Preface by Mike Marlowe

This is a text for future and current teachers of children who are resistant or hard to reach. Its focus is the philosophy, classroom practice, and teacher stories of Torey Hayden, a teacher of children with emotional and behavioral disorders, coauthor of this book, and author of eight books chronicling her day-to-day work in special education and child psychology. Hayden's first book was *One Child* (1980), the story of Sheila, a silent troubled girl, who had tied a 3-year-old boy to a tree and critically burned him. *One Child* was followed by *Somebody Else's Kids* (1982), *Murphy's Boy* (1983), *Just Another Kid* (1986), *Ghost Girl* (1992), *The Tiger's Child* (1995), the sequel to *One Child, Beautiful Child* (2002), and *Twilight Children* (2006).

All of Hayden's books are particularly helpful for understanding relationships. Her stories stress the interpersonal dynamics and emotional connections involved in working with resistant children and emphasize relationship skills, intuition, and the social milieu in changing children's behavior. Both new and long-term teachers need the perspective Hayden provides in her stories of classroom life.

This book reflects the growing interest in teacher education in building theories from successful practice rather than just trying to put theory into practice. There is increased recognition of the authority that derives from expert teachers' careful examination of real-life classroom events and the complexities of what

it means to teach children. And there are signs of a renewed respect for the importance of *practice expertise* in building a knowledge base of teaching (Cook, 2012). Without turning to the work of reflective practitioners and their grounded knowledge, our understandings of what it means to teach children remain disconnected from the real world.

I first became aware of Torey, as her students call her in her stories, in 1992 when examining books for possible adoption as texts in a university course on the education of emotionally disturbed children. The last page of a paperback had an advertisement for Torey's books with the hyperbolic tag line "The World Needs More Like Torey Hayden." Beneath the ad was a coupon for ordering the books of this proclaimed "miracle worker." Curious, I put it in the mail.

What drew me to her work was the difference in her approach, as backdrop to her stories, to emotionally disturbed children in contrast to the primary approaches today. Current American research shows that classrooms for emotional and behavioral disorders in the public schools today rely on heavy use of behavior modification programs, which seem primarily aimed at achieving obedience. These classrooms have been described as curriculums of control, and they are widely viewed as ineffective. Here was a viable alternative, an approach that centered on relationships and appropriate social interaction and caring in a very real way.

I was also drawn to Torey's work by how her writing accurately portrays what it *feels* like to work with children, transporting me back to when I taught in classrooms for emotional and behavioral disorders in the public schools of Indiana and Kentucky. Here was a kindred spirit, as she articulated the feelings I had experienced—compassion and anger, joy and sadness, and enthusiasm and frustration. Her stories evoked thoughts, feelings, purposes, images, and aspirations not contained in the research bound texts I normally assigned in teacher education, so taking a new direction, I adopted three of her books.

This proved to be a popular decision with the students. They sensed the excitement of a writer who was there before

they were and writes it like it really is. End-of-course student evaluations of the books were superb (e.g., "A wonderful learning source"; "I'm now a member of the Torey Hayden fan club"; "When in doubt I ask myself, what would Torey have done?"). Vicariously, students saw themselves in Torey's classroom stories; they imagined new possibilities for their own teaching.

Two decades later, I continue to use Torey's stories in teacher education and in doing so have distilled from them an approach to educating children with emotional and behavioral disorders, which could be termed the *relationship-driven classroom.* The crucial foundations of a relationship-driven classroom are the individual relationships between the teacher and the child and those among the children and the group or unit relationship. What sets the relationship-driven methodology apart from other methodologies is its active use of interpersonal relationships as a means of change.

The importance of relationship became apparent to Torey when she was a college student and took on work as an aide in a preschool program for disadvantaged children (Hayden, 2002). Torey had been given responsibility for Mary, a 4-year-old, who did not speak, was afraid of men, and spent the whole time hiding underneath a piano. Torey's charge was to get the girl to come out. The director did not tell Torey how to do that or what to do.

Torey began her relationship with Mary by lying under the piano with her and carrying on a long, very one-sided monologue while she just watched. When Torey ran out of things to talk about, she started reading to her. It took months to achieve a relationship with Mary and get her to speak again, but it did happen, and the connection between its happening and the long hours Torey spent apparently doing nothing more than spending time with her was not lost on Torey.

A second experience soon followed reaffirming the importance of relationship (Hayden, 2005). As a graduate student in special education, Torey devised a small research project in learning disabilities. She divided children with identified learning disabilities and poor reading performance into three groups.

In the first group, children were paired with trained tutors who used the most up-to-date learning-modality-based methods to help them improve their reading; in the second group, children were paired with an untrained college student who simply read books, magazines, and comic books to them; and the third group was a control group who had no special interventions. The tutors/college students met their children twice a week for half an hour, and the project ran for 6 months.

At the end of six months, both treatment groups had made statistically significant improvements in reading. Both groups improved whether the children were being actively taught or whether they were simply listening to an adult read. Torey's conclusion from this was not that we don't need to actively teach children to read but that the significant influence was human interaction, rather than the method used. The results of the study spoke of how much it matters to us that someone else is willing to take the time to be with us, that our problems tend to improve simply by being with people who pay positive attention to us.

Source: The previous three paragraphs are based on material in *Twilight Children* by Torey Hayden. Copyright © 2005. Published by William Morrow, an imprint of HarperCollins. Reprinted courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers.

These insights into the power of relationships shaped Torey's approach to teaching children in classrooms for emotional and behavioral disorders. Her focus is on human interactive concerns rather than methodological concerns. There is no best method strategy. She thinks about the child, not the model. She reasons and reflects on a case-by-case basis. Her practice is derived directly from experience, using relationship as a process. She asks, "Who is this child? And what affirmations and experiences does she need to make her more humane and strong enough to survive?"

Objectives of the Book

The book's purpose is to describe the philosophical principles that underpin relationships as a means of change and present

the teacher skills and concepts fundamental to creating and maintaining a relationship-driven classroom. Hopefully, teachers will not only gain insight into how to implement a relationship-driven classroom but also become more reflective about the meaning of teaching and learning with at-risk children and grow and change, both professionally and personally.

It is not just teachers of special education, however, that we seek to engage with this book. The majority of students identified as emotionally or behaviorally disordered spend at least a portion of the school day in regular classrooms, and such children form a substantial portion of the school population. Federal child-count data reported annually by states confirms that in 2003 to 2004, there were approximately one-half million students identified as having a serious emotional disturbance or about 1% of the school-age population (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). But many experts claim that emotionally disturbed children are grossly underidentified. They estimate between 3% and 5% would be more accurate. Mental health epidemiological studies suggest even higher rates (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009).

The behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties of the students in Torey's books are variations of the same persistent problems that many general education teachers experience with their most difficult students. The knowledge and practice of a relationship-driven methodology will be useful to general education teachers in their efforts to understand and teach students who are resistant or hard to reach.

Most teachers strive to make emotional connections with their students. However, making this a priority can be difficult since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the demand for higher state test scores and accountability. High stakes tests are not likely to go away, and a relationship-driven classroom promotes both emotional connections and learning. We know that students are more likely to attend school and excel when they feel like they belong. Feelings of connection lead to greater effort, greater persistence, and positive attitudes. Feelings of rejection have the opposite effects.

Outline of the Book

Chapter 1, "The Relationship-Driven Classroom," describes the relationship-driven classroom model and how it differs from the three most common approaches to childhood behavioral problems: the behavioral model, the market or business model, and the medical model.

Chapter 2, "Relationships as a Means of Change: Goal Versus Process Orientation," describes how relationships are a process, not a goal, and how process orientation—the ability to focus and work in the present—is at the core of a relationship-driven model of treatment and management of emotional and behavioral disorders.

Chapter 3, "Teacher Skills Needed to Develop a Relationship-Driven Classroom," describes the social skills needed to create strong and healthy bonds necessary for effectively using relationships as a medium of behavioral change and the philosophical principles which underpin and inform all action taken in a relationship-driven classroom.

Chapter 4, "Discipline," describes laying the ground rules for a relationship-driven classroom, how to respond when misbehavior happens, and how in a relationship-driven classroom consequences are not the only appropriate responses to discipline and control.

Chapter 5, "Positive Classroom Climate," describes how one builds into a structured routine the opportunities for joy and enthusiasm, expression of feelings, stress reduction and relaxation skills, and communication.

Chapter 6, "Teaching Relationship Skills to Children," describes the importance of actively teaching relationship skills to troubled children, who often need direct and active help in developing these skills to a useful level.

Chapter 7, "Developing Teacher–Student Relationships," describes the importance of teacher–student relationships and teachers acting as functional adults while showing their warm and friendly side.

Chapter 8, "Successful Peer Relationships," describes how the teaching of the social skills children need to make and keep friends and to be a valued member of group are built directly into the curriculum.

Chapter 9, "Successful Group Dynamics," describes five strategies to strengthen the classroom group: concrete identification, deemphasizing comparisons, group responsibility, group problem solving, and group celebrations.

Chapter 10, "The Future," discusses the implications of a paradigm shift for teaching resistant children, away from control models, toward a relationship-driven orientation.