

THE FLOURISH PROJECT

The roots of difference and the path to compassion

No matter where they are born in the world, all human beings share the same seven core needs that then shape what they want and value – our motivations and behaviours stem from having our needs met (or not) and our values are a reflection of these needs.



These human needs represent the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects that give our lives meaning and purpose. As they grow, young children need to steadily experience and build on each aspect, whereas healthy adults are able to integrate them all. The ability to feel whole as a person is really important for our wellbeing and, just as in all other living systems, our biology is always trying to bring us into a balanced energetic state. Our 'self-energy' is constantly encouraging us to balance both our internal and external needs, so that we can access our authentic nature. The spiritual aspect of our development is always moving us toward wholeness, that includes contribution to something larger than ourselves, and our ongoing growth.

All aspects of our lives, both personal and professional, are therefore based upon the way that our needs have been met - and our values have been shaped – both through our genetic predispositions and then through our early experiences and how they are subsequently expressed through our beliefs and behaviours. We all create mindsets and worldviews that predict how we see both ourselves and others and these are the maps that we then use to survive and grow.

Human babies are unique in that they are so reliant on their early relationships with others for such a long a period of time. Apart from the security of adequate shelter and nutrition, positive human relationships are therefore the single most important factor for healthy development.

In order to feel secure and that they belong, young children model and adopt the values of the adults in their worlds, which is where we start to see the roots of difference take shape.

If our early environments have been positive and nurturing, we are likely to have developed healthy mindsets that have enabled us to maximise our natural development and potential in line with our innate energies and dispositions. For example, neurobiological studies suggest that, as a social species, human beings are hardwired to initially be cooperative and trusting. We are also likely to be able to learn and bounce back quickly from any setbacks and failures - which helps us to see them from the perspective of a 'glass half full'.

Values related to normal healthy development include love, trust, courage, justice, respect, patience, honesty, humility, compassion, tolerance, hope and optimism

Introducing the Flourish Project

But if we have grown up in difficult or stressful environments, our natural energies and development are more likely to have been compromised and we may have adopted limiting belief and value systems that have helped us to survive, but have also limited our ability to become happy, healthy adults. We are then more likely to personalise and struggle with any setbacks and failures – which make us see them from the perspective of a ‘glass half empty’.

Values related to compromised early development include neglect, distrust, fear, anger, frustration, self-protection, dishonesty, arrogance, lack of respect for others, lack of tolerance, despair and scepticism.

A core objective of any human-centric system, whether it be a family, school, organisation, city or nation, should therefore be to nurture positive self-energy and the fullest expression of human potential. We call this ‘values-based living’. Such systems should seek to promote a way of being that values self, others, and the environment. They should nourish pro-social behaviour and promote innate positive qualities and dispositions from an early age. They should remember that we all have rich inner lives that can promote, or drastically inhibit, our capacity to learn and form meaningful relationships with ourselves and others.

Understanding why we are the way we are, that our values and personalities are a reflection of what has happened to us in our lives, and that others have experienced the world differently, starts us on the Path to Compassion.

To achieve healthy human development and wellbeing, external aspects such as attainment and success are important, but these must be balanced with the internal need for meaning and wholeness. As social and responsive beings, our wellbeing is also irrevocably connected to that of others and the health of the planet. There is an all-encompassing ecology of wellbeing that suggests that we cannot only look at one aspect, without acknowledging the others. In fact, there is an inherent danger in doing so, as is evidenced through the current concerns about the human impact on climate change.

Research shows that when organisations actively model universal, positive human values, it has a positive effect on everyone within the system. Values-based learning promotes the understanding of positive values and how we can encourage the habits, skills and dispositions that we most want to see in adults and children, so they can contribute as valued members of the community.

The good news is that we are not confined by our early backgrounds and labels and that we can seek out and learn values-skills from others - values-based learning and mentoring is, therefore, particularly important for anyone who was denied positive environments and role models in their early years.

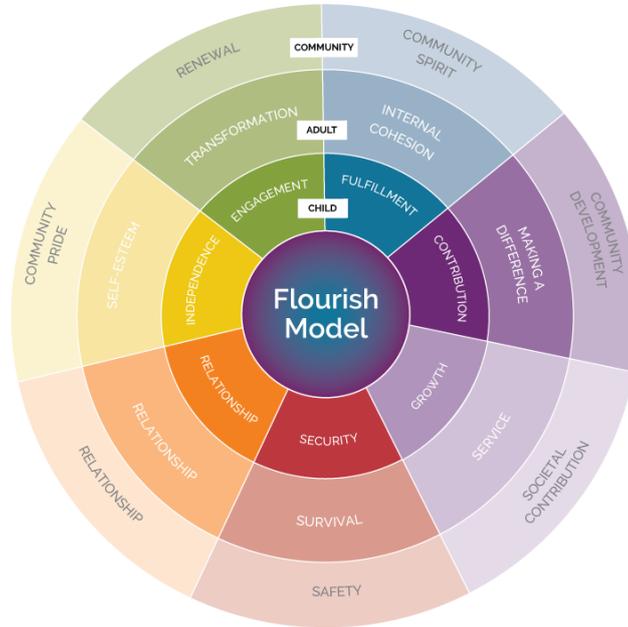
Values-based learning, within the understanding of a new ecology of wellbeing, also underpins the call for more human-centric economic systems, that are focused not only on profit, but on people and planet. It acknowledges that beneath our diversity we share an essential unity, it asks the big questions about the definition of success and what makes a ‘good life, and it questions what kind of world we want to hand down to our children and grandchildren.

Above all, it suggests a new and more hopeful way forward, based upon the best of what makes us all human.

Introducing the Flourish Project

The Flourish Values Model (FVM) spheres show how values underpin the worlds of children, adults and communities and how human systems are then embedded within the wider natural world.

Flourish Model



Flourish Model

