



Wounded by School: Recapturing the Joy in Learning and Standing Up to Old School Culture

Kirsten Olson

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*** 2010 ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award Finalist in Education

*** 2009 Notable Education Book by American School Board Journal

"Kirsten Olson has written a book that is at once intellectually engaging and replete with usable resources and proposals for action.... May this splendid book be read, discussed, taken to heart, and put into action by a growing company of educational 'wounded healers.'"

-- From the Foreword by **Parker J. Palmer**, author of *The Courage to Teach*

"This wonderful and probing book is filled with powerful, poignant, passionate stories; stories that are at once fragile and strong, painful and enduring. They make us mourn the losses of laughter and opportunity in schools, weep at the lingering sadness and sorrow in schools, laugh at the absurdities; and grin at the moments of mischief and inspiration."

-- From the Foreword by **Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot**, Harvard Graduate School of Education

"A brilliant, original, and important book. *Wounded by School* makes an eloquent and moving case for the radical re-invention of our schools."

-- **Tony Wagner**, author of *The Global Achievement Gap* and Co-Director of the Change Leadership Group (CLG)

"Kirsten Olson's book is refreshingly unlike the general run of sludge I associate with writing about pedagogy: It seems to be entirely free of the familiar platitudes which replace thought when we read about school matters, is scrubbed clean of pretentious jargon, and offers up the twists and turns of Olson's analysis and citations with beautiful clarity. I can't imagine anyone not being better for reading this book Twice!" -- John Taylor Gatto, Author, *Dumbing Us Down*

While reformers and policymakers focus on achievement gaps, testing, and accountability, millions of students mentally and emotionally disengage from learning and many gifted teachers leave the field. Ironically, today's schooling is damaging the single most essential component to education -- the joy of learning.

How do we recognize the "wounds" caused by outdated schooling policies? How do we heal them? In her controversial new book, education writer and critic Kirsten Olson brings to light the devastating consequences of an educational approach that values conformity over creativity, flattens student's interests, and dampens down differences among learners. Drawing on deeply emotional stories, Olson shows that current institutional structures do not produce the kinds of minds and thinking that society really needs. Instead, the system tends to shame, disable, and bore many learners. Most importantly, she presents the

experiences of wounded learners who have healed and shows what teachers, parents, and students can do right now to help themselves stay healthy.

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