



Centre for Resilience & Recovery

The Well of Being

The Psychobiology of Trauma and Recovery

The Water in Well

Water in a river remains pure because it is moving. When water becomes trapped it dies. Therefore, water must constantly be circulated.....So when your emotions flow throughout your body, you feel a sense of joy and move towards physical health. Moving, changing, flowing- that is what life is all about. (2001:xvi)

(Masaru Emoto. The Hidden Messages in Water)

Like the pollutants that poisons our rivers trauma poisons the well-being of our children. How can we keep this well-being ever moving changing, flowing?

Trauma

Type 1 trauma – is one off traumatic event.

Type 11 trauma is reoccurring trauma patterned interactions.

Children Who Have been Abused: 5 Key Issues

1. Children who have been abused suffer from Type11 trauma.
2. Type 11 trauma changes the person who is subjected to it.
3. Post trauma children are children and they are different from other children.
4. The body – when it is feeling the feeling is the same reaction as if it was actually having the experience
5. Cognitive interventions with children who experience trauma are ineffective – we need to make space for their experience

Children who have been Abused: Major Implications

Trauma changes children's view of :

Self	Others	World
Unlovable	Unreliable	Unsafe

Reflection question:

What implication does the five issues and the major implications mean for you when relating to children?

Growth from Connection

A human infant can neither survive physically nor develop normally on its own. This is why there is no such thing as “a baby”; there is only “a baby in relation to someone else.” (Garbarino 1999:38)

At birth, humans are some of the most immature of beings: Human infants are born with brains that are very undeveloped and they depend upon adults for critical care. The development of the necessary complexity of the child’s growing brain depends upon genetic information and experiences. In other words, the immaturity of the infant’s brain means that experiences will play a significant role in determine the unique features of emerging brain connections.

The care that adults provide nurtures the development of essential mental tools for survival. These attachment experiences enable children to thrive and achieve a highly flexible and adaptive capacity for balancing their emotions, thinking, and empathic connections with others.

Science has demonstrated that the way memory works is by the changes in connection among neurones. When neurones become active at the same time, associational linkages are made so that is a dog bites you when you hear firework, your mind may come to associate not only dogs but also fireworks with pain and fear. These linkages are made, according to the half-century-old axiom of the Canadian physician-psychologist Donald Hebb, because ‘neurones, which fire together, wire together.’(Siegel & Hartzell 2004: 32-34)

Experience and the Building of the Self.

Experience shapes the developing structures of the brain. Parents are the architects of a child’s brain and biology it’s raw materials. Experience shapes the self in all ways of being, (physical, social, emotional...)

“Our experiences directly shape the structure of the brain and thus create the mind that defines who we are.” (Siegel 2004:22)

“Self knowledge is in part a co-constructive process as children about themselves through the communication and connections they have with parents and others. (Siegel 2004:83).

Attachment

Avoidant- Parent is emotionally unavailable, rejecting or unresponsive to their child.

Anxious/ambivalent- Parent is inconsistent in availability and responsiveness to this child.

Disorganised/Disoriented- The parental behaviour is either abusive or suddenly shifts into mental states dependant on the child's behaviour, hence it is frightening or disorientating for the child. (Siegel, 1999)

Secure Attachment occurs when a parent is emotionally available and attuned to their child. The child's experience of being cared for within a nurturing, predictable, consistent relationship provides them with what John Bowlby termed a secure base.

Within the secure base children develop a secure attachment to their carer and are better able to internalise this model of security and explore the world around them and develop more fully.

Importance of secure attachment shapes Children's:

- ◆ Interaction with others currently and in the future.
- ◆ Sense of security about exploring the world
- ◆ Resilience to stress.
- ◆ Ability to regulate emotions.
- ◆ Ability to form a coherent narrative of their lives

The Biology of Well Being

Bruce Lipton in his seminal book *The Biology of Belief* writes about his research and self-confessed life changing moment when he realized ‘that a cell’s life is controlled by the physical and energetic environment and not by its genes... It is a single cell’s “awareness” of the environment, not its genes, that sets into motion the mechanisms of life. (2005:15)

Furthermore Greg Braden in his work on the science of miracles brought together research that highlighted that our DNA is communicating with the world around us and that human emotion has the power to shape DNA.

Gastro Cardio Neurology of Trauma

Cellular

Emotions effecting the DNA – positive emotions relaxes the DNA – relaxed DNA enhances the immune system
 - Negative emotions tightens the DNA and then is a barrier to the immune system.

Regulatory

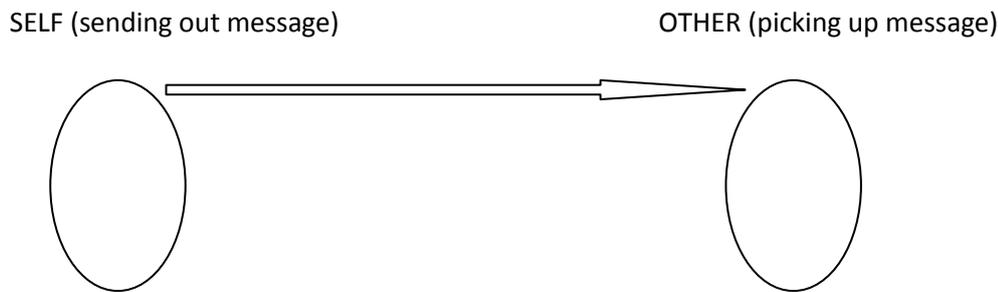
- We are born to work in perfect harmony with ourselves – when born to be in harmony with self then born to be in harmony with others
- Protection system of the body – stomach, heart and mind communicate with each other
- Danger happens, body brings us up to arousal state hormonal and chemical messages go into the body FFF Fight, flight or freeze
- Chemicals give off toxic by product and need to be expelled – urine, faeces’, tears, perspiration, vomit
- For trauma population their resting state is heightened and when danger happens their arousal sate goes up quicker and higher and stays high for longer
- The body still holds the memory

Brain

The function of a mirror neuron is to reflect the activity of another's brain. As a person observes another's experience these neurones fire as if the watcher had made the same movement (eg, physical reaction to someone else's pain or joy).

Therefore: The activity of the brain's mirror neurons may account for some portion of unconscious mimicry.

(Rothschild 2006:50)



Mirror Neurons account for unconscious mimicry

Be curious about the experience and how it comes in and then goes out

Heart

Heart	Thinking, remembering, learning Feeling Energy field
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Thinking

Heart is a thinking and learning and therefore a remembering organ.

It therefore allows the heart to make decisions independent of the cerebral cortex

Feeling

Emotion = energy in motion

Feelings effect the coherence of the heart.
Coherence in the heart leads the rest of the body
Coherence – positive emotions
Deregulation- Negative emotions

The heart generates an electro magnetic field that is not only transmitted internally but it is also transmitted externally (communicates)

The more coherent the heart is the rest of the body in alignment therefore the more coherent the electromagnetic field externally

Improve your own coherence and increase your empathy
The more internally coherent you are the more strengthened

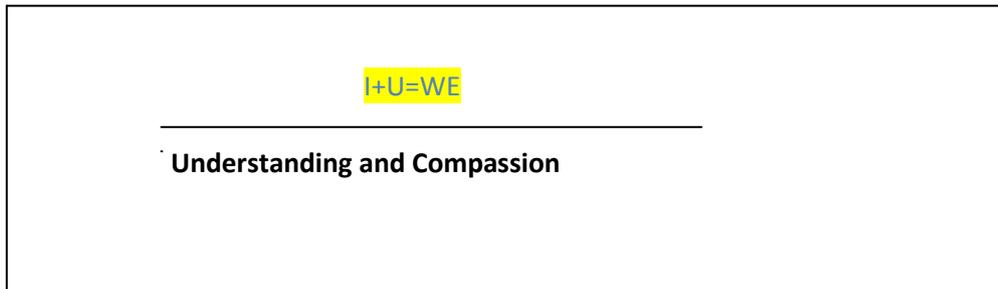
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What does heart wisdom mean in practice? The Adult

Attunement

Attunement requires mindfulness of self and the child and being open to respecting, understanding and connecting to their experience.



It is important to;

- ◆ Be aware of the 'hows and whats' of our own communication patterns.
- ◆ Be aware of our internal experiences while communicating with children.
- ◆ Be aware of the effect of our communication patterns on children.
- ◆ Manage our external communication behaviour.
- ◆ Choose behaviour that has child's emotional wellbeing as its aim.
- ◆ Notice what compromises your ability to communicate from a place of attunement.
- ◆ Allow children to teach us.

Environment

Environments can either hyper arouse children or help them self-regulate.

Manage the environment not the child.

Learning as loving.

What does heart wisdom mean in practice? The Child

Doing

Involved in everyday activities to enhance self-esteem and self-efficacy.
Progression of skill attainment according to age and ability.
Time without adult surveillance.
Teaching themselves.
Teaching us.

Tools for Children

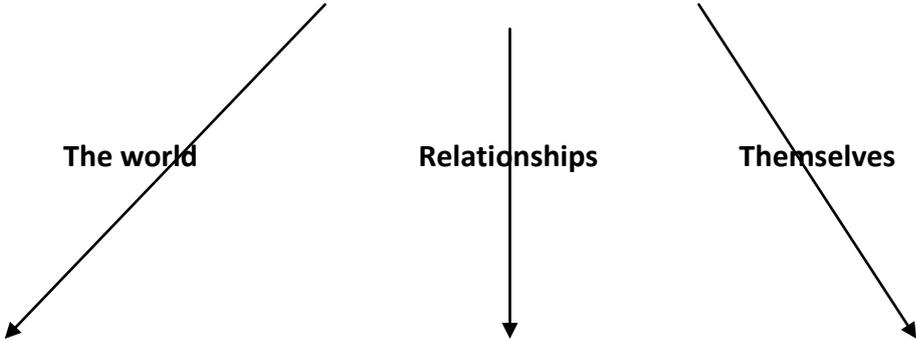
Body audit
Breathing- deep breathing
Staying in 'today'
Sensory work
Apply heart wisdom to a problem

Reflection question:

What implication does the heart wisdom mean for you when relating to children?

ABUSE

Messages about



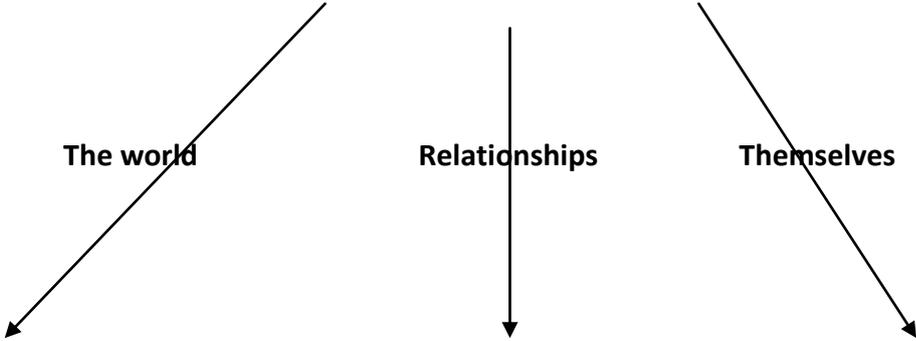
Unsafe Painful Unlovable

Show the world

The turbulent & poisoned waters of the well

Attuned Carer

Messages about



Safe Trustworthy Lovable

Show the world

The Divine Spark deep within that well

Children learn what they live.

If a child lives with criticism,
 he learns to condemn.
 If a child lives with hostility,
 he learns to fight.
 If a child lives with fear,
 he learns to be apprehensive.
 If a child lives with ridicule,
 he learns to be shy.
 If a child lives with jealousy,
 he learns to feel guilty.
 If a child lives with encouragement,
 he learns to be confident.
 If a child lives with tolerance,
 he learns to be patient.
 If a child lives with praise,
 he learns to be appreciative.
 If a child lives with acceptance,
 he learns to love.
 If a child lives with approval,
 he learns to like himself.
 If a child lives with recognition,
 he learns that it is good to have a goal.
 If a child lives with sharing,
 he learns about generosity.
 If a child lives with honesty and fairness,
 he learns what truth and justice are.
 If a child lives with security,
 he learns to have faith in himself and in those about him.
 If a child lives with friendliness,
 he learns that the world is a nice place in which to live.
 If you live with serenity,
 your child will live with peace of mind.

DOROTHY LAW NOLTE