



# Conscious Discipline®



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## Emotional Intelligence, Consciousness, and Classroom Management

By: Dr. Becky Bailey

### **'It must be Love, Love, Love!' Transforming States**

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I have to admit that I arrived at this workshop with no prior knowledge of Dr. Becky Bailey, or indeed, her work on **Conscious Discipline®**. My state of ignorance ensured that expectations were minimal. As I had no ability to make prior assumptions about the content of the workshop, even playing around with the title 'Conscious Discipline' offered me little insight, I started by checking out the room, then the other delegates and then the presenter for some clues. I couldn't see the presenter, I assumed she hadn't arrived. *Nobody* seemed to be getting ready to present in traditional *presenter mode* armed with PowerPoint, flip chart and marker pens. However, the room was buzzing. Other delegates seemed to be hugging and embracing each other like old friends. I held my breath in anticipation wondering what was to come.

Looking more closely, there did seem to be a woman at the centre of the noise, suddenly, she was standing in front of me, wearing a *pinny*, smiling and inviting me to name 'my preferred style of greeting.' ***Only in America....*** scrolled along in front of my brain, as she enthusiastically signalled to various rather beautifully embroidered colourful and cartoonish images of animals on the *pinny*. I felt compelled to opt for the animal with the greatest ability to escape and chose 'the *butterfly*' Dr. Becky taught me a fluttering, intertwined finger and hand-mirroring greeting. I was now initiated! Right from the start then, this greeting set the tone for all that was to come.

The workshop was very informative, she really is a highly energetic presenter, her delivery is engaging and I have to say, it was very powerful too. Dr. Bailey's research focuses primarily on younger children. However, it became increasingly obvious that there was much to be taken from the workshop in terms of both theory and practical activities that might be easily transferred to the secondary school setting and beyond. She advocates that Conscious Discipline® is a powerful tool and program that is also for parents too. It is driven by a holistic approach to the education of students with the concept of 'inclusivity' at its heart.

## Conscious Discipline is specifically designed to teach the following:

- Helpfulness
- Cooperation
- Empathy
- Problem solving
- Assertiveness Impulse Control
- Anger management

## Creating Safe, Brain Smart Classrooms

Using the latest brain research, Dr. Bailey got the group exploring brain friendly learning; this covered topics including:

- How the brain learns to self-regulate.
- How to literally "wire" children for self-control.
- How to move past your own "triggers" or hot buttons.
- How to create and implement a safe place in the classroom.
- How to create a safe keepers ritual.
- How to create effective routines that eliminate the majority of discipline problems.
- How to base your classroom on safety and use the language of safety.
- How to start the day the Brain Smart way.

## Neuroscience for kids!

Dr. Becky Bailey practises what she preaches. As I recovered from the *greeting*, I then faced the embarrassment of being picked to pretend to be the *frontal lobe*, Dr. Bailey got the group actively modelling the structure of the brain for fellow classmates. This gave life to some challenging concepts that could easily be replicated in your own classrooms as neuroscience for kids. She went on to assert that learning the Conscious Discipline brain model, will not only help you to maintain self control, teaching it to children, including those with special needs, will literally change the



brain chemistry of the students in the process and this is fundamental to establishing happy and safe learning environments.

What research says...	What Conscious Discipline Does...
<p><b>1) <u>Decreases Aggression</u></b></p>	
<p>Threat and stress in the learning environment may be the single greatest contribution to impaired academic learning (Jensen, 1998). Safety is the prerequisite for all learning.</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline significantly reduces aggressive acts, creating safe classrooms and safe schools.</p>
<p><b>2) <u>Increases academic scores on state tests</u></b></p>	
<p>A meta-analysis of 11,000 statistical findings indicate that the #1 influence on learning was classroom management (Wang, Haertel &amp; Walberg, 1997).</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline® classrooms scored significantly higher in statewide reading comprehension, writing and math tests. The impact of Conscious Discipline® is reflected in the 1999 scores on the graphs below.</p>
<p><b>3) <u>Decreases impulsivity, hyperactivity in “difficult” children in public schools</u></b></p>	
<p>At-risk children require a disproportionately large amount of time and resources from teachers and schools (Strong, 2002).</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline® can bring these at risk, “difficult” children into a normally behaving range, saving valuable school resources.</p>
<p><b>4) <u>Increases collegiality of staff</u></b></p>	
<p>Collegiality has a greater impact on student achievement than any other factor (Barth 1991).</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline® is a research-based program proven to increase collegiality and organizational climate.</p>
<p><b>5) <u>Creates a positive school climate</u></b></p>	
<p>Positive school climate is significantly related to psychosocial and academic development and performance outcomes (Haynes et al, 1996).</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline® improves teacher-student and student-student relationships in order to create a more positive school climate where helpfulness outweighs external rewards as a student motivator.</p>
<p><b>6) <u>Increases teaching time</u></b></p>	
<p>Overwhelming research indicates the positive relationship of teaching time to academic outcomes</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline® significantly increases teaching time and reduces discipline problems.</p>
<p><b>7) <u>Enhances Parenting Effectiveness</u></b></p>	
<p>Parent-child relationships that include healthy communication and the ability to set limits is the #1 factor in self-esteem, social competence, academic success, and psychosocial development of children.(Strage and Brandt, 1999)</p>	<p>Conscious Discipline® for parents significantly enhances parent-child relationships in the areas of setting limits, communication, satisfaction involvement and support.</p>

Dr. Bailey included wide ranging use of evidence based research from her practise and from other practitioners who were employing her methods in a variety of settings. She used DVD and video clips which she referred to as Consciousness Clips® to further exemplify her ideas and theories and to these theories in action.

## **Building the School Family & Creating Positive School Climates**

### **The Language of Love!**

Conscious Discipline is concerned with the empowerment of adults, encouraging them to change their relationships and responses to children and as teachers to change how we manage classroom conflict. To explore this further, there were some very interesting examples shown which focused on the power of language and how, as the teacher, a more conscious choice of words would improve the ability to download positive emotional states for students. Dr. Bailey encourages 'Loving Guidance' as a language repertoire to give effective commands so that children are more likely to do what you say and in so doing, enhance learning.

The workshop encouraged reflection and discussion in pairs and in groups. There were lots of activities and laughter; brain breaks, opportunities for sharing personal experiences, anecdotes and discreet moments built in for more personal reflection and for setting your own targets and goals. It became increasingly apparent that my own state of emotional intelligence as a leader should be checked first and then, as the adult, I in turn, could facilitate the emotional and social skills of the students/children with whom I work.

This powerful and uplifting session had commenced with the enthusiastic and ritualistic '*butterfly*' greeting. Encouraging inclusivity from the start made sense to me by the end of this workshop, there was nowhere to 'hide' and I was firmly integrated into the group, actively participating right from the start along with **everyone** else in spite of myself, and my English reticence, I was transformed!

I really do believe that this workshop provided participants with opportunities to enhance their skills and techniques as well as giving the practical know how and confidence for developing new ones. It focused on enabling 'Adults to stay in control of themselves and in charge of children,' with or without a *pinny* but always with love!

**Helen Wilson**

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