship are complex. What is clear is that each party to the attachment relationship brings her/his own internal working model, though in contemporary early childhood discourse what the adult brings to the relation is often ignored in favour of child-centred understandings (Brennan, 2014). The adults bring an internal working model that has grown and

developed over the course of their own lifetimes. The child brings a model that is newly developed and developing. The quality of what occurs in the relational space between parents and their child, and between children and early childhood educators, would grow out of the complex interplay of the internal working models of each one.

Current attachment models use the terms reflective functioning and maternal mind-mindedness to describe the sensitive characteristics that are required by the adult to relate to the child in ways that promote feelings of security (Brennan, 2014). These two characteristics were described by Brennan (2014) as:

Maternal mind-mindedness is . . . the parents ability to attune to the affective states through the mother externalising and articulating the infants thoughts and feelings as a means of regulating internal states . . . [and] reflective functioning concerns the mother's capacity to detach from her own affective experience in order to contain and respond to her infant's state of mind (p. 286).

The capacity of a parent to use mind-mindedness or reflective functioning would rely on her/his capacity to express compassion, the ability to be *with* another and to use this experience to understand and meet the needs of the child. Not only is compassion necessary for the development of secure attachment relationships, it is also likely that secure attachments develop compassion in children as their sense of security allows them to open themselves to others.

The verse from Shantideva (2006) which opened this chapter talked about birth into the Buddha's line. This referred to his belief that by undertaking the Bodhisattva's vow he would develop his compassionate nature and become like

the Buddha. Buddhist philosophy believes compassion to be an innate characteristic of sentient beings and that all children are born with the capacity to develop compassionate natures. This innate characteristic could be described as part of the way each individual's internal working model develops, an interplay between the innate characteristic of compassion and their life experience.

Compassion and Pity

This chapter has used the phenomenological strategy of holding variations of an experience together, in this case the relationships of the children and their parents, so that differences can be illuminated and examined. When they are described together, because of the similarity in experiences, small differences become evident and can be considered. This was the case with Ruby and her Dad's attachment relationship. These differences gave insight into the phenomenon of compassion and its role within the area of attachment (van Manen, 2002).

While the first part of this chapter held similar variations of an experience together to illuminate differences, the following discussion brings together two concepts that are often used interchangeably, compassion and pity. This will enable an investigation of the meanings of the two words and will increase understandings by describing what compassion is not. The following description of my reflections on attachment brought to mind my experience as an educator working in an early childhood service which provided a vehicle for examining these two concepts.

Attachment Relationships in Early Childhood

Environments

While I was working in my first early childhood service the organisation was unable to secure a diploma trained educator to lead the team in the two to three-year-old room to begin the year. As I was studying towards my diploma I was asked to take on this position until a diploma trained educator could be recruited. A few months into the year the organisation achieved its aim and was able to recruit a new educator. When she started at the centre I moved back to my own position in the birth to two-year-old room.

Hannah, a child who was in the two to three-year-old room, was just over twenty-four months old. She did not cope well when I moved back to the infant's room. She became distressed each morning as her Mum left and remained so on and off throughout the day. At that time Jackie and Barbara were the educators in her room. When they attempted to cuddle her or pick her up Hannah would resist and move away from them. Though I had developed a positive relationship with Hannah during the few months I had worked with her. I was not aware of any special connection between us. It was evident though that our relationship was important to her as she stopped crying and would come to me for a cuddle if I entered her room.

The next few times Hannah attended the centre she continued to show signs of distress. Barbara and Jackie alternatively fussed over her in an attempt to try to get her to settle her or shook their heads together, as they talked about her having a problem and how worried they were about her. At times Hannah would sit on the floor crying and rocking her body. This behaviour particularly distressed the educators. They talked together about it being evidence of some deep psychological problem. At times they became so worried about her that they showed distress themselves and cried together.

They persisted for the next few visits to the centre with attempts to settle her. As she continued to show signs of distress a decision was made to relocate Hannah to the infant's room where I was working. This decision was taken as much to meet Hannah's needs as to calm the fears and worries of Jackie and Barbara. Hannah settled immediately and would follow me around the room and help with whatever I was doing. After a few months, when she was more settled and confident in the centre, we transitioned her back into the two to three-year-old room without drama. She could visit me if she needed, but this became less and less common. Eventually she was a confident and happy member of the two to three-year-old room and had positive relationships with Jackie and Barbara.

The narrative of this story was underpinned by the relationship that existed between Hannah and I. In a sense we had been thrown together just a short three months earlier and within this short time frame, Hannah had developed such a strong need for our relationship that she was unable to function in the centre

space without my presence. It was also clear that an attachment relationship had formed between us as Hannah clearly needed my presence to feel safe, confident and secure in this setting (Degotardi & Pearson, 2009).

As I reflected upon this anecdote I had no particular memories of the way this relationship developed. It seemed unremarkable to me until her distress started after my room change. I began to think of the strategies I generally used to develop a relationship with a child who was new to an early childhood environment. I have always placed a great deal of emphasis on developing relationships, spending time interacting with each child, including singing, smiling and dancing with them. I would cuddle and hold them to help ensure their physical needs were met. Provision was made for each child to have easy access to any comfort items brought from home.

This chapter's previous discussion of relational space also heightened for me an awareness that I made every effort to be in relation to the children as much as possible. If a child were missing her/his mother, for example, as I was cuddling them I would acknowledge that there was something to be sad about. I would share with her/him that sometimes I cry because I miss my mother. The act of genuinely sharing this feeling of sadness touched that soft spot inside me that does miss her presence and thinks about her with love. Then I would reassure the child that I would see my Mum again soon and so would she/he. This strategy relates to the maternal mind-mindedness described by Brennan (2014), where a parent was attuned to the child and able to articulate the child's thoughts and

feelings. This action was reported to promote regulation of the child's internal state. This self-regulation was manifested as we reached an understanding, the child and I, that missing Mum was okay and that Mums come back. This understanding not only helped the child to cope and settle, but also created a bond between us, the developing bud of a relationship.

The use of reflective functioning by the mother to increase secure attachment with an infant has also been described by Brennan (2014). The mother will put aside her own affective, or emotional, experience in order to 'contain and respond to her infant's state of mind' (p. 286). In this way I was able to touch on the emotional bond I had with my own mother to support the child, while not allowing this to distress me, nor to inhibit my capacity to comfort her/him. It seemed that Barbara and Jackie as carers were unable to do this with Hannah. They became upset themselves rather than supporting her to contain her emotional response.

These strategies are not unique to me, similar approaches are practiced by many early childhood educators. Jackie and Barbara were both engaged and devoted educators. I had previously witnessed them use these approaches themselves to develop relationships. This led me to raise the question: What was the barrier that impeded them in developing a relationship with Hannah?

Compassion or Pity

An examination of the two words, compassion and pity, that are so commonly used in our everyday language facilitated the development of ideas about the barrier(s) that may have existed for Jackie and Barbara in relating to Hannah. Compassion and pity have often been used interchangeably and dictionaries typically use one word to help them define the other. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines pity as the feeling of sorrow and compassion caused by the suffering and misfortunes of others. It defines compassion as sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings and misfortunes of others (Stevenson, 2015). However, when the etymological origins of both words were explored a difference emerged.

As I have already discussed, compassion comes from the root Latin word *compati* meaning to suffer with. Pity comes from the Latin root *pietas* meaning piety. When I explored the definition and origins of piety it was defined as the quality of being religious or reverent (Stevenson, 2015). There were links to the word pious which was defined as devoutly religious or dutiful (Stevenson, 2015). It seems reasonable to take from this knowledge of the origins of these words that a person who feels compassion was in a much different relational space than one who felt pity. A compassionate response opens a person to the suffering of another, when suffering *with* another you acknowledge your shared humanity. Perhaps you will be in just their situation at some time in your life, or have already experienced a similar situation yourself (Burns, 2007).

The person who acts out of pity does so with her/his own framework to inform understandings and perhaps deeply held religious beliefs. They relate to the suffering of another from a different relational space, removed from the other. ‘Pity tends to reinforce our false sense of separation from others and their suffering ... with pity we feel a vast ... distance from others,’ according to Naphthali (2009, p. 128). This individual has a belief about what is best for the other person when enacting care, and also a deep sense of duty guided by what she/he believes is right and good. For centuries, missionaries across the world have demonstrated pity for others, often with negative outcomes for the people whose suffering they are piously trying to relieve.

Perhaps in current more secular times, the deeply held beliefs that are guiding the actions of some, are not religious in origin. Is it possible that some of us at times use our training and expertise in this *pious* way, which impedes our capacity to enter into a genuine relational space with others? Do we hold our frameworks, our beliefs and our truths in a similar way to the missionaries holding their bibles, like a shield that creates a barrier to genuinely relating to others?

In the early days of their interactions with Hannah, it is possible Jackie and Barbara were interacting from this place of pity. Certainly their discussions about Hannah came from a place of expertise as they talked together about what her problem might be, using their understandings of developmental theory, attachment theory and psychology. Once they had adopted a position of pity

could this have impeded them from being truly *with* Hannah and in developing a genuine relationship with her? It seems likely that this was the case.

What pushed them to this position is not evident, as it was not generally the way they interacted and they clearly had a capacity to genuinely form positive relationships with the children in their care. Perhaps Hannah's initial distress and her rejection of the educators when they tried to comfort her made them step back and hold so tightly to their beliefs that it impacted on the way they related. If this is the case, it seems likely that any one of us could hold fast to such a position when dealing with challenges from children or families, where we hold tightly to our frameworks for comfort and hold back from genuinely relating to the other.

In our early childhood programs with the current focus on the importance of relationships, how we think about our understandings of relationships and in particular of attachment relationships is important (Degotardi & Pearson, 2009). The role of the early childhood educator is complex. We are not mothers or fathers, yet it would seem likely that in order to support each child to feel secure we must develop a secure attachment relationship. We need to employ strategies, such as mind-mindedness and reflective functioning to ensure we are sensitively attuned to the needs of the child within our early childhood programs (Brennan, 2014). Doing this can be difficult as seen when discussing Barbara and Jackie and their challenges in relating to Hannah. As educators we need to understand how our beliefs, alongside our professional knowledge, impact on our

relationship with children. We need to be sensitive to our own stepping away from children into a place of pity, rather than working with them compassionately to develop secure attachments.

Conclusion

Examining deeply the way attachment relationships existed for the three children who are the primary focus of this study has highlighted the way compassion exists here. It is where compassion exists that secure attachment patterns are able to develop. When we allow compassion to lead in relationships with children, when we relate genuinely *with* children, then attachment will follow, as our relating will be sensitively attuned to their needs. When we come to a relationship with the child holding strong positions, understandings and beliefs, and when we are unable to place aside our personal needs to truly interact with her/him, the development of secure attachment patterns is impeded.

Chapter Three

Compassion - Care

If with kindly generosity
One merely has the wish to soothe
The aching heads of other beings,
Such merit knows no bounds.

No need to speak, then, of the wish
To drive away the endless pain
of each and every living being,
Bringing them unbounded excellence.

(Shantideva, 2006, p. 56)

Introduction

Thinking deeply about the way attachment relationships develop highlights the important place that caregiving plays in relations between parents and young children. Examining caregiving was a powerful means to understanding attachment relationships. While chapter one did this by holding together similar experiences to allow understandings to emerge, the phenomenological strategy of closely examining common experiences has been used in this chapter to gain insight into caring and the way the phenomenon of compassion may occur within care relations. Care routines occur commonly and I deliberately organised my visits to the families in the study during the evening, being confident I would observe them involved in caregiving at this time. Care routines are also an embedded part of early childhood programs.

It is exactly the commonness of these experiences that makes them valuable for phenomenological study. van Manen has stated that ‘phenomenology is oriented to practice - the practice of living’ (2007, p. 13). The focus on practice allows us to gain valuable information about lived situations and relations. The role of phenomenology is not just to describe common experiences but to ‘produce texts that awaken a sense of wonder about the order of what is ordinary ... seeing the extraordinary in what is ordinary’ (van Manen, 2002, p. 49). This chapter uses descriptions of common care experiences to search for the wonder that lies hidden in these routines. It also explores understandings of care and ethics of care to uncover the role compassion plays in caring relations. I began this consideration by describing the routine care relationship I had with my mother for the last five years of her life and how this experience equated with early childhood practices.

Mother and Child Feeding Routine

For all intents and purposes my mother is lost to me. Though she greeted me when I arrived at the nursing home this morning by taking my hand and smiling at me, I have no illusions that she knows who I am. A few moments later she greeted the tea lady with the same warm smile. Alzheimer’s disease has ravished her memory and left her with only infrequent snippets of remembering, when she calls out a familiar name and tries to communicate, before degenerating into unrecognisable mumbling.

I am sitting beside her in the sun as she dozes on and off, providing a drink when she opens her eyes, to help keep her precious fluids up. Much of the time I spend here beside her, caring for her physical needs, is coloured for me by our histories together. By my knowledge that she would not wish to be so dependent on others to meet her most basic needs, humiliated by her complete physical and emotional dependence. But, also by my own pain and grief at the loss of our previous relationship, of what we have meant to each other in dynamic changing roles throughout my life.

There is little any of us can do for our Mother. The only way left to communicate is through caring for her needs, such as brushing her hair, massaging her feet or filing her nails. It is during these care routines that I can at times suspend the external distractions, let go of the many thoughts running through my head, and just be in the moment. This is particularly true of feeding times. Despite the distractions of a large nursing home, at times I become suspended in the act of feeding. While we are relating to each other, time no longer exists. We become two beings, engaged in this one thing, feeding. At times I lose sense of myself, I forget who is feeding who. Who is the mother? Who is the child? I feel a deep sense of this happening before, of being the infant receiving food, of my mother being the infant, of the timelessness of this act, its primordial basis and it existing outside contexts and time.

Care Relations

While describing this interaction with my mother, I have used the terms care and caring a few times. The use of this term has permeated descriptions of relationships, parenting and the early childhood profession. However, its use across a number of settings and contexts creates some ambiguity in understanding what is meant by the term. When I sought a dictionary to define care, the complexity of the concept became apparent due to the number of definitions listed. As a noun care could describe providing what is necessary to another, it could describe taking another into protective custody, it could be that you are paying serious attention to something or that you are concerned about an object of care. When used as a verb, it may mean to feel concern for another, to have affection or liking for another, that you are willing or motivated to do something because you care about it or that you are providing for the needs of another (Stevenson, 2015).

Due to this ambiguity about the meaning of care I looked to the etymological roots of the word for some clarification. Care comes from the old English word *caru* when used as a noun and from *carian* when used as a verb. Both words are of Germanic origin and relate to Old High German meaning grief or lament, and to the Germanic word *charon* which means grieve. The word is also related to the Old Norse word *kor* which means sickbed (Stevenson, 2015).

The root meaning of the word care fitted very strongly with my remembering of sitting next to my mother. I felt grief for the loss of her memory, I lamented

knowing that she would not want to be in such a situation and the memory occurred next to her sickbed. An understanding of the root meaning of the word also gave me a sense of the way care and compassion sit together. Care may tune a person into the suffering of another - through the grief you feel for them during illness. Compassion sees suffering and acts to relieve it. I get a sense that these two words are so intimately related to each other that they occur together, perhaps like two sides of the same coin. I feel compassion for another so I care for them or I care for another so I act with compassion towards them.

Relating and Care

Care occurs in relation. It is something that opens up between beings when they relate to each other in a caring manner. It does not belong to either of those engaged in the relation, but exists between them in what Winnicott (originally published 1971/re-published 2005) describes as a transitional space ‘in an area that is intermediate between the inner reality of the individual and the shared reality of the world’ (p. 86). Robinson (2011) believes that ‘the self has no separate essential core but, rather, becomes a ‘self’ through relations with others’ and that ‘relations of interdependence and dependence are a fundamental feature of our existence’ (Hekman, 1995, p. 73, cited in Robinson, Chapter 1, Para. 9). When engaged in this relational space the carer is tuned into the other, seeking always to genuinely see their needs in order to respond to them.

Noddings (1984; 1995; 2002; 2010; 2012) has been researching care for decades and in this chapter I have used her work as a frame for much of the discussion.

She uses the terms care and caring interchangeably and states that ‘life starts’ in a caring relation which is ‘an empirical reality, not a theoretical construct’ (2010, p. 28). Noddings (2010) states that caring ‘involves attention, empathic response, and a commitment to respond to legitimate needs’ (p. 28). She uses the term ‘receptive attention’ to describe the attitude by the carer to the cared-for, one of openness to the other, with a focus on the verbal and physical cues they give.

The care relation always has two parties. The carer and the cared-for. Like the particular characteristics of the attachment relationship we discussed in chapter two, the caring relation has characteristics that are particular to it. It is an unequal relationship where one party relies on the other for care. However, it is not a one-sided relationship as the cared and cared-for each contribute. It is as critical in the care relation for the carer to be aware of and understand the needs of the cared-for, as it is for the cared-for to communicate her/his needs to the carer. Even in care relations that involve very young children, or, as in my relation with my mother, a cared-for who does not have the cognition to express their needs, clearly, the cared-for contributes to the relation by communicating her/his needs through physical and verbal cues and by responding to the care provided. The partners in a care relationship can also change places over time as was the case with my mother. For many years of my life she was my caregiver and now I was hers (Noddings, 2010).

However, Metcalfe and Game (2002) describe times when the ‘well-intentioned self gets in the way of care’ (p. 58). At these times the carer’s relation to the

other is blocked by their own strong perspectives, knowledge or pain and they may act to meet the others needs from their own determination about what they would want, or what they think is best for the other.

When I am genuinely in relation to my mother and caring for her needs I am suspended in the relational space, listening, watching and feeling every nuance of her being in an attempt to truly meet her expressed needs. When I am caught up in thinking about our shared history, about what might happen next or about my own bundle of worries, I move away from that relational space. At this time the nuances of her needs are less evident to me. It is more difficult to see the minute responses she makes to show that she is ready for more food or that she does not like what is being fed to her.

Ethics of Care

Two types of caring were identified by Noddings (2010) in her research. The first is natural caring which was seen as an intrinsic, biological response. She described natural caring as:

a moral approach to life ... referring to an informal morality, a way of interacting with others that does not require explicit attention to moral criteria such as duty, principle, God's will, or the exercise of virtue. In a climate of natural caring, our attention is on identifying and satisfying needs, maintaining or establishing caring relations, keeping open the channels of sympathy, and promoting this way of life among the young (p. 36).

She believed that this type of caring was critical for young children because it represented a prototype to follow. Children learn how to care by being cared for (Goleman, 1996). There seemed to be a link between this concept of natural

caring and the internal working model that Bowlby (1979) proposed for young children's development of attachment relationships. Instinctive caring is not only biological, but learned during the care relationship a child experiences with a parent, and in this relationship they can both learn how to care for others. Everyday ethics was the term introduced by Einhorn (2006) to describe the emergence of moral understanding in children that emerges during these relations.

The second of Noddings (2010) care types was ethical caring which becomes morally necessary when natural caring has failed. Ethical caring is embedded in the ethical values and beliefs of individuals and communities and in their understanding of justice. It is clear when researching the ethics of care that some tension exists between the concepts of care and justice, which challenges the role of care as an ethical framework that could be used broadly. Held (2010) contended that 'the ethics of care has developed into what is potentially a comprehensive moral outlook suitable for human relations' (p. 116). The conflict in relation to justice stemmed from a belief that care cannot deal with the complex situations that justice is used to resolve. However, if an ethics of care was employed as an overarching framework where justice was considered as necessary to develop rules and guidelines to manage problems, then its potential as an ethical framework could be realised.

An ethics of care has been deeply contested over a number of decades, particularly in relation to the gendered way it has been understood. Traditionally

care has been enacted by females and many care professions are dominated by women, including the early education and care sector. Hekman (1995) gave a detailed analysis of Gilligan's seminal work in relation to discussions on moral theory and feminism in her book *Moral Voices, Moral Selves*. Her review contested the silencing of women's voices in Western moral tradition and argued for a 'moral voice constituted by relational experiences' (Chapter 10, Para. 1). The importance of care relations politically and the way these are embedded in power relations was argued by Robertson (2011). Other researchers, such as Held (2010), believed that 'a caring world would fundamentally transform the oppressive social structures that produce misery and increased violence for vast numbers of people throughout the world' (p. 120).

Caring for my mother was evidence of my own moral fibre and ethical being. I could choose to do otherwise, to ignore her suffering and to leave her in the hands of others. However, my ethical code meant I was committed to caring for her. The organic nature of our care relation was moral. Care can also be a broader ethical code, whereby an ethics of care allows people to 'be tied together as caring members of the same society, yet [they] can agree to treat their limited legal interactions in ways that give priority to justice' (Held, 2010, p. 117).

While I enact an ethic of care in decisions about my mother, I am also committed to the justice of the equal distribution of her estate to all my siblings upon her death.

The care relation that underpins an ethic of care relies on the relation between two people. As already discussed, care and compassion sit so intrinsically together that it is difficult to separate them. Noddings (2010) used the term sympathy when describing care. Sympathy comes from the Greek word *sumpathies* from sun - with and pathos, meaning feeling (Stevenson, 2015). The etymological root is similar to that of compassion, which is to *suffer with*. What is clear is that care relies on the experience of being with another. As compassion is action oriented, like care, I believe it describes more appropriately what occurs in a care relation.

Care Barriers

This belief that compassion sits within care relations inspired me to think about times when barriers interfere in this connectedness, and brought to the surface my own recent experience of being the cared-for. I found that I felt more comfortable sharing stories about being the carer, but the vulnerability expressed when describing myself as the cared-for was a little confronting and I wondered why. Perhaps part of the challenge of phenomenology as methodology lies not only in the complexity of the philosophy, but also in the confronting nature of exposing yourself and your life to reflection. Over the period of this research study my belief and courage in the methodology had grown and I accepted that the meaning I searched for may lie in these challenging places.

Please - No More Needles

I walked into the emergency room at our local hospital late one Thursday night. I obviously looked unwell as the lady sitting in front of the receptionist waiting to be served got off her seat and told me to sit down. I was bald from chemotherapy and shaking, so I welcomed the chance to sit. When the receptionist came back I handed her my get-into-hospital card that had been given to me at the cancer clinic. My husband and I were told that if my temperature went over 38° following a treatment, I was to go immediately to hospital and hand over the card. I was taken straight into the emergency ward and placed into a room by myself. I saw a doctor straight away. She asked me many questions then ordered tests and intravenous (IV) antibiotics. A nurse came into the room shortly afterwards, completed the tests and put in the IV, and then we were left alone for some time. My husband and I were both feeling very stressed and fatigued. During the past three weeks I had been given my third chemotherapy treatment, my mother had passed away and I had spent a week in hospital with a suspected heart attack. We were both very quiet, each locked up in our own thoughts, neither of us talking about what was occurring or what it might mean.

I sent my husband home, when the hospital staff advised I was to be admitted, I hoped he could get some sleep. Now I was alone with my worries and fears. Once I had been admitted to the ward however, the worst time of my treatment started. I was given two types of antibiotics by IV. One antibiotic took an hour to go through the IV and the other, the one the nurses called the yucky one, took four hours. Unfortunately, my veins were a little shut down from the

chemotherapy treatments and every two hours they would collapse and block the drip. I would then need to have the cannula moved to a fresh vein and the IV started again. As my veins broke down and each cannula was reinserted the veins became more and more painful and I felt increasingly fragile and worried.

As it approached three in the morning on my second day in hospital my vein collapsed again. I was really beginning to feel fearful and upset. I had been very stoic throughout my treatment, but this was beginning to fade. A doctor came from the emergency room to reinsert the cannula. I asked him as he searched for a vein: 'Do you really need to put it back in?' He continued to inspect my veins saying: 'You're neutropenic and febrile, you need intravenous antibiotics'. He put in a *very* painful cannula and left the room. I pulled the blankets over my head and cried.

Throughout this visit to the hospital I had been looked after by countless nurses and doctors, but I do not think I entered into a genuine care relationship with any of them, except one. A doctor came to see me during rounds. She had a group of four trainee doctors with her and asked me the same questions I had been asked many times before. At one point the shawl I was wearing around my shoulders fell off and she reached over and fixed it. In that moment I felt that she was listening to me, that she was genuinely trying to care for me and meet my needs.

In contrast the other professionals who looked after me were focused on their work, on what needed to be done and on assessing me using their professional

knowledge to make a decision about what I needed. Metcalfe and Game (2002) point out that when someone enters a caring interaction with fixed views about what the other needs, with a professional knowledge, history and understanding of how to fix problems they appear not to be able to enter into a genuine care relation. Their interactions are full of their own knowing and they do not open themselves to truly listen to and understand the needs of the other. Perhaps they fear to enter this place because of the risks to their own emotional wellbeing. When I asked the doctor: ‘Do you really need to put it back in?’ I was feeling very vulnerable. I was asking for some reassurance, really saying: ‘Please, no more needles’. He seemed to answer from a completely professional viewpoint, when he said: ‘You are neutropenic and febrile, so you need an IV.’ It sounded like he was quoting something from a medical textbook.

Vulnerability and Compassion

The vulnerability that I experienced as I lay in hospital gave me a greater understanding of compassion than any other experience in my life. I found Brown’s (2015) definition of vulnerability as ‘not winning or losing; it’s having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome’ (Chapter 1, Para. 5) to fit well with my thinking. She cautioned against hardening our response to others in order to stop feeling hurt as this inflexibility can interfere with our ability to connect with others. As I lay in hospital I attempted to accept what was happening, sometimes successfully, rather than struggling against it. I learnt from deeply personal experience that in care relations connecting to the person being cared for was critical and ‘every time we honor

our own struggle and the struggles of others by responding with empathy and compassion, the healing that results affects us all' (Brown, 2015, Chapter 1, Para. 16).

Knowing that being unwell and in need of care is part of any hospital visit, I wondered what was missing from these interactions within professions that are often described as caring. Is the missing quality compassion? The doctors and nurses were all perfectly pleasant to me, they all implemented measures to take care of my health needs. What they did meets the description of care when we consider it at face value as meeting the needs of another. However, when we think of care as a relation, and consider the vulnerability of patients, the actions of these professionals were missing some element that would have allowed them to enter into relation with me, to truly listen and respond to me as a person meeting all of my needs, some of them beyond measurable health needs. Perhaps this element was compassion, being with another in their suffering. This may be the nuance of care that allows a genuine relation to develop.

Embodied Care

Hermeneutic phenomenology is interested in lived experiences. Not simply the theoretical understandings we have about life and how it should be lived, but the physical enactment of our values and beliefs. The care routines we enact are so indicative of our inner being, simply because they are so common, so unremarkable and so much a part of how we live daily.

During care relations we enact our embodied knowledge of what it is. We respond unconsciously to others using behaviours that we learned while we were being cared for (Bourdieu, 1997, cited in van Manen, 2007). The fact that these behaviours were unconscious makes them difficult to access and understand, but reflecting on the physical enactment in our practices can allow us to consider them. Looking at the differing manner in which the families I observed cared for their children revealed a variety of ways of being in the care relation:

Mum picked Pearl up out of her chair, carried her to the bathroom and began to undress her. She lifted her tops off one after the other gently moving them over her head.

Mum began to undress Ruby. She pulled her tops off over her head all in one go then taking her nappy off said: 'Go sit on the potty'.

Mum picked Jasper up and lay him on the lounge. She took his wet nappy off and wiped him gently with a wipe. She lifted his legs and placed a clean nappy under him then put his legs down and sealed the tabs on the nappy.

Each of the mothers physically interacted with their child in slightly different ways. Ruby's Mum was a little firmer with her; while Pearl and Jasper's mothers used a softer and gentler approach. Each of the children seemed comfortable with the physical way they were being handled and their familiarity with the person caring for them was probably a source of comfort and security to them. In his early work Bowlby (1953) described the importance of physical care for the development of secure attachment relationships:

All the cuddling and playing, the intimacies of suckling by which a child learns the comfort of his mother's body, the rituals of washing and dressing by which through her pride and tenderness towards his little limbs he learns the values of his own (p.16).

The way the mothers enact care physically not only has an impact on the development of secure attachment patterns, but is in turn embodied by the children as part of their internal knowledge. It becomes part of the way they know themselves, part of their unconscious response to another during the care relation (Noddings, 2010).

Embodied Compassion

As we have discussed, it is possible that compassion is what defines a genuine care relation. The act of being in relation to another is possible through the compassionate perspective of suffering *with* the other and the care enacted as a result evolves from this more genuine and nuanced understanding of them, rather than through a prescriptive knowledge of what they need. Is it possible then that we could describe compassion as embodied? If the move to relieve the suffering of another is through care relations, then the contact made will often be a physical manifestation of compassion.

Barasch (2009) spent a day shadowing the Dalai Lama as a newspaper reporter. He was sceptical of the hype surrounding His Holiness, but described throughout the day the numerous times the Dalai Lama paused to provide comfort to others, such as stopping and talking to a cameraman who had asked for help. He stood with his hand on the shoulder of the cameraman and seemed totally in tune with him. Ultimately Barasch reported 'his quality of empathy, at once indiscriminate and specific, began to overwhelm me, not least because he made it seem so

ordinary - ordinary kindness, ordinary consideration, taken to an extraordinary degree' (p. 43).

I personally witnessed this just a few weeks ago when I attended a public talk by His Holiness in the Blue Mountains entitled: *The Wisdom of Forgiveness* (2015). It was a very cold day in Katoomba and everyone was rugged up. The Mayor of the Blue Mountains introduced His Holiness wearing a long woollen coat, but his head was uncovered and bald. As the Dalai Lama was talking to the audience of nearly four thousand people, the Mayor obviously made some movement that showed he was cold. The Dalai Lama immediately stopped what he was saying and turned to the Mayor asking: 'Do you have a hat, are you cold?' The Mayor indicated that he was fine and the Dalai Lama continued with what he was saying. To me this demonstrated his ability to tune into the needs of another individual, and to seek to care for that person and meet his needs, while also communicating with a large crowd of people. This skill was extraordinary, and yet it was such an ordinary caring act, and an example of how compassion can be embodied.

van Manen (2014) argued for the importance of pathic knowing about situations. The term pathic is derived from pathos meaning suffering and passion (Chapter 9, Section 5, Para. 3). Pathic means the 'general mood, sensibility, sensuality, and felt sense of being in the world' (Chapter 9, Section 5, Para. 4). It is clear that pathic shares etymological roots with compassion and therefore it is logical that they align together. van Manen (2007), has also argued for the importance of

examining practice in phenomenological studies. He contends that the practices we engage in and the routines that are part of these are evidence of our pathic sensibilities, in addition to how we respond emotionally. In this sense our pathic understandings are truly embodied as we engage in practices that come from a deeply emotional space. Our compassionate response is embodied as it too comes from this space.

The importance of routines and practice to compassion led me to examine how it occurred in early childhood education and care centres where routines are an embedded part of programs. A selection of anecdotes are presented below that occurred at the centre I was directing which helped me to examine the way care and compassion was expressed by educators in these services.

Care and Morality in Early Childhood Education and Care

While working in the office of an early childhood centre I was troubled by crying coming from the birth to three year old room. A child had been crying for some time and I went into the room to see what was happening and to offer the educators some support. They were unable to comfort a young infant who was nine months old. She was on the floor and crying inconsolably. I picked her up and moved to the playdough table where I sat down with her on my lap and tried to comfort her. She was still upset and continued to cry, though she tolerated being held.

Another child Lea, twenty months old, was across the room in the home area playing with dolls. As I picked the infant up and moved to the table she looked across the room at us. She continued to look at us for a short while after I had sat down. Lea then moved away from the dolls she was playing with and looked around the room. She selected a block from the construction shelf and came over to the infant on my lap and waved it in front of her until she took it off her. The infant began to chew the block and stopped crying.

When moments like these occur in early childhood settings I am always amazed and overwhelmed with the wonder of them. It seems remarkable to me that a child not yet two years old could have the skill to identify the needs of another child and that they would be motivated to meet that need. Noddings (2010) places the development of this capacity within a natural care relationship. As already discussed, the ‘importance of relationships and their organic and necessary nature is basic to biological life, [and] the caring relation is basic to moral life’ (p. 45). An ethics of care ‘claims that relations of interdependence and dependence are a fundamental feature of our existence’ (Robinson, 2011, Introduction, Para. 8). Natural morality is a manifestation of the natural care relationship and is where the ethics of care exists.

What was remarkable about Lea was that within her family setting she would probably not have had many opportunities to meet the needs of others. She lived at home with her Mum and Dad and had two siblings both of whom were teenagers. Yet, within less than two years her experiences of being cared-for had

developed in her the perspective of natural morality that allowed her to identify and meet the needs of a younger child. Noddings (2010) states that ‘empathy begets empathy; that is, someone who regularly experiences [empathy] is already “prepared to care” and approaches encounters with an empathetic disposition’ (p. 56). In the same way we could say that compassion begets compassion, when a child regularly experiences compassion they will be prepared to care for others with compassion.

Early Childhood Education and *Care*

The use of the term care to describe our profession is fraught with difficulties when we consider the complexity and ambiguity in understandings of the word. What exactly is meant by including care in the title and what does it mean for our practice? If we consider it in relation to feeling care for another, Noddings (1995) would dispute the need to include *care* in the title as she believes that education and care are inseparable and argues for pedagogical practices that understand the value of caring relations. When we say education we mean *care* as it is embedded into the pedagogical relationship. Metcalfe and Game (2006) also argue for the central role of care relations to pedagogical practice in their work *Teachers Who Change Lives*. They identified that love and concern for students is a critical element that characterises successful teachers of children in formal education.

Without doubt care relations are an integral part of the early childhood education profession. Particularly the routines that are part of the daily life of centres.

These routines often have a shared text or understanding about how to implement them such as nappy change procedures, hand-washing procedures or procedures for placing a child in a cot. As previously stated, van Manen (2007) speaks about the phenomenological value in examining routines and practices:

We have questions of how to act in everyday situations and relations. This pragmatic concern I will call the “phenomenology of practice”. Thus, we wish to explore how a phenomenology of practice may speak to our personal and professional lives ... a phenomenology of practice aims to open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact (p. 13).

I saw value here in examining nappy change procedures as they are probably the most common care routine in early childhood services with children under three years of age. In my experience it is also the most consistently structured routine, as the hygiene and safety issues involved are significant. It is not uncommon for services to have a written nappy change routine that all educators must follow and that has been informed by information from state health authorities. However, despite this uniformity of expectation, the way educators change nappies can be vastly different.

Changing Nappies and Care

At a service I directed, two educators displayed shared characteristics in the manner in which they related to children. They both had positive relationships with children and these were characterised by lots of cuddling, playful interaction and by the educators’ knowledge of the likes, dislikes and interests of the children. However, the children did show a preference for the second educator

described below when they wanted comfort, and she was more likely to prioritise cuddling and comforting children who were distressed. Both educators had very different approaches to nappy changing and had very different styles of embodied care.

The first educator felt very strongly about hygiene and maintained a focus on cleanliness during her time at the service. When she changed children's nappies she approached the task very much from this viewpoint, it was an opportunity to clean the children and to ensure hygiene guidelines were met. She had quite a firm way of interacting with children during care routines and would pull their legs well over their heads to ensure she cleaned their bottoms thoroughly, she would wipe their bottoms vigorously and once they were re-dressed she would scrub their faces and hands before sending them on their way.

The second educator was physically very gentle. She changed each child's nappy using a very soft touch, talking to the children as she worked, asking them to lay down on the mat and waiting patiently until they were ready to lie down themselves. She wiped their bottoms and faces very softly, taking time to clean them, but making sure she avoided their eyes, noses and mouths.

The first educator entered the care routine very much focused on her training and beliefs in relation to hygiene and this seemed to impede her ability to enter into a genuine care relation with the child during this routine. Her way of handling the child was firm which for some children would have felt familiar if they were

cared for in a similar way at home. For other children this might have felt rough and left them unsettled if it differed significantly from their home care routines. By not entering into a genuine listening care relation (Bath, 2013) this educator was not tuned into what the child needed. Instead she was operating from her own understanding of what the child needed. Akin to my hospital experience with the doctor inserting the cannula as described previously.

The second educator entered a genuine care relation with the child. While following the standard guidelines she was able to maintain relation with the child and was still able to be attentive to the individual needs of the child during the routine. As Noddings (2013) says:

the carer is not governed by a pre-specified curriculum and an unshakable theory of pedagogy. Because she must evaluate and respond to a wide range of expressed needs, she must expand the breadth of her competence (p. 391).

This does not mean that the educator was not motivated in her work by her professional knowledge, only that the professional knowledge was not her only guiding principle. She prioritised listening and responding to the child which allowed her to enter into a genuine care relation.

Bath (2013) argues that the ethics of care is deeply embedded in the relationship that exists between the early childhood educator and the child and is manifested through a genuine listening relationship. Listening is more complex when working with very young children and a genuine openness, combined with positive relationships with families, allow educators to ensure they truly

understand the child. The educator who used her pathic knowledge to genuinely listen to the child while changing her/his nappy was enacting an ethic of care. This genuine listening was an act of compassion, as she was truly with the child using all her skill and patience to meet her needs.

The approach used by the first educator to these care tasks is common in early childhood centres and is problematic. The early childhood education sector is highly regulated and as professionals our response has been to formalise routines to ensure they meet requirements. However, if professionals approach these care routines with a focus on requirements and accountabilities only, to the detriment of their relations with children, the entire tone of the early childhood service could be at risk. Routines in services consume significant time, so if educators are not relating to children during these times then opportunities to relate are minimised.

van Manen (2007, p. 13) describes a phenomenology of practice where our engagement, our valuing, our being is demonstrated by what we practice. If early childhood environments are dominated by regulated routines that minimise care relations what does this mean for the children we care for? What are we teaching them about being when we are absent during these critical times, when we miss cues about what children need because we are caught up in our professional standards? If the care relation relies on compassion to tune the carer into the relation, to place them with the child attentively listening and watching for clues indicating their needs, does this minimise or marginalise the practice of

compassion in our services? If we wish to provide environments that are genuinely democratic and responsive to children, particularly to the youngest children in our care, we need to spend as much time as possible compassionately connected and genuinely listening (Bath, 2013).

Conclusion

The introduction to this chapter by Shantideva (2006) speaks to the generosity of the act of relating with care to another. Yet, it highlights something much more generous and that is acting with compassion towards another, acting to relieve their suffering. As professionals bound in relationships with young children, surely we should be motivated by wanting to meet their expressed needs as much as possible. Particularly when our professional knowledge alerts us to the value of the care relation in developing compassion and care for others in children. It is through this developed perspective that children grow with an intrinsic motivation to relieve the suffering of others.

Compassion and care seem to be woven together and it is difficult to clearly see the differences between the two. Perhaps it is compassion that suspends the carer and cared-for in relation to each other. The carer is compassionately tuned into the suffering of the other, and they are with the other during the relation. They are then motivated by the cared-for to act to meet their needs. This is where care becomes part of the relation as the carer enacts an act of care.

Chapter Four

The Nature of Compassion

I offer every fruit and flower
Every kind of healing draft
And all the precious gems the world contains
With all pure water of refreshment;

Every mountain wrought of precious jewels,
All sweet and lonely forest groves,
The trees of paradise adorned with blossom,
Trees with branches bowed with perfect fruit.

(Shantideva, 2006, p. 61)

Introduction

As I walked into the playground of the early childhood centre where I worked my gaze was diverted towards the behaviour of a two year old child who had come into the playspace only moments earlier. She was on her haunches watching a line of ants that were walking alongside the building. Her hands were folded in front of her and her entire attention was focused intently on the ants. I was captured by her intensity and I wondered what she was thinking. My mind became filled with images of children reacting to insects in many different ways. Some running screaming in fear; some watching, seemingly fascinated as this young child did; some killing the insects, squishing them with a finger or stomping on them; and some taking action to help the insects, perhaps finding them something to eat or a safe place to be in the garden.

I wondered where these different responses originated and whether compassion played a role here? In this chapter I explore this, looking for the role compassion plays in the interactions between children and the natural environment and then consider the very nature of us as human beings and where compassion originates.

Phenomenology and Nature

The use of phenomenology to explore nature is highly relevant in the sense that phenomenology is deeply concerned with the natural world. Phenomenology as a philosophy developed as a response to the disconnect that was occurring between ways of being in and scientific understandings of the world (Fox, 2009). For centuries, the understandings we had gained from science and technology have been privileged over direct human experience (Naess, first published 1998/re-published 2002). This has significant implications for the ways humans relate to the natural world.

For example, if we understand a flower only from a scientific perspective our response to it will be concerned with the pragmatics of the object, what use it is to us as human beings. However, if we have lain in a meadow full of buttercups, smelled their fragrance, watched them turn to the sun, and held them in our hands with delight and wonder, our response to them will be very different. The goal of phenomenology is ‘to reveal the world as it is given to consciousness ... [it] strives to know the world as it is perceived by the “naked eye” and as it is experienced by the open mind’ (van der Schyff, 2010, p.98).

Ecosophy

The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, worked to connect philosophical thought with nature as he had a deep interest in the environment (1989). In the 1970's he believed the world was on the brink of an ecological crisis and devoted himself to developing and disseminating a philosophy aimed at providing deeper understandings that would help humans to realise that their futures were critically linked to that of the whole environment in totality. Naess discussed our intrinsic connections to the natural world, our place as part of a whole and he utilised his observations of children's responses to insects to illustrate a critical point in his understandings:

In a glass veranda with one wall open away from the sun a bunch of children are playing with insect spray. Insects are trapped flying against the wall pointing towards the sun. Spraying makes them dramatically fall to the floor. Amusing? A grown-up appears, picks up an insect, looks at it with care, and utters dreamingly: 'Perhaps those animals might, like you, prefer to live rather than to die?' The point is grasped, the children for a moment see and experience spontaneously and immediately the insects as themselves, not only as something different but in an important sense like themselves. An instance of momentary identification! Perhaps it has no effect in the long run, or perhaps one of the children slightly changes an attitude toward small fellow creatures (Naess, 1989, pp. 171-172).

This anecdote demonstrates the role of identification in how children respond to other beings. The children are at first subject/object oriented. They see the insects as totally separate from them, as objects to be played with for their own amusement. However, the adult's intervention shifted their perspectives. Rather than viewing the insects as objects without feelings, they realise they are living things like themselves and immediately responded emotionally to them.

Naess believed this idea of identification was critical to our own response to other beings and to natural environments and therefore, how we act towards them. He suggests each of us has our own ecosophy, our own personal environmental understanding and belief (Sageidet, 2014). Naess describes our place in the environment as being connected with and part of a whole, part of the greatness of the world, intricately connected to both the biological parts of nature, the animals and plants we occupy this space with, and also the mountains, seas and ecosystems that support and are supported by them. He sees this as the whole and believed that identification helped us to place ourselves within the whole rather than separate from and other to it (Naess, 2002). To illustrate Fashih (2000) states that ‘a small grass root, a grain of sand; each is the universe in miniature, and enables us to perceive the relationship between the individual and the world’ (p. 95).

Naess describes a deep ecology which looks for long-term solutions and pursues deep questioning motivated by this sense of connection (Drengson, 2001). Once we identify as part of the whole we will act to protect and care for it as we no longer see ourselves as separate. We will no longer view caring for nature as a responsibility and duty to others, but will respond with empathy and compassion to the whole as if it were ourselves. Compassion was defined as to suffer with and identification allows us to be with the whole of the environment by understanding a shared sense of self. From this place we can then act with compassion - to relieve the suffering of the other.

Kellert (2012) also argues for the critical need for children to connect with nature and to view themselves as part of a whole. He describes biophilia as ‘fundamental ways we attach meaning to and derive benefit from the natural world’ (Introduction 1, Section 1, Para. 10). In order for humans to flourish he believes that having a positive, benevolent relationship with the natural world is critical and that children’s need for contact with nature is ‘a reflection of our species’ inherent need to affiliate with the natural world’ (Introduction, Section 9, Para. 1). In addition he espouses the values of biophilia to children’s health and development and states:

Children’s emotional attachment and love of nature encourages the development of their capacities to give and receive affection, bond and relate to others, and develop a sense of caring and compassion (Chapter 9, Para. 31).

It Tickers

During one of my visits to the early childhood service where I was collecting data I had the privilege to witness a group of children (aged eighteen months to two years) come face to face with a giant beetle. One of the children found a beetle on the verandah. He approached an educator and, taking her hand, led her to the beetle. The educator picked it up. The beetle was huge, about five centimetres long. Carrying it gently in her hand she walked to the centre of the playground and sat down.

A small group of children gathered around the educator as she opened her hand and allowed the beetle to crawl around on her palm and up her arm. She talked to the children about the beetle as she moved her arm from side to side in response to the way it was climbing to make sure it didn’t fall off. She smiled and wiggled describing to the children how it

tickled. The other children in the playground became aware that something interesting was happening and ventured over towards the group of children with the educator. As they came close the educator encouraged them to sit down in a circle around her.

She continued to talk and then encouraged the children to touch the beetle, but to be gentle. Pearl came over and sat down with the group of children. She patted the beetle with an extended finger while receiving encouragement from the educator to be gentle. Pearl indicated that she wanted to hold the beetle and the educator said: 'I'll put it on your hand, but remember, it tickles'.

The educator placed the beetle on Pearl's hand and it began to climb up her arm. Pearl shook her arm and the educator took the beetle off her. One of the other children said: 'Spider'. The educator said: 'No, it's not a spider, what is it Pearl?' Pearl said: 'A beetle'. She turned to the child and said: 'It tickles'. Pearl continued to closely watch the beetle and to reach a finger out every now and then to pat it gently. The educator continued to remind the children: 'We need to be gentle'. Pearl reached in again and patted the beetle gently and said: 'Dotty'. The educator said: 'Yes, he does have little dots'. After about thirty minutes of the children taking turns to stroke the beetle, the educator said: 'I think we should say goodbye and put him over the fence. I think we should put the beetle into a tree.'

She talked to the children about the beetle going home, that he needed to see his Mum and Dad, suggesting they might be missing him and worried about him. She went inside to get the keys to the external gate. Pearl walked over to another educator and said: 'Lady beetle go home'. She came over to the fence and watched as the educator put the beetle onto a tree just outside the gate. The beetle began to climb the tree and Pearl pointed to the tree saying to the other children: 'Beetle in there.'

Pearl continued to stand at the fence watching as the beetle slowly inched its way up the tree and eventually into the leaves. After a while the beetle could not be seen and Pearl asked the educator: 'Where beetle gone?' The educator said: 'I don't know, maybe he's flown away. That's better than getting squashed in the door anyway'.

Throughout the time the educator held the beetle for the children she emphasized the need to be gentle so they did not hurt it. She communicated clearly that the

beetle was a living thing and needed care from the children. I believe this encouraged the children to identify with the beetle, it was a living thing like them and could be harmed. When it was time to let the beetle go the educator talked about it 'needing to go home' and that its 'Mum and Dad would be missing it'. Thulin and Pramling (2009) state that this style of anthropomorphising (to speak of something non-human as if it was human) of other living things is common among teachers in early childhood services. They question the value of anthropomorphising to learning about scientific concepts. However, they state that 'it works as a resource' when 'learning to handle animals in a responsible way' (Thulin & Pramling, 2009, p. 148). In addition, teachers modelling caring for other beings encourages children's development of positive feelings (Bires & Schulz, 2014).

Family themes are very familiar to this age group and this would further help them to identify with the beetle. It is important when using anthropomorphising speech to take a 'footing in the child's experience and perspectives as a resource in developing the child's understanding' (Thulin & Pramling, 2009, p. 149). The educator did this to develop identification. The concept of identification and care for another occurs simultaneously within this observation, and further supports the role of compassion in this space where children and nature come together. By emphasizing the need to care for the beetle, the educator was encouraging the children to identify with it and while they were doing so she was supporting them to act with compassion.

Shoo Fly

In the last line of the previously quoted anecdote by Naess (1989) he stated ‘perhaps one of the children slightly changes an attitude toward small fellow creatures’ (p. 172) and this is the result that educators who care for the environment hope for from experiences like the giant beetle. That the children will identify with the nature they come into contact with and they will begin to identify and care about the whole of nature as a result (Kellert, 2012). However, not all interactions with nature are as wholesome as this one, and children may well be alienated from nature as seemed to be the case for Ruby during this observation.

Ruby moved to the climbing equipment and began to climb onto it when she saw a fly sitting on a balance beam. She screamed and began to cry. Another child nearby came over and tried to squish the fly, stomping his feet on the beam. An educator sitting nearby reassured Ruby saying: ‘It’s ok, it’s just a fly, shoo it away Ruby’. The other child said: ‘Shoo, shoo’. Ruby stopped crying, however continued to look at the fly with much concern. After a few seconds she copied the other child and said: ‘Shoo, shoo’. The fly flew away.

Ruby’s reaction to the fly seemed totally out of character. She had shown confidence and was outgoing in nearly every other observation I had made of her at the early childhood centre, but she was clearly terrified of the tiny insect. I have already discussed the focus on cleanliness and hygiene that was part of her family life in chapter two and it seemed likely that insects would not be welcome in their home. It is possible they would be responded to with disgust and a desire to get rid of them. Whatever the reason for her fearful response to the fly, it was clear that she did not identify with it and it did seem likely that she would not be motivated to care for insects while she was so alienated from them.

Interdependence

Naess' (1989) described each of us being part of a whole. This takes our perceptions of care from a place of stewardship and managing resources for human benefit, to one where we protect and care for natural environments as we are intrinsically connected to them. This concept aligns well with the Buddhist concept of interdependence which also places beings as part of a whole.

Interdependence identifies our intrinsic connection to each other and the natural environment. Buddhist practitioners are encouraged to consider their place in the whole and to always act from this understanding of connectedness (Dalai Lama, 2003).

Shantideva's (2006) verse that opens this chapter comes from this place of interdependence. The offering of the wonders of the natural environment to the Buddhas demonstrates strongly the deep connection and interdependence that is understood. One where the offering is genuine as it wells up from a deep understanding of one's own place as part of this natural environment, as part of the whole. Such an offering can only meaningfully be made from within, from a place of understanding of connection, of being with the whole. In chapter one, I discussed how the terms interdependence and belonging relate to each other, as discussed in the *EYLF*, and I decided to review the framework to examine how it might guide educators to consider belonging and its link to connectedness with nature.

Belonging

As noted in Chapter 1, belonging is one of the pillars of the *EYLF* and its inclusion in the title demonstrates, belonging is seen as integral to a child's learning and development. The framework describes belonging as:

knowing where and with whom you belong is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being, and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they become (DEEWR, 2009, p. 7).

This description of belonging is strongly based on the critical value of human relationships to the learning and development of children, but it is missing the breadth of description that acknowledges the child as part of the wider whole. The child is positioned as intrinsically belonging with other beings and the natural environment, connected and interdependent. It takes an anthropocentric stance (regarding humankind as the central most important element of existence) rather than a biocentric stance (extending the status of moral object from human beings to all living things in nature) (Elliott, 2014). It lacks support for educators to embed and understand how to develop children who are ecoliterate and who 'cultivate compassion toward other forms of life' (Goleman, 2012, Chapter 2, Section 1, Para. 3). This ability to feel empathy often stems from a deep understanding that 'humans are part of a broader community that includes all living beings' (Goleman, 2012, Chapter 2, Section 1, Para. 3).

The framework does not totally ignore the natural world, rather it gives some support for curriculum implementation that acknowledges the natural world. For example, it guides educators in how to promote care for the environment with children. However, there is little evidence of holistic implementation of education for sustainability in early education programs across the country (Hill et al. 2014). I believe the lack of a broader perspective on children's belonging to the natural world and to other beings, and a sense of belonging to the whole of life, weakens the value of the document and narrows our understandings of children and their capacities for connectedness and action.

Merely having opportunities to engage in nature can promote a child's love and appreciation of other beings and of the natural world (Kellert, 2012). However, without a sense of how they belong to and are a part of the other, their active response towards sustainability, for instance, may come from a perspective of ownership of the other, of seeing sustainability as managing resources for their own and other humans possible future needs rather than from a desire to protect that which they are bound to (Naess, 1989).

Educators working within this framework may well consider the behaviour of a child who kills snails on a rainy day, jumping with his/her friends joyously in the mud and counting how many they have squashed, to be connecting children with nature while promoting their relationship with others. A deeper understanding of belonging, an acknowledgement that children need support to understand how they are connected to the whole of life, would alter the educators understanding

in this situation. Snails are living creatures and deserve respect. Perhaps when snails attack our veggie patch we may need to find a way to remove them or limit their damage, but if we are working with the understanding of our connection to the other, then the joyous killing of another being, or destruction of natural environments would not be a celebrated part of centre practice.

Elliott (2010) asks us to reflect on what we can draw from behaviour like the destruction of insects by children, and to consider what this tells us about a child's nature-trusting relationship. As early childhood educators who understand the way connections between children and nature are critical to their building of nature-trusting relationships, supporting children to protect and respect the living creatures they encounter in their day-to-day lives may be one way of promoting such relationships.

Relating to Nature

In chapter two and three I explored the way human relationships form and considered the role of compassion in the development of genuine relationships. Relationships occur between two beings and they develop when each party to the interaction enters the relational space with an openness to the other and when they have suspended their own goals and beliefs to truly listen to the other (Metcalf & Game, 2002).

Martin Buber (1970) in his work *I and Thou* focused on relational existence. He discussed the way we may relate to others as objects, things for our own

purposes and believes that for much of the time our occupation with life keeps us in this style of relation, an I-It relationship. However, he uses the term 'I-Thou' to describe when:

thing-like connections are put aside in favor of something intimate and unbounded ... we come toward one another on a different plane—one of true humanity, generosity, acceptance, kindness, compassion, and mutual affirmation—even love (Buber 1970, cited in Fox, 2009, p. 141).

The question is can the I-Thou relationship exist only between humans, or only between beings? Buber (1970, p. 57-58) describes in his work his contemplation of a tree:

I contemplate a tree.

I can accept it as a picture...

I can feel it as movement...

I can assign it to a species and observe it as an instance, with an eye to its construction and its way of life.

I can overcome its uniqueness and form so rigorously that I recognize it only as an expression of the law...

I can dissolve it into a number.

Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place...

But it also happens, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It.

While the focus of Buber's work is on human relationships, he does not discount that the I-Thou relation is possible with other beings. If the relation is entered into with the qualities he describes as necessary for the I-Thou relationship,

including compassion, it is likely that this unbounded relationship can exist between humans and the natural world.

Being and Beetles

Martin Heidegger is one of the founding philosophers of phenomenology and his work has been important in the move to investigate and value lived experience (van Manen, 2007). While the concept of being has been used by philosophers to denote 'what is' (Fox, 2009, p. 150) Heidegger considers being critical to our understandings of lived experience and describes it as:

Everything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything towards which we comport ourselves in any way, is being; what we are is being, and so is how we are. Being lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is (Heidegger, 1962, p. 26).

This understanding of being is important here as my aim is to explore:

a phenomenology of practice [which] aims to open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact (van Manen, 2007, p.13).

Returning to the beetle experience, while handling the beetle the educator's every gesture, the way she held her arm moving it in response to the movement of the insect, the way she emphasized the need for gentleness, and the way she encouraged the children to touch the beetle were a manifestation of her *being* in that moment and of her knowledge and appreciation of the natural world. When watching the large beetle crawl up her arm, I recognised a situation that many early childhood educators would find terrifying, I understood who she was in that moment in a way that was difficult to describe. The children who were gathered

around her were also experiencing who she was in that moment, the way she grasped at the experience communicated to them a way of being with nature that perhaps may have lasting effects on who the children will become (Chawla & Rivkin, 2014).

Reflecting on *being* and the observation of the giant beetle, I am struck by the extraordinary way the educator acted throughout the experience. van Manen (2007) tells us that:

knowledge does manifest itself in practical actions and we may “discover” what we know is how we act and what we can do, in the things of our work, in our relations with others, in our embodied being, and in the temporal dimensions of our involvements. Even our gestures, the way we smile, the tone of our voice, the tilt of our head, and the way we look the other in the eye are expressive of the way we know our world and comport ourselves in this world (p. 22).

Within this way of *being* sits compassion. That sense of suffering *with* the other and of acting to relieve that suffering.

The educator’s *being* at this time consistently demonstrated care for the other and encouraged the children to also care. She actively ensured the safety of the creature by removing it from harm and by encouraging the children to care for it, and after an appropriate time ensured that it was released back into the wild. The value for children of time spent with another whose being relates so positively to the natural world lies in the fact that young children are in the early stages of developing and exploring their own sense of *being*. They have not yet established strong boundaries of self and perspectives about their own being (Blenkinsop & Piersol, 2013). Connecting with such an educator may open possibilities for how

they can and will be in the world. Their *being* with nature is not always such a positive experience and I have also been with children when they behave in ways that are other than connected.

Playing God

I once held a four-year-old child as he actively tried to get closer to a line of ants walking through the mulch of a garden bed. He was stretched towards the ants, trying to reach them and yelling: 'I want to kill them.' This encounter terrified me. I wondered what he was feeling. It looked like he hated the ants and if this was the case how had his hatred developed and what did this desire to kill mean about who he was and how his trust in and connection to nature was developing?

In contemporary early childhood programs we recognise young children as competent, however, we also understand they have inherent fragilities that mean they need care and protection as described in The Report of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in 1989 (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 1989). I suggest that due to our protection of children in Western modern cultures they have few opportunities to be the most physically powerful being in many situations. Certainly their parents, carers, older siblings and often other children they encounter have the ability to control younger children due to their comparatively greater stature and physical strength. But, when young children interact with beings in the natural environment they are often faced with a unique situation, one in which they have physical control over another being. They have the opportunity to play God.

While Pearl and the other children intently interacted with the giant beetle they were very powerful. The beetle was at real risk of being injured by the children, either intentionally or through their lack of understanding of their physical power. The educator continually reminded the children of the need to be gentle and careful with the beetle. This gave them opportunities to practice control of their own behaviour to protect another being. As De Waal (2009) states ‘children become gentler with younger, weaker parties, controlling their strength’ (p. 212). Interactions with animals have a positive effect on children’s development of compassion. In addition, children who see adults acting with compassion to animals also demonstrate this characteristic. While those who see animals treated with cruelty are more likely to develop conduct disorders (Renck Jalongo, 2014). Further, Renck Jalongo (2014) suggests children develop relationships with animals because they recognise in them a vulnerability like their own. The children during this observation were not only learning about compassion by being with the educator and the animal, they were practicing the embodiment of care and compassion themselves (van Manen, 2007). The child striving to kill the ants was embodying a very different way of being. Understanding his motivations is complex, however, it is likely that at this time in his life he felt little connection to nature.

Awe and Wonder

I recently travelled to Bhutan for a conference and after a very difficult and delayed trip I flew through the Himalayan Mountains and over Mount Everest as

the sun was rising. As the mountains came into view I was completely awestruck and began to cry, to sob, they were so beautiful. At this moment sitting on the plane with that magnificent mountain range before me I felt totally open, as if I was connected in some way, not just to the mountains, but to the whole world. Right here was my 'phenomenology of practice' (van Manen, 2007) as I experienced the concepts of interdependence, of being part of a whole that I had explored during my Buddhist studies.

At that moment I also felt totally open, not only to the mountains, but to everyone and everything. It was an amazing sensation and I know this relation was extraordinary, an I-Thou relation that was unbounded and beautiful (Buber, 1970). As I calmed down I realised that I was not the only one having this experience, it became evident that others on the plane were similarly affected. After the first gasps of awe, strangers, who had sat silently through the first part of the flight, began to talk to each other. Passengers on the right side of the plane passed cameras to those on the left asking them to take photos. It was as if having shared this experience of wonder they too felt a sense of openness and connection to others (Dent, 2005).

Keltner (2009) is deeply interested in the physiological underpinning of emotions and has used the knowledge gained from neuroscience to inform his understandings of human responses to life. He describes awe as an experience where we feel a sense of vastness 'anything that is experienced as much larger than the self or the self's typical frame of reference' (Keltner, 2009, p. 256). This

feeling of awe leaves us with a sense of reverence and respect that moves our thinking away from our sense of self, our immersion in our personal cares and concerns and shifts our thinking towards others. Awe allows us to move from an I-It relation with the world to an I-Thou relation (Buber, 1970).

Keltner (2009) believes that awe developed in humans as we needed to work together to be successful as a species:

awe produces a state of reverence, a feeling of respect and gratitude for the things that are given ... this thinking assumes that for groups to work well, and for humans to survive and reproduce, we must often subordinate self-interest in the service of the collective. The collective must often supersede the concerns, needs, and demands of the self (p. 259).

Rachel Carson wrote *The Sense of Wonder* (originally published 1956/republished 1998) at a time before the use of neural imaging allowed biologists to confirm insights into the way our bodies work, yet she too understood that a sense of awe and wonder was critical to human development and our connection with others:

What is the value of preserving and strengthening this sense of awe and wonder, this recognition of something beyond the boundaries of human existence ... Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts ... there is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter (1956/1998, p. 101).

Once this sense of connection was made she felt that we would be motivated to have 'a feeling of sympathy, pity, admiration or love' (Carson, 1956/1998, p. 56) for the other. During this experience of awe, a profound experience of I-Thou relation, our motivation is toward compassion, to care for the other. Carson

(1956/1998) argued that access to nature was critical for the development of awe and for the subsequent feeling of connectedness, and that this is a powerful argument for children having many opportunities to be in nature, to spend time connecting to natural environments and to experience the beautiful (Chawla & Rivkin, 2014).

Carson's (1956/1998) descriptions of time spent with a child in nature capture the beauty of the relationship and highlight the importance of the adult in promoting a connection to nature. Pelo's (2013) recent work *The Goodness of Rain* has a similar tone and suspends the reader in the joy and value of spending time in nature with a child. However, Taylor (2013) argues that the movement to engage children in natural environments is a result of romanticised views of children and of their relationships with nature. This has led to a focus on the production of natural playspaces and play objects within educational design. She believes that children's relationships with environments are more complex than this and that we should bring 'childhood back to earth - grounding it within the imperfect common worlds that we share with all manners of others - living and inert, human and more-than-human' (Chapter 4, Section 1, Para. 3). I have a belief that communing with natural environments is positive for children and helps them connect to nature. However, on reflection I can support Taylor's (2013) view that rather than aiming to give children naturally utopic spaces we could best support their understanding of the world by allowing them to interact in spaces where 'all manner of things co-exist' (Chapter 4, Section 10, Para. 1).

The final part of this chapter is concerned with human nature, and whether or not the characteristic of compassion could be innate and part of our biology as human beings.

Compassion - An Innate Characteristic

From a very young age my own grandson reacted with concern to others in distress. His younger sister was born when he was twenty-two months old and he was caring towards her from the first day. He was vigilant if she cried and would rush to comfort her. When she was six months old and was just beginning to move about on her own he was playing with his uncle as she rolled around the room. She bumped her head and began to cry. He immediately stopped what he was doing, jumped up and ran across the room to her. He patted her head saying: 'It ok, you'll be ok'.

While I like to think my grandson is extraordinary I know that young children often act with care towards others. In my professional roles in early childhood settings I have witnessed many examples of empathy, helping behaviours and compassion by children, prior to them turning two years old. Gopnik (2009), the author of *The Philosophical Baby* states:

From the time they are born children are empathetic ... they literally take on the feelings of others ... one year olds understand the difference between intentional and unintentional actions and behave in genuinely altruistic ways. Three year olds have already developed a basic ethic of care and compassion (p. 204).

Buddhist philosophy also considers compassion as an innate characteristic of all sentient beings. While obscurations may exist for individuals that inhibit their ability to express compassion, the Dalai Lama describes compassion as an innate characteristic of sentient beings and fully developing our compassionate nature is the goal of Buddhist practice (Dalai Lama, 2003).

Western thinking in this area has been mixed over the centuries of recorded history, with the dominant discourse about the innateness of compassion, and the nature of humans in relation to their innate capacity for empathy and cruelty, changing many times. Phillips and Taylor guide us through the changing thinking in this area in their publication *On Kindness* (2009). They state that ‘kindness has always been contentious’ (Phillips & Taylor, 2009, p. 15) and discuss the disputes that occurred between ancient philosophers about whether people were naturally kind or selfish.

They propose that today there is a widespread belief that kindness epitomises softness and is the province of females. The move to a free market economy and the competitive disposition that is at its core, exists in a climate where the dominant discourse says that humans are naturally competitive, where success is measured in dollars and where kindness is seen as a sentimental luxury that cannot be afforded. We are very experienced in this thinking at the moment when we listen to Australian politicians talk about refugees in dehumanising and alienating ways.

The human characteristics of ‘aggression and interpersonal violence’ (Hall, 2010, p. 177) have attracted a great deal of research attention perhaps because such characteristics are confronting and readily observable (Hall, 2010). However, the spotlight of interest has turned to the characteristics of empathy, sympathy and compassion in the fields of biology and neuroscience over the last decade and this has enormously increased our understandings of these characteristics (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2011a). Tomasello (2009) has shown that children as young as fourteen months engage in helping behaviours and that these behaviours are ‘mediated by empathetic concern’ (p. 12). Further, he argues that the emergence of these behaviours at such a young age is evidence of their innateness stating:

Children’s early helping is not a behavior created by culture and/or parental socialization practices ... it is an outward expression of children’s natural inclination to sympathize with others in strife (Tomasello, 2009, p. 13).

While humans do have this biological predisposition to compassion it is clear that not all human beings act from a place of compassion towards others. The horrors of war, violence and persecution that have occurred throughout human history demonstrate this. As Baron-Cohen (2011) demonstrates, the environment a child is born into and grows up in has a profound influence on their capacity for empathy. The quality of the relations they have with others and with the wider world will have a significant influence of how they come to be in the world.

Conclusion

It seems that not only is there a natural inclination of humans towards compassion and empathy for others, but spending time as part of natural environments is a rich place to develop this characteristic. Encouraging children to understand their place and connection to nature requires not only the practice of the innate characteristic of compassion, but also promotes the development of these capacities. Encouraging children to relate to the natural world invites them to participate in a relationship that is rich, awe inspiring and beautiful and also supports their practice and embodiment of care, concern and compassion drawing from their understandings of their place as part of the whole.

Chapter Five

Pedagogy for Compassion

Wherever and whenever and whatever you are doing,
For your sake or the sake of others,
Implement with diligence
The teachings given for that situation.

There is indeed no field of knowledge
That the Buddhas' offspring should not learn.
For those who are well-versed in all these ways,
There is no action destitute of merit.

(Shantideva, 2006, p. 125)

Introduction

I am beginning to understand the foundational role compassion plays in relationships that are critical to children. In this chapter I explore another relationship that is important to children's learning and development, the pedagogical relationship. van Manen (1990; 1997; 2005; 2007; 2014) has supported my understandings in relation to the use of hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology throughout this work. However, in this chapter his contribution over decades to understandings about pedagogy have given me a great deal of support and I have used these understanding to frame my explorations of this concept (van Manen, 1991; 1997; 2002; 2012).

Pedagogy is an interesting concept for an educator like myself. 'We all recognise pedagogical experiences because we have received the active care and worries of a mother, a father, a teacher, a grandparent, or some other adult who at various

times played a formative part in our young lives' (van Manen, 2012, p. 9). However, we may not truly understand the pedagogical experience until we have experienced it ourselves as pedagogues (van Manen, 2012). I have not only experienced pedagogical relationships as a child with significant people in my life, but I also aspire to develop pedagogical relationships with the children I work with professionally. My immersion in the area of pedagogical relationships means that my own experiences are an excellent place to start to examine the lived experience of this phenomenon (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015; van Manen, 2014). I begin by examining the pedagogical relationship I had with one of the most significant people in my life, my father. This chapter draws on descriptions of my relationship with my father and Pearl's relationship with her parents to explore the concept of pedagogy and the role compassion plays within it. I then discuss the way pedagogy is enacted in early education and care, and how our understandings of pedagogy are important to the way we work with young children to promote their development of compassion.

My Father's Blessing

My father passed away a short time ago and left a Daddy-shaped hole in my universe. As I worked with my brothers and sisters to plan his funeral and to write his eulogy I reflected on his impact on my life, on the things he had taught me and the values he had passed on to me. My father was a Catholic from the day he was born until the day he died. However, more importantly he was a follower of Christ and when making decisions he would ask himself: 'What would Christ do?' A few years ago my Mum and Dad were given a papal

blessing for forty years' service to The Society of St Vincent de Paul. During the years he spent with this society, many of them as the president of his local branch, my Dad resisted directions that asked him to make a judgement about the people he would help and to prioritise charity to those who had the capacity to change their future circumstances through the gifts they received. He would firmly (some might say stubbornly) state: 'I'll let God worry about the people he sends to me and I'll worry about helping anyone he sends'.

Though my Dad's spiritual hero was different to mine, I wonder if my drive to understand the nature of compassion and to support children to develop their capacity to care for others, was passed from him to me. I may have taken a different route to caring, but the values of non-judgement and concern that motivate me are values I share with my father. How these values have passed from him to me are embedded in the pedagogical relationship we shared as father and daughter.

What is pedagogy?

van Manen (2002) uses the term pedagogy to describe a comprehensive and inclusive way of working alongside children. Pedagogy captures the desire to teach and to educate. Rather than placing these tasks in the narrow confines of the classroom, where knowledge is formally passed through instruction and is the product only of a pre-written curriculum, he takes a holistic view of these processes. Pedagogy acknowledges the importance of the quality of the teaching

relationship that exists between adults and children. These often ineffable qualities distinguish truly successful teachers from others and the deep sense of commitment to and understanding of the subject being taught. 'Pedagogy stems from a space of morality, where a pedagogue's primary responsibility is to 'serve the child' (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015, p. 72).

Pedagogues work not only in the classroom and all are not formally trained to teach (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015). Pedagogy occurs between parents and children, between coaches and their players, between music teachers and their students, as well as within formal classroom settings. The role of the pedagogue is not to transmit knowledge, but as van Manen (2002) states to 'actively distinguish what is appropriate from what is less appropriate for children' (p. 8). Pedagogy is to enter a relationship where you are prepared to share yourself with children in a desire to help them to reach understandings. Knowles and Lloyd (2015) describe pedagogy as a 'concept with layered, overlapping, and coexisting perceptual meanings of love, compassion and support' (p. 77).

The pedagogical characteristic that stands out in relation to my father as pedagogue, was his genuine commitment to what he was doing. He had a deep sense of the value and importance of the charity work he undertook and he shared this with us in an ongoing way. We were part of his work, just as we were part of his life, and we attended functions and helped out with tasks such as packing food parcels at Christmas time. It was his sense of *being* in relation to these tasks that he communicated to each of his children in turn as we became

old enough to help him and my mother. His position in relation to this area was pedagogical. A sense of charity and Christianity were characteristics he wanted us to develop and he brought to his relationship with us a desire to develop these dispositions in each of us. He was thoughtful about sharing these parts of his life with us as he felt this would help to develop our own compassion and empathy for others.

In the same way as the educator in the previous chapter, whose sense of being was critical to the way she communicated a love of nature and caring to the children, my father's sense of being was critical to our pedagogical relationship. Heidegger (1962, cited in Fox, 2009, p. 152) believed that to understand what it is to be human we must investigate our sense of being - how we are in the world. He used the term *Dasein*, which means literally being-there, to describe a particular kind of Being that is 'disposed to question itself'. Also, van Manen (2007) believes the search for being lies in practice as it is manifest in how we live our lives in relation to others. My father's *Dasein*, who he was and how he was and what he was, was manifested in his charity work and his commitment to this activity. The practice of charity was an intrinsic part of our pedagogical relationship and simply by being in relation with my father I was learning about compassion and care for others.

Pedagogy is a relation. It requires more than one person and exists in the space that develops between them (Metcalf & Game, 2002). Like the attachment relationship, the pedagogical relationship has particular characteristics including

the motivation of the pedagogue to act always in the best interests of the child (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015). Compassion is part of the pedagogical relationship as the pedagogue is *with* the child in relation, and is listening and thoughtful about best meeting the child's needs.

Thoughtfulness is the critical characteristic that lies at the heart of pedagogy. Thoughtfulness sets the tone of the pedagogical relationship and results from the pedagogue having a deep connection to the subject taught. It relates to them having a desire to share the subject and an unconscious embodiment of the subject within themselves that is manifested as part of their being. This was evident in my father's engagement in charity work. In addition, the pedagogue is thoughtful about the child (van Manen, 2002), just as I believe my father thoughtfully and deliberately encouraged us to be part of his work.

While we wrote my father's eulogy and discussed his commitment to charity work one of my sisters said: 'He wasn't a saint you know!' He certainly was not. He was a human being, just like all pedagogues. Human natures are complicated and he was a very complex man. I believe bringing up a family of nine children only added to the complexity of our relationship with him. When I was a young adult, I read a self-help book aimed at helping me to know myself by understanding the self-talk in my mind. It suggested I look for the voice in my head to find out what my self-talk was like.

I struggled to hear *a voice*, my head was very busy and picking one voice from the multitude within was not easy. For the first time in my life I practiced meditation in an effort to calm my mind. One day I was walking across a room and dropped a cup of tea I was carrying. In my mind my father's voice said: 'That was stupid'. Immediately, I was a teenager again, preparing dinner for the family. I was bringing a plate of food to the table and I dropped it onto the floor. I remember my father instantly saying: 'Well, that was stupid'. I realised at that moment that my father was one of the voices in my mind and that his voice was harsh and critical.

Pedagogues risk themselves when entering into relation with children. They risk that every decision they make for the child, their actions and responses to the child may not be right for them at that given moment (van Manen, 2012). My father could not have realised the profound effect his style of communication was having on the way my sense of self was developing. As pedagogues we must understand that the 'pedagogical moments we share with children can affect them for the rest of their lives' (van Manen, 2012, p. 10). We were also reminded (2012) that 'pedagogy is in the routine and reflective, habituated and deliberate preconscious and conscious practice of upbringing' (van Manen, p. 10). Often our responses when in relation come unconsciously, unreflective and unfiltered. My father brought to the pedagogical relationship his own inner knowing, his pathic sense of himself. This pathic sense is 'prereflective, pre-theoretic and pre-linguistic' (van Manen, 2007, p. 20) and it too is manifest within relations. This

critical sense was also a part of my father's being and at times he could not protect me from it.

When you commit to pedagogical relations you risk 'pedagogical failings ... (which) have to do with the personal, relational and ethical aspects of the pedagogy of teaching' (van Manen, 2012, p. 14). Even though I know that my father was committed to the pedagogical relationship he had with me, and that he brought as much love as he could to our relationship, he could not help 'but do wrong at times' (van Manen, 2012, p. 15). The need for the pedagogue to balance their own 'felt sense over rationality' has been identified by Knowles & Lloyd (2012, p. 77). In addition to understanding self and what you bring to the pedagogical relationship, the pedagogue must leave their 'firmly rooted authoritarian position and dwell amidst "responsibility"' (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015, p. 77). My father at times maintained an authoritarian stance that was controlling and critical and he was pressed to this space at times within our relationship.

Compassion and the Pedagogical Relationship

The Dalai Lama uses the term an open heart (2001) to describe a compassionate response to others. In addition, the idea of being open to a student is used by Metcalfe and Game (2006) in their publication *Teachers Who Change Lives*, in an attempt to describe the characteristics of the best teachers. This openness, or compassion, is at the heart of genuine pedagogical relationships and is revealed

in the pedagogue's thoughtful attention to the child, her/his commitment to listen to the child and always strives to act in the child's best interests (van Manen, 2002). Like compassion, pedagogy is action oriented. A compassionate response does not end with feeling the suffering of others, but with taking action to end that suffering. In the same way the pedagogical relationship does not end with listening to and being thoughtful about a child, the pedagogical approach is action oriented as it aims to facilitate further understandings about both yourself and the child.

Pedagogy for Compassion

In chapter four I discussed how the capacity for compassion, helpfulness and cooperation are innate characteristics of humans. However, many of us are aware that the nightly news on television is often characterised by very different human responses and that war, cruelty and aggression are a part of our global lives. It is clear that the way we are nurtured has a critical impact on how we respond to others, whether with aggression or care. We are conscious that the critical carers in our lives play a profound role in how we develop our own responses to others. In addition, as with the development of dispositions and attitudes generally, developing our innate capacity to act with compassion towards others has its roots in early childhood (Gopnik, 2009).

Pedagogy for compassion describes the motivation of the pedagogue who believes that the capacity to develop compassion, sympathy, kindness or caring is

critical for happiness and that supporting children to develop these characteristics is a part of their role. In addition a pedagogy of compassion seeks an entry point into ethical dilemmas in response to the suffering occurring within them (Carson & Johnston, 2000). Pedagogues place an emphasis on supporting children to develop such critical dispositions by modelling compassionate responses, by demonstrating compassion themselves in their interactions. In this way they are supporting children to empathise with others and encouraging them to act with compassion when possible.

Parenting and Pedagogy for Compassion

Like all relationships, a parent brings to the pedagogical relationship their own particular understandings, values and experiences. They will act within this relationship from their own learned responses (van Manen, 2002). For example, they may recreate the behaviours and interactions that are a response to their own attachment relationship. Parents will also come from a place of their own values and beliefs about what is best for their child. Some may consider firm discipline to be critical for their child's development as they value obedience, while others may consider allowing their child to make their own choices is most important as they value independence. Pedagogy for compassion describes the parent who places a great deal of value on their child developing compassion and care for others and who acts as best they can to promote this characteristic.

During my observations in Pearl's home, the value her parents placed on compassion and caring within their pedagogical relationship was evident. Pearl was approaching two years old and was the youngest child in her family. She had an older brother, Jack, who was five and sister, Belle, who was seven. When I first arrived at their home the family had just sat down together to eat dinner and from this first moment, the emphasis the parents placed on caring for each other was palpable.

Pearl was sitting at the table in a booster seat and her toy Elmo was sitting in a high chair next to her with a cup and bowl in front of him. The television was not on and during the meal the family talked together about a variety of things and Pearl was given an opportunity to share. At one point she asked:

'Elmo drink water?' Mum said: 'You want a drink of water?' Pearl repeated: 'Elmo drink water?' Mum and Dad said together: 'Elmo wants a drink'. Mum asked: 'Can Belle give him a drink?' Belle reached across to Elmo with a cup and pretended to give him a drink. Pearl smiled and repeated: 'Elmo drink.' Belle pretended to give Elmo another drink.

Both of Pearl's parents were listening to her, deeply listening in an attempt to understand what she was saying. This style of deep listening is important in pedagogical moments as it allows the pedagogue to truly understand what the child needs. With young children, understanding needs can be difficult as they may not yet be able to communicate clearly. In this case the attunement of the pedagogue to the child is even more critical (Bath, 2013) and this was evidenced in the way Pearl's parents listened to her. As pedagogy is relational 'then listening informs the quality of the relationship formed' (Bath, 2013, p. 367).

In addition, Pearl's parents acted pedagogically to support the development of compassion in both Pearl and her sister Belle. They could have easily intervened and pretended to feed Elmo themselves, however, they thoughtfully asked Belle to help, giving her an opportunity to care for her sister. The way Elmo had been seated at the table also encouraged Pearl to think of another and what they might need. This style of parenting was common at Pearl's home, and her parents often encouraged the children to act to take care of each other's needs.

Pedagogy for Compassion and Early Childhood Education and Care

The educator in the previous chapter who shared the giant beetle with the children used pedagogy for compassion during the interaction between the children and nature. She consistently talked to the children about their need to be gentle with the beetle, emphasizing that the beetle could be hurt. The children had the opportunity to learn about nature during the interaction, they counted how many legs the beetle had and looked closely so they could see its spots. However, the overall tone of the learning experience was caring for the beetle and ensuring it was not injured (van Manen, 2002).

The emphasis the educator placed on the children developing compassion for another was in direct contrast to an educator I spoke with recently in an early childhood centre. She was talking to me about her love of nature and her belief that young children should have access to it. She described an incident in the

playspace of her centre where she had found a large spider in its web. She felt it was important that the children see the spider and she brought a group of children over so they could observe it closely. The educator then went on to state that she had caught an ant and dropped it into the spider's web, then encouraged the children to watch as the spider captured the ant, wrapped it in threads and stung it.

This educator was dedicated to sharing nature with young children. It is evident that her focus was not on helping children learn about compassion for other living beings. As she dropped the ant into the spider's web she may have been teaching the children about nature, but she was also teaching them to disregard the suffering of another living thing. She was teaching them that living things can be manipulated for our investigations and that the children do not need to concern themselves about the care of these creatures. I know that animals are used within scientific research, and I also know that my own treatment during illness has benefitted from this research. However, decisions to use living things in research are made according to ethical guidelines that were absent from this educator's pedagogical interactions.

Pedagogy in the Australian Early Childhood Context

What does this examination of pedagogy mean for the current early childhood context in Australia? With the release of the *EYLF* (DEEWR, 2009), the term pedagogy was introduced to describe the roles of early childhood educators with young children. It is defined in the framework as:

early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning (p. 46).

In my own professional context the term was greeted with confusion by educators who were unsure what it meant. The notion of pedagogical leadership in national curriculum documents also presents a tension in light of the diverse background characteristics of early childhood practice (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

I believe that pedagogy in early childhood environments can be understood as the holistic practice of relating to young children and can be viewed in broad terms as a focus on relationships between educators, children and families (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). However, pedagogy can also be understood in narrower terms as the processes, policies and curriculum practices we engage in when working with young children. This can create a tension between understandings of what is meant by pedagogy and pedagogical leadership (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

Pedagogy is in fact all these things together. The combination of 'that more elusive and invisible dimension that lies at the heart of teaching' (van Manen, 2012, p. 14) and the 'influence [of] national and local policies and guidelines, as well as the needs, interests and abilities of individual children and their families' (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). Finding a balance as a pedagogue, a way to weave these ways of being into an authentic whole is the professional challenge of all early childhood educators. In addition, the cultural context of the

pedagogical relationship is complex (Yates, 2009) and educators need to consider the choices and decisions they make. The introduction of the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) and its open curriculum structure ‘requires critical reflection to bridge the gap between curriculum ideals and intentional practice’ (Knaus, 2015, p. 223).

For each professional pedagogue it is likely that their way of being in relation to young children will be influenced strongly by their values and beliefs in the same way family pedagogues focus on particular areas. It is important that they have an effective and in-depth understanding ‘of their own being’ (Knaus, 2015, p. 224). Further, personal understandings of theoretical perspectives that inform pedagogical action will have a profound influence on pedagogues’ priorities for children’s learning. Yet, these understandings and the implementation of national frameworks are challenging for educators as they often lack the theoretical underpinning and qualifications to inform their practice. To create a truly ‘democratic-centred pedagogy would require a shift’ in the way early childhood professionals approach learning (Langford, 2010, p. 122). Perhaps a better understanding of the critical place compassion plays in the lives of young children would motivate pedagogues to implement a pedagogy for compassion. As Knaus (2015) states ‘educators who think carefully about their practices will show respect and genuine feeling for the children in their care’ (p. 228).

Implement with Diligence the Teachings Given

Shantideva's (2006) verse that opened this chapter is a valuable direction to early childhood pedagogues. Teacher education programs need to promote students skills to understand and embed early childhood theory into their practice. But, they should also focus on developing the self-knowledge and interpersonal skills that will support educators to attune to the children in their care to ensure that their 'routine and reflective, habitual and deliberate, preconscious and conscious practice[s]' (van Manen, 2012, p. 10) lead them to 'look immediately and directly to the child' (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015, p. 72). In particular, Lippitz (2007) suggests that we look at pedagogy as 'an active and reflective practice which arise[s] and is changed and maintained in systems of order' (p. 78).

This year I have been involved in developing an innovative professional learning plan built on the foundation of a practitioner-focused curriculum renewal process, a process that my employing organisation has been developing over many years (Newman, Keegan & Heeley, 2015). During the course of this year we have been working with three centres who identified that they wanted to increase children's agency. We created a professional learning plan for this group that included training in relation to agency and the image of the child. The plan also included ongoing mentoring for educators in the centre, with a professional counselling service who worked individually with educators using art therapy to understand themselves, their motivators, values and beliefs, and to consider the complex way this impacts on their practice with young children.

This training has had profound results for some educators and has supported the staffing teams to embed critical reflection into their professional work that is at the interface of what they bring, what they know and what they practice. This style of professional learning attempts to mediate in the complex lived space of the educators whose practice arises from their own pathic knowing (van Manen, 2007) and from their knowledge and understanding of early childhood theory. This type of learning could support educators to ‘consider new ways of approaching pedagogy that are flexible, creative, and inherently collaborative, but which require mutual change and re-imagining’ (Harris & Lennon, 2013, p. 421).

There is a space here too for compassion. The research outcomes that are reported in this thesis has shown how embedded compassion is in the critical relations that are part of children’s everyday lives. Educators who more often can come from a place of compassion in their responses to young children are those who at that moment of engrossment or engagement with children can act unconsciously with compassion (Knowles & Lloyd, 2015). They are more likely to be in the relational space with children that allows them to genuinely support children’s learning. The critical reflection that educators engage in allows them to relate to themselves in ways many of them may not have related previously. This relation, guided by counselling professionals, may allow educators to realise a felt sense of compassion for themselves that may translate into better understandings of the need to develop compassionate relations with the children in their care.

Conclusion

Once again, compassion has shown itself to be deeply embedded in children's relationships and in this chapter the way it relates to the pedagogical relationships children share with teachers, parents and others has been explored. Pedagogy is a complex and often poorly understood concept in the current Australian early childhood context and this has implications for the way educators understand and work within pedagogical relationships. What is clear is that compassion is part of the pedagogical relationship and supporting the development of compassion in children can be a goal of pedagogical interactions.

Chapter Six

The Spirit of Compassion

This aim to bring about the benefit of beings,
A benefit that others wish not even for themselves,
This noble, jewellike state of mind
Arises truly wondrous, never seen before.

(Shantideva, 2006, p. 57)

Introduction

From the beginning of my research I have wondered most about the place compassion plays in spirituality. In that sense we have reached the heart of my study. This is the place that has inspired me, motivated me and carried me forward. Yet, now I am here I feel a little lost in the vastness of the concepts I want to explore and understand. The phenomenon of spirituality is ineffable like compassion and I am challenged to write meaningfully and with grace. van Manen's (2005) assertion that phenomenology is like writing in the dark has become very real here as I wonder how to move forward. However, phenomenology does provide me with a sense of confidence and awareness that I am in a powerful place to explore the phenomena of compassion and spirituality. It is a place where some light can be shone on the role of compassion in the spiritual lives of children. Since spirituality is part of my lived experience I began to examine this concept by exploring my own engagement with it (van Manen, 1997).

Breathing and Death

My Mother is dying! She has been in care for the past five years and during that time her struggle with Alzheimer's disease has left her without memory of who she is or who her family are. She can no longer walk, can say very little and cannot feed or care for herself. Over the years as we have cared for her, the progression of Alzheimer's disease has felt like it is moving her away from each of us, from who we are as a family.

A few days ago she had a small stroke. She has had a number of these over the past five years, but each one left only a temporary deficit and she recovered from them rapidly. However, this time the stroke left her unable to swallow and in the days following she did not recover. As a family we understood that this was the end. We made the decision not to put in a drip to hydrate her or to attempt to syringe feed her as the nursing staff had suggested. We made the decision to let her go. My husband and I, two of my brothers and their wives plus my sister spent the week at her bedside. Throughout the week she seemed quite bright in some ways. Her eyes sparkled and she followed us as we moved about the room. However, her ability to swallow did not return and she slipped into unconsciousness. Her breathing is now laboured and each breath seems to be a struggle.

I have never considered myself courageous, yet it took courage from all of us to sit together in that room coming face to face with the death of our mother. Over the week our courage had been bolstered by singing, playing music and sharing

stories of our lives together, particularly memories of our Mum and Dad. Yet, as we reach the point where we know Mum would leave us soon, we became quiet and focused. A tight circle forms around her bed and each of us leans into the circle completely focused on our mother.

We all know that the end is near as her breathing becomes more and more laboured and as the time between each breath movement extends. We sing a few songs together that speak to us of her and that remind us of our father. At one point one of my sisters-in-law turns to me and asks: 'Do you still feel she's here, or do you feel she's gone?' I realise we are having a shared experience of her absence. Up to this point, while she was unconscious, it still felt like she was with us, like we were relating to each other through our centred focus on her. We were supporting her somehow, giving her strength by our concentration.

However, suddenly it feels like she is no longer with us, I have a strong image of her body as a machine that is pumping blood and oxygen, but nothing more. She does not last much longer. The spaces between her breaths become longer and longer and finally she breathes no more.

Courage was not the only thing that had brought us together to that final place. We were also motivated by compassion. We could easily have made the choice not to be present, but instead we risked entering this relational space, one most of us were unfamiliar with. Entering into that space allowed us to experience a sense of connection to each other and to our mother that was quite profound. It

allowed us to experience the mystery of life and death and I found it a deeply spiritual experience.

What is Spirituality?

Defining what spirituality means is not easy. The Oxford Dictionary of English (Stevenson, 2015) defines spirituality as relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. It comes from the word spirit which is defined as the non-physical part of a person regarded as their true self and as capable of surviving physical death or separation. However, Hyde (2010) asserts that ‘spirituality defies a single definition’ as it is deeply rooted in ‘each person’s being’ (p.16). This may account for the difficulties I have in reaching understandings when talking to others in the early childhood field about spirituality and its place in the early childhood curriculum.

van Manen (1997) encourages researchers to search for the etymological roots of words to support understandings about the phenomenon they are researching.

Spirit comes from the Latin *spiritus* meaning breath and the word *spirare* meaning breathe. As I reflect about sitting with my mother when she died I am filled with a sense of the root meaning of spirituality with her breath and her breathing being both the foreground and background to the whole experience. We sat close by watching each breath as it came in and out, revealing to us a profound understanding of her condition.

Spirituality is also often described as a connectedness to others (Hyde, 2010) and occurring in relation to others. When we relate to others we open up a space between us that at once contains each and all of us (Metcalf & Game, 2002). Sitting in the room with my family and Mother, we were all deeply engaged in a relational space. Throughout the week we had been together our relational space was ever changing as we moved about the room, ate meals, chatted and sang together. But, the quality of the relational space during those final hours when Mother was dying was different. Not only was it more intense, but it had a character that was not easy to describe. Each of us was completing a part of the relationship. The space we were occupying contained and held all of us. We held Mother in that relational space without flinching, willing her strength and peace. A connection existed between us that was almost palpable and one I consider was spiritual in nature. It felt as if our connection reflected an ultimate unity where our 'sense of connectedness seemed to go beyond conventional notions of relationality' (Hyde, 2010, p. 93).

In my mind I can clearly see my mother breathing in and out, which brings to mind the idea of movement from self to other. Breathing in to self and out to other. Buber states 'spirit in its human manifestation is man's response to his You' (1970, p. 89). He proposed that we live much of our life thinking of others as objects, as it. We occupy an I-It space when we see others as things rather than as other beings. While we moved about the room organising ourselves by deciding what to get for lunch or tidying our leftovers, we often entered this I-It space with our Mother. She was there with us, nothing had changed for her,

however our focus was elsewhere and her physical self was almost a background object in our perceptions. Buber (1970) describes spirit as a relation, between I and You. When we see the other as a being and relate to them in this way an I-Thou relation exists. For most of the time at least one of us was engaged in this type of relation with our Mother as we chatted to her and cared for her needs.

Buber (1970) sees the mystery and spirituality in relationships when he describes the I-Thou relationship. When Thou is spoken it is within a relation that is intimate and unbounded when we come towards the other 'on a different plane - one of true humanity, generosity, acceptance, kindness, compassion, and mutual affirmation - even love' (cited in, Fox, 2009, p. 141). As we sat together with our Mother nearing the end, we were encompassed in an I-Thou relationship, not only each of us with her, but with each other. When my sister-in-law turned to me and asked: 'Do you still feel she's here, or do you feel she's gone?' I felt that my mother was no longer in relation to us, that some essence of herself was no longer with us, no longer relating to us, that she had left the I-Thou relation.

This felt sense of separation before my mother had actually left us touches on another aspect of spirituality, mystery. Hyde (2005) argues that mystery is an important part of spirituality.

Mystery involves that which transcends human understanding ... mystery captures and engages the human imagination, it permeates the relational understanding of spirituality in terms of connectedness to self, others, the world or universe, and to the Transcendent (Hyde, 2005, p. 33).

There was mystery in the feeling that my mother was already gone, mystery in the unknown, in where she was going and what form her going would take. However, rather than mystery being reserved for exceptional circumstances like the death of a loved one, Metcalfe and Game (2002) argue for an everyday mystery that is embedded into the way we relate to others ‘moments of *lively* life, of enthusiasm and inspiration’ (p. 8). They argue for the mystery that is manifested in our relation to others, describing the mysterious difference between a social gathering that is awkward, where no-one can think of something to say and one where everyone is animated and engaged. This idea that mystery can be part of the everyday is an important concept to consider when examining what spirituality in early childhood may look like.

Spirituality and Religion

Many who attempt to define spirituality discuss the difference between spirituality and religion (Bone, 2008; Cupit, 2002; Thomas & Lockwood, 2009). Spirituality is considered an innate part of human beings arising from our deepest humanity, while religion is the cultural response of individuals and groups to spiritual experience. It is possible to be spiritual and not religious (Grajczonek, 2012; Hooks, 2000). As a practising Catholic for the first twenty-five years of my life I have a deep familiarity with the religious traditions that are part of my cultural experience. When we had a Catholic mass for my Mother’s funeral I followed the rituals of the mass, standing, kneeling and reciting prayers that were so automatic they seemed to be almost part of my genetic makeup. However, it

was when I was standing at her graveside and I raised my eyes to the top of a tree that was swaying in the breeze that I felt an uplifting of spirit and a sense of something beyond myself.

My mother was religious. She was Catholic and throughout her illness she was surrounded by symbols of her faith including a picture of the sacred heart of Jesus. When it was clear she would not live much longer we called the priest to give her last rites. Even though everyone in the room during her final hours had been baptised and brought up Catholic, or in a Christian tradition, none of us remained practising. The spiritual sense of connection and relation that was part of our experience with our mother in her final hours did not include religious ritual. We were not motivated to pray together or to sing her the songs we had learned in church and were familiar with. Instead we sang songs that were part of our cultural heritage, Irish ballads and rhymes she had sung to us as children. For all of us this deeply spiritual time was not framed by the religious beliefs that we had been brought up with, nor by the belief in Buddhism that a number of us had later adopted. It was beyond religion.

Spirituality and Compassion

Due to the difficulties with clearly defining spirituality it is often described by its attributes and characteristics (Grajczonek, 2012) and these consistently include reference to connectedness and to compassion (Bone, 2008; Grajczonek, 2012; Hyde, 2010; Thomas & Lockwood, 2009). Describing spirituality as a relation and emphasising connection to other, including our connection to all beings and

to the natural environment, illuminates the *with* in this phenomenon. When we are with another and genuinely connected to them, this is the place where spirituality exists. Being *with* another is also an important part of compassion. The root of the word compassion is to suffer *with*. It seems these two phenomena reside in the same space, a relational space where there is a genuine sense of being *with* another. This suggests that compassion is an act of spirituality and that spiritual connections result in compassionate responses. Like care and compassion, compassion and spirituality seem bound together with spirituality relying on compassion for its expression.

When we were bound together with my mother at her deathbed our communion, our sharing of thoughts and feelings, with her and with each other had not only a spiritual dimension, but it was expressed in our compassionate response to her. Our relating to her came from a place of being with her in her suffering and from a fervent desire to end that suffering.

Spirituality in Early Childhood

The characteristics that describe spirituality, also occur in early childhood settings. However, due to the particular characteristics of these settings how we understand and describe spirituality for young children is different and it can be difficult to gain information about the experience of this concept from young children. While acknowledging these difficulties Thomas and Lockwood (2009) have said that:

it means different things to different people ... it is often linked to compassion and the experience of joy. It is also about the search for connection in our lives (Thomas & Lockwood, 2009, p. 5).

Bone (2008) also writes about spirituality in early childhood settings and describes spirituality as:

a means of connecting people to each other, to all living things, to nature and the universe. Spirituality is a way of appreciating the wonder and mystery of everyday life. It alerts me to the possibility for love, happiness, goodness, peace, and compassion in the world (p. 266).

These two definitions use the concepts of connection, compassion and joy/happiness to describe what spirituality in early childhood might look like. Drawing on this study's data collecting observations of Ruby, Pearl and Jasper in their homes and in the early childhood service they attended, I did not see a single interaction, ritual or icon from any religious tradition that I was familiar with. There was no overt indicator that spirituality was embedded in their lives.

However, I observed many instances of connection, compassion, and joy/happiness and my understanding of their spirituality is supported by the concept of everyday spirituality. Bone (2008) is concerned with the particular way spirituality occurs in early childhood settings and employs the term everyday spirituality to describe the quality of spirituality in this context.

Everyday spirituality describes a type of spirituality that:

could be experienced everywhere and in everything ... [it] emphasises the practical aspects of spirituality and the spiritual as a component of pedagogical practice. Everyday spirituality, recognises the power of everyday actions to change daily life, to transform it into something beyond the ordinary (p. 267).

Understanding spirituality in early childhood by placing it within everyday experience resonates with hermeneutic phenomenology and its search for understandings in everyday life. Heidegger (1962) uses the term Dasein to describe the state of human existence in being. This is a German word meaning Being There. *There* being in everyday existence. So, when we search for meaning he proposes that ‘since we humans are immersed in existence, and since existence is a subspecies of Being, then the evident path to our goal is through an analysis of existence’ (Fox, 2009, p. 151). Searching for spirituality in the lives of young children is a search for being. Looking for the way spirituality exists as part of their lives is a search for the immediate experience as it is lived by them.

van Manen (1990) employs the term lived experience to describe the everyday nature of phenomenological enquiry stating that:

Lived experience is the starting point and end point of phenomenological research. The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence (p. 36).

By reflecting on everyday life and examining lived experience we reach understandings about Being. In addition to the use of the term everyday spirituality to describe spirituality in early childhood, perhaps thinking through the use of the term phenomenological spirituality could put us in touch with the lived nature of this phenomenon as we understand it occurring in early childhood.

As I reflected on the place of spirituality in early childhood and on what meaning this had for understanding compassion, I was supported by the three spaces

described by Bone (2010). While researching in early childhood settings she identified three areas where the spiritual emerged. She called these spiritual witness, the spiritual in-between and the spiritual elsewhere. In the next section I use these three spaces to frame my reflections and to further deepen my understandings of the data I have collected here.

Spiritual Witness

Dad came into the room and Jasper stood up and moved toward him with his hands up. Dad picked him up and then sat on the lounge with Jasper on his lap looking out towards the room. Dad leaned into the chair and Jasper leaned back into Dad. Dad picked up a book sitting on the lounge next to him and began to read it to Jasper. Jasper looked at the pages of the book as Dad read, touching them occasionally and making sounds. Once Dad had read the book he read it again with Jasper turning the pages. Mum asked Holly to set the table and Dad got up with Jasper on his hip and began to clear room on the table for dinner. Then he sat back on the lounge with Jasper on his lap.

Bone (2007a) describes spiritual witness as:

when people are together, in tune, or in touch with each other in a way that can be thought of as connected on a spiritual level. I have conceptualised spiritual witness to be an aspect of the pedagogical relationship that merges intersubjectivity with the spiritual dimension in the everyday context of the early childhood setting (p. 147).

Using the term spiritual witness to examine the observation of Jasper and his Dad illuminates the way spirituality occurs in young children's lives. Dad and Jasper were with each other throughout the observation, Dad making a particular effort to keep Jasper with him even when he needed to complete another task. They were not just with each other in a purely physical sense they were connected to each other on another level. While they leant into each other physically, they entered a relational space where they were both open to each

other (Metcalf & Game, 2002). Their interactions with each other communicated engagement, comfort and love for the other. While observing them in this space the quality of their engagement and the comfort they found in each other was visibly evident. This is a spiritual space where we step out to join the other and where engagement with the other takes us beyond ourselves into what Buber (1970) calls an I-Thou relation, one where our connection to other in turn connects us to something unbounded and beyond ourselves (cited in Fox, 2009).

Bone's (2010) use of the term spiritual witness to describe the relational and spiritual space she witnessed during her study, points to the role of compassion in spirituality. As previously noted the etymological roots of the word compassion are to suffer *with* and it is the use of the term *witness* to describe the spiritual connection here that makes me wonder about the role compassion plays in spirituality in early childhood. In order to enter into relation with another you must open yourself to being *with* the other (Metcalf & Game, 2002). It is when you are with the other that you can truly see their needs and can then act to meet those needs. This is an expression of compassion for the other, however during these moments of connection both spiritual and compassionate dimensions exist simultaneously. This explains in part why definitions of spirituality often use the word compassion (Bone, 2010; Thomas & Lockwood, 2009).

In chapter three I described this same observation of Jasper to show the way compassion existed within the care relationship with his father. It seemed that

compassion and care occurred together, with compassion motivating someone to care for another and with genuine care relationships inspiring the carer to feel compassion for another. Here I identify in this same space the expression of everyday spirituality. Perhaps the term *witness* could also be used to describe the complexity of the relationship that exists between spirituality, compassion and care. Is it the existence of compassion that elevates a relation to the spiritual? Perhaps spirituality as described in this everyday sense cannot exist in the absence of compassion and care.

The Spiritual In-between

As I explore spirituality in early childhood I am now faced with the news that my father-in-law is dying and my husband and I are called to the hospital to be with him in his final days. I am now sitting beside his bed with my husband, his mother and two sisters. Like my family's focus on my mother's breathing, we too watch each breath entering and leaving his body. There is no longer anything we can do, but be here with him. He was diagnosed with lung cancer twelve months ago and withdrawn from treatment just four weeks ago. The end has come suddenly in a way, with each of us expecting he would have more time.

His consciousness altered over the four days we sat with him. Sometimes he seemed completely aware and at others he seemed lost, distant or confused and finally today he slipped into unconsciousness. Yesterday, when he seemed settled my husband and his sisters went to a cafe so they could talk together. I stayed with my father and mother-in-law. No sooner had the others left than my father-

in-law indicated to me, using hand movements that he wanted to go outside. I asked the nursing staff to help me get him into a wheelchair and took him outdoors.

The palliative care unit had lovely gardens and pathways around the building. I sat my mother-in-law inside in the lounge area (she was recovering from a hip replacement operation) where she could see us walking outside through the windows. My father-in-law was so happy to be outside and as soon as we walked out he lifted his face to the sun and sighed. I walked him around the gardens. As we came to a hedge of lavender he leaned over the side of his chair and dragged his hands through the bushes. While we walked I picked seed pods and small flowers and handed them to him. He held a collection of these tightly in his fists.

I found a creeping banksia rose in flower and I picked one and passed it to him saying: 'Smell it, it's lovely'. He put his collection into his lap and taking the rose lifted it to his nose inhaling. He looked at it for a long time and finally said: 'It's beautiful'. I said: 'We should go and give that to your wife'. He nodded, so I wheeled the chair back onto the verandah and brought him to where she was sitting. He passed the rose to her and as she took it she began to cry. After a moment he indicated that he wanted to return outside, so we went. When he found a geranium flower he indicated that he wanted it, so I picked it and gave it to him. He pointed towards the verandah and when we reached the sitting room he again handed the flower to his wife.

When we settled him back in his bed, my mother-in-law sat with the banksia rose in her hand and cried. She said that when he had handed the rose to her it was like he was a child and that he was offering her his whole heart. The rose remains an important symbol for her as we near the end. She has placed it into her prayer book and intends to dry it when she can so she can keep it always. She holds the prayer book, with the flower enclosed, to her chest as we sit together.

The In-between and Ritualised Experiences

Reflecting upon this experience while researching spirituality in early childhood, Bone's (2007a) description of the spiritual in-between resonated. She describes the spiritual in-between as a place of 'being in-between realities, of being not quite in the real world ... a space for new spiritual possibilities to emerge' (Bone, 2007a, p. 175). She proposes that entering the spiritual in-between can be supported by rituals, and she employs descriptions of ritualised experiences that she observed during her data collection, such as celebrating midwinter or preparing for Christmas, to define this space. These rituals are often a part of the everyday experience of early childhood and are often contextualised within the particular setting in which they occur.

van Manen (2005) discusses ritualised experiences in a broader sense. Ritualised experiences may be behaviours that have become so common or so much a part of how we interact with each other that they are often entered into unconsciously. Because they are so unconscious we rarely reflect upon them. For example, we may say hello to parents as they arrive each morning at the early childhood

centre with the simple greeting: 'How are you?' Yet, we do not expect them to actually tell us how they are, this is simply a way of greeting that is so much a part of how we interact with each other it is unconscious. As van Manen (2005, p. 9) states: 'We habituate these behaviours because they now inhabit us. They have become part of everyday practice'.

It is the very nature of these habituated ritualised experiences that makes them 'phenomenologically remarkable because they are so un-remarkable' (van Manen, 2005, p. 9). Although they are ritualised and generally beyond reflection it is possible that some trace of their original meaning exists within them and a phenomenological examination may reveal this meaning. We may discover this meaning when we 'refuse to accept the taken-for-granted dimension of the ritual' (van Manen, 2005, p. 9). Early childhood environments are rich with these taken for granted everyday rituals, that on examination may reveal something about the nature of spirituality and compassion as they are expressed in these places.

The Giving of a Flower

Returning to my father-in-law, when he gave a small rose to his wife the moment was intense and the feeling it created went well beyond the simple act of giving something to another. I know this moment was particularly profound because of the timing. Yet, the way my mother-in-law later described it to me was what alerted me to the potential of the moment. She said that when her husband had handed her the rose it was like he was a child and that he was offering her his whole heart. It is easy to see the spiritual dimension of this relation as it touched

each of them so deeply and it clearly meant something to each of them that was well beyond the simple pragmatic act of giving.

In the early childhood years the giving of a flower is a ritualised action that occurs frequently in my experience. When a child picks a flower it is very common for the adult who is caring for them to suggest they give it to someone or often the child is so familiar with the ritual that they instinctively give the flower to another. The person who receives the flower typically takes it with some ceremony, a show of surprise or delight, generally they lift it to their nose to smell it and thank the child for the gift. Most people who have spent time with young children will be familiar with this ritual. At times the flower may be passed from child to child and I have seen delight on a child's face as another hands them a flower.

This simple ritual that is embedded in our early childhood culture has this essence of everyday spirituality that Bone (2007b) describes. The child takes the delight they feel in the flower and passes it to another. In this moment they are fully present and move into relation with another. The other enters the relation with the child and shares the delight. This moment, this space, allows each being to share the joy, wonder and mystery of the flower. It is a ritualised space where the I-Thou relation (a relation that touches unbounded and transformational space) can occur (Buber, 1970, cited in Fox, 2009).

Compassion is also present here. The offering of the flower is an opening of self to other. The child takes the joy she/he is feeling and shares it with another. The other person opens to the child and takes the flower. They enter a shared space where they are with each other and can meet each other's need for joy and delight. Again in this in-between space the experience of spirituality and compassion come together.

The concept of being in-between is also used by à Beckett (2007). Though the focus of her research was on relationships, the way she understands the in-between has a similar tone. She describes the 'in-between ... [as] an openness that is always available' (à Beckett, 2007, p. 107). Within her research she considered the in-between to be a place of possibilities and mystery, and stressed the importance of entering this relational space not knowing what will happen. She states that 'each situation has its unique potential drawn partly from the things that have gone before while at the same time creating something new' (à Beckett, 2007. p. 111). She also argues for the everyday place of the in-between stating that it is 'a crucial part of daily life ... without the in-between other times lack meaning and purpose' (p. 125). This supports Bone's (2007a) notion that ritual has a place to play in the in-between. When we use ritual we are using the things that have gone before. However, the ritual needs to be flexible and responsive enough to be creative and to invite mystery to develop.

Another common ritual in early childhood with the potential for creativity is the encouragement of young children to touch an animal or plant gently with care

(Renck Jalongo, 2014). For example, in this study when the educator found the giant beetle in the playground, she immediately encouraged the children to stroke it (Refer chapter four). If a rabbit, bird or dog visits our play environments, we encourage the children to gently touch the animal. We also may encourage young children to gently touch other natural materials, such as the bark of a tree or the petals of a rose. Pelo (2013) describes how a young child's opportunity to connect with natural environments creates moments that are deeply engaging for the child. These experiences are not only engaging, but also have the potential for creativity and surprise.

These too are ritualised moments when everyday spirituality and compassion come together. Like my father-in-law who dropped his head back and sighed when he came outside or who ran his hand through the lavender bushes, the act of touching brings the child into relation with the other, human and nonhuman. Within this relation they can be uplifted to a place of wonder and joy and tuned into the need for care of the other. van Manen (2007; 2014) discusses the pathic (experiential and felt) experiences of life and emphasises the way phenomenology can allow us to examine and reflect on these types of experiences.

The Spiritual Elsewhere

The final space that Bone (2007a) described was the spiritual elsewhere. This is an imaginative and creative space where children can explore possibilities and differences. Within this space, children can take on the role of others, perhaps

becoming animals or insects. They can explore concepts like anger or joy or what it might be like to be without sight or hearing. When children are engaged in play they can also enter the spiritual elsewhere as they suspend the concrete world for a world of imagination of their own making. These spaces are spiritual because they allow the child to connect with the other, whether that be another person, non-human being or part of the physical environment. These spaces also allow children to explore the mystery of the world as they engage with concepts that they may not yet have tacit knowledge of.

A magpie flew into the older children's yard while they were inside. As soon as Jasper saw the magpie he moved to the fence that divided the yards and leaned against it. He watched the magpie intently as it dug through the sandpit. It moved across the playground onto the grass and Jasper moved along the fence to follow it.

Another child came close to Jasper and stuck his legs through the fence. Jasper imitated him, putting his own legs through the fence. The other child moved away and Jasper stood up and began searching for the magpie. Initially he couldn't find it and he walked along the fence until he spotted it. He stood still again leaning against the fence and watching the bird. He remained watching the bird through the fence for over fifteen minutes.

As Jasper leant against the fence in the playground he seemed elsewhere.

Occasionally he would notice something occurring around him, but would return immediately to this almost dreamlike state of watching the magpie. We do not know what he was thinking or experiencing as he watched the magpie, but his body language and focus showed that he was deeply engaged. Adams, Hyde, and Woolley (2008) highlight that young children will not use the term spiritual or know what it means. As educators we may identify that children are having a

spiritual experience ‘from a straightforward verbal account, to simply being lost in their own world’ (Adams, Hyde & Woolley, 2008, p. 38). It seems likely that Jasper was having a spiritual experience that he was in the spiritual elsewhere.

The spiritual elsewhere is an important place for the development of compassion, a space where children can take on the perspectives and roles of others (McTamaney, 2007). This can lead to empathetic understandings of others (Bone, 2007a) and motivate children to act with compassion towards them. The experience of being other may also promote deeper understandings of the needs of others to guide actions to reduce their suffering.

Spirituality and Awe and Wonder

The experience of awe and wonder are spiritual capacities that occur naturally for young children (Hart, 2003, cited in Hyde, 2008). In particular, Pelo’s (2013) narrative *The Goodness of Rain* offers a remarkable account of the way children’s immersion in natural environments can promote wonder and awe for them and the adult they are engaged with. It is possible that Jasper’s engagement was one of awe. Perhaps he was awestruck by the magpie or perhaps he was filled with wonder about what it was and what it was doing. In chapter four I discussed the capacity for awe and wonder to create connection between people, other beings, human or non-human, or the environment. These connections create a space where compassion can occur and reveal deeper understandings.

Experiences of wonder and awe have been described as the cornerstone of a spiritual life and during these experiences the ‘boundaries can blur between Self and everything Other than self’ (Hyde, 2008). Buber (1970, cited in Fox, 2009) describes the I-Thou relationship as unbounded - describing connection with something beyond self, something without boundaries. Hyde (2008) believes this accords with the idea of Ultimate Unity. This concept of ultimate unity links to the Buddhist concept of interdependence. The belief that we are all interconnected and dependent on each other (Dalai Lama, 2003). The experience of awe and wonder can take children to this place of interconnection.

The Way of the Bodhisattva (Shantideva, 2006) is a guide to living the life of a Bodhisattva, a being who has devoted their life to the benefit of others.

Interconnectedness with others, human and non-human, is an important understanding of Bodhisattvas. The verse that opens this chapter shows how important these links between interconnectedness and compassion are when it describes the Bodhisattva’s dedication to others as a ‘noble, jewellike state of mind’ and that this state of mind ‘arises truly wondrous, never seen before’ (Shantideva, 2006, p. 57).

Conclusion

Spirituality occurs in a space of deep connection between people, other beings, human and non-human, and the environment. This connection places the child with another and it is this experience of *with* that points to the role of compassion here. Compassion occurs when we are genuinely with another, when we are

connected, and as connection is critical to spirituality, so is compassion.

Spirituality relies on compassion to manifest. Like care and compassion which occur so closely together it is difficult to describe one without the other, spirituality also seems to rely on compassion for definition. This explains why compassion is critical in attempts to describe this ineffable phenomena.

Chapter Seven

Peace at Last

With perfect and unyielding faith,
With steadfastness, respect, and courtesy,
With conscientiousness and awe,
Work calmly for the happiness of others.

Let us not be downcast by the warring wants
Of childish persons quarrelling.
Their thoughts are bred from conflict and emotion,
Let us understand and treat them lovingly.

(Shantideva, 2006, p. 114)

Introduction

When I was conceptualising this research I attempted to keep an open mind about what would emerge from the data. However, I had some sense of the types of activities and behaviours that I would observe children displaying and areas where I might see compassion enacted. I also had an idea of the concepts that might emerge as significant, being familiar with young children and having had extensive professional experience in early childhood education. However, the concept of peace did not occur to me as significant. My interest in this concept emerged purely out of my data collection as I watched Ruby, Pearl and Jasper interact with other children in their current early childhood setting.

Peace is the last chapter as it has taken me this long to understand its value within this study. As I reflected on the role of peace I began to wonder whether my own experience as a child growing up in a violent society had created some

personal blind spot that did not allow me to see the compassion inherent here. Was there some part of my being that was committed to the narrative of rebellion and conflict that I had grown up with? This is where phenomenology has led me. To a place where my own unconscious being is brought into the light of day. I realise now that my memories can give a first-hand account of what it was like to be a child in the midst of an armed conflict and this will give insight into how peace, or the absence of peace, is experienced by children (van Manen, 2005).

Spending Thruppence

For the first seven years of my life I lived in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In 1969 Northern Ireland was divided along sectarian lines. There were two main groups: the Catholics, who identified themselves primarily as Irish and who wanted to become part of the Republic of Ireland, and the Protestants, who identified themselves primarily as British and who wanted a continuation of British rule (Connolly, Fitzpatrick, Gallagher & Harris, 2006).

Violence had broken out at times between these two groups for more than a century and in Belfast we referred to this as The Troubles. My father and mother both told me stories about their experiences of violence when they grew up. My mother had been tossed out of her bed in the middle of the night a number of times so her home could be searched for weapons. Two of her brothers were interned without trial in Long Kesh Prison for years, for suspected involvement with the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

My father was a staunch Republican. He told me stories of himself as a young adult joining vigilante groups with his cousins to patrol the streets to keep his people safe. He and his cousins had no weapons so they manufactured their own using a piece of string tied tightly between their hands intending to strangle anyone who threatened them. My father brought us up singing songs of rebellion, listening to stories about the history of Catholic Ireland in Belfast and the injustices he believed had been done by the British Government and The Protestants. It was his decision to come to Australia. He had become frustrated by the lack of opportunities for Catholics in Belfast and by the discrimination he and his family faced on a daily basis.

It was just as we were preparing to migrate to Australia that The Troubles (open conflict) flared up again. They lasted until the 1990's. I doubt my father would have immigrated if he had known some action was imminent. He would have been involved, but our home was already sold and we were packed and ready to move overseas. It was one of our last days in Belfast and we were spending a few nights with my aunt and uncle before we flew out.

I was seven years old and since birth I had lived in the middle of a Catholic district, I attended a Catholic school and went to mass at the Catholic Church every Sunday. My experience of the conflict that had been an ongoing part of our society was limited to the stories my parents and others had told me. My aunt and uncle lived on the edge of a Catholic district with their son. At the bottom of their street was the Protestant district. The area they lived in had both Catholic

and Protestant families. On the last day we were to spend in Ireland I experienced The Troubles first hand. I had been given thruppence to spend by a relative as a going away present and I took my young cousin's hand (he was about three years old) and we walked to the local shop to buy sweets. I did not think of telling my mother where I was going. At our old house I had walked across the street to the local shop alone many times.

The shop in this area was on the next block from my aunt and uncle's house. We walked there quite happily and I bought my cousin and myself a sweet each. We were just coming out of the shop when a truck burst into flames not far away from us. I do not remember being scared at the time, but I do recall standing open-mouthed in amazement, watching as people seemed to climb all over the truck to put out the flames. There was much yelling and screaming and this began to frighten me. I held my cousin's hand tightly as we watched from a distance.

Apparently there had been an outbreak of violence in this area and the British Soldiers had come in to move Catholic families out of their homes so the district would not have a mixture of Catholics and Protestants and therefore be easier to manage politically. The furniture from one of the homes had been loaded onto a flatbed truck and when it was leaving someone had thrown a Molotov cocktail onto it. Probably more than one as it burst into flames very quickly.

My cousin and I watched for a little while and when the fire was nearly extinguished we walked back to his home. When we got there my mother was nearly hysterical. She had not realised we had gone to the shop and had been running around frantically trying to locate us. The British soldiers were door knocking down the street and were telling people to evacuate their homes. Groups of Protestant men were also patrolling the streets and yelling at people to get out. My aunt had a picture of the Pope hanging in her entry hall. I can remember my mother's look of anguish as she hurriedly tried to close the door behind us as we came home. She wanted to make sure the Protestants did not see the picture and realise this was a Catholic house.

The next day we flew out to Australia so our knowledge of The Troubles was no longer gained firsthand. We now listened for news broadcasts from Ireland, letters from back home or the occasional telephone call. My aunt and uncle ultimately were evacuated and moved into a house with a relative. Later the relative's house was firebombed. Thankfully no-one was home as all their furniture and belongings were destroyed. Later my father's youngest sister was shot dead in her own home by a Protestant group and I remember all too clearly the grief and helplessness etched on my parents faces as they read the telegram telling them the news.

Once settled in Australia, my father continued to support the rebels. We attended many rallies and ceremonies in support of Sinn Féin (a group dedicated to the Republican movement which was to have a significant part in negotiating peace

in Northern Ireland). Ultimately, my father received an award from Sinn Féin for his fundraising efforts. He also continued to teach us Irish rebel songs and to teach us the history of the conflict and invasion that were part of the history of our homeland.

What is peace?

When I have previously spoken about this memory I had always said that I was unaffected by what was going on around me and what danger I might have been in. As I retold the story here and more authentically attempted to find myself in the memory, I did acknowledge feeling unsettled and upset. It seems improbable that a seven-year-old child could not be affected by such an event, but perhaps the way it was embedded into our culture meant I was expected not to make a big deal of it.

It is interesting that this memory of violence was the first that emerged as I began to reflect about peace and compassion. This seemed difficult to understand until I began to research the concept of peace. The origin of peace was from the Latin *pax* or *pace* meaning peace. This did not shed much light on the meaning of the word except that it had remained stable over a long period of time. The dictionary defined peace as a noun used to describe freedom from disturbance and tranquillity or mental and emotional calm. It was also described as a state or period in which there is no war or a war has ended (Stevenson, 2015).

O'Dea (2012) joined these two descriptions together to create a rich definition of peace that further informed my understandings:

Peace is the source of health, well-being, skilful mediation, dialogue, conflict resolution, fruitful and productive relationships, empathy, compassion, social justice, genuine freedom, cultural diversity, true democracy, and enlightened local and global governance. Peace is so large and encompassing because it brings together inner security and global security (p. xiv).

This detailed definition was lent additional support by Campbell et al. (2001) when they described peace in an early childhood context stating 'peace is about justice and respect for everyone's basic rights' (p. 2). With this knowledge I used my memories of childhood experiences to wonder if peace could simply be the absence of war, or if it was more than this?

Care and Peace

Noddings (2012) wrote extensively on care ethics over a number of decades and argued for the important role of care in education. She described an ethic of care that was initially naturalistic, part of who we are as humans. It is developed and established from our earliest moments and permeates our lives. We learn to care for others by being cared for ourselves and this concept has profound implications for how we resolve conflict. Noddings (2012) argued that it is within the care relation that altruism develops, whereby 'the continuous work of caregiving encourages the cultivation of moral sentiments favouring altruism' (p. 39). This means that we feel altruistically towards those we form close relations with.

She also argued that an altruistic relationship is fostered among groups of people who share similar interests, like religious groups. Such a bond could promote peace as it reduces open conflict between members of a group since they identify with each other and have shared needs and interests. My memories of life in Northern Ireland support this view. I had been nurtured and cared for in a loving extended family and by the wider Catholic community who were part of my everyday life. The act of being with each other and our shared religious commitment bound us together, and I felt protected and free from harm as part of this caring community. I sensed I was cared for within this group, so walking to the local shops by myself was a comfortable and safe thing to do.

While acknowledging the positive role of altruism in reducing conflict and promoting peace within a group, identifying with each other in this way also developed a belief that those who were not group members were different. The consequence can be increased alienation and violence towards those outside the group. Noddings' (2012) research noted: 'in community-like settings, altruism reduces violence ... [but] it tends to justify and support violence across state or national lines' (p. 40).

This was the case in Belfast where communities were divided along sectarian lines and where our sense of who we were as Catholics was informed by who we were not - Protestants. While I lived protected and sheltered within a solely Catholic community, I had a peaceful existence and felt safe. Noddings (2012) challenged the idea that peace was merely the absence of war as stated in the

second definition above. In the absence of open conflict, violence can still exist and ‘so long as organized violence continues, there is no real peace’ (Noddings, 2012, p. 119). Further, Brunk (2008) agrees stating ‘a situation should not be called “peaceful” if persons are suffering harm from the nature of the relationship ... any relationship of extreme injustice should hardly be considered “peaceful”’ (p. 21). He also argues that a situation of injustice is ‘a fertile breeding ground for overt forms of violence, and thus is not likely to be peaceful ... for very long’ (Brunk, 2008, p. 21).

This absence of peace described the situation in Northern Ireland. Over the course of a century open conflict had broken out a number of times, the most recent in 1969 and lasted for forty years (Connolly, et al., 2006). Yet my father’s frustrations with the systems that he experienced as discriminatory showed that violence towards Catholics was occurring long before open conflict broke out. Moreover, our upbringing was fuelled by stories of rebellion and by descriptions of history that positioned Catholics as violated and victims. The Protestants and the British were seen as aggressors. This helped to develop and strengthen our sense of identity as Irish Catholics and as fundamentally different to The Protestants.

Violence was an ongoing part of our lives as it was lived in the stories and songs we heard. Violence was justified and normalised, even glorified because it was for a valid cause. This meant that an underlying sense of resentment and violence simmered just below the surface of our being Catholics, even during times when

no open conflict was occurring. Brantmeier (2010, cited in Ritchie, Lockie, & Rau, 2011) used the phrase being peace to describe a sense of being that promoted peace, as the person's lived expression was peaceful. We were the opposite of this, *being conflict* perhaps or *being resentment* would be a better description of our being as Catholics. Our community was like a tinder box, ready to ignite at any moment, and it seems likely that the Protestant community was the same.

How the open conflict was described in Belfast was also a hint to the underlying conflict that was part of our communities (O'Dea, 2012). While newsfeeds around the world referred to the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland as war, we continued to refer to it as The Troubles. The use of metaphor here may support an understanding of the lived experience of this type of underlying violence. Like someone with a rumbling appendix, they may feel sick on and off for a time and then suddenly become violently ill with an attack of appendicitis. Our use of the term The Troubles was similar. It was an underlying acknowledgement of something simmering away just below the surface all the time that occasionally broke out into open conflict (Fisk, 2008). A breakout of trouble was inevitable and consequently to be both expected and accepted.

In recent years research has been undertaken in Northern Ireland to consider the way prolonged armed conflict has affected young children. The sectarian lines that divided Ireland when I lived there as a child, have become more entrenched following the declaration of peace (Fitzpatrick, 2007). Another study of children

by Connolly et al. (2006) reported that from an early age children were aware of the events around them:

while the majority of children at the ages of three and four were not explicitly recognising and/or identifying with the two main communities in the region, this was not to suggest children of this age were unaffected ...[there] was a clear tendency for children at this age to begin to adopt and internalise the cultural preferences of their respective communities (p. 264).

They demonstrated that children by age of seven years were very aware of the events that surrounded them and had a clear sense of us and them.

While I had been sheltered from the open signs of conflict for my first seven years I had a good understanding of who I was as a Catholic. I also had a deep awareness that the *enemy* were a group of people who were different from us. What struck me even more strongly than knowing I had this entrenched alienation to a group of people I did not know, was how strongly I had ‘internalised the cultural preferences of my community’ (Connolly et al. 2006, p. 264). During the shop outing when the truck full of furniture exploded into flames I reacted with stoicism, almost as if this was a normal occurrence. It seemed this ready acceptance of violence was an indicator that I had adopted a cultural preference to view open violence like the common cold, something to be expected and accepted.

van Manen (2007) uses the term *pathic* to describe our sense of knowing that was beyond cognitive or calculative perception. He described it as a ‘felt sense of being in the world’ (van Manen, 2007, p. 20) and a place where unconscious

practices and behaviours emerge. While I was exploring my sense of being as a child facing open conflict for the first time, I began to get in touch with this pathic sense of self, the place where my unconscious responses emerged. How could peace be merely the absence of open conflict when the cultural preferences of a community have developed these pathic responses to violence in a child who had only just turned seven? Even as an adult as I have reflected on my personal response to violence, I sensed that it was embedded so deeply in my pathic knowing that when conflict existed within groups I automatically expected people to accept it, to work with it, rather than challenge and change it. Peace then is not only the absence of open conflict, but must be more than that, it needs to be a space where freedom from disturbance and tranquillity allows children to develop pathic knowings of peacefulness.

The impact of locating this discussion remotely in Northern Ireland seems to have created a distance. It has provided me with a sense of this occurring for others and a belief that it was a product of a society very different from where I now live. Yet, the current discourse in Australia around the issue of terrorism and of Muslim communities suggests that an undercurrent of violence could exist in our society. Much discourse in the current media has been committed to the idea of them and us, which is likely to have contributed to the development of Anti-Muslim groups, plus the implementation of legislation aimed at taking punitive actions against our own citizens, who are deemed as them.

The reality of this situation became evident while I was working at an outside school hours service a few months ago. An eight year old girl said to me out of the blue: 'I hate Muslims'. I was initially open-mouthed with shock, but now knowing the way cultural preferences are internalised by children (Connolly et al. 2006) I am no longer surprised. I continue to be fearful that the growing media reporting and political discourse in this area has created communities where peace is absent and where it has been replaced by an undercurrent of violence with the potential for open conflict.

Peace and Compassion

Now that I have a much clearer understanding of what peace is I wonder what role compassion plays in peace? While observing children in the early childhood centre a number of instances occurred that at the time evoked for me a response that was both compassionate and peaceful.

Pearl was walking around the yard carrying a plastic tiger. A staff member called out: 'Let's have afternoon tea everyone' and Pearl immediately ran into the room and sat down in a chair at the tables. She sat for a few seconds playing with her tiger. A child sat at the table across from her and she passed her tiger across the table to the other child who took it and began to play.

Ruby was standing playing with a toy at the table. Another child came over and began to work at the same toy. Ruby moved over a little to give him space and they stood playing together for a short time.

Pearl and Ruby got into a closed space on the equipment with another child. It was a little squishy. Pearl turned to the other child and smiled. He pushed her in the face and she became tense and looked fearful. She moved back from him a little then lifted her hand and stroked his cheek.

These simple acts were in one sense not extraordinary, they were a part of the everyday fabric of the children's lives. They were enacted without direction by children who had only just turned two years old. They were extraordinary, when viewed through the lens of peace, where they can be seen clearly as acts that promoted the responses of compassion and peace. When another child poked Pearl in the face, her body language communicated fear and that she felt threatened, yet her response was a gentle touch on the others face. Pearl anticipated the desire of another child and shared her tiger. Ruby moved over to allow another child to stand next to her. How did they know so much about peace at such a young age? Both Pearl and Ruby seemed to have internalised a pathic knowledge (van Manen, 2007) that allowed them to respond with gentleness in the face of potential conflict, even a capacity to anticipate conflict and act to create peacefulness in the situation.

These small instances of peacemaking also had a quality of compassion. The gentleness and openness of the children was evident. They each placed themselves into close relation to the other and allowed themselves to be *with* the other. Just as Buber (1970, cited in Fox, 2009) proposed, they entered into an I-You relation with the other. A place where they could understand what the other needed and where they could act to meet that need. How extraordinary that a two-year-old could enter into such a relation with another that allowed her to understand that a child poking her in the face needed softness and gentleness in response? Perhaps their capacity for compassion allowed them to enact peace in these situations.

The Absence of Peace

van Manen (2005) suggested that drawing together different experiences could give us a clue to understanding a phenomenon. We can get a sense of what a phenomenon is by considering what it is not as in chapter two, when I considered the phenomena of compassion and pity. A contrast became apparent between the peaceful interactions I witnessed watching Pearl and Ruby, and the family culture in Jasper's home, which produced some further insights into peace. The term negative peace has been used to describe a situation where open conflict is absent, but where societal injustice, discrimination or oppression exist to such an extent that genuine peace between individuals is not possible (Fisk, 2008). This was the case numerous times over the past century in Northern Ireland. I began to question whether the interactions I had witnessed in Jasper's home were a display of negative peace within the microcosm of his family. Jasper's family consisted of his Mum and Dad and sister, Holly (five years old). The following observations were representative of the general types of interactions I identified between the family during the short time I visited:

Dad picked up a piece of track and said: 'Here Jasper, give this to Holly'. Jasper took the piece of track and moved over to where Holly was building and stood next to her. Holly turned to him and said sharply: 'Give it to me Jasper'. Jasper quickly gave her the piece and Holly placed it onto the track.

Jasper walked close to where Holly was working and vocalised to her. As he stepped back he stood on the track and broke it. Holly growled at him and Jasper flinched and quickly moved away from her.

Jasper came close to Holly and watched Thomas the Tank Engine as it passed by on the track. Holly moved away from the track and Jasper bent down and lifted Thomas off the track. Holly came back saying: 'No

Jasper, no'. Jasper replaced Thomas onto the track quickly and moved close to Dad.

Jasper looked through the box of trains and found another Thomas. He picked it up and began to push it along the track. As Holly came close to him Jasper stood up looking cautiously at Holly and stepped away from the track.

Dad asked Holly to pack up and she began to put the track onto the box. Jasper held Thomas in one hand and put a piece of track away in the box. Holly snatched Thomas off him and dropped it into the box. Jasper tried to take it back out but Holly buried it under the other track so he could not find it. Jasper began to cry.

Over the period of time that I observed at Jasper's home it became obvious that his sister, Holly sometimes displayed challenging behaviours. His mother and father had in place strategies to manage her behaviour and to encourage her to do what was asked of her. She had behavioural charts that her parents referred to during the time I was observing at the house. She demonstrated little patience with Jasper and was clearly frustrated when he wanted to join her play. Jasper's parents managed this behaviour by ensuring that he did not do anything to upset his sister - as much as possible they encouraged him to be very careful when playing near or with her, so she did not become upset. When he wanted to play with the marble run on the table his mother turned to Holly saying: 'Jasper is going to play with your marbles for a little while'. She used a tone that hovered between a statement and a question and seemed a little worried about Holly's reaction. Jasper visibly reacted with fear when he felt he had annoyed Holly or when he thought she would be angry.

As I sat in their home observing Jasper's family I came to understand the concept of negative peace. I did not witness any cases of open conflict between Jasper

and Holly, but the potential for conflict seemed to be omnipresent. Jasper and his parents seemed to be on edge much of the time. Rather than being at peace with each other, an ongoing undercurrent of conflict appeared to exist. Perhaps Jasper was learning peacekeeping skills that would place him in a good position to negotiate with others as he grew older. It is also possible that the oppression that was part of his daily life would breed anger and resentment (Noddings, 2012). This may contribute to an absence of peace in his family life as he grows older.

Educating for Peace

I have come to recognise that peace is more than the absence of open conflict, but can only exist where just relations occur, so I now examine what strategies could promote peace. The role of social justice, whether in the family home, the early childhood centre or within a group has been deemed critical to peace relations. It is in the absence of social justice that communities become embittered and resentful. Hawkins (2014) argues that early childhood educators have a responsibility to work with young children to bring them towards an understanding of peace, as future peaceful relations rely on them enacting peaceful relations as adults. She advocated for a curriculum that 'challenges any form of prejudice and upholds equity, justice and human dignity and promotes teaching for social justice' (Hawkins, 2014, p. 122). My early experiences in Northern Ireland support this view. We felt that as a group we were discriminated against by the Protestants and by the British government. This led to resentments that regularly erupted into periods of open conflict such that genuine peace could not develop.

In spite of research outcomes which have identified the important role of early childhood education and care in shaping dispositions for peace, Australian early childhood educators have been poorly guided to embed peace into their work with children. Te Whāriki, (1996), He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa, the Early Childhood Curriculum Document for New Zealand (NZ Ministry of Education, 1996), has had a significant influence on the way the *EYLF* has been developed and enacted in Australia. Te Whāriki (NZ Ministry of Education, 1996) requires children to have access to a ‘range of strategies for solving conflicts in peaceful ways and a perception that peaceful ways are best’ (p. 70). In a critique of the document Ritchie et al. (2011) stated that it did not give clear guidance about how the ‘disposition for peace might be fostered’ (p. 334).

Te Whāriki provides more guidance than the *EYLF* which neglects to employ the word peace. Educators must interpret and extrapolate educating for peace from the documents focus on promoting ‘secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 12) and ‘respect for diversity’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 13). The critical role educator’s play in supporting children to become advocates for peace (Hawkins, 2014) was ignored in the development of the Australian document. While one of the documents key visions was embedded in the concept of who children will *become* and ‘emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 7), no value was accorded to the important role of peaceful relationships.

We must look further afield to find guidance on how to promote peace with young children, including Brantmeir's research (2010, cited in Ritchie et al. 2011). She discussed the role of critical peace education in 'challenging pervasive forms of direct and indirect violence' (p. 341). Critical education was not a part of my learning in Northern Ireland. My school days were spent in a Catholic education system that was committed to the narrative of invasion and oppression of my family and community. Coming to Australia allowed me to see things differently, to take another perspective at a distance from the violence that became a part of the everyday lives of the young children, families and community we left behind.

Ritchie et al. (2011) state that an early childhood curriculum for peace should include 'criticality, indigeneity, empathy and an ethic of care ... [to] foster dispositions for peacefulness' (p. 335). It seemed that the role of compassion, particularly the inseparable way it was linked to care relations, critically positions compassion for the development and fostering of peace relations. On reflection I questioned: Could peace exist in the absence of compassion? It seems unlikely. It was being able to truly be *with* another, to enter into a relationship where their needs could be seen and understood, that allows humans to truly see each individual as like ourselves rather than as other. I would argue that when educating young children for peace we must also consider how to develop their innate compassion to promote peaceful dispositions.

Buddhism and Peace

Shantideva's (2006) verse that began this chapter articulated the clear links between peace and compassion. He has encouraged us to act lovingly towards those who are quarrelling and to work 'calmly for the happiness of others' (p. 114). The inclusion of a direction to work for another's happiness links well with the idea that peace is not merely the absence of war, but continues to exist in spaces where there is happiness. When we act with compassion to end the suffering of another we are acting to increase their happiness.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is also in a good position to provide insight into Buddhist philosophy and peace. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his tireless work for peace, particularly in response to Tibet being taken over by the Chinese government. Since that time he has worked in exile for the freedom and self-determination of the Tibetan people, always encouraging peaceful actions. He has advocated for justice believing that justice guided by ethics was necessary for peace (His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, & van Den Muyzenberg, 2008).

He has given us further guidance on the way justice and compassion exist together. His belief that compassion could underpin genuine justice has been challenged by those 'sympathetic to secular ethics' (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2011a, p. 57). This challenge emerged out of a misunderstanding of the nature of compassion. It stems from the belief that by prioritising compassion we allow perpetrators of violence to continue with impunity. His Holiness the Dalai Lama

(2011a) stated that ‘nothing in the principle of compassion - the wish to see others relieved of suffering - involves surrendering to the misdeeds of others’ (p. 57). Compassion demands strength and courage as we argue for justice and stand up for those who need our support. It does mean that our strength in arguing for justice is non-violent, however ‘an attitude of calmness and nonviolence is actually an indication of strength, as it shows the confidence that comes from having truth and justice on one’s side’ (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2008, p. 58).

A Peaceful Conclusion

Once again, the complexities of the phenomenon of compassion are illuminated and are bound intrinsically with the practice of peace. Could peace exist in the absence of compassion? It seems unlikely, the relational space that is a compassionate response to another, being *with* the other, is critical to the process of peace. Without compassion, the felt sense of being with another would not be possible and therefore, our interactions with the other would be ones that highlight the differences that exist between us rather than confirm our shared experiences. It is the knowing of the shared experience that promotes us to act with compassion toward self and the other and it is this act that is at the heart of peaceful relations.

What Good is Philosophy?

What about peace for myself? I titled this chapter peace at last as I hoped I would have reached a place of peace as I completed this study. My journey while undertaking this research has been a turbulent one. My father, mother and father-in-law passed away during this time. My niece was diagnosed and treated for cancer and my sister and her husband were critically injured in a car accident. I was also diagnosed with breast cancer and had surgery, chemotherapy, a heart attack, an immunity crisis, radiotherapy and a small stroke. Throughout this time my research question lived in my mind. Much of what was happening around me was filtered through the lens of my study. In a sense the study drew me forward and supported me to keep going when things were grim. When I was able to read I chose materials that promoted my understandings in this area including *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962), *I and Thou* (Buber, 1970), *Writing in the Dark* (van Manen, 2005), *The Way of the Bodhisattva* (Shantideva, 2006), and *The Compassionate Life* (Barasch, 2009).

Heidegger (1962, cited in Fox, 2009, p. 47) wrote ‘you can’t do anything with philosophy’. He argued that philosophy was an impractical subject that did not give us answers or solutions to life’s questions. However, he does propose that perhaps philosophy could do something with us. That philosophy could help us to understand our everyday lives and create a place where our being was revealed. In this place philosophy could have a profound effect on who we were, how we understood ourselves and how this informed us about others.

While navigating the problems of the last few years, philosophy supported me by facilitating my understandings of the meanings inherent in everyday life. This philosophy was phenomenology. As I lived the philosophy I began to understand not only what phenomenology was, but also what meaning it had for understanding myself and, from this vantage point, for understanding others. The close alignment between phenomenology and the Buddhist philosophy I had been studying and practicing for some years allowed me to accept my lived experience, even while suffering, by embracing the learning that was part of the experience.

In particular, investigating the pathic nature of our responses to others and the way it impacts on our practices in everyday life was profound (van Manen, 2007; 2014). The phenomenological approach to research allowed me to consider what was closest to me, my own memories and experiences. I used them to unravel the meaning of compassion within those experiences. Once this knowledge of the pathic base of my experience was exposed, understanding how others may be motivated and how deeply their motivation might lie was revealing and supported my understandings of compassion.

Conclusion

Within the early childhood field I believe it would not be disputed that there are intrinsic connections between many of the concepts that have emerged during the course of this research study. An educator committed to peace might consider an ethic of care critical to the way she works to develop a disposition for peace with

the children she cared for. Another educator who has a commitment to developing a love of nature with children may use pedagogical strategies that support children to enter into relationships with the natural environment. An educator who was committed to understanding spirituality in early childhood might develop ritualised experiences that include the children's family as he recognises the significance of the child's primary attachment relationships and believes that honouring this relationship may support the opening of transformative spaces.

I believe that the intrinsic connection I observed was compassion. During this study the role compassion held within the relationships of attachment, care, pedagogy, nature, spirituality and peace has been illuminated. Compassion appeared to be the common denominator when describing and understanding these concepts and defining a number of the concepts that rely on the use of the word compassion. It was our relation with others, entering into a space that allowed us to know the other like ourselves and, once knowing, allowed us to understand and act to meet their needs. Compassion was at the heart of many of the concepts early childhood educators have continued to advocate for when educating young children.

What implications does this have for the early childhood profession? Perhaps, whether we want to educate for peace, promote spiritual knowing or promote the development of caring dispositions we need to think carefully about what pedagogical strategies will best promote the development of genuine

relationships and nurture the innate disposition in all children towards compassion. Further research is required to identify the particular strategies that will promote the development of compassion in young children, research that aims to make evident the intrinsic actions and behaviours that are embedded within the dispositions that our early childhood programs aim to develop. In addition, research could also unpack the way compassion is currently implemented across early childhood services and the particular pedagogical strategies that would promote its development.

Dedication

Shantideva's (2006) work *The Way of the Bodhisattva* has enriched this study as it has given insights into compassion from an ancient philosophical tradition. It is common in the Buddhist tradition to dedicate the merit you have gained through study, prayer and actions to the benefit of others. I have chosen to conclude this study with Shantideva's Dedication (Jacobson, 2015) to offer any merit I have gained from this study for the benefit of all beings.

Shantideva's Dedication

May all beings everywhere,
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.
May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.
May the blind see forms
And the deaf hear sounds.
May those whose bodies are worn with toil

Be restored on finding repose.
May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food.
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.
May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy.
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness and prosperity.
May there be timely rains
And bountiful harvests.
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.
May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments.
Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.
May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed.
May the powerless find power
And may people think of benefiting each other.
For as long as space remains,
For as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then, may I too remain,
To dispel the misery of the world.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- à Beckett, C. (2007). *Playing in the In-between: Implications for Early Childhood Education of New Views on Social Relations*. Unpublished PhD, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.
- Adams, K., Hyde, B., & Woolley, R. (2008). *The Spiritual Dimension of Childhood*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Barasch, M. I. (2009). *The Compassionate Life: Walking the Path of Kindness*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publications.
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2011). *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Theory of Human Cruelty and Kindness*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bath, C. (2013). Conceptualising listening to young children as an ethic of care in early childhood education and care. *Children and Society*, 27, 361-371. doi:10.1111/j.1099-0860.2011.00407.x.
- Bires, N., & Schultz, D. (2014). Foundational humane education: Promoting love of nature and affinity for animals in schools. In M. Renck Jalongo (Ed.), *Teaching Compassion: Humane Education in Early Education*, New York, NY: Springer. [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>
- Blenkinsop, S., & Piersol, L. (2013). Listening to the literal: Orientations towards how nature communicates. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 7(2), 41-60. Retrieved from <http://www.ejournals.library.ualberta.ca>.
- Bone, J. (2007a). *Everyday Spirituality: Supporting the spiritual experience of young children in three early childhood educational settings*. Unpublished PhD, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Bone, J. (2007b). Creating relational spaces: Everyday spirituality in early childhood settings. *Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 16(3), 343-356. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>
- Bone, J. (2008). Exploring trauma, loss, and healing: Spirituality, Te Whariki and early childhood education. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 13(3), 265-276. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Bone, J. (2010). Spirituality and early childhood education: 'Belonging, Being and Becoming' at a midwinter festival. *Journal of Religious Education*, 58(3), pp. 26-34. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy/une.edu.au>.

- Bowlby, J. (1953). *Child Care and the Growth of Love*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1979). *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Brennan, M. (2014). Perekhivanie: What have we missed in infant care? *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 15(3), 284-292. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy/une.edu.au>.
- Brown, B. (2015). *Rising Strong: If we are brave enough, often enough, we will fall*. London: Vermilion. [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>.
- Brunk, C.G. (2008). Shaping a vision: The nature of peace studies. In L. Fisk & J. Schellenberg (Eds.), *Patterns of Conflict: Paths to Peace*. (pp. 11-34). Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and Thou*. Translated by W. Kaufmann, New York: Touchstone.
- Burns, S. (2007). *A Path for Parents: What Buddhism Can Offer*. Birmingham: Windhorse Publications.
- Campbell, S., Castelino, T., Coady, M., Lawrence, H., Macnaughton, G., Rolfe, S., Smith, K., & Totta, J. (2001). *Our Part in Peace*. Watson, ACT: Early Childhood Australia.
- Carson, R. (originally published, 1956/re-published, 1998). *The Sense of Wonder*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Carson, T., & Johnston, I. (2000). The difficulty with difference in teacher education: Toward a pedagogy of compassion. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVI(1), 75-83.
- Chawla, L., & Rivkin, M. (2014). Early childhood education for sustainability in the United States of America. In J. Davis & S. Elliott (Eds.). *Research in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability: International Perspectives and Provocations*, (pp. 248-265). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Connolly, P., Fitzpatrick, S., Gallagher, T., & Harris, P. (2006). Addressing diversity and inclusion in the early years in conflict-affected societies: A case study of the Media Initiative for Children - Northern Ireland. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 14(13), 263-278. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (2nd Ed.)*. California: Sage Publications.
- Cupit, G. (2002). Spirituality in Early Childhood Educative Care. *Every Child*, 8(4), 4-5. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- The Dalai Lama. (2001). *An Open Heart: Practicing compassion in everyday life*. Sydney: Hodder Headline Australia.
- The Dalai Lama. (2003). *The Compassionate Life*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- The Dalai Lama. (2005). *Essence of the Heart Sutra: The Dalai Lama's Heart of Wisdom Teachings*. Translated and Edited by Geshe Thupten Jinpa, Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications. [Kindle DX]. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com.au>.
- The Dalai Lama. (2015, June). *The Wisdom of Forgiveness*. Public talk given at Katoomba, Australia.
- Degotardi, S., & Pearson, E. (2009). Relationship theory in the nursery: attachment and beyond. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 10(2), 144-155. doi:org/10.2304/ciec.2009.10.2.144.
- Dent, M. (2005). *Nurturing Kids' Hearts and Souls: Building Emotional, Social and Spiritual Competency*. Dunsborough, WA: Pennington Publications.
- Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations. (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework*, Barton, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia.
- De Waal, F. (2009). *The Age of Empathy: Nature's lessons for a kinder society*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.
- Drengson, A. (2001). Education for local and global ecological responsibility: Arne Naess' cross-cultural, ecophilosophy approach. *The Trumpeter Journal of Ecosophy*, 17(1). Retrieved from <http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca>.

- Dumont, C. & Paquette, D. (2013). What about the child's tie to the father? A new insight into fathering, father-child attachment, children's socio-emotional development and the activation relationship theory. *Early Child Development and Care*, 183(3-4), 430-446, doi:10.1080/03004430.2012.711592.
- Einhorn, S. (2006). *The Art of Being Kind*. Translated by N. Smith. London: Sphere.
- Elliott, S. (2010). Children in the natural world. In J. M. Davis (Ed.). *Young Children and the Environment: Early Education for Sustainability*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>.
- Elliott, S. (2014). Early childhood education for sustainability and natural outdoor playspaces: Researching change and theorizing about interfaces. In J. Davis & S. Elliott (Eds.). *Research in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability: International Perspectives and Provocations*, (pp. 127-142). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Fashih, H. (2000). Enlightenment education. In M. Batchelor (Ed.), *Women on the Buddhist Path*. (pp. 92-103). London: Thorsons
- Ferrucci, P. (2006). *The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life*. Translated by V.R. Ferrucci. New York: Penguin Group.
- Finlay, L. (2012). Debating Phenomenological Methods. In N. Friesen, C. Henrikson, and T. Saevi (Eds.), *Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Education: Methods and Practice*, (pp. 17-37). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Fisk, L. J. (2008). Shaping visionaries: Nurturing peace through education. In L. Fisk & J. Schellenberg (Eds.), *Patterns of Conflict: Paths to Peace*, (pp. 159-195). Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.
- Fitzpatrick, S. (2007). Developing a culture of respecting difference in early childhood education in Northern Ireland. *Young Children*, 62(6), 14-17. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Fox, M.A. (2009). *The Remarkable Existentialists*. New York, NY: Humanity Books.
- Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Goleman, D. (2012). *Eco Literate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social, and Ecological Intelligence*. Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. [Kindle DX]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>.
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2010). Compassionate roots begin with babies. *The Early Childhood Leaders Magazine*, (193), 46-49. Retrieved from <http://www.Eric.ed.gov>.
- Gopnik, A. (2009). *The Philosophical Baby: What children's minds tell us about truth, love, and the meaning of life*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Grajczonek, J. (2012). Interrogating the spiritual as constructed in Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(10), 152-160. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Hall, S. S. (2010). *Wisdom: From Philosophy to Neuroscience*. St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press.
- Harris, A., & Lennon, A. (2012). Bodies that shatter: Creativity, culture and the new pedagogical imaginary. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 20(3), doi:10.1080/14681366.2012.712054.
- Hawkins, K. (2014). Looking forward, looking back: Framing the future for teaching for social justice in early childhood education. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 121-128. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Hekman, S.J. (1995). *Moral Voices, Moral Selves: Carol Gilligan and Feminist Moral Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being & Time*. Translated by J. Macquarie & E. Robinson. New York: Harper & Row.
- Heikka, J., and Waniganayake, M. (2011). Pedagogical leadership from a distributed perspective within the context of early childhood education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 14(4). doi:org/10.1080/13603124.2011.577909.
- Hill, A., Nailon, D., Getenet, S., McCrea, N., Emery, S., Dymont, J., and Davis, J. (2014). Exploring how adults who work with young children conceptualise sustainability and describe their practice initiatives. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 14-22. Retrieved online <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.

- Held, V. (2010). Can the ethics of care handle violence? *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 4(2), 115-129. doi:10.1080/17496535.2010.484256.
- Hinde, R.A. (1992). Developmental psychology in the context of other behavioral sciences. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(6), 1018-1029. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.28.6.1018.
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama and van Den Muyzenberg, L. (2008). *The Leader's Way*. Translation by The Padmakara Translation Group, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. (2008, June). *Stages of Meditation*. Teaching presented on Stages of Meditation by Kamalashila, Sydney, Australia.
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama. (2009, December). *Awakening the Mind*. Teaching presented on Awakening the Mind, Nagarjuna's Commentary on Bodhicitta, Sydney, Australia.
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama, (2011a). *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a whole world*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin Harcourt Publishing.
- His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, (2012a). *Compassion and the Individual*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, (2012b). *A Human Approach to World Peace*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet. (2013, June). *Jewel Lamp: A Praise of Bodhicitta*. Teaching presented on Jewel Lamp: A Praise of Bodhicitta by Khunu Rinpoche Tenzin Gyaltzen, Sydney, Australia.
- Hooks, B. (2000). *All About Love: New Visions*. New York: Gloria Watkins.
- Hyde, B. (2005). Beyond logic-entering the realm of mystery: Hermeneutic phenomenology as a tool for reflecting on children's spirituality. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 10(1), 31-44. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Hyde, B. (2008). *Children & Spirituality*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hyde, B. (2010). Non-verbal communication and spirituality: Implications for religious education. *Religious Education Journal*, 26(2), 16-21. Retrieved online from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.

- Jacobson, B. (Director) (2015). *Osel Shen Phen Ling: Land of Clear Light Benefiting Others*. Missoula, MT. Retrieved from <http://www.ftmp.osel.org>.
- Kellert, S. R. (2012). *Birthright: People and Nature in the Modern World*. Connecticut: Yale University Press. [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>.
- Keltner, D. (2009). *Born to Be Good: The science of a meaningful life*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Knaus, M. (2015). 'Time for Being': Why the Australian Early Years Learning Framework opens up new possibilities. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(3), 221-235. doi:10.1177/1476718X14538601.
- Knowles, K., & Lloyd, R. (2015). Teeters, (taught)ers, and dangling suspended moments: Phenomenologically orienting to the moment(um) of pedagogy. *Phenomenology & Practice*, (1). Retrieved online from <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca>.
- Langford, R. (2010). Critiquing child-centred pedagogy to bring children and early childhood education into the centre of a democratic pedagogy. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(1). doi:org/10.2304/ciec.2010.11.1.113.
- Lippitz, W. (2007). Foreignness and otherness in pedagogical contexts. *Phenomenology of Practice*, 1(1), 76-96. Retrieved online from <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca>.
- Metcalf, A., & Game, A. (2002). *The Mystery of Everyday Life*. Sydney: The Federation Press.
- Metcalf, A., & Game, A. (2006). *Teachers Who Change Lives*. Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press.
- McTamaney, C. (2007). *The Tao of Montessori: Reflections on Compassionate Teaching*. Lincoln NE: iUniverse Star.
- Minichiello V., & Kottler, J. A. (2010). An overview of the qualitative journey: Reviewing basic concepts. In V. Minichiello and J.A. Kottler (Eds.), *Qualitative Journeys: Student and Mentor Experiences with Research*, (pp. 11-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Naess, A. (1989). *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*. Translated and edited by David Rothenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Naess, A. (originally published 1998/re-published 2002). *Life's Philosophy*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Napthali, S. (2009). *Buddhism for Mothers of Young Children: Becoming a Mindful Parent*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Newman, L., Keegan, J., & Heeley, T. (2015). Sustaining curriculum renewal in Western Sydney: Three participant views. L. Newman & C. Woodrow (Eds.), *Practitioner Research in Early Childhood: International Issues and Perspectives*, (pp. 105-121). London: Sage Publications.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa, Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington, NZ: Learning Media Limited.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. London: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (1995). *Philosophy of Education*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Noddings, N. (2010). *The Maternal Factor: Two Paths to Morality*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (2012). *Peace Education. How We Come to Love and Hate War*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Dea, J. (2012). *Cultivating Peace: Becoming a 21st-Century Peace Ambassador*. San Rafael, CA: Shift Books.
- Paquette, D. (2004). Theorizing the father-child relationship: Mechanisms and developmental outcomes. *Human Development*, 47(4), 193-219. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Paquette, D., & Bigras, M. (2010). The risky situation: a procedure for assessing the father-child activation relationship. *Early Child Development and Care*, 180(1-2), 33-50, doi:10.1080/103004430903414687.
- Pelligrini, A. with Symons, F. J., & Hoch, J. (2004). *Observing Children in Their Natural Worlds: A Methodological Primer (2nd Ed.)*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pelo, A. (2013). *The Goodness of Rain: Developing an Ecological Identity in Young Children*. Hurstville, NSW: Childcare Information Exchange.

- Phillips, A. & Taylor, B. (2009). *On Kindness*. London: Penguin Group.
- Punch, K.F. (2013). *Introduction to Social Science Research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches (3rd Ed.)*. California: Sage Publications.
- Renck Jalongo, M. (2014). Humane education and the development of empathy in early childhood: Definitions, rationale and outcomes. In M. Renck Jalongo, *Teaching Compassion: Humane Education in Early Education*. New York, NY: Springer. [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>.
- Ritchie, J., Lockie, C., & Rau, C. (2011). He Tatau Pounamu. Considerations for an early childhood peace curriculum focusing on criticality, indigeity, and an ethic of care, in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Journal of Peace Education*, 8(3), 333-352. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.
- Robinson, F. (2011). *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. [Kindle DX version]. <http://www.amazon.com.au>.
- Sageidet, B.M. (2014). Norwegian perspectives on ECEfS: What has developed since the Brundtland Report? In J. Davis & S. Elliott (Eds.). *Research in Early Childhood Education for Sustainability: International Perspectives and Provocations* (pp. 98-112). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Schwartz, B., & Sharpe, K., (2010). *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.
- Shantideva. (2006). *The Way of the Bodhisattva, (2nd Ed.)*. Translated by Padmakara Translation Group. Boston, Ma: Shambhala Publications.
- Stevenson, A. (2015). In *Oxford Dictionary of English (3rd Ed) online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com>.
- Taylor, A. (2013). *Reconfiguring the Natures of Childhood*. New York, NY: Routledge. [Kindle DX version] retrieved from <http://amazon.com.au>.
- Thomas, P., & Lockwood, V. (2009). *Nurturing the Spiritual Child: Compassion, Connection and a Sense of Self*. Watson, ACT: Early Childhood Australia.
- Thulin, S., & Pramling, N. (2009). Anthropomorphically speaking: On communication between teachers and children in early childhood biology education. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 17(2), 137-150. Retrieved from <http://www.ezproxy.une.edu.au>.

- Tomasello, M. (2009). *Why we Cooperate*. Boston Review. Cambridge: MIT Press Books.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (1989). *The Report of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in 1989*. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org>.
- Van der Schyff, D. B. (2010). The ethical experience of nature: Aristotle and the roots of ecological phenomenology. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 4(1), 97-121. Retrieved from <http://www.ejournals.library.ualberta.ca>.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London: The State University of New York.
- Van Manen, M. (1991). *The Tact of Teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Van Manen, M. (2002). *The Tone of Teaching*. Ontario, Canada: The Althouse Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2005). *Writing in the Dark: Phenomenological Studies in Interpretive Inquiry*. Ontario, Canada: The Althouse Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2007). Phenomenology of Practice. *Phenomenology and Practice*, 1(1), 11-30. Retrieved from <http://www.ejournals.library.ualberta.ca>.
- Van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning-Giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. [Kindle DX]. Retrieved from <http://www.LCoastPress.com>.
- Vuorisalo, M., Rutanen, N., & Raittila, R. (2015). Constructing relational space in early childhood education. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 35(1), 67-79. doi:10.1080/09575146.2014.985289.
- Winnicott, D.W. (originally published 1971/re-published 2005). *Playing and Reality*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Yates, L. (2009). From curriculum to pedagogy and back again: Knowledge, the person and the changing world. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 17, 17-28. doi: 10.1080/14681360902742837.

Appendix A

Participant's & Parent of Participant Information Sheet *Understanding how Compassion is Practiced and Received in the Everyday lives of Young Children*

This study aims to explore how young children experience compassion and kindness in their early years. In the early childhood field there is a tradition of encouraging children to care for others, to show compassion and kindness to others and to cooperate. Though we also have a long tradition that acknowledges children have an innate spirituality, our current curriculum and practices often avoid issues of spirituality. Perhaps this is due to a lack of understanding of these issues by staff. The staff may confuse spirituality with religion and avoid it as they fear creating tension and conflict. In this study I plan to explore how young children experience compassion in their day to day lives, plus how we can support them to further develop their practice of compassion and how this relates to spirituality.

If your child participates in this project you will need to agree to her/him being observed in the day-to-day environment. Two of these observations would take place in your home where I will attempt to be part of the background, making a few notes, but not interfering with your routine. These visits will be organised at a time to suit you and your family. After the visits I will write detailed observations of the experience. I am happy for you to read these notes and comment on whether you consider them to be accurate. Each home visit will take about one hour. I will negotiate what would work best for you and your family circumstances.

After the home visits, I plan to observe your child at the children's centre, on three to four occasions to complete similar observations. I will negotiate with the centre suitable times to observe your child. I would be happy for you to read and comment on the centre observations. The observations will be completed over a period of six months.

You or your child are under no obligation to participate in this project and can elect to withdraw from the process at any time. All information gathered will be coded to ensure that only I will know your identity. This data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and in a password protected computer file, for a period of five years. After this time the information will be destroyed. You or your child may withdraw from the project at any time throughout the research process. If you chose to do this, all information collected will be destroyed.

The information collected will be used to form the basis of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Education [Honours]. Articles will be written from the findings to be published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at both local and international conferences.

You can contact me at any time, to discuss participation in the study and to have any questions answered. Thank you for your interest in the project. If you wish to participate in this study, or ask to seek further information please do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the research team:

Trish Heeley
(02)9834 3630

Helen Edwards
(02)6773 2078

Brenda Wolodko
(02)6773 2021

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE10/095 Valid to 7/6/11)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which the research is conducted, please contact Mrs Jo-Ann Sozou, Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services,
University of New England
Armidale, NSW, 2351
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Appendix B

Staff Information Sheet

Understanding how Compassion is Practiced and Received in the Everyday lives of Young Children

This study aims to explore how young children experience compassion and kindness in their early years. In the early childhood field there is a tradition of encouraging children to care for others, to show compassion and kindness to others and to cooperate. Though we also have a long tradition that acknowledges children have an innate spirituality, our current curriculum and practices often avoid issues of spirituality. Perhaps this is due to a lack of understanding of these issues by staff. The staff may confuse spirituality with religion and avoid it as they fear creating tension and conflict. In this study I plan to explore how young children experience compassion in their day to day lives, plus how we can support them to further develop their practice of compassion and how this relates to spirituality.

The child participants will be observed in the day-to-day environment. Two of these observations would take place in their home where I will attempt to be part of the background, making a few notes, but not interfering with their routine. These visits will be organised at a time to suit the family. After the visits I will write detailed observations of the experience.

After the home visits, I plan to observe the child at the children's centre, on three to four occasions to complete similar observations. I will negotiate with the centre suitable times to observe the child. Your permission is sought to be included in observations made of the child while they are at your service. I would be happy for you to read and comment on the centre observations. The observations will be completed over a period of six months.

You are under no obligation to participate in this project and can elect to withdraw from the process at any time. All information gathered will be coded to ensure that only I will know your identity. This data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and in a password protected computer file, for a period of five years. After this time the information will be destroyed. You may withdraw from the project at any time throughout the research process. If you chose to do this, all information collected will be destroyed.

The information collected will be used to form the basis of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Education [Honours]. Articles will be written from the findings to be published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at both local and international conferences.

You can contact me at any time, to discuss participation in the study and to have any questions answered. Thank you for your interest in the project. If you wish to participate in this study, or ask to seek further information please do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the research team:

Trish Heeley
(02)9834 3630

Helen Edwards
(02)6773 2078

Brenda Wolodko
(02)6773 2021

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE10/095 Valid to 7/6/11)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which the research is conducted, please contact Mrs Jo-Ann Sozou, Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services,
University of New England
Armidale, NSW, 2351
Telephone: (02) 6773 3449
Email: ethics@une.edu.au

Appendix C

Parent Consent Form

Understanding how Compassion is Practiced and Received in the Everyday Lives of Young Children

We and have read the information contained in the participant Information Sheet attached, and have had any queries satisfactorily answered. By signing this assent form we are agreeing to our being included in observations of our child by the researcher. We understand that information gathered will be published appropriately. We know that all information collected will be coded so that our child and family remain anonymous to all but the researcher. We understand that we may withdraw participation at any time without providing a reason. If we choose to do this, we understand all information gathered about our child will be destroyed and not used in any manner.

...../../..
Signed participant's parent/guardian (1) date

...../../..
Signed researcher date

...../../..
Signed participant's parent/guardian (2) date

...../../..
Signed researcher date

Appendix D

Staff Consent Form

Understanding how Compassion is Practiced and Received in the Everyday Lives of Young Children

I have read the information contained in the participant Information Sheet attached, and have had any queries satisfactorily answered. By signing this assent form I am agreeing to my being included in observations of children in my care, by the researcher. I understand that information gathered will be published appropriately. I know that all information collected will be coded so that I will remain anonymous to all but the researcher. I understand that I may withdraw participation at any time without providing a reason. If we choose to do this, I understand all information gathered about me will be destroyed and not used in any manner.

...../../..
Signed participant date

...../../..
Signed researcher date

Appendix E

Parent Consent Form (Participant child and sibling of child)

Understanding how Compassion is Practiced and Received in the Everyday Lives of Young Children

We and have read the information contained in the participant Information Sheet attached, and have had any queries satisfactorily answered. By signing this assent form we are agreeing to our child/children being observed by the researcher. We understand that information gathered will be published appropriately. We know that all information collected will be coded so that our child and family remain anonymous to all but the researcher. We understand that we may withdraw participation at any time without providing a reason. If we choose to do this, we understand all information gathered about our child will be destroyed and not used in any manner.

...../../..
Signed participant's parent/guardian (1) date

...../../..
Signed researcher date

...../../..
Signed participant's parent/guardian (2) date

...../../..
Signed researcher date

Appendix F

Participant Consent Form

(Parent consent for child participant)

Understanding how compassion is practiced and received in the everyday lives of young children

We and have read the information contained in the Participant Information Sheet attached, and have had any queries satisfactorily answered. By signing this consent form we are agreeing to our child being observed by the researcher.

We understand that information gathered will be published appropriately. We know that all information collected will be coded so that our child and family remain anonymous to all but the researcher.

We understand that we may withdraw participation at any time without providing a reason.

If we choose to do this, we understand all information gathered about our child will be destroyed and not used in any manner.

...../../..
Signed participant's parent/guardian (1) date

...../../..
Signed researcher date

...../../..
Signed participant's parent/guardian (2) date

...../../..
Signed researcher date