



Heads, Hearts and Hands: Reading and Social and Emotional Learning

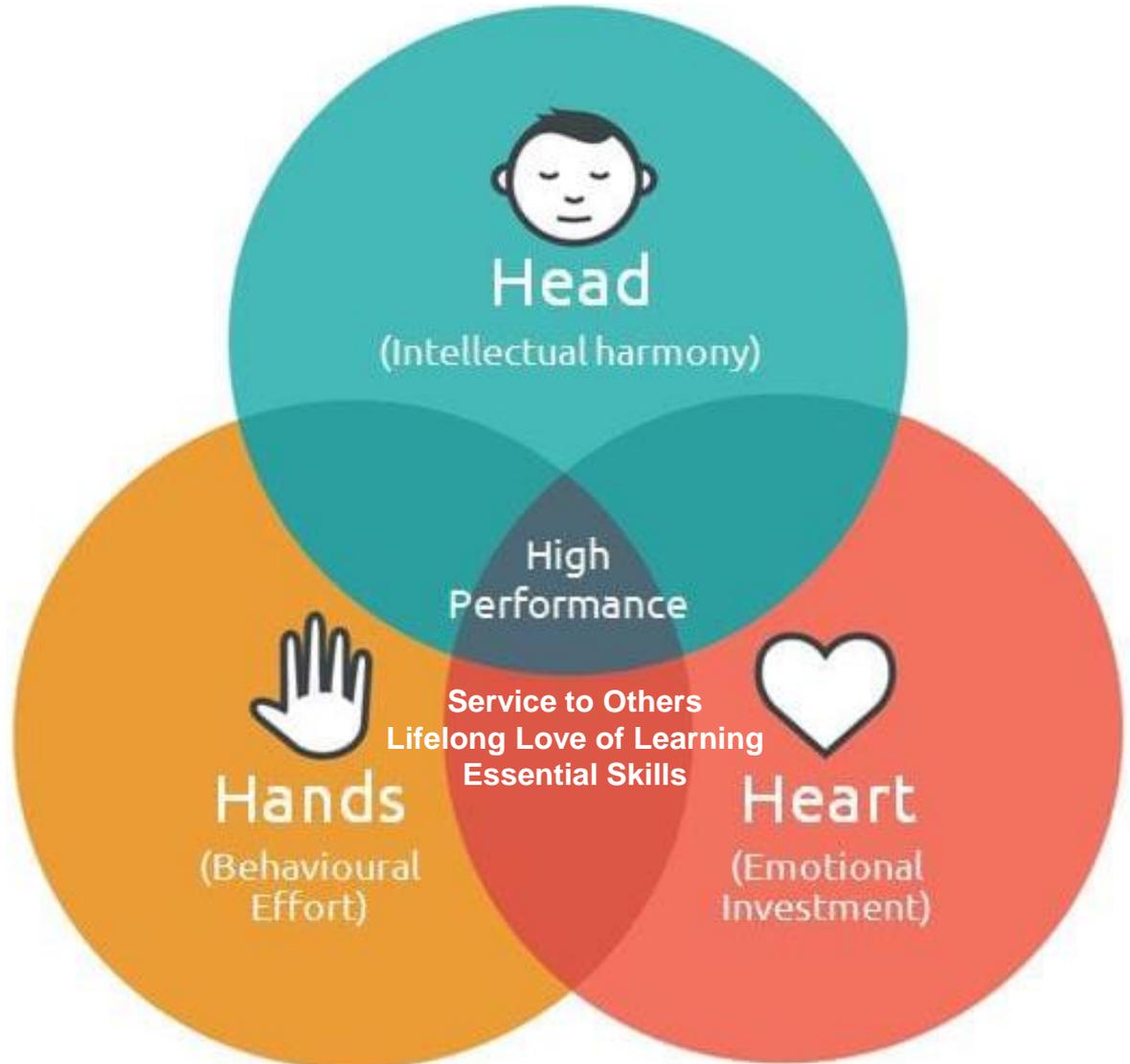
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Recurring Themes

*Good For
Heart,
Good For
Head,
Good for
Hands*



Isabelle Allende

“It’s so important for me, finding the precise word that will create a feeling or describe a situation. I’m very picky about that because it’s the only material we have: words. But they are free. No matter how many syllables they have: free! You can use as many as you want, forever.”



Wisdom from the Ancients

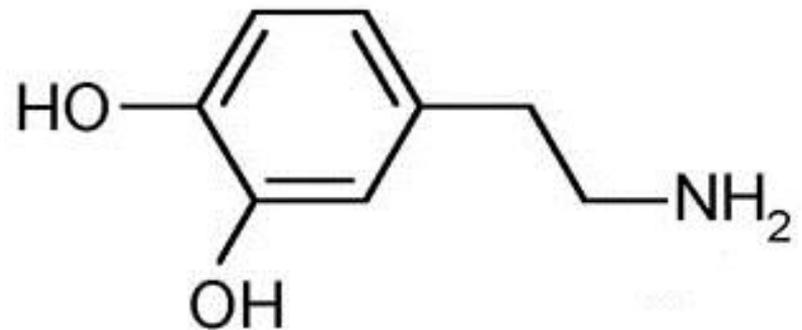
In ancient Egypt, when humans were preserved through mummification, the brain was discarded—it viewed as a superfluous organ. Egyptians believed that the heart was the center of all emotion and learning.

Learning lies at the heart of surviving and thriving as humans.

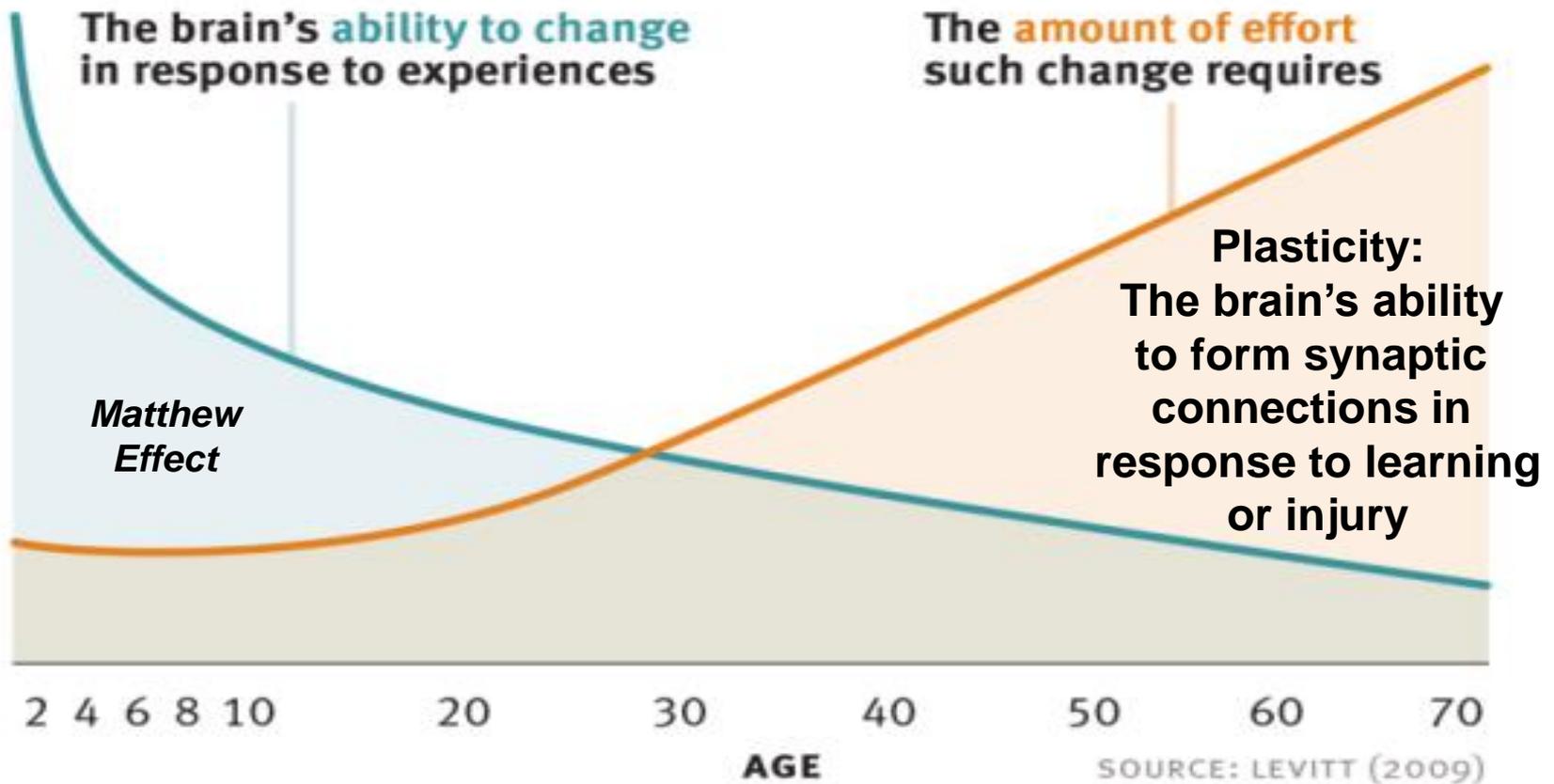


The Neurochemistries of Persistence and Avoidance

- **Positive** feelings about a learning experience produce *endorphins* (euphoria), *dopamine* (stimulates the prefrontal cortex), *oxytocin* (puppy love/trust/relationships) and *serotonin* (well-being)
- **Negative** feelings about a learning experience produce *adrenalin* and *cortisol* –which puts the brain in survival mode and causes anxiety/ stress



Aging and Plasticity



Enhancing Motivation

*Habituation
and Novelty*

Confidence

Play

*Joining the
Community*

Source: ASCD, 2021.



From Young Children

As children experience more sophisticated forms of language and literacy, such as using longer sentences and a larger and diverse vocabulary, they build increasingly complex communication skills and use them to express needs, feelings, and ideas and to interact with others.



Hairs (Pelitos) by Sandra Cisneros

Everybody in our family has different hair. My papa's hair is like a broom, all up in the air. And me, my hair is lazy. It never obeys barrettes or bands. Carolos's hair is thick and straight. He doesn't need to comb it. Nenny's hair is slippery – slides out of your hand. And Kiki, who is youngest, has hair like fur.

But my mother's hair, like little rosettes, like little candy circles, all curly because she pinned it in curls all day, sweet to put your nose into when she is holding you, holding you and you feel safe, is the warm smell of bread before you bake it, is the smell when she makes room for you on her side of the bed still warm with her skin, and you sleep near her, the rain outside falling and Papa snoring. The snoring, the rain, and Mama's hair that smells like bread.

Emotional Development

- **Basic Survival** (Emotional Intelligence)
- Limbic system: **share most basic emotions with other animals** (fear, joy)
- Ability to envision **past** and **future** selves, combined with reason—enhanced problem solving
- Survival in **complex circumstances (modern civilized life)** require more than just fight, flight or flee: consider war, homelessness and pandemic
- Finding balance between **reason** and **emotional core: integration of two elements that exist side by side** (more sophisticated solutions to challenges)

Rule Number One: Peace of Mind Before Everything Else

Attend to the affective (socio-emotional) first, foremost and always and all will follow in its wake.

Provide clarity (ambiguity produces anxiety), peace of mind and opportunities for success no matter how small (competence produces confidence).

Neuroscience dictates that no amount of school- or home-based sorcery will provide forward momentum if children remain in survival mode.

The Brain, Emotions and Stability, Predictability, Routine

Although the brain loves a challenge, we crave routine to a certain degree. Why? Because routine affords senses of predictability and stability. There is something to be said for having a pretty good idea that the sun will rise and that every new day will be a lot like the day it followed.

Stability allows the brain opportunity to focus on more complex tasks at hand.

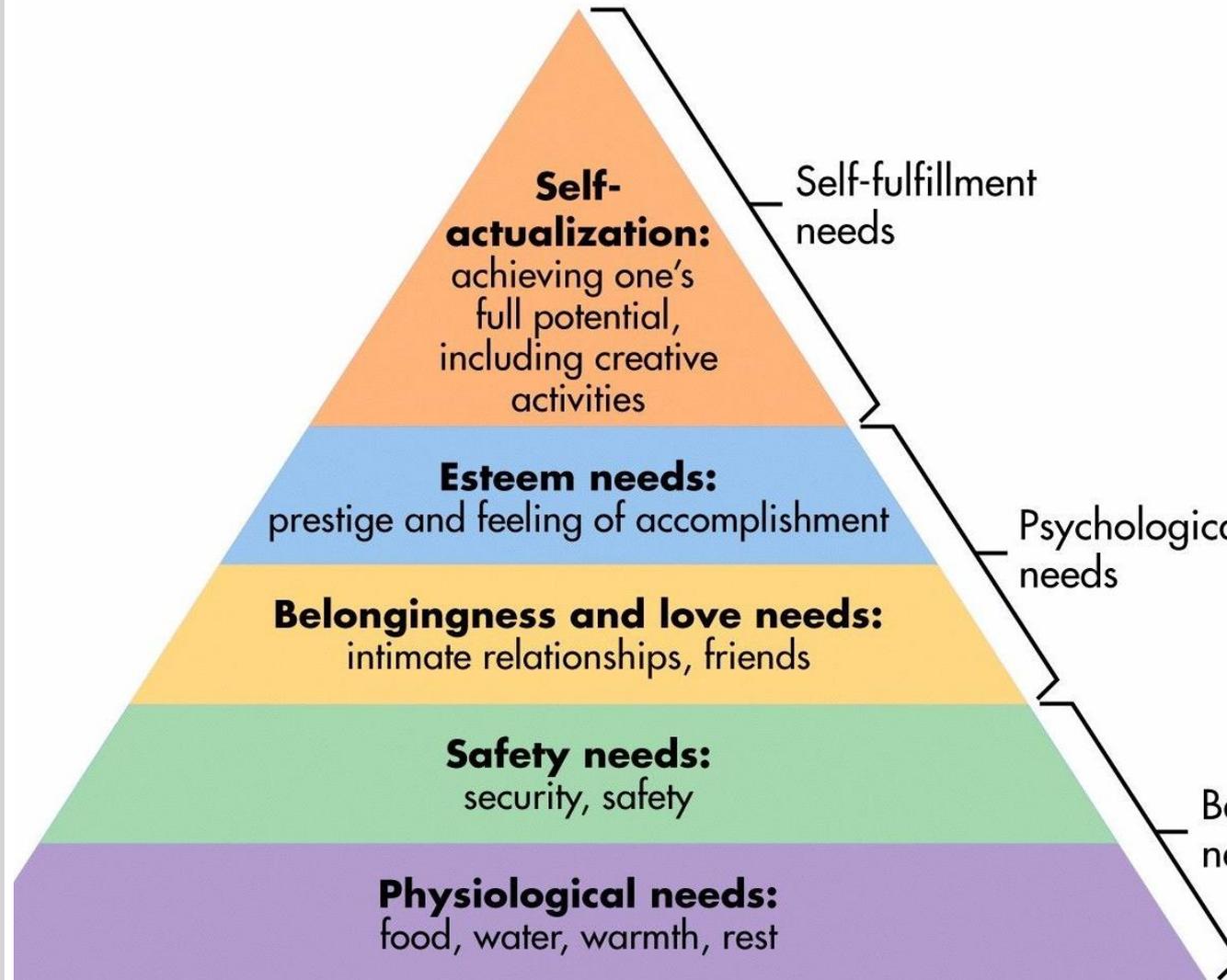
When routine is disrupted suddenly (no glide path), ambiguity sets in. The brain enters survival mode and emotions begin to overpower the rational. Absent support, instability over long periods of time may serve as catalysts for toxic stress.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow proposed that human needs can be organized into a hierarchy.

This hierarchy ranges from more concrete needs such as food and water to abstract concepts such as self-fulfillment. According to Maslow, when a lower need is met, the next need on the hierarchy becomes our focus of attention.

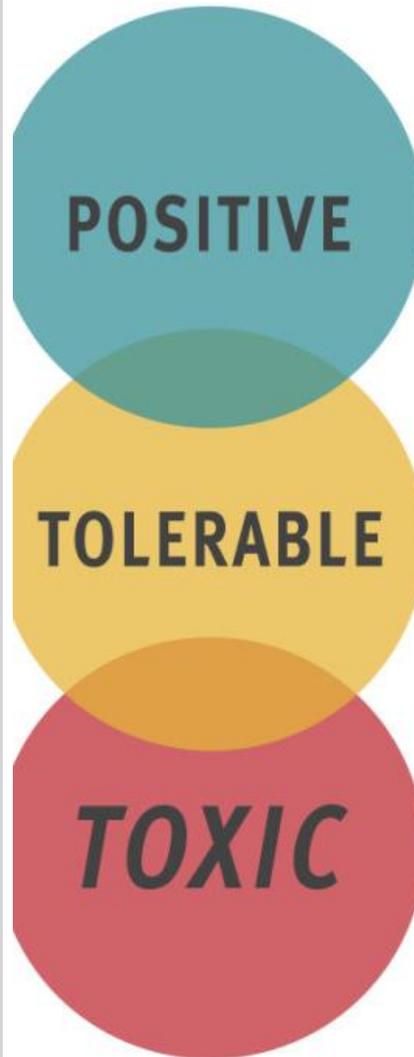
Source: ThoughtCo, 2021



I Will Survive: Stress and its Implications

As we are well aware, a little bit of stress can be a good thing as it pushes us forward to achieve. Neuroscience offers that the stress response is associated with the survival mechanism and the neurochemistry of focus.

Beyond impacts to the problem at hand, long-term experience with Toxic Stress can have lasting physiological effects and serve as catalysts for underachievement and avoidance behaviors.



Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

Socioemotional Aspects of Childhood (Ages 5-7)

- Developing empathy
- Positive relationships/friendships
- Identify emotions/control impulsive behaviors
- Begin self identity formation/positive self image
- Understanding of family history
- Accept that parents are not all powerful
- Strive toward independence
- Moral values/right and wrong
- Become increasingly resilient

Socioemotional Aspects of Childhood (Ages 8 and 9)

- Concerns about peer acceptance and 'fit'
- Have a best friend
- Strengthen cooperative skills
- Self conscious, self aware
- Refining self image/understanding
- Work out values and beliefs/develop an ethical stance
- Further establish independence and individuality (noncompliance at school and home)

Socioemotional Aspects of Childhood (Ages 10 and 11)

- Behave appropriately in a variety of situations (including online/social media)
- Refine communication skills/conflict resolution
- Independent and responsible for actions
- Value and respect for authority
- Manage emotional changes associated with development (security versus unknown)
- Positive self esteem and acceptance of limitations (building strengths)
- Self esteem through an optimistic lens

The (Early) Adolescent Emotional Brain: Ages 12-18

In most adolescents, the part of the brain that processes emotions (the limbic system) is fully operational, whereas the regions responsible for thinking, reflecting and controlling emotional response (located in the prefrontal cortex) are still developing.

This is why many secondary students overtly display emotions inappropriately in the classroom and at home (through pained sighs, rolling eyes and blank looks).

A fully developed prefrontal cortex enables most adults to consciously dampen their emotions.

Source: ascd.org



Socioemotional Aspects of Early Adolescence and Adolescence (12-18)

- **Developmental Asynchrony**
 - Physical Development (+1)
 - Cognitive Development (+1)
 - Socioemotional Development (+1)
- **Formation of Identity**
 - Self concept (identity) and self esteem (feelings about identity): changes/evolves over time
 - Parents and peers (desire for both autonomy and fit)
 - Friendships (homophily/homogamy, peer pressure and deviant peer contagion)

Socioemotional Aspects of Early Adolescence and Adolescence (12-18)

■ Emotional Traits

- Self focus (own needs first, often to the exclusion of others) and fear of missing out
- Emotional suit of armor (everything is okay)
- Emotions that change frequently, impacted by stress
- Questioning behaviors and risk-taking (peers)
- Relationships (careful not to trivialize)
- Impacts feel profound (even online)
- Socioemotional well being in the age of social media
- Anxieties and insecurities (context and non-context based)

Reading and Emotional Expression

Reading is a safe way for children to learn how to express and think about their emotions. It also opens the doors to new ways to cope with emotional responses to change.

They'll develop a higher self-confidence in sharing feelings and emotions. Reading can spark your child's imagination and stimulate their curiosity.



You Are Not Alone!

There are millions of parents across the globe experiencing the impacts of adolescents, most all with the same questions and similar degrees of angst.

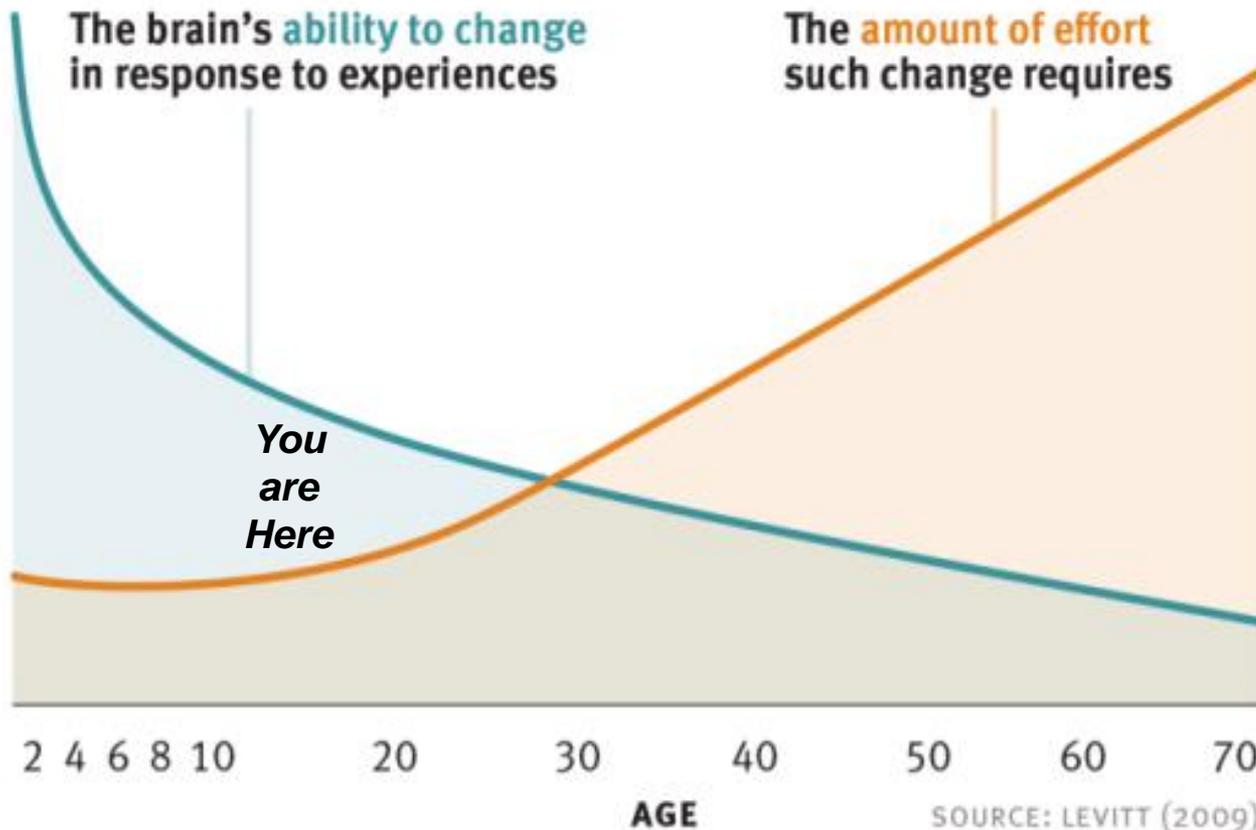
Rest assured that although you may feel as though you are the only ones navigating the labyrinth of teen and tweendom, you are not alone.

My parents had to deal with this horribly obnoxious kid who barely made it out of high school. Things do get better, eventually.

\$%\$^%&\$ \$!
%\$&^%#!
@#^%\$^%^*&!!!



The Adolescent Brain and Behavior



It's All About That Brain

- Increased intensity of behavior and diminished ability to 'hit the brakes'
- Self consciousness and need for peer approval
- Impulsivity and want of independence (desire to 'experience' life)
- Difficulty holding back emotions and need for high levels of excitement

Reading and Emotional Intelligence

Understand Complex Relationships

Exposure to More Vocabulary Explaining Emotions

Encourages Reasoning and Logic

Improves Social Perception

Increases Empathy

Enhances Self-Awareness

Produces Emotional Responses

Source: Clifonline.org., 2021



Three Stages of Adolescence

Early Adolescence

Early Adolescence occurs between ages 10-14. During this developmental period, adolescents experience the beginning stages of puberty. Both sexes experience significant physical growth and increased sexual interest. Cognitively, adolescents in this stage have a limited capacity for abstract thought but intellectual interests expand and become more important. Although adolescents in this stage have limited interest in the future, they develop deeper moral thinking during the early adolescence stage.

Three Stages of Adolescence

Middle Adolescence

During the middle adolescence stage (ages 15-17), puberty is completed for males and females. Physical growth slows for females but continues for males.

Adolescents in this stage continue to experience a growing capacity for abstract thought. During this stage, adolescents begin to set long-term goals and become interested in the meaning of life and moral reasoning. Adolescents in this stage of development experience numerous social and emotional changes including increased self-involvement and an increased drive for independence.

Three Stages of Adolescence

Late Adolescence

Adolescents in the late adolescence/young adulthood phase typically experience fewer physical developments and more cognitive developments. Adolescents gain the ability to think about ideas rationally, delay gratification, plan for the future, and gain a firm sense of identity.

During this last phase of adolescent development, young people also experience increased emotional stability and independence.

Reading Emotions: Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy is the practice of helping individuals grow and develop through books. Reading, writing, and discussion can provide an opportunity to work through grief, cope with a difficult situation, or just explore developmentally-appropriate topics. The practice dates back to the 1930s in the United States, and has widened to include self-help manuals and even movies.

Source: OSU, 2021.



Commitment and Exploration in Adolescent Identity Development

*If I am not my parents
who am I?*

Commitment

No Commitment

Commitment

Exploration

No Exploration

Exploration

Identity Diffusion Never quite settled	Moratorium In crisis/alternatives
Foreclosure Premature Commitment	Identity Achievement

Common Behaviors in Adolescence

- Lying (fear of consequences)
- Arguing (asserting independence)
- Defiance (independence)
- (An) Awkward Phase (s) (time bound, don't fit in)
- Abandoning Commitments (giving up)
- Withdrawal from family (friend-centric)
- "Attitude" (parents just don't understand)
- Impulsivity (brain development)
- Academic Problems (priorities setting)
- Curfew Violations (boundary testing)

Common Behaviors in Adolescence

- Low impulse control
- Increase in appetite
- Lack of frustration tolerance (short fuse, may be hormonal)
- Verbal aggression (hormonal/be vigilant)
- Concern about physical appearance (pickier)
- Sleeping longer and more soundly
- Selfishness (identity related)
- Low Self-Esteem
- Greater interest in privacy (keeping thoughts to themselves)
- Frequent changes in relationships

Socioemotional Connections to Reading

The reading that children and adolescents engage in for its own sake may also provide 'self-generated learning opportunities', that in turn serve to nurture and support educational aspirations, achievement motivation, occupational choices, as well as ways of understanding one-self and others.



Low Motivation in Adolescence

- It happens / happened to the best of us!
- Biological changes and priorities
- Emotional concerns (predominance)
- School environment (making adjustments from elementary to middle/high school)
- Social and peer pressures (what's 'cool' and what is not)
- Shift in self perception (from growth to fixed mindsets)
- Short attention spans (social media doesn't help)
- Unrealistic expectations and underdeveloped work ethic

Ever Vigilant: Warning Signs

- Extreme changes in weight (loss or gain) / appearance
- Insomnia / ongoing sleep problems
- Rapid and/or drastic personality changes
- Sudden / constant changes in friends
- Persistent academic failure
- Suicidal talk or ideation / self harm
- Substance use /abuse (beyond experimentation)
- Violence / bullying / threats / cruelty to animals
- Fantasizing about acts of violence
- Run –ins with the law

And Even More Friendly Advice

ANGER

The way to calm an angry teen is to remain calm.

Encourage to address issues in the moment rather than bottling them up and blowing up later.

LYING / CONCEALING

Pick your battles and offer open communication being non-judgmental as is possible. Teens will lie—but offering honesty and truth may find that they will do so less and less.



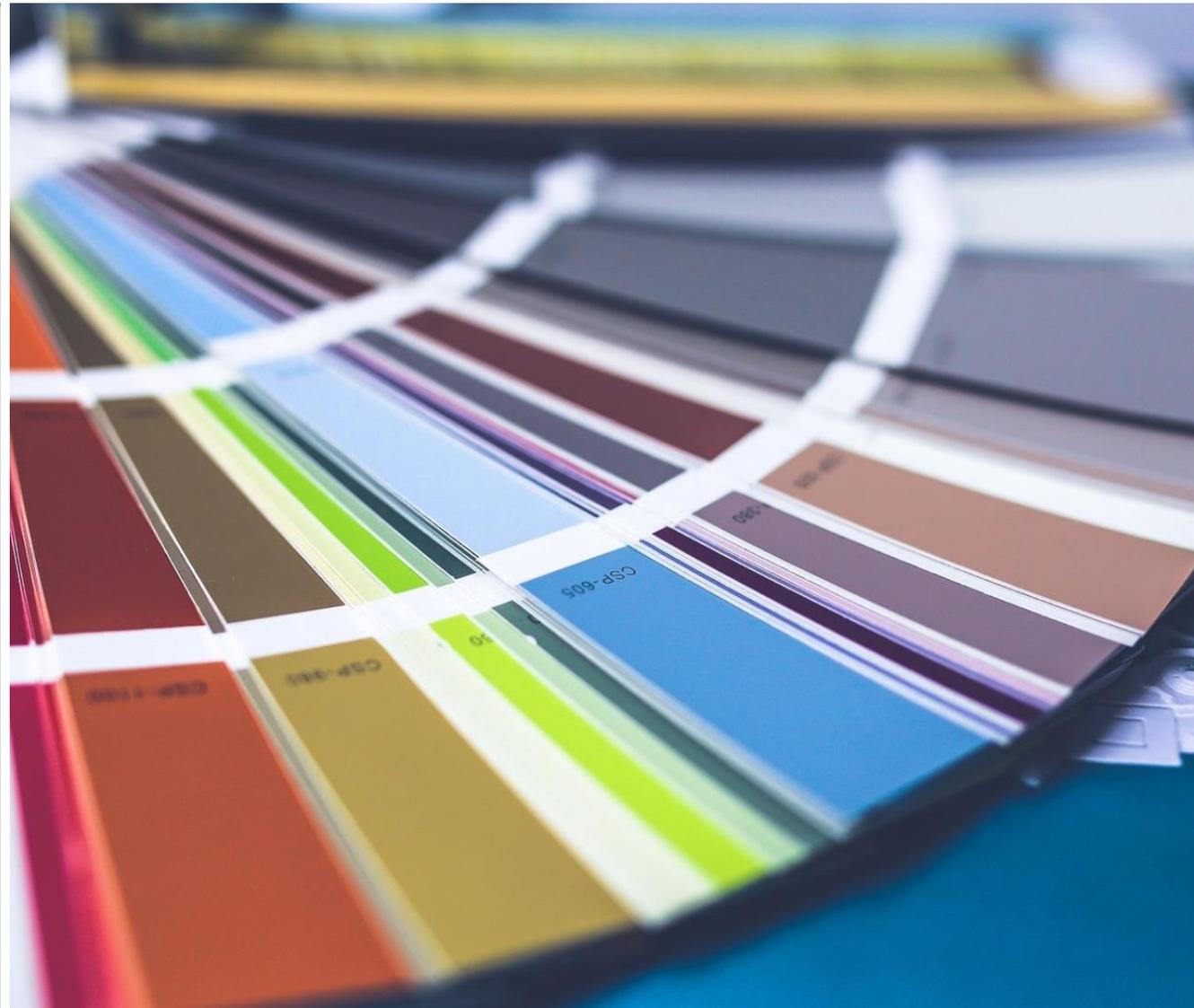
And Even More Friendly Advice

INDECISIVENESS

Natural during the adolescent years. It is the best time to introduce decision-making skills. This does not mean making the decision for them.

ARGUING AND DEFIANCE

Young adults need guidance in terms of rules and consequences for breaking them. Remain clear and firm—and attempt to involve your t(w)een in the process of developing rules when possible.



Bouncing Back: Resilience

■ *Resilience:*

- Coping in spite of setbacks, barriers or limited resources
- Competence and strengths
- Developing assets to build resilience
- Fostering pathways toward resilience
- Focus on families, schools and communities
- Strengths-based and process focused
- Acknowledging Appreciating 'Turning points'

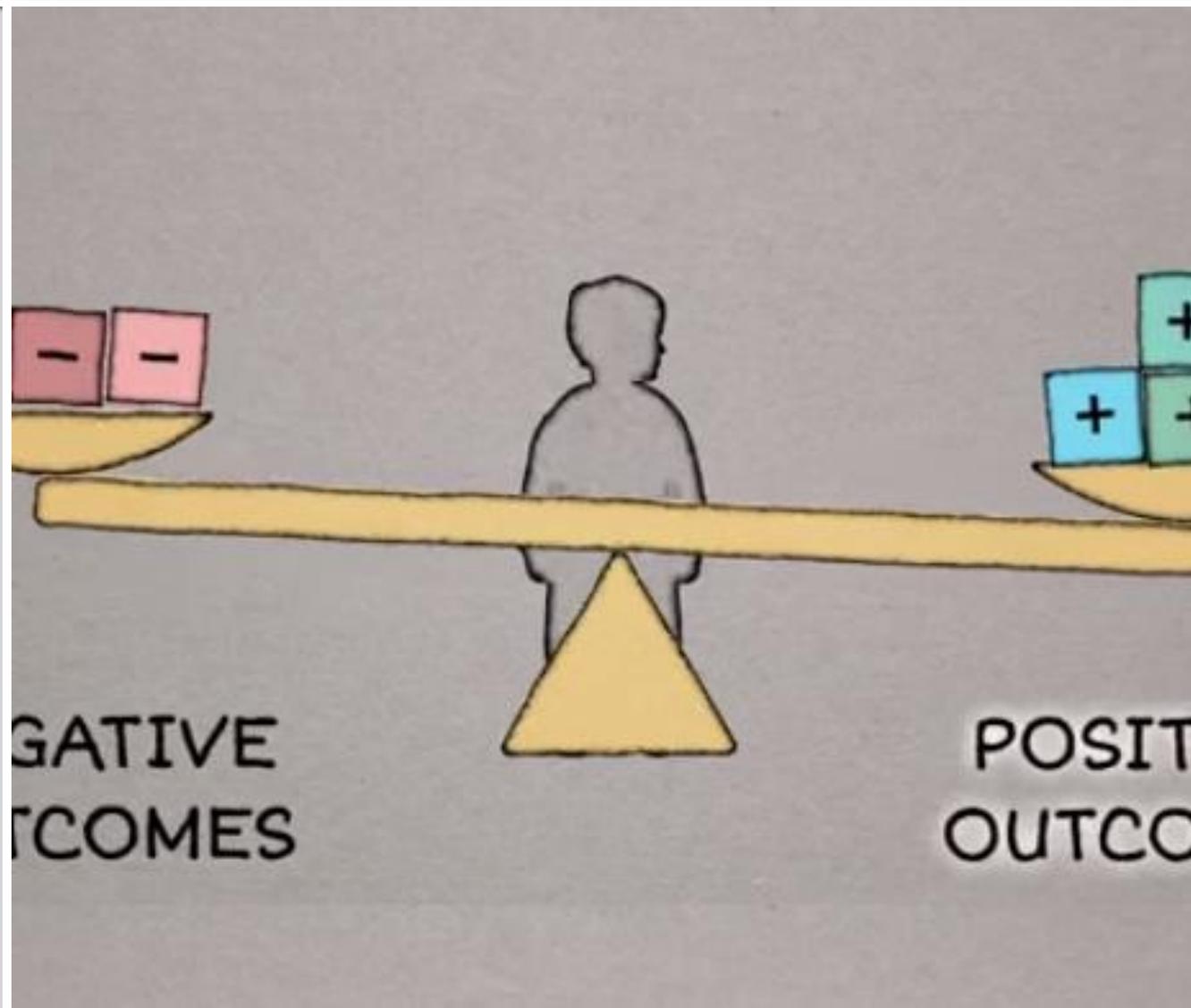
The Resilience Fulcrum

Our ability to cope and to build resilience is a combination of genetics and life experience.

We are predisposed to be impacted by events in certain ways, but our responses to these events can modify our structure, effectively moving the fulcrum to either side.

In this manner, we can become more resilient and the impacts of positive outcomes begin to outweigh the impacts of negative outcomes.

We take advantage of neuroplasticity and take an active role in our own well being.



Promoting Growth Mindset

Research on growth and fixed mindsets is the brainchild of Carol Dweck, Professor of Psychology at Stanford University.

The impetus of her work was the study of attitudes toward failure and resilience attributes of children.

Dweck's research incorporates advances in neuroscience, including studies on brain plasticity, as well as data on teaching practice.

More details available at <https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/>.

Fixed Mindset

Intelligence is static.

Leads to a desire to *look smart* and therefore a tendency to

- **avoid challenges**
- **give up easily due to obstacles**
- **see effort as fruitless**
- **ignore useful feedback**
- **be threatened by others' success**

Growth Mindset

Intelligence can be developed.

Leads to a desire to *learn* and therefore a tendency to

- **embrace challenges**
- **persist despite obstacles**
- **see effort as path to mastery**
- **learn from criticism**
- **be inspired by others' success**

Defining Terms: Mindsets

FIXED MINDSET

“In a fixed mindset, people believe that their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are **simply fixed traits**. They spend their time **documenting their intelligence** or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—**without effort.**”

GROWTH MINDSET

“In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be **developed** through **dedication and hard work**—brains and talent are just the starting point. The view creates a **love of learning** and a **resilience** that is essential for great accomplishment.”

Stress Reduction Essentials

- **Creating a Secure Home Environment** that is welcoming and supportive for all involved, cognizant of difference between working at home and living at work (lessen chaos)
- **Understanding Cognitive and Socioemotional Imbalance**
Processing Information: appeal to the *rational* to mitigate anxieties and 'spooling up' (identify, challenge, modify, replace)
- **Making Dedicated Time for *Listening*:** the importance of being *heard* before being *reassured*. Do this daily without downplaying the intensities they feel or minimizing concerns
- **Providing Opportunities for Regular (Virtual) Communication:** with peers, grandparents, cousins, and other members of circle of support (socioemotional reassurance and stability)

Stress Reduction Essentials

- **Accuracy:** Deliver developmentally appropriate and accurate information, being sure to ask about any questions children and young adults may have
- **Tone:** Reassuring and supportive, acknowledging your own concerns but highlighting resilience and light at the end of the tunnel
- **Channeling Anxieties and Intensities in a Healthy Way** through service to others (letters to first responders, etc.)
- **Navigating Uncertainty, Control and Related Emotions:** positive attitudes, gratitude practice, kindness, having fun
- **Parents' Own Perfectionism:** Control and Related Emotions

Comments and Questions

From Chat
Other Questions
Following Up

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