

## PRAISE FOR *DELIBERATE OPTIMISM*

This book reminds us that we have far more control than we realize. The refreshing and encouraging perspective helps us tackle our daily challenges and offers concrete actions and introspective suggestions that capture our true sense of efficacy as professionals. By heeding the message, we can become empowered to do whatever we can to make a difference with our students, in our classrooms, and throughout our schools. It affirms that “can-do” attitude and culture that I witness in the National Forum’s Schools to Watch middle-grades initiative across the country. The message of *Deliberate Optimism* reinforces my personal coping strategy of humming “Keep on the Sunny Side” when I encounter negativity and challenges!

—Deborah Kasak, EdD, executive director, National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform Schools to Watch Initiative

The monologue about teachers has been pretty awful over the past few years. Teachers did not get into the profession to be kicked around during political campaigns—they got into education because of a love for children and a passion for learning. *Deliberate Optimism* is for all of those teachers who have lost or forgotten that along the way. Read this book . . . and regain your optimism.

—Peter DeWitt, independent consultant, Finding Common Ground by *Education Week*, Corwin author, and consulting editor for the Corwin Connected Educators Series

Teaching is tough, but it’s not supposed to be masochistic. Sometimes teachers forget that taking care of ourselves is an important part of the job. *Deliberate Optimism* helps educators learn how refill our mental and emotional gas tanks—or at least increase our fuel efficiency.

—Roxanna Elden, author, *See Me After Class: Advice for Teachers by Teachers*

Students have a right to see someone in the front of the room who is confident, competent, and incurably optimistic. Too often, the status quo in classrooms and buildings is decidedly—and powerfully—negative. Every district leader and building principal should put this book in the hands of teachers and teacher assistants—and then model the kind of deliberate optimism teachers have a right to expect from their leaders.

—Ron Nash, presenter and author of *The Active Classroom* series

This book is a must-have resource for experienced as well as novice teachers. Easy to read and implement, it offers a wealth of sensible, realistic, and inspiring advice about how to successfully manage the daily business of being a classroom teacher. Its positive message is simply empowering!

—Julia G. Thompson, author, *The First-Year Teacher’s Survival Guide*

A must read for every educator. This book details why they must work to maintain their optimism and how they can do that—and does this with a twist of humor.

Nothing important can be accomplished without optimism. Since teaching is a task of highest importance, this book should be read by anyone who is, or aspires to be, a teacher.

In an era of relentless criticism and overriding pessimism about our educational system, this book will lift the spirits of all who work in schools.

—Michael Connolly, co-author, *Young Enough to Change the World*

With so much negativity heaped on education today, there is a need for sources of inspiration and this book provides it. Not only is the book a singular call to arms for teachers to reclaim their joy, but within these pages are real strategies for healing our souls and growing positive, nurturing classrooms. Bravo, my friends, we needed this book!

—Kevin Honeycutt, international speaker, author, song writer, and program developer, Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas

*Deliberate Optimism: Reclaiming the Joy in Education* is a highly relevant and engaging book that goes directly to the heart and soul of what education should be, not what it has come to be. The authors offer practical suggestions on how to reclaim what we have lost in the struggle to keep students, learning, and relationships at the core of educational practice. Their suggestions provide a pathway for educators to take deliberate personal action to reject the increasingly dehumanizing and deadening effects of politicization and corporatization of education. *Deliberate Optimism* provides us with hope that the joy in education, which attracted us to our profession, is still available; it is just waiting for each of us to take deliberate action to reclaim it.

—Martin Tadlock, vice president and provost, Bemidji State University, MN

The authors have a realistic view of a teacher's daily life and provide realistic solutions for teachers to embrace optimism and positivity in a myriad of situations.

—Kati Searcy, teacher, Mountain Park Elementary School, GA

This book is a nice synthesis of current research and classic literature about climate, culture, and the environmental context of the classroom and the teachers' lounge.

—Chris Hubbuch, principal, Excelsior Springs Middle School, MO

The universe provides. Debbie asked me to review this book at a time when I was facing new and daunting challenges both at home and the workplace. *Deliberate Optimism* offers not only encouragement, but much more importantly, practical steps for maintaining and rebuilding realistic optimism at work, home, wherever. The authors' insights are grounded in the real world of too little funding, too much criticism, too many demands, too little time, etc. And they show how to find and nurture light there.

—Paul D. Deering, professor of education, University of Hawaii at Manoa

This is such an important book for every classroom teacher. I wish schools would keep a copy in the faculty room so teachers can get practical ideas for finding the fun in working with students! I love how the book provides deliberate strategies that help teachers overcome the everyday bumps in the road that accompany the classroom. Thank you Debbie, Jack, and Judith for reminding us that teaching kids should be joyful!

—Jared Covili, author, *Going Google: Powerful Tools for 21st Century Learning*

Justice and self-improvement are interdependent. You can't change yourself without working to change your world, and you can't change your world without working to change yourself. With realistic scenarios, clear, sympathetic suggestions, and funny off-hand pop-culture references, Debbie Silver and her co-authors help educators tackle the latter half of this interdependence in *Deliberate Optimism*. In this book we are offered tools to cultivate the fund of energy and creativity we all need to set in motion real change.

—Dina Strasser, educator and author of <http://theline.edublogs.org>

Blind optimism is no more effective than blind pessimism when it applied to providing children a good education. Thankfully, respected educators Silver, Berckemeyer, and Baenen offer optimism as a tool with eyes wide open. While acknowledging the challenges—social, political, and professional—of today's teachers, the authors describe and promote concrete strategies for building, sustaining, and using optimistic behaviors to improve professional effectiveness. A great book for whole-school discussion—or to read simply for personal uplift—*Deliberate Optimism* belongs on every teacher and administrator's bookshelf—and hearts.

—Doug Johnson, author, *Teaching Outside the Lines*,  
director of media and technology, Mankato Area Public Schools, MN

This book provides a framework for taking responsibility in classrooms, choosing to see the positives, dealing with problems rather than dwelling on them, recognizing that choices are always available, and building relationships with all in the school community.

—Charla Buford Bunker, literacy specialist, Great Falls High School, MT

*Deliberate Optimism: Reclaiming the Joy in Education* is a timely and important book. And imagine that—the pairing of the words “joy” and “education.” That's as rare these days as the pairing of “productive” and “Congress.”

In an era when teachers are the problem and children are raw material for some grim manufacturing process, this book is a refreshing antidote. Children and education should and can be joyful, unless we allow all the joy to be leached from our schools by the dreadful pessimists who get all the airtime, gnashing their teeth over test scores and proposing damaging “reforms.”

Silver, Berckemeyer, and Baenen offer a Road to Joy (sorry, Beethoven). Every teacher and administrator should take this trip.

—Steve Nelson, head, Calhoun School