



MINDFULNESS in SCHOOLS PROJECT CONFERENCE 2021

Including ALL
TEACHERS & LEARNERS

Dr Colette Power

How can mindfulness welcome
all social classes?

Missing Class

Exploring Social Class within the Mindfulness Field

Colette Power June 2021

Poverty, Class & Inequality

The top 1% of households own 43% of all personal wealth while the bottom 50% have only 1%

The 2020 Suisse Global Wealth Report

31% of children or 9 in a classroom of 30 are living in poverty in the UK 2019-20

The Child Action Poverty Group

Education & Inequality

82% of Oxbridge graduates come from the upper and middle classes

Independent, fee-paying schools educate just 7% of students, while 43% of Oxford and 37% of Cambridge students come from fee paying schools. 82% of barristers, 81% of judges and 80% of supreme court judges have been to Oxbridge.

10% of top jobs go to people from just 10 schools

Ferguson (2018)



‘The need for critical social mindfulness in schools’

Forbes (2019)



The Mindfulness and Social Change Network

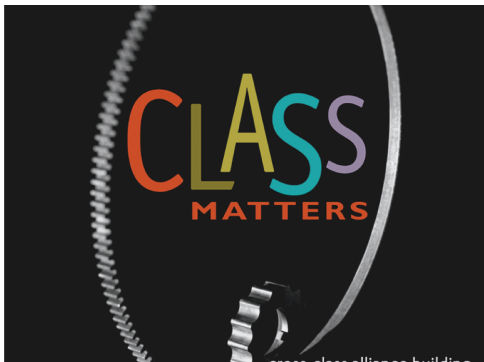
Diversity & Inclusion: Why is it important for the mindfulness 'sector' to understand and respond to issues around power, privilege, diversity and inclusion, and identity? What does this mean for mindfulness centres, teachers and teacher trainers?

'True compassion is more than flinging a coin a to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring'

King (1967)



Missing Class:
Strengthening Social Movement Groups
by Seeing Class Cultures



Class Matters:
Cross-Class Alliance Building
for Middle Class Activists

Definitions

Class

Relative social rank in terms of income, wealth, education, status and/or power

Classism

Differential treatment based on social or perceived social class. Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups. It's the systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class

Individual Classism

This term refers to classism on a personal or individual level, either in behaviour or attitudes, either conscious and intentional, or unconscious and unintentional

Institutionalised Classism

This term refers to the ways in which intentional and unintentional classism is manifest in the various institutions of our society

‘I thought ‘Thank God! Someone with a northern accent! I’d never met another gay woman with a working class background and accent in this field, being able to truly be myself was so empowering. I’ve carried this with me since’

Survey Respondent (Power, 2019)

She has an immediate, reflexive “No” reaction to the email. Familiar thoughts, feelings, and experiences of being ignored due to being in marginalised groups flash through her mind. ...everything in her rejects any suggestion that anyone would be interested in what she has to say

An Auto ethnography of a Working-Class Gay Woman Becoming a Mindfulness Teacher,
Lynne Wheeler (part of masters degree at Bangor University)

Those who make the decisions in any field (whether educational, occupational, intellectual, or artistic) resonate with and reward those whose cultural capital (taste in food, humour, media, clothes) is similar to their own. Conscious intention to discriminate by favouring one's own class is not necessary for privilege to be perpetuated

Bourdieu (2014)

'I used to try and talk differently. I've educated myself. I used to feel shame that I didn't have a degree, but I now I feel this is my power, it's my difference, my unique life experiences. I'm proud to look back on my struggles and see where I have brought myself'

Survey Respondent (Power, 2019)

REFERENCES

Bourdieu in Leondar-Wright (2014) *Missing Class: Strengthening Social Movement Groups by Seeing Class Cultures*. Cornell University Press, NY.

Child Action Poverty Group (2021) 'Child Poverty Facts and Figures'. Available at: <https://cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>

Ferguson, D (2018) 'Britain has created a crisis in childhood'. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/oct/23/britain-crisis-childhood-former-childrens-commissioner-al-aynsley-green-book>

Forbes, D (2019) 'The need for critical social mindfulness in schools'. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/need-critical-social-mindfulness-schools/>

Leondar-Wright (2014) *Missing Class: Strengthening Social Movement Groups by Seeing Class Cultures*. Cornell University Press, NY.

Leondar-Wright (2005) *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists*. New Society Publishers, Canada. Class Awareness Facebook Page (resources and further reading)

Luther King, M (1967) "Beyond Vietnam": Speech at Riverside Church Meeting, New York, N.Y., April 4, 1967. In Clayborne Carson et al., eds., *Eyes on the Prize: A Reader and Guide* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 201-04.

Power, C (2019) 'Missing Class'. Available at: <https://www.mindfulness-network.org/missing-class-by-colette-power/>

The Suisse Global Wealth Report (2020). Available at: <https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us/en/reports-research/global-wealth-report.html>

RESOURCES

Class Awareness UK Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/Class-Awareness-UK-301866293726167/>

Joshua Eaton (2011) 'Making Buddhism accessible to working-class people', *Tricycle*. Available at:

<https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/making-buddhism-accessible-working-class-people/>

Bhikkhu Bodhi (2007) 'A Challenge to Buddhists', *The Lions Roar*. Available at:

<https://www.lionsroar.com/a-challenge-to-buddhists/>

Mindfulness and Social Change <https://mindfulnessandsocialchange.org>

Jayarava (2015) 'The Problem of Class and Popular Buddhism'. Available at:

<http://jayarava.blogspot.com/2015/12/the-problem-of-class-and-popular.html>

The Class Work Project <https://www.theclassworkproject.com/>

www.colettepower.com
colette@colettepower.com

