

# The Heart of Education

by Kimberly Fletcher



Theodore Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States asserted that, "To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

There is a lot of focus in our nation about educating the minds of our youth. While we agree that education is a vital component to a free society, we are deeply concerned that all the discussions on "reform" or proposals to "fix" the problems of education focus on the mind and completely neglect the heart. It is our hearts that guide our actions, not our brains, so if all we focus on is the brain, the result is a nation of highly intelligent people with no moral foundation, and that is a very dangerous thing.

Oliver DeMille, former president of George Wythe University, addresses this very concern in his book, *TJED for Teens*. He states:

As Allan Bloom pointed out in his classic bestseller, *The Closing of the American Mind*, the last society to be as highly trained and as poorly educated as the current U.S. was Germany in the 1930s. A significant number of German engineers were highly enough trained to build cutting-edge weaponry, submarines, missiles, airplanes and so

on, but not wellread enough in history to vote against Hitler or refuse to do his bidding.

Same with German scientists, who understood chemicals and genetics enough to experiment on their neighbors when they were thrown immorally into prison camps, but not learned enough in ethics, morals, history, psychology or basic politics to not elect Hitler or refuse to torture their countrymen.

Critics could say that by the time submarines were being launched and people were being tortured, it was too late to do anything. But only the combination of top technical training and poor Leadership Education could have allowed this all to happen. A less highly trained people could not have done it, and a truly educated people would not have done it. This may seem extreme to some, but seriously, what is education all about? If it is not to teach us what is good, ideal, and right, then it isn't really education.

We are all deeply concerned for the moral decay in our society and the violence that has erupted because of it. Strengthening the mind will not cure what ails us. As J.K. Row-

ing so poignantly states, "It is our choices.... that show who we really are, far more than our abilities."

It is not what is in our minds that inspires greatness; it's what is in our hearts. A moral nation of freedom-loving, intelligent, devoted citizens must start there.

### Discussion Questions

- ★ *What are your thoughts on the difference between education of the heart and mind?*
- ★ *Why is education of the mind without the heart dangerous? How do morals direct our intelligence and decision making?*
- ★ *How does the United States today compare to Germany at the rise of Hitler?*
- ★ *What experiences have you had that educated your heart? How is an educated heart better able to capture life's sunshine?*
- ★ *In what specific ways can we integrate education of the heart into our children's education?*