

Success in school and success in life
depend on more than smarts.

Horror stories in the news...

What went wrong?

Empathy!

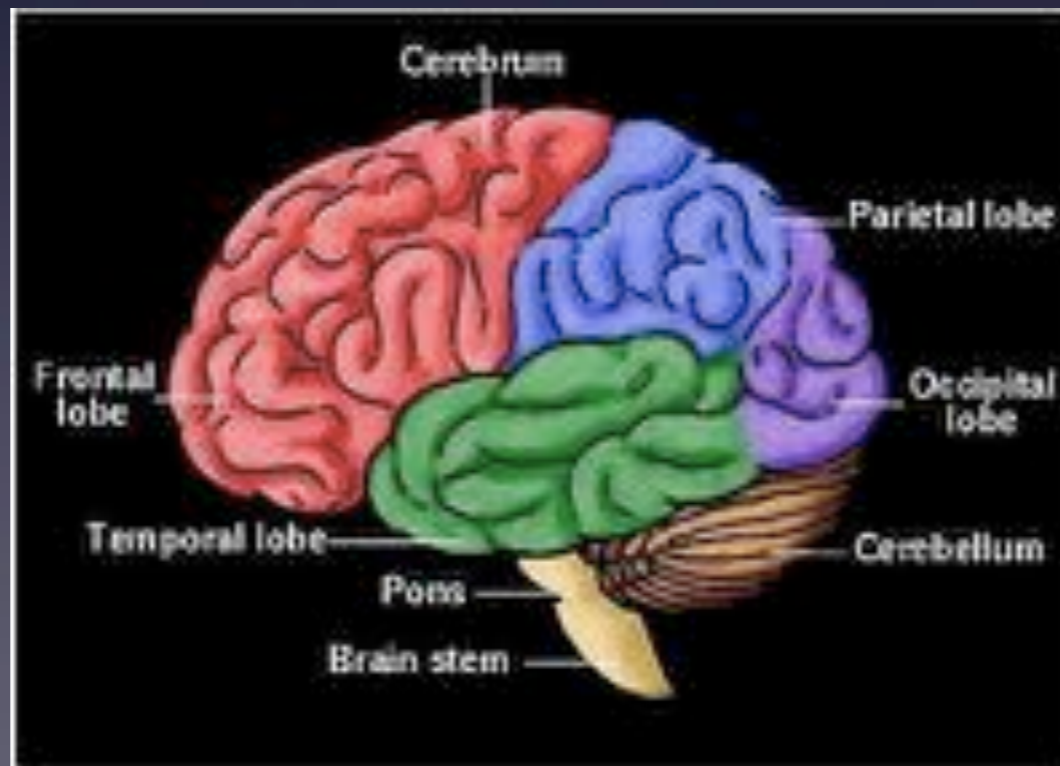
The essence of empathy
is the ability to stand in another's shoes,
to feel what it's like there
and to care about making it better if it hurts.

Dr. Bruce Perry

2 books

Understanding what goes wrong
when children don't get individualized care
in their first several years
can help us recognize what's needed
for those year to go right.

It starts in the brain...





Brains are like thumbprints --
no two are alike

We build our own brains
through experiences and
relationships
throughout our lives

The brain develops in a use dependent way --
if one doesn't activate a part of the brain
it doesn't develop.

If a person doesn't experience love,
he/she cannot love.

Experiences have different impact
on children depending on
their stage of development.

The brain is organized in a sequential
bottom to top way.

From the bottom to the top
the brain grows more complex,
and more plastic (flexible).

Areas of the brain

- Cortical
 - abstract thought
 - concrete thought
 - affiliation
- Limbic
 - attachment
 - sexual behavior
 - emotional reactivity

Areas of the brain

- Midbrain

- motor regulation

- arousal

- appetite/satiety

- sleep

- Brainstem

- blood pressure

- heart rate

- body temperature

The lower in the brain, the less modifiable

Only the brainstem part of the brain
is fully developed at birth.

Social Brain

The brain is a social organ and requires affectionate contact to develop normally.



Newborn

Helpless...

You can't spoil a newborn. By being responsive and interactive a caregiver helps to build a template, neurobiologically, that the world is a good place where needs can be met. It helps to develop a sense of trust and attachment.

Empathetic capacity develops first in the early bond babies make with their primary caregiver. It doesn't matter to babies whether this caregiver is their biological mother or father or a nanny or a grandparent; what matters is consistency and nurturing.

Nurturing interactions lay the foundation for learning and language development and for key aspects of self-regulation, including attention, aggression, and impulsivity.

A securely attached baby
is free to explore his/her
environment.

Hart and Risley Study 1995

30 Million Word Difference

number and kind of words differ

Attachment

Ainsworth

- Secure attachment
 - consistent
 - attentive
 - responsive
 - tender
- Insecure Attachment
 - cold
 - resentful
 - rigid

Secure attachment: baby used mom as safe haven from which to explore world. Baby fussy when mom left; reassured and joyful when she returned.

Insecure attachment: baby avoidant and indifferent to mom's leaving. Ignored her on return.

Ambivalent attachment: mom distracted or erratic in attentions. Baby clutching at mom, wailing when separated; inconsolable after return.

When children in grade school...

Responsive Mom -- child happy, socially competent, resilient, persistent, likable, empathic with others; had more friends.

Cold Mom -- child distant, difficult-to-reach hostile to authority, shunned togetherness. Often had mean streak; took pleasure in provoking other children.

Unpredictable Mom -- child socially inept, timid, hypersensitive, lacking confidence. Hungry for attention, easily frustrated.

Help with attachment...

child needs repetitive touch
age appropriate

for the developmental needs missing,
not the chronological age now.

Attachment leads to Pleasure in Human Connection

If the specific connection isn't made between particular people and trust, the later general positive association between human contact and the pleasure on which it relies simply won't be made.

If a child doesn't get the affection needed to make the connection between people and pleasure, the pain of social punishment, like a "time out" or "going to your room" is also diminished.

Most children raised with empathy want to please their parents. A child who doesn't will become increasingly difficult to manage.

Attachment sets the Stress Response System

Ordinarily, the interaction between mother and child teaches the stress system how to soothe itself, providing a calm state for learning to take place.

The key to a healthy stress response capacity -- to healthy self-regulation and ultimately resilience -- is the pattern of stress networks being activated in small, moderate “doses” followed by soothing connections. This makes them stronger over time and better able to handle larger stresses.

**Resilient children are
made, not born.**

**Children become resilient as a result
of the patterns of stress and of
nurturing that they experience
early in life.**

To build children who can handle
new situations, even though stressful,
we need responsive caregivers.

Importance of Social Contact

Long-term isolation can raise blood-pressure, lower immunity, and worsen virtually all mental and physical illnesses.

We need relationships
to be healthy.

Having strong social relationships strengthens the immune system, extends life (more than does quitting smoking), speeds recovery from surgery, and reduces the risks of depression and anxiety disorders.

Repeated partial bonding and loss prevents secure bonds from developing. Over time, it becomes too painful for a baby to even try to connect again. That part of him simply shuts down. Rather than trying to find pleasure and comfort in people, he turns to things.

Transgenerational

Parents with poor attachment
cannot parent well themselves.

What goes in is what comes out...

love	love
hate	hate
structure	structure
chaos	chaos

In infancy and early childhood, quality time is only part of the equation - babies need many, many hours every day of one-on-one attention from the same few people over and over in order to build the full relational capacity of their brains.

Reality -- Understood
by new parents?

The more high-quality, consistent relationships in a child's life, the more resilient a child will be.

Attachment allows for
self regulation.

If a child can't regulate himself,
he can't begin to recognize
the needs of others.

Discipline

Using your words helps children to use theirs when they are tempted to be aggressive. More responsive, verbal, and sensitive parenting improves not only behavior, but academic performance.

HOPE

Internalizes a sense of the future.
Shows a child that not all adults are mean.
Through nurturing, caring, and respect
we show children the world
could be better.

One person CAN make a difference.

What helps heal
is anything that increases
the number and quality of a
child's relationships.

What helps is
consistent, patient,
repetitive loving care.

Challenges

Neglect

Hard to study and address
because it isn't the presence
of something, but the
absence of potential.

Neglect can be a lack of what is needed or too much of what is not needed.

Parents who work to make their child smarter, better, tougher may be neglecting experiences the child really needs at that time.

In cases of neglect the brain does not develop normally. Head circumference of globally neglected infants falls in the 2% range. It is the result of cortical atrophy -- not only smaller; it has gaping holes in it.

Neglected children sometimes seek pleasure elsewhere -- Not finding relationships rewarding, they seek thrills in physical pleasures and in wielding power over others. Dramatically raises risk for all addictions and compulsive behaviors. Anything that can be an escape attracts them.

Orphanages

Spitz 1945

first to systematically study
children suffering from loss
of important relationships.

Compared babies raised in typical
sterile American orphanage
with those raised in a cold,
institutional prison nursery
with mom...

37% of children from orphanage
died by age 2.

None of prison children died.

What infants really need most is
individualized parental attention.

Failure to Thrive

Physical affection is necessary for growth hormone production.

Lack of stimulation causes “shutdown” response. Without knowledge of being wanted, the brain releases hormones which makes the body not use calories.

Romania - 2007

Study demonstrated how important ordinary empathetic parenting is to the development of virtually all important brain functions.

Empathic care is necessary for optimal development.

Effect of Fear

Fear actually shuts down the higher regions of the brain, the areas of the prefrontal cortex involved in planning, creative thinking, and considering long-term consequences.

Red Net

downshift to protect

Sociopathy

A complete lack of concern for
anyone other than self.

To them people are objects to
be manipulated.

Ryan -- by age 3
had 18 nannies.

Repeated loss of attachment is
enough to be devastating to
child development.

Mother's Depression

Mom picks up on fewer cues from baby or are less able to share in his happiness.

Help needed for both mother and baby.

Poverty

1/5 of American children
grow up in poverty --
second highest rate
in developed world.

NCLB???

Screen Time & Conditions of Modern Life

Computer games and internet can't provide the social engagement of face-to-face interaction and playing.

We need to be much more conscious of the intrusions of various media into our lives and the drip-drip-drip of various trends that together can spell trouble for our ability to trust and connect.

The brain becomes what it does.
Conditions of modern life conspire
against allowing children time and space
to repeatedly practice the social skills
necessary for the true development
of empathy.

Amount of time spent playing freely
fell by nearly 1/3 between 1981 and 2003.
Number of hours children spent playing
outside (more likely to be social)
in unstructured activities was
cut in half
between 1981 and 1997.

In schools the overall time available for social activity has been reduced by cuts in recess time, in gym classes, and by shortened lunch periods.

- *Advances in technology*
- *high mobility of population*
- *ongoing instability of families and communities*
- *compartmentalization of life, work, education*
- *have contributed to a reduction in the number and quality of human interactions.*

We have fewer daily
opportunities to connect
face-to-face in shorter
amounts of time
with smaller numbers of people.

Impact of Stress on Health

Chronic stress can reduce the ability of your immune system to mount a response to everything from infectious diseases like TB and flu to cancer.

Persistent stress will alter the biology of the brain.

While activating this system in the short bursts for which it was designed can save your life, if it stays active for too long, it is harmful.

(High blood pressure, hardened arteries, impaired immune function.)

Side effect -- Obesity

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
Obesity a marker of severe
family dysfunction.

Child Illiterate Society

If we don't know what's normal for a child's stage of development, we won't have appropriate expectations and may fail to meet a child's critical needs.

Middle class and wealthy people can be more ignorant about child development. Spend less time around babies and small children.

Support for Families

We should see shared care --
from extended family and friends --
as natural.

We need to nurture mothers so that
they can help their babies effectively
develop the capacity to modulate stress.

Strong networks of extended family and
friends can make children more resilient.

Roots of Empathy

Ruth Gordon

Six Strands of Human Connection

Love grows brains -- teaching neuroscience

Temperament -- Getting to Know You

Attachment -- Building the First Relationship

Emotional Literacy -- Language of the Heart

Authentic Communication -- Speaking from the Heart

Social Inclusion -- Setting a Place for Everyone

My hope...

You found this information interesting.
It brought you more understanding.
You will share it with others:
colleagues, parents, friends,
policy makers.

We need each other.
We need to encourage
interdependency and
genuine care.