

THE AUTHORS SHOW – Authors of Nonfiction

Author: Doug Carnine

It's Time for More Kindness

Doug Carnine, Professor Emeritus, University of Oregon and Lay Buddhist Minister

Time's cover story, "Hate in America," calls out for answers. One answer, mindful kindness, is being tested in the notorious Tucker Maximum Security Unit, which provides the historical basis for Robert Redford's fact-based movie Burbaker with the telephone torture machine and the 200 prisoner bodies discovered in unmarked graves. In my first book Saint Badass: Personal Transcendence in Tucker Max Hell my incarcerated friends tell the story of their childhoods of abuse, lives of crime, life sentences at Tucker Max, and finally their transformation through our mindful kindness partnership.

I am using my second book How Love Wins: The Power of Mindful Kindness to expand our mindful-kindness partnership described in Saint Badass. This self-help/us-help book takes the reader through 12 steps to become more mindfully-kind and to experience greater happiness, health, longevity, and stronger loving relationships. The partnership is using How Love Wins with an 'each one, teach one' strategy that grew out of slavery, where a slave who was taught to read would then teach another slave how to read.

To complement the books, my feedkindness.com website contains a variety of resources to help you be mindfully kind to yourself, to your partner, children, friends, co-workers, community members, spiritual seekers, and social justice activists.

Buddhist Synopsis of Saint Badass:

Saint Badass: Personal Transcendence in Tucker Max Hell is a memoir about bringing heaven down to hell. Drawing on an exchange of letters, Doug Carnine tells the story of his partnership with three murderers and an alleged rapist, about Buddhism and its practices of mindfulness and kindness, and how by adopting these practices, the prisoners transformed their lives.

All four prisoners were housed in Tucker, Arkansas, at the notorious maximum-security prison featured in the Robert Redford movie *Brubaker*. In their letters, to Carnine, and sometimes to one another, the prisoners describe their unrelentingly abusive childhoods, their lives of violence and crime, their eventual submission to prison life, and their growing commitments to meditation and kindness. A suspenseful and moving drama unfolds as these prisoners join in partnership and experience glimpses of internal freedom. Each prisoner faces new crises in prison, including disabling illness, a brain tumor, a prison gang attack, family betrayal, medical abuse and harsh punishments for mild offenses. Yet through mindfulness and the blessings of kindness, each prisoner in his own way overcomes his crisis. The destructive forces of prison and the horror of the men's upbringings provide a dramatic contrast to their incongruously continuous acts of kindness and growing concern for the well-being of others. The journey chronicled in this book calls into question stereotypes about marginalized members of society and inspires hope for change. This story is about transformation -- that of the prisoners, and of the author, as he shares personal difficulties and learns from the courage and commitment of his prison friends.

Synopsis of *How Love Wins*:

"Be kind." It sounds simple, so why is it so difficult? Most of us recognize that being kinder and more present would not only improve our own lives and the lives of our loved ones, but also strengthen our communities. Numerous scientific studies have confirmed that both living mindfully and being kind to others offer a host of benefits -- from stronger relationships to longer life. Yet even if we truly care and are motivated to change, we find that old habits keep us from achieving our goal of increasing our kindness and improving our relationships.

With his book *How Love Wins*, Doug Carnine offers another path. In this simple but powerful guide, Carnine leads the reader through a 12-step process of transformation, opening a toolbox of skills and techniques that anyone can use to live more fully in the moment and be more kind to themselves and others. A lay Buddhist minister who has worked with hospice patients and prisoners, Carnine provides a clear path that will enable everyone to build a mindfully kind life - and make it stick.

Review of How Love Wins: The Power of Mindful Kindness

Tony Biglan, PhD, author of The Nurture Effect:

Doug's book makes a critical contribution to evolving societies that nurture the well-being of every person. Ultimately, a nurturing society will be one where every person is committed to caring acts in their relationships with everyone they encounter. How Love Wins is a foundation for creating such a society. With warmth, compassion, and clarity it will guide you to a way of living that benefits you, at the same time it enriches the lives of everyone you encounter.

Review of Saint Badass: Personal Transcendence in Tucker Max Hell

Geri Larkin, author, Stumbling Toward Enlightenment:

Saint Badass isn't simply about the transformative power of sincere spiritual practice. It demonstrates the impact of our practice on our environment and the people around us. These men have many reasons to be filled with hate, to be violent, and to be completely shut down given the lives they are leading in the bowels of the hell realm of our society, our prisons. And yet. They transform. One of them glows in the dark, I swear. Reading the book gave me hope. Their lives are proof of this.

About Doug:

During his 35-year career at the University of Oregon, Douglas Carnine, Professor Emeritus, taught about, conducted research on, and advocated for improved education for vulnerable children—the poor, handicapped, English language learners, and children of color. He has over a 100 scholarly publications, has lectured around the world, received the Ersted Award for outstanding University teaching, and received the Life Time Achievement Award from the Council for Exceptional Children. He received a presidential appointment to the National Institute for Literacy and was confirmed by the U.S. Senate, serving as program committee chair for three years. Simultaneously he developed his meditation and kindness practice and became a Buddhist lay minister. Since retirement, he has developed a mindful kindness project that includes a prison ministry, two books and a related website: feedkindness.com.