

## **The Science of Success** **David Dobbs ~ The Atlantic, December 2009**

### **Brief Summary of Author:**

David Dobbs is an American author who writes features, reviews and essays for several magazines and newspapers. Culture, genetics, science and medicine are topics that influence his writing.

In 2009, Dobbs wrote *The Science of Success* for The Atlantic; The Atlantic is mainly a literary and cultural magazine.

### **Brief Summary of Article**

Dobbs' essay *The Science of Success* includes a dense focus on genes and human behaviour. Dobbs gives a broad overview of various researchers and how their research led to theories on genes and human behaviour. Through his review, Dobbs eventually sides with Professors Bruce Ellis and W. Thomas Boyce.

Ellis and Boyce use a garden metaphor to give vivid imagery to their theory. Ellis and Boyce pose the idea of "dandelion children" possessing "resilient genes" and "orchid children" possessing genes considered to be "more sensitive". Ellis and Boyce endorse that orchid children add the beauty and uniqueness that defines a stunning garden. They go on to propose, "having both dandelion and orchid kids greatly raises a family's (and a species') chance of succeeding, over time and in any environment". The "dandelion children" are seen to provide an underlying stability and the "orchid children" when appropriately attended to (and not overly attended to or under attended to) offer a heightened response to adversity. Ellis and Boyce recognize that **together the dandelion and orchid children offer an adaptive flexibility that neither can provide alone.**

### **DBT Skills and Children**

By using the skills taught in SILA workshops, all children, Orchid and Dandelion, are attended to in a compassionate, mindful and validating environment. With this environment, Orchid children learn to regulate their internal experience and accept their immediate circumstances allowing them to be dynamic and responsive to changing circumstances. It is important to honour the beauty of an Orchid child and appreciate the Orchid child may take longer to "stabilize or regulate" in some environments...once the roots are re-established the internal regulation will return.