

## Mary Gordon Bio

### Founder, President and inspiration behind Roots of Empathy and Seeds of Empathy



Mary Gordon is recognized internationally as an educator, author, child advocate and parenting expert who has created award-winning programs informed by the power of empathy. In 1996, she founded Roots of Empathy, which now offers programs in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. She is a Member of the Order of Canada and an Ashoka Fellow.

Ms Gordon is also the founder of Canada's first school-based Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, which she initiated in 1981. They have become public policy in Ontario, with more than 120 schools involved, and have been used as a best practice model around the world.

Ms Gordon speaks and consults to governments, educational organizations, and public institutions. She is the recipient of several prestigious awards, and her 2005 Canadian bestseller, *Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child by Child* was ranked as one of the Top 100 Books of the Year by the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper.

Ms Gordon has twice had dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama: First in 2006, at the Vancouver Dialogues, and then in 2008, in Seattle, Washington as part of the Seeds of Compassion event. In 2008, Roots of Empathy was one of three winners – and the only Canadian organization – to win an international competition from Changemakers, an Initiative of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, for programs that help youth at risk. Ms. Gordon was the first female Canadian Ashoka Fellow, recognizing her as a member of an international circle of social entrepreneurs who have the creativity that enables them to envision new and better ways to address persistent social problems and the skill and determination required to bring their ideas to fruition.