

Moral Intelligence (*Borba*)

Dr. Michele Borba is an educator who promotes practical, solution-based parenting strategies to strengthen a child's behaviour, sense of self-worth and moral development. Her work has a clear focus on building strong families and revolves around shaping the character and moral destinies of youth. Borba places a specific emphasis on moral intelligence. She believes that all children need to be raised so that they develop solid character, strong minds and caring hearts.

Borba defines moral intelligence as the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong; have strong ethical convictions and act on these convictions in an honourable way. Moral intelligence consists of seven essential virtues: empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness. These virtues become a child's moral compass and enable him or her to deal with the challenges of everyday life.

The foundation of a person's moral intelligence is empathy, conscience and self-control. This moral core gives individuals the power to do what's right. Once a moral code is established, a person can add respect (valuing all life) and kindness (a sense of decency and compassion in relationships). The remaining virtues, tolerance and fairness, are the cornerstones of integrity, justice and citizenship.

Borba believes it is crucial to build children's moral intelligence so they develop a sense of right and wrong, and can respond positively to social influences. She believes that building children's moral IQ has many benefits, including:

- nurturing good character
- getting children on the right course by teaching them how to think and act morally
- teaching critical life skills such as resolving conflict, empathizing and decision making
- promoting a strong sense of citizenship
- inspiring good behaviour and allowing children to become decent, caring and respectful.

Borba believes that all children are born with a capacity for moral intelligence and that, since character traits are learned, they can be taught. She asserts that teachers have the power to teach critical character traits and have many opportunities to weave them into learning throughout the school day and across subject areas.

Borba offers these five steps for teaching a character trait.

1. Accentuate a character trait.
2. Tell the value and meaning of the trait.
3. Teach what the trait looks and sounds like.
4. Provide opportunities to practise the trait.
5. Provide effective feedback.

Related Web site

<http://www.micheleborba.com/Pages/7virtues.htm>

Related publications

Borba, Michele. *Character Builders: Respect for Self and Others—A K–6 Character Education Program*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2000.

Borba, Michele. *Character Builders: Responsibility and Trustworthiness—A K–4 Character Education Program*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2000.

Borba, Michele. *Building Moral Intelligence: The Seven Essential Virtues That Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Borba, Michele. *Character Builders: Positive Attitudes and Peacemaking for Primary Children—A Program to Enhance Positive Attitudes and Peacemaking Skills, Preschool through Third Grade*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2001.

Borba, Michele. *Fairness and Cooperation: A K–8 Program to Develop the Skills of Fairness and Cooperation in Students*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2003.

Borba, Michele. *Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me: The Top 25 Friendship Problems and How to Solve Them*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005.