

Intelligence & Compassion in Action
The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs

A White Paper Application

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A Framework for Empowered Action

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Premise

Comprehensive investment of the research and methodologies presented in *Intelligence & Compassion in Action* into the curriculum of a university-level communication course; although it could be applied to a junior college or high school curriculum or other dedicated coursework.

Introduction

The Seven Pillars, which create the foundation for the curriculum, are vision – knowing the problem you want to solve, and envisioning how you might make an impact; special skills – identifying and applying each person’s unique talents toward that vision; non-duplication of effort – understanding that if good work is already being done well, join forces or invest elsewhere; sharing the credit – validate all who contribute, great or small; working in partnership with other stakeholders; creating an authentic feedback loop for input and course correction; and staying the course – going the distance, despite setbacks.

In 2005, Dr. Lauren Speeth’s Elfenworks Foundation had just begun its social entrepreneurial work on behalf of the country’s marginalized citizens. Her organizational goals were to identify issues that weren’t being effectively addressed, seek new and different ways to create change, and promote her partners’ successes through storytelling. But first, she needed to know how.

The opportunity to pave the path toward her goals arose with an invitation to meet with former president James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, to whom she presented her quest. During their meeting, President Carter told Dr. Speeth about the seven criteria he uses to guide his own work at The Carter Center in Atlanta. She sensed, as she heard his ideas, how satisfying they were. She realized his criteria could become the tools that would enable her to lay the groundwork on which to build her own path toward change.

Seven years later, Dr. Speeth developed the information she gained from that conversation, now known as the “Seven Pillars,” into the entrepreneurial methodology she and her team apply daily at Elfenworks. She also has authored a book, *Intelligence & Compassion in Action; The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs*, as a means to share her wisdom in a much broader context with other agents of change.

Background

The context for this particular discussion is a society-centered university dedicated to the wellbeing of the wider community and to the quality of life and development of its students. Its vision is to create a collaborative intellectual community via innovative instruction, broadly defined scholarly and creative activity, and coordinated community service.

In developing her upper-division communications course, a professor of this university sought a more contemporary, interactive approach to the delivery of her curriculum that would better engage her students and give them an opportunity for application of course concepts. She endeavored to create a course that taught students to think broadly but in specific terms, to understand themselves in the context of others. She sought to scaffold the class such that it would enable her students to envision themselves as deliberative agents of the community and agents of positive social interaction.

Teaching within the framework of an outcomes-based university, which fosters student success through demonstrated learning of concepts, and application of skill, the professor elected to forgo the use of conventional textbooks in favor of a more hands-on experience in her course. She sought a vehicle that would drive a semester-long exploration of social interaction. Yet she also recognized her students could benefit by researching relevant ideas and methodologies they could apply to course concepts with intelligence and compassion. She launched an investigation of alternative resources, including a progressive text.

Solution

At Amazon.com, the professor discovered *Intelligence & Compassion in Action; The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs*, a 235-page, soft-cover book published by Elfenworks Productions in 2012. She found it an informative, stimulating read. She also found that, although it bears resemblance to a textbook, with prompts for expanded discussion or written response provided at the end of each chapter, it read more like a collection of articles, written in an engaging, narrative style, and infused with real-world application and example.

The professor adopted the book as required reading for her 16-week, upper-division course. She then completely redesigned her course around the concepts, exercises and applications of the material.

Text Synopsis

- **Foreword:** Moral Compass – The concept of lifting compassion from the heart where it resides and launching it into action, of using it to make a difference, shift awareness, promote change, is intriguing. Particularly if done with research and reason, with intelligence and intent, and with the mindfulness that it all began with the heart.
- **Preface:** Highly educated, exceptionally experienced, author Dr. Lauren Speeth, nevertheless, sought an entrepreneurial methodology that would enable her to harness her resources and apply them to good works engaged in social change. Former President

Jimmy Carter provided her moments of insight she has developed and applied to the wisdom that informs her work.

- **Introduction:** This book provides a broad, comprehensive framework for individuals whose vision for success includes meeting the world's needs. Universally applicable, it offers a comprehensive way of thinking about your world and the work you do, no matter what your field and no matter what your theological perspective. The Seven Pillar practice is particularly useful to people interested in making a difference yet seek a rubric for moving forward in an effective and thoughtful way.
- **Chapter Content**
 - Definition, history and examples of social entrepreneurship
 - Introduction of the integrity and influence behind former president Jimmy Carter's work via The Carter Center
 - Introduction, explanation and application of each of the Seven Pillars
 - Epilogue: Where to take it from here

Application

- **Course Reading:** *Intelligence & Compassion in Action; The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs* was assigned as out-of-class reading on a weekly schedule. Students were asked to think critically in preparing well-considered, typed responses to end-of-chapter prompts due at the start of each week. The introduction, followed by 11 chapters, plus a supplemental chapter of empirical essays, created a semester-long investigation.
- **Content:** Chapter content, specifically the insight and application of each of the Seven Pillars, provided material for full-class and small-group discussion on a weekly basis.
- **Visuals:** The visual nature of the seven methodologies presented as Pillars lends itself to a reimagining of alternative icons which can be represented in sevens, as well as the comparative indications of any chosen symbols. The professor provided an out-of-class assignment for students to brainstorm and apply their own visions by creating artistic representations to be presented to the class, accompanied by explanations for the significance of their icons. Examples include the solar system, a tree, puzzle, sporting team, house, rainbow, layer cake and so on.
- **Term Project:** The professor designed a Term Project, presented one month into the semester, once the students were sufficiently engaged in the material to have a context from which to work. Dividing the class into seven groups, each representing one of the Seven Pillars, the students were assigned to work together throughout the semester to investigate a single Pillar and then, working with a nonprofit organization in the area, apply their Pillar to the mission, vision and practices of their chosen organization. Each group presented their findings in a term report and PowerPoint presentation to the class. The collaborative nature of the assignment was appropriate to the methodology, course objectives and university vision.
- **Guest Lecture:** The professor contacted Dr. Speeth, who was willing to come to the university and address the class on her impetus for, research and application of the Seven Pillars in the context of her endeavors at Elfenworks and in her own life. Hers was a bright, interactive presentation that engaged the class and gave students the insight behind the Pillars, a context for their studies, and guidance in their term project.

- **Expansion:** Upon the conclusion of all seven Pillar presentations, the class was assigned to work within their groups one last time to think about their own application of the Seven Pillars to their personal and professional lives going forward, and to think outside the Pillars about how they could use them to their success as a social entrepreneur
- Examples of the prompts for each related assignment are included as attachments to this report.

Outcome

The proof was in the presentations, chapter responses and in-class discussions; in how students thought and were able to incorporate the Seven Pillar methodology into their other assignments and activities. To find such reference was the “Aha Moment,” which meant the light had come on in their learning. Perhaps most gratifying was when students reported having applied the Seven Pillars to their personal lives with parents, partners, siblings and friends, and also on the job. Moreover, students of this university are required to accumulate Service Learning hours by volunteering their time in the community. Students reported introducing *Intelligence & Compassion in Action* to their Service Learning class, and the positive effects of using the insights and ideas in their community service endeavors.

Conclusion

Intelligence & Compassion in Action; The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs created a new college course. It took the course outside the traditional academic frame and created a context for a different, deliberative kind of learning. It proved to be the insightful, relevant core curriculum that engaged the class, and gave them the opportunity to apply the concepts to their coursework and their lives. The text is both academic and narrative, making it appropriate to the rigors of a university course, yet also relevant outside the context of the course, which prompts productive deliberation and engagement. Students surely will continue to consider and apply the Seven Pillars Concept long after the conclusion of the course. Although the professor applied the text to an upper-division communication course, she is now tailoring her pedagogical modalities to apply the text to a lower-division course on Reasoning & Writing at the university, as well as a junior college course on Critical Thinking & Composition.

Intelligence & Compassion in Action; The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs provides an opportunity to develop a curriculum around a wide diversity of disciplines, coming at the course content from a dynamic that invites expanded thinking outside the traditional framework of the subject and application beyond the course. And the students are better for it, able to depart the traditional academic environment to the wider community, where they can apply their knowledge and become agents of positive change.

Glossary

Critical Thinking – is the study of clear, reasoned thinking, which bases analysis on a balance of logic and empathy.

Elfenworks Foundation – is an organization, which works for hope in America by

fostering creative and technology solutions that advance change.

Marginalized – an individual, group or concept treated as insignificant or peripheral.

Methodology – is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study.

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) – is a teaching methodology that clearly communicates the learning outcomes that will be achieved through active, student-centered learning in a lesson, a course, or a curriculum. OBE stimulates student success through the demonstration of learning in a variety of well-defined assessments.

Social Entrepreneur – is an agent of change, one who pursues innovative solutions to social problems, one who adopts a mission to create and sustain social change, resolution, value.

Works Cited

Speeth, Dr. Lauren, [Intelligence & Compassion in Action; The Seven Pillars for Social Entrepreneurs.](#) Burlingame: Elfenworks Productions, 2012. ISBN 978-0-9859753-0-2

Author Statement

“Many of us have valid, deeply heartfelt ideas about change,” says Dr. Speeth. “Yet often, we don’t understand how to develop our sensibilities into an effective plan of action. This is a book about how to think about social action, what it means to be a social entrepreneur, and how perspective and intention can guide such action. By linking the Seven Pillar methodology to fundamental teachings, it creates a framework for the social entrepreneur. And, by applying a useful instrument, it is action oriented. Whether the social entrepreneur is working on social justice, peace, environmental or other issues, all of humanity stands to benefit from an empowered leader, prepared to guide rather than control.”

About the Author

Dr. Lauren Speeth is the visionary force behind Elfenworks Productions, LLC, a producer of internationally acclaimed and Grammy®-nominated media content, and the founder of The Center for Non-Harming Ministries. As founding CEO of The Elfenworks Foundation, she has assembled a team of social entrepreneurs of the highest caliber, with deep and far-ranging expertise in multimedia outreach, computers and technology, music, film, management, law, finance, education, human development, and social justice.



Dr. Speeth has used her bridge-building skills to forge alliances with other groups such as Campus Moviefest, encouraging students to create social justice content; Golden Gate University, in poverty law; Saint Mary’s College, in Fiduciary Capitalism; Mills College, for Socially Responsible Business; and The Center on Poverty and Inequality at Stanford University, recently named a National Poverty Center

and with whom Elfenworks established The Collaboration for Poverty Research. The Elfenworks team has developed online resources including multilingual stress reduction visualizations for children, awards programs, awareness-raising efforts, and empowerment tools for nonprofits, socially responsible businesses, and private citizens. Dr. Speeth is called on regularly to judge web and film content, and currently serves on various advisory boards, including the Board of Regents of Saint Mary's College and the Board of Councilors of The Carter Center.

In 2010, for her commitment to poverty law, Speeth was honored with a Doctor of Laws Honoris Causa from Golden Gate University School of Law in San Francisco, where she earned her Doctorate in Business Administration in 1992. In addition to her DBA, Lauren also holds a Doctorate in Ministry from Bakke Graduate University in Seattle, Washington, an MBA from Saint Mary's College, and a BA in Psychology from Mills College. She has completed three distinct courses of study at Stanford: a summer internship as a chaplain at Stanford Hospital, an Advanced Computer Security Professional Credential program, and a summer program for philanthropy leaders at the Graduate School of Business. She holds lifetime Community College Teaching Credentials in three areas: finance, management, and computers.