



HEARTSET® EDUCATION

A Way of Living and Learning

STU SEMIGRAN

“Stu Semigran’s commitment and love for young people fills each page.

He is a master teacher of the heart!”

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO, Thrive Global

Praise for Heartset® Education

“Stu Semigran’s commitment and love for young people fills each page. He sees the beauty of what their lives can become and he shares ways they can get there by building their resilience. He is a master teacher of the heart!”

— Arianna Huffington, Founder & CEO, Thrive Global

Stu brings simple wisdom and practical tools for empowering young people everywhere. He draws upon the vast wealth of his experience with schools, educators and students worldwide in this wonderful and timely new book.”

— Pedro A. Noguera, PhD, Dean, Rossier School
of Education, Distinguished Professor of Education,
University of Southern California

“Heartset® Education teaches valuable life skills that all children need to create successful, fulfilling and meaningful lives. I highly recommend this book.”

— Jack Canfield, Co-creator of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul*® series and Author of *The Success Principles™: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*

“Stu’s book Lights up the new way of education. At last we embrace the greatest truth: Loving is the way into the hearts of our children, exciting them to learn, healing their pain with trust, and showing them how to build a strong core of Heartset resiliency.”

— Leigh Taylor-Young, Emmy Award-winning Actress,
Ordained Minister, and prior Goodwill Environmental
Ambassador for the UN

“If you care about the future of our world, based on the young people growing up in it, this book is a must-read. It should be a required manual for anyone dealing with kids (and, frankly, dealing with yourself). I challenge anyone reading this not to be moved about something important, inside. Bravo, Stu!”

— David Allen, Author of *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*

“Lighthearted and deeply transformative, *Heartset Education* sets the groundwork for our educational system shifting to a kind and thoughtful understanding of the greater needs of our children.”

— Parker J. Palmer, author of *On the Brink of Everything, A Hidden Wholeness*, and *The Courage to Teach*

“*Heartset Education* brings to light the need for educating every child with greater love and understanding. It should be at the core for all our schools!”

— Michael Funk, Director, Expanded Learning Division for the California Department of Education

“If you’re a parent, you need to read this book. If you’re a teacher, you really need to read this book. If you’re a student, you’re praying that your parents and teachers read this book. Stu’s powerful and insightful book encourages us to educate and respect the whole person—body, mind and heart.”

— Russell Bishop, author of *From Self-Talk to Soul-Talk: Becoming More of Who You Truly Are*

“*Heartset Education: A Way of Living and Learning* is a terrific book and needs to be read by all educators. I’ve been involved

with Stu and EduCare over the previous 30 years and had an opportunity to interact with some of his students, parents and staff. What Stu writes about is lived by his staff and of course himself. In short, the results are amazing. You can see it in the smiles and shining eyes of students in EduCare’s programs. Educating young people to adopt that belief in themselves will provide a head start wherever EduCare’s students decide to contribute to the world.”

— Gregory Stebbins, Ed.D., Founder and
Master Coach, PeopleSavvy

Heartset Education explores the power of teaching to the heart and soul of our young people. Thankful for you, Stu, and for your many years of loving kids into life giving change!”

— Bill Milliken, Founder and Vice-Chairman of
Communities In Schools, Inc.

“At last. We’ve waited too long for this book and to address what is most needed in teaching our young people—opening their hearts as well as educating their minds! We can’t recommend it strongly enough.”

— Ron and Mary Hulnick, Founding Faculty and
Co-Directors of the University of Santa Monica

“Child and youth development research continues to highlight that when children, youth, and their families experience love it is healing, and supports positive developmental outcomes. In this text, Stu Semigran beautifully illustrates WHY love is the foundation of education and youth development work. Perhaps more importantly, Stu demonstrates HOW the environments and experiences we create for children and their families can

be rooted in this foundation of love, resulting in powerful and transformative outcomes.”

— Jeff Davis, Executive Director,
California AfterSchool Network (CAN)

“In this brilliantly written book, Stu lays the foundation of education In the Centre of the HEART and reminds us of the wise paradigm of Heartset to guide the educators to use the skills and the tools to educate with the emphasis to awaken the heart of each student. Learning then becomes filled with enthusiasm, joy and upliftment. It is a guide that will help everyone remember that when we live from the heart, we live in fullness of who we are, tapping into our potential, and serving our fellow human beings.”

— Agapi Stassinopoulos, Author of *Speaking with Spirit:
52 Prayers to Guide, Inspire and Uplift You*

“Stu Semigran’s delightful storytelling reveals how love can heal our children’s pain and build an inner personal core of resiliency.”

— Keith Leon S., 7x Award-Winning 9x International
Bestselling Author, Speaker, and Publisher

“Stu’s *Heartset Education* is filled with inspiring stories, a new mindset, and practical methods for touching young people’s hearts and preparing them for future leadership roles. I recommend this book for any teacher, parent, or leader that wants to make a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of others.”

— Mark Samuel, founder and CEO of IMPAQ and
author of *B State*

“*Heartset Education* is a MUST for bringing the best out of both educators and parents!”

— Gloria Halley, Region 2 Lead for Learning Support,
Expanded Learning Service, Office of Education,
Butte County (CA)

“Stu sparks the awareness that establishing a foundation of love in our families, our classrooms, and our society, is essential for the well-being of all of our children.”

— Sam Piha, Founder, Temescal Associates and
The How Kids Learn Foundation

“I wholeheartedly recommend Stu Semigran’s *Heartset Education*! I have had the distinct pleasure of watching Stu work his Heartset magic in person with remarkable results, and now all can benefit from his decades of leadership in the field of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) by reading his book. This book offers effective methods for touching our young people’s hearts, opening their minds, and changing their lives.”

— Dr. Amy Cranston, Executive Director, [SEL4CA](#)

“Stu Semigran’s *Heartset Education* is a revelation. Having known Stu since I was in school myself, I know his dedication to assisting young people in recognizing their intrinsic value. Imagine our world if our schools taught our children from a place of love.”

— Joe Hubbard, Chief Training Officer at Thrive Global

Heartset® Education

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A Way of Living and Learning

Stu Semigran

President and Co-Founder, EduCare Foundation



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*To all children across the world and
all those who love, serve, and lift them*

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Introduction

How many of us see potential in our kids that they don't see?

We can see their lives stretching out in front of them. They don't see it. How do we wake kids up to who they are and what their lives could become?

It isn't a mystery. There are ways to build a sense of connection, relationship, compassion, forgiveness, and understanding in a classroom. It can't be done entirely with curriculum or subject matter content. It's also in the environment, the culture, and the community that surrounds our kids. It is in the people.

Students need to have their minds ready to learn. However, to become active learners, a lot of our kids need more than that. They don't just need a new mindset; they need a new *heartset*. When the heart is set in a good place, the mind is open and receptive. When heart is troubled, the mind is cluttered. So heart and mind have to go hand in hand.

I am suggesting a new way to look at education that I call *Heartset® Education*. Most people are familiar with the idea of a good mindset, a frame of mind that is positive and affirming. *Heartset* is a *frame of heart*. It is the power of unconditional love, where love is the foundation for education.

Heartset Education lays the nurturing soil from which the seeds of vibrant teaching, parenting, and learning sprout. Kindness of heart establishes an energy of self-awareness, non-judgment (acceptance), peace, caring, positivity, giving, forgiveness, and compassion. *Heartset* creates an empathetic environment in

which our young people—and the rest of us—can flourish in spite of the uncertainties and challenges we all face.

Somehow, I intuitively knew this concept when I was just starting out as a young teacher. Working at an underserved middle school in Los Angeles in 1978, I could see that what was being attempted in public education was missing the mark for our kids. So many young people seemed to be lost, awkwardly trying to maneuver through the troubles and traumas of their lives.

I wondered: *What if we could teach them greater self-awareness, as well as coping, social, and practical life skills? We could make their lives easier and their futures brighter. We could help them treat themselves and each other with greater kindness and understanding.*

I asked my middle school principal if I could start teaching a class in self-awareness, social skills, and character development. I didn't have a good name for it at the time. His reply was a clear *no* followed by, "You need to get those test scores up."

Not taking *no* for an answer, I found a way to discreetly work around the issue. I started teaching elements of these essential life skills to the students in my classes. The class atmosphere soon came alive. Smiles, laughter, and friendships sparked, enriched by deep and honest discussion. As this learning environment of kindness, empathy, and caring was built, test scores significantly rose. Soon after, when the principal heard word of the results, it became an established elective class.

This became the impetus for me to extend the curriculum even further. In 1990, with my wife and fellow teacher, Candace, I launched *EduCare*. Our heartfelt intention for *EduCare* was

to touch the lives of more students by establishing love as a foundation in their education. As a non-profit organization, our mission became *to inspire and empower young people to become responsible citizens and compassionate leaders and to live their dreams.*

EduCare Foundation now supports over 30,000 students annually across more than 100 elementary, middle, and high schools in Southern California with social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, afterschool programs, and case management. Since 1990, over 300,000 students have benefitted from EduCare's direct student services. Over 45,000 teachers and parents across more than 500 schools have participated in EduCare professional development programs and parent workshops throughout the United States and abroad.

Bringing love front and center in education in ways that are understandable, practical, field-tested, and evaluated has been at the core of *Heartset Education*. Education is moving away from gauging success primarily by test scores. We are moving toward an understanding of the need for whole-child education that is heart-centered and includes social-emotional learning. We must educate the intellect, the heart, and the character of our young people with a clear focus on equity and inclusion.

More and more educational leaders are understanding the truth in this saying (author unknown, but commonly attributed to Aristotle):

*Educating the mind without educating the heart
is no education at all.*

This ideal is captured in a statement from a high school principal after his students and teachers participated in EduCare’s ACE (Achievement and Commitment to Excellence) Student Success Program: “EduCare, you are teaching from the inside out. You’ve opened my students’ hearts, and now we can capture their minds.” He recognized that when the heart is set in a healthy and compassionate place, the mind is more open, available, and prepared to learn.

With this book, I invite you into *Heartset Education: A Way of Living and Learning*, a program based on the eight *Heartset* skills. It is an opportunity for you to look deeply at yourself and at our young people today. Look into their dreams and, with hope in your heart, see what could lie ahead.

The book highlights stories of my students, colleagues, friends, and family members who inspired and advanced the growth of *Heartset*. Each chapter also includes a few engaging *Heartset* activities for teachers, parents, and students, many of them from *Making the Best of Me: a Handbook for Student Excellence and Self-Esteem*.¹

My sincere wish is that reading *Heartset Education* inspires you to love yourself more deeply. Together, we can learn to strengthen our human connection so that we create families, schools, and communities of greater understanding, empathy, and compassion for our young people.

A portion of the proceeds from the purchase of this book will be donated to the EduCare Foundation to support Heartset educational programs empowering thousands of young people to become courageous and compassionate leaders. To learn more, visit educarefoundation.com

Heartset®

...is a kindness of heart.

It establishes a culture of self-awareness, empathy, personal responsibility, and compassion – to build genuine communities of caring.



EduCare's Eight *Heartset* Skills

- Skill #1 Seeing the Best in Everyone—*Honoring*
- Skill #2 Positively Reinforcing—*Praising*
- Skill #3 Listening From the Heart
- Skill #4 The Power of Choice—*Personal Responsibility*
- Skill #5 Resolving Conflict
- Skill #6 Moving From Judgment to Forgiveness
- Skill #7 Turning Challenges Into Learning Opportunities
- Skill #8 Giving and Receiving

About The Author



Stu Semigran has more than forty years' experience as an educator, teaching in urban public schools and subsequently developing and facilitating training programs for youth and adults in educational settings worldwide. As co-founder and president of the EduCare Foundation, Stu has trained thousands of professionals, youths, educators, and parents in leadership development, afterschool and expanded learning programs, and social-emotional learning.

Since 1990, EduCare has served over 300,000 students and 45,000 teachers and parents across more than 450 schools. Currently, EduCare is the largest provider of high school afterschool programs within the Los Angeles Unified School District. Stu has developed innovative social-emotional development curricula, including *Making the Best of Me: A Handbook for Student Excellence and Self-Esteem*, which is used in schools worldwide. He initiated EduCare's *Heartset® Education* model that guides educators in building kinder and more compassionate classrooms and schools.

A highly skilled and motivating speaker with an exceptional rapport with people of all ages, Stu has appeared on radio and television, and has presented at conferences internationally. Stu's kind-hearted and innovative leadership is widely noted. Stu recently served on the CA Department of Education's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) State Workgroup. In 2012, he was recognized as a David Chow Foundation Humanitarian Award recipient for his service to youth.

Stu lives in Southern California with his wife Candace (EduCare's co-founder) and enjoys spending time with their son in Oregon, meditating, biking, hiking in nature, puttering in the yard, being with family and friends, and following sports, especially the Los Angeles Dodgers.

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