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A New Compass

Dear Reader . . .

Over the last number of years I have made several trips to Italy and, in particular, to a picturesque and historic region called the Amalfi coast. On one of the visits, in the town square of the small city of Amalfi, I came across the statue of Flavio Goia (Aczell, 2001), the man who, legend has it, was the father of the modern compass. And it got me thinking. And it got me doing some research in local libraries in my halting Italian. And it got me thinking further.

We have now had the benefit of a rather sophisticated compass for more than 500 years, and yet even now, so long after the invention of the compass, who among us has not felt lost in life or feared we were "losing it"?

Who among us has not felt afraid of losing our way in the day-to-day, or in the dark, or in love, or at work, or in growing up, or in growing older?

Who among us has not felt afraid of losing the company of others, or having only our own company, or wondering who could possibly want our company?

And how many among us have fears that we have lost our way or could lose our way in alcohol, or drugs, or gambling, or food, or in purchasing, or in pursuing success, or in the fear of failure?

4 A Compass for the Classroom: The Concept

Historically, in an attempt to find their way, people have turned from reading trail signs, to the stars, to maps, and eventually to a compass. And all of these methods have helped those who were lost find their way or stay on track. However, though most of us these days can tell north from south, we still need to find our way.

To that end, what you are about to read is of a new compass that can help any of us find our way and keep all of us from getting lost in all the ways that are not geographical.

But this is more than another self-help book in a me-first world. When I finished writing my book, *A Compass for Your Life*, one of the most trusted editors in the field of education, Robb Clouse, at Corwin Press, suggested I send the book along to Robert DiGiulio—a noted scholar and educator who had written many books that have helped teachers around the world in the classroom and in the transformation of their lives. Following on Mr. Clouse's advice of what he thought might be a great fit and of great service, I received a call from Dr. DiGiulio and an immediate respect and friendship was struck.

And while what you have in your hands now is a slim volume, it is more importantly a tool, a tool that will simply and fundamentally add leverage to all the other tools in your inventory. This tool is designed to help teachers find their own way in today's tumultuous world as well as to realize and rediscover the humanity, beauty, and joy of teaching. This is not a how-to-teach book, but a timeless ally to facilitate support and affirmation for teachers and their students in a time when those allies are hard to come by. If you will, here is a tool that in addition to all its other functions will also scrape today's tarnish off the most noble of professions. Here is *A Compass for the Classroom* that has the potential to serve you, your students, and your colleagues in untold ways. And we trust that you will lend others the Compass you find herein. *E grazie.*

—Noah benShea