

Exploring Fear in Moral Life: Implications for Education

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Abstract : Fear is usually considered as a basic emotion. In society, it is normally cast as undesirable, but also as partly unavoidable. Fear can be said to underlie courage or be required for courage, or it can be understood as its foil. Fear is not normally promoted (intentionally) in education, or treated as something that should be cultivated in schools or in society. However, fear is a basic, to some extent unavoidable emotion, related to truly fearsome things in the world. Fear is also understood to underlie anxiety. Fear is seen as basically disruptive to education, while from a psychological view it is an ordinary state. that cannot be avoided altogether. Despite calls to diminish this negative and mixed feeling in education and society, it can be regarded as socially and personally valuable, and psychologically functional in some situations. One should not take for granted the goodness of fear. However, it can be productive to explore its moral worth, and uses and abuses. Such uncomfortable feelings and experiences can be cultivated and explored via educational and other societal influences, in ways that can benefit a person and their relations with others in the world, while they can also be detrimental.

Keywords : virtue ethics, philosophy of education, moral philosophy, fear

Conference Title : ICMP 2020 : International Conference on Moral Philosophy

Conference Location : Lisbon, Portugal

Conference Dates : April 16-17, 2020