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For Immediate Release

**THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE
Coaching Children To Be Kind,
Respectful and Successful**

By Lynne Azarchi

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"The Empathy Advantage is a highly needed book, especially in the times we live in...[It] shares activities that help parents, caregivers and educators develop children's ability for human connection while acknowledging the strength in diversity, as well as practicing equity and inclusion."

-- Yonty Friesem, Ph.D., Founding Director, MA in Civic Media, Columbia College Chicago

"Empathy is the most basic and essential life skill. It makes classrooms and families humane places. As Lynne Azarchi shows, empathy can be taught. Most importantly, Lynne can teach it, and that is exactly why this book belongs in every home and classroom – now more than ever."

-- Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D, director, Rutgers University's Social-Emotional and Character Development Lab; co-author, Emotionally Intelligent Parenting and The Joys and Oys of Parenting

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW: MORE EMPATHY

THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE Teaches Parents And Others How To Nurture Empathy In Their Children, Setting Them On the Road For A Better Future

Bullying and cyberbullying is on the rise. Face-to-face interpersonal skills are declining. Narcissism is increasing. Not only do studies show these distressing facts to be true, but we see them in the news and in our own lives. Lynne Azarchi, Executive Director of Kidsbridge Tolerance Center, has the answer to these growing problems: teaching our children *empathy*. In her new book, **THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE: Coaching Children To Be Kind, Respectful and Successful** (Rowman & Littlefield; November 4, 2020), Azarchi provides the tools and strategies families can use to give their kids the gift of empathy – simultaneously setting them on the road for a more successful future and changing the world for the better.

Why empathy? Research demonstrates that people who can “read” feelings and other nonverbal cues are more emotionally adjusted, better liked, and more successful. They

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make better leaders, have lower rates of substance abuse, and higher levels of academic achievement. “Teaching empathy – the ability to ‘walk in someone else’s shoes’ and understand what people different from ourselves see and feel – is one of the greatest foundations and gifts that you can bestow upon your child,” says Azarchi.

Over the past eighteen years, the author has taught empathy to more than thirty thousand youths and their educators, using an approach developed through years of work and study – creating activities, listening and observing, and measuring success. In her new book, she shares her findings and experience, showing people how to teach empathy to their own children.

THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE lays out proof that empathy can be taught and explains the brain science behind it, addressing how the rise in “screen time” and the drop in face-to-face interaction is contributing to the decline in empathy. The author then shares a multitude of tips and techniques for counteracting this trend with children from toddlerhood through their teens. These include:

- **Reading Hour** – Sneak empathy lessons into your reading time with your preschoolers. Ask them how they think characters in the stories feel, what they think of the choices the characters make, and what they might do in the same situation.
- **Praising Kindness** – “Catch your kids in the act of being kind and make them want to be so again and again,” writes Azarchi. Acknowledging your kids’ caring behavior will help them understand that these actions are valued and encourage them to do more of them.
- **Family Meetings** – They can be as short as fifteen minutes, but these meetings can foster empathy, self-esteem, and self-compassion. They will evolve as children age, but can include silly icebreakers, sharing favorites (family activities, hobbies, foods), and discussing questions like, “Do you think our home can be more peaceful” or “Are their ways we can help each other?”
- **Media Literacy** – Limit your children’s screen time, and watch shows with them whenever possible. Discuss what they learned from the program, and what they thought about the characters’ behaviors.
- **Role Playing** – Pretending to be other people is an ideal way to “walk in someone

else's shoes." Some role-playing scenarios the author suggests include: a new girl in school eating alone; a child being teased because his or her family can't afford cool sneakers; a boy being mocked for taking dance lessons.

- **Service Learning** – While community service is a great thing, service learning is even better. "Service learning involves both discussion and evoking feelings for kids to understand what it feels like to be hungry, what it feels like to not know where their next meal is coming from, or what it feels like to be in a homeless shelter," explains Azarchi.

The book also addresses the dynamics of bullying and how children can stand up for themselves and others; managing media in the home; the value of pets in nurturing empathy; the importance of active listening; and self-compassion – the ability to forgive oneself – as the foundation for empathy. Throughout, the author emphasizes the importance of starting early and spending quality face-to-face time with children, while also making clear how busy parents can make time to do this.

"Building empathy is like building a muscle: it grows stronger and stronger the more it is used and exercised," attests Azarchi. **THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE** provides the tools to help children be kinder and more respectful, perform better academically, and experience greater success. Not only will this create more caring adults, but it will help make the world a brighter place.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LYNNE AZARCHI, author of **THE EMPATHY ADVANTAGE**, is Executive Director of Kidsbridge Tolerance Center outside of Trenton, New Jersey—a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering bullying prevention, anti-bias, diversity appreciation, empathy, and empowerment strategies for youth. She is a tireless advocate for improving the lives of at-risk youth in communities across New Jersey. Kidsbridge helps more than 2,500 preschool, elementary, and middle school students and educators improve their social-emotional skills each year. Azarchi has won many awards and her articles have been published both in newspapers and academic journals. She is a frequent speaker to parent and teacher groups, corporations and major educational conferences.