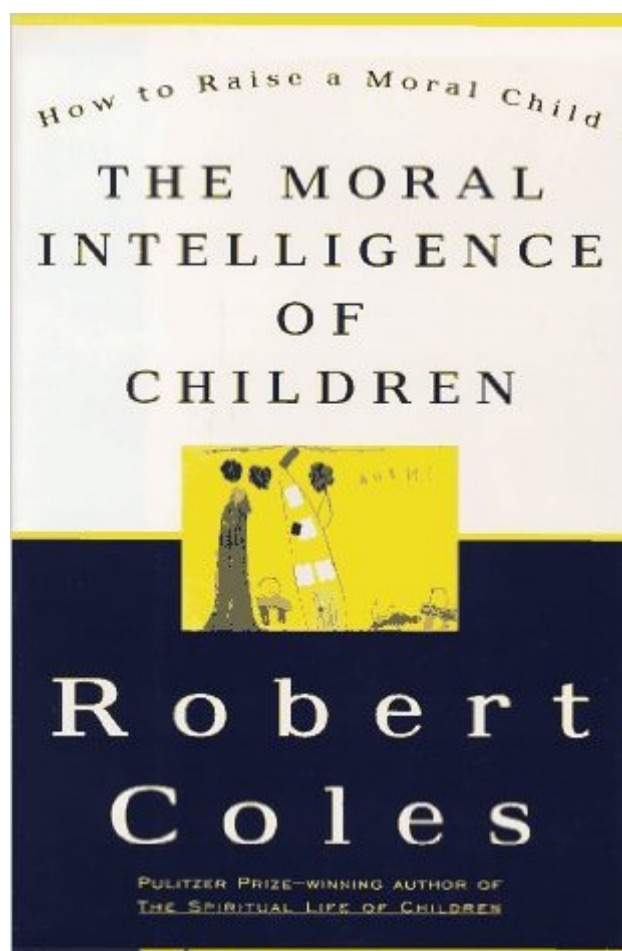


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The Moral Intelligence Of Children



Synopsis

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the bestselling *The Spiritual Life of Children* now explores how to develop character in children, from infancy through the teenage years. During three stages in the "moral archaeology of childhood," Coles shows how to spot moral crossroads, and what to do about them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Moral Intelligence one of numerous books Robert Coles has written is in a way in a culmination of the years he has spent working with children in families. It is a topic that has intrigued him since he was a student of psychology, and has continued to play a role in his life. He offers many personal insights and examples from his own life-showing that even an expert psychologist can learn from his own children-the rest of us should be equally humble! Moral intelligence is the theory put forth by Dr. Coles, that children learn some of the most important lessons by observing the behaviors of those around them in authority positions (mainly parents and teachers). His theory goes beyond the teaching of moral lessons such as "you shouldn't steal, or lie" and reaches a deeper level of analysis. He theorizes that children pick up and retain information about moral behavior from witnessing the actions of others. He defines moral intelligence as the actions of one that effect the behavior of another. He feels that this manner of learning has a more lasting impact on children. Dr. Coles states that he has been interested in moral intelligence much of his life. This topic is something he feels truly passionate about and it shows in this work and in this book. Critics may

dismiss this work as simple common sense but it goes well beyond that, and cannot be summed up so easily. While the advice he offers may seem elementary-it is not being followed by many parents and bears repeating. He writes from both his heart and his mind and provides necessary reassurance and guidance for parents and teachers who may be struggling with the decisions and choices they must make each and every day. His book is unique in that it is a resource for parents, teachers and academics.

"Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind." So said Henry James in response to his nephew when he sought advice on what he ought to do with his life. Robert Coles, known for his extraordinarily insightful thought-provoking and profoundly sensitive five-volume work, *Children in Crisis*, delves into what it means to be moral and goes further to examine how children - even very young children - acquire moral values, that is learning empathy and living by the Golden Rule, not to do unto others what one would not want done unto himself. In the first part, "Moral Intelligence," Dr. Coles examines what it means to be a good person or a not-so-good person. He discusses moral intelligence, that is, how children learn empathy and respect for others and themselves. He shows how this moral intelligence is as important, if not more important, other forms of human success and intellectual achievement. In the second part, "The Moral Archaeology of Childhood," Dr. Coles explores how children acquire empathy and other critical moral values at various stages of childhood. Drawing upon the work of Anna Freud, the infant and toddler quickly learns by the limits of "Yes" and "No." He also discusses the problems of the spoiled child and how to prevent a baby from growing up to be a bully. Dr. Coles refers to the elementary school years as the "Age of Conscience," the period when a child's verbal skills enables him to take in what he sees, hears, and reads and try to make sense of everything. In his section on adolescence, Dr. Coles explores how teens try to cope with decisions and how to understand life and new responsibilities, including coping with alcohol, drugs, sex, and other moral questions.

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