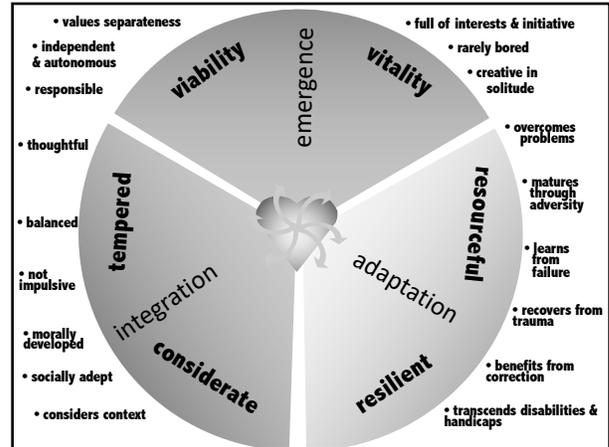


Creating the Conditions for Our Kid's Well-Being

Why relationship and play are key to emotional growth and well-being

Deborah MacNamara, PhD
Author, Counsellor, Educator, Mom.

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“A wise woman once said to me that there are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these she said is roots, the other, wings.”

WHERE MAIN STREET MEETS THE RIVER
Holding Center
1953

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EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

ATTACHMENT
ROOTS
is key to survival and fulfillment

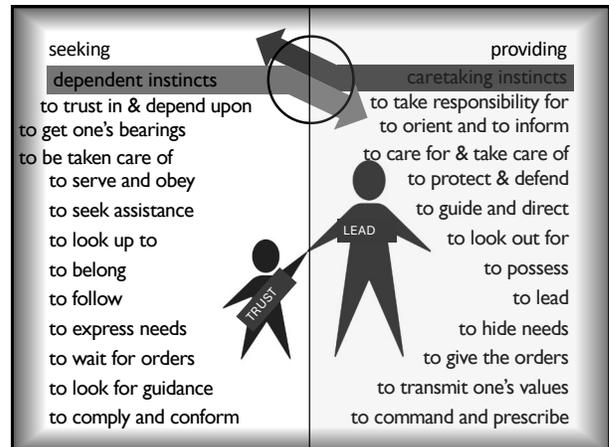
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PLAY (wings)
is key to self-realization

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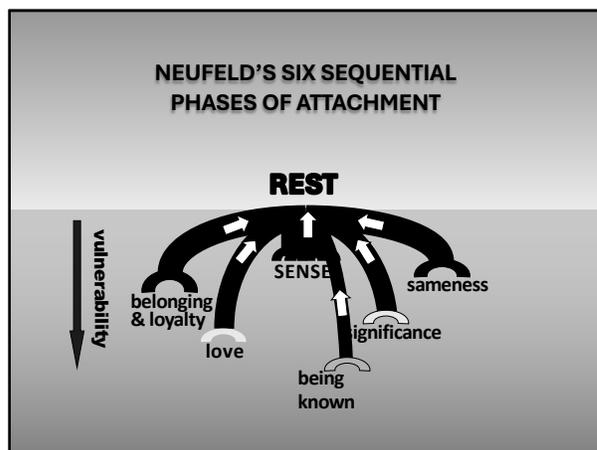
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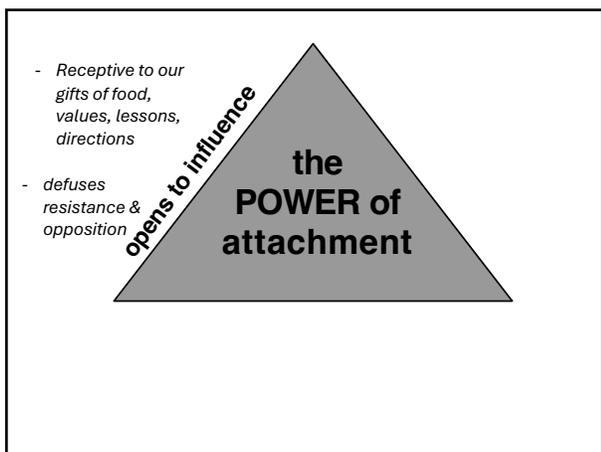
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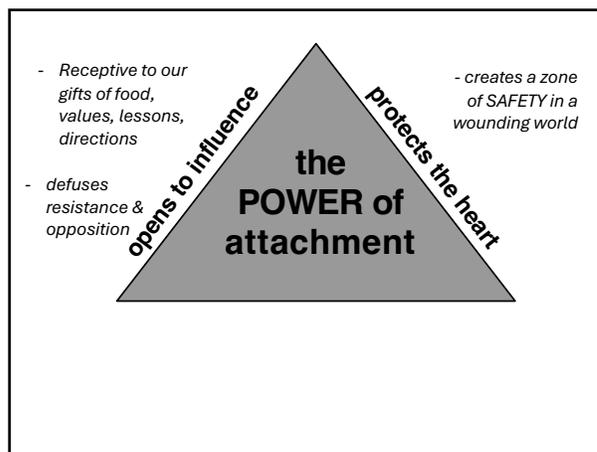
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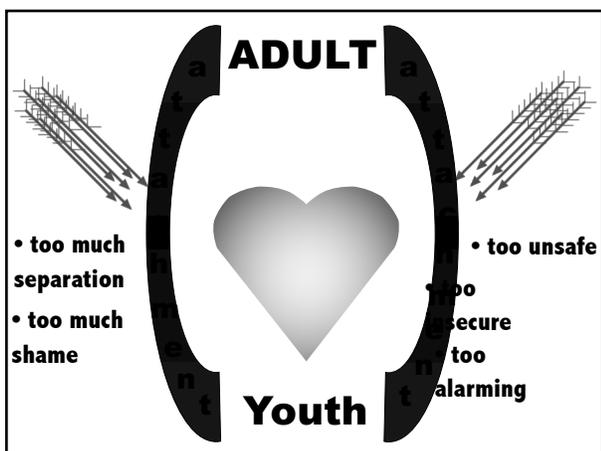
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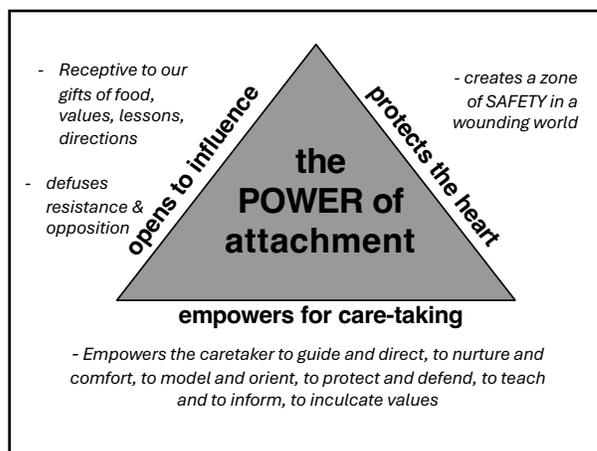
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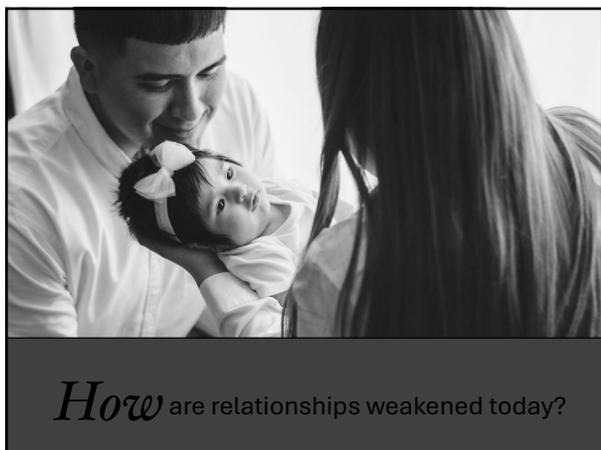
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HOW ARE WE LOSING OUR LEAD?

happens when adults do not assume a caring presence

- parents reacting to their own backgrounds
- failure of today's culture to script caretaking posture
- insecure parenting
- caretakers looking to child to fill needs
- caretaking on demand
- egalitarian parenting
- child-led parenting
- adults looking for answers rather than being their child's answer

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happens when it does not feel safe to depend

- separation too much to bear
- not feeling taken care of
- being bullied by parents, siblings, peers or teachers
- feeling abused or exploited
- extreme vulnerability or overwhelming sensitivity
- practices that exploit a child's state of dependency
- experiencing alarming situations or circumstances

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seeking

dependent instincts

- to trust in & depend upon
- to get one's bearings
- to be taken care of
- to serve and obey
- to seek assistance
- to look up to
- to belong
- to follow
- to express needs
- to wait for orders
- to look for guidance
- to comply and conform

providing

caretaking instincts

- to take responsibility for
- to orient and to inform
- to care for & take care of
- to protect & defend
- to guide and direct
- to look out for
- to possess
- to lead
- to hide needs
- to give the orders
- to transmit one's values
- to command and prescribe

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What is peer orientation?

When kids orient around their peers instead of the adults who are responsible for them.

Take their cues from peers

Play close attention to what matters, how to act, talk, dress, and act in accordance to peers you want to belong too, favouring them over adults

Prefer company of friends

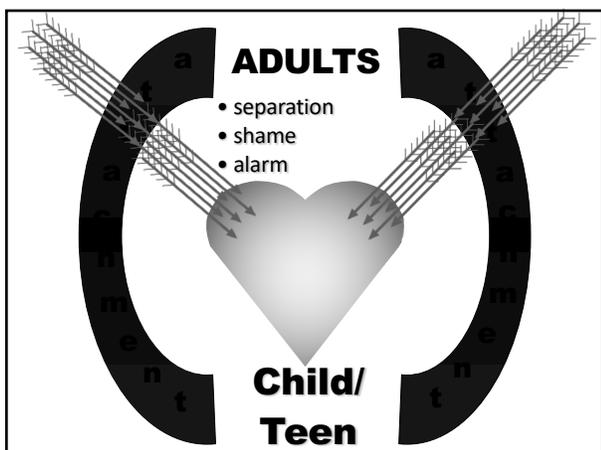
Would rather spend time and be with their friends over the adults in their life, even when offered a warm invitation from caring adults

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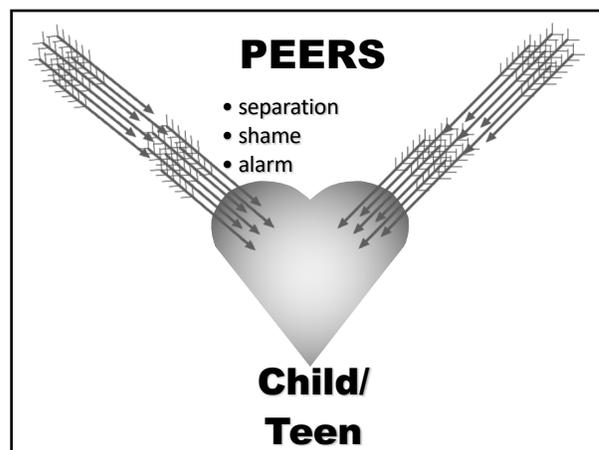
What does it look like in the classroom?

- **Preoccupation with peers**, hard to get their attention
- **Plagiarized personalities** and adoption of other's interests
- **Incessant talking** to friends, digitally preoccupied
- When frustrated with friends - **replace and rotate**
- **Lack of interest** / motivation in learning & homework
- Bright but bored, intelligent but **underachieving**
- **Lack of engagement** in vulnerable conversations
- Class clown, **insolence and backtalk** to adults

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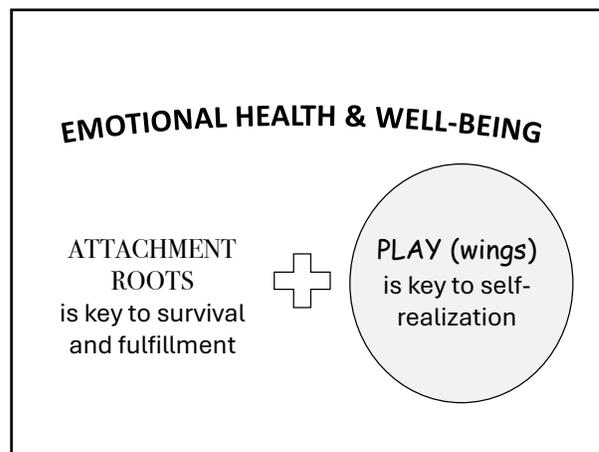
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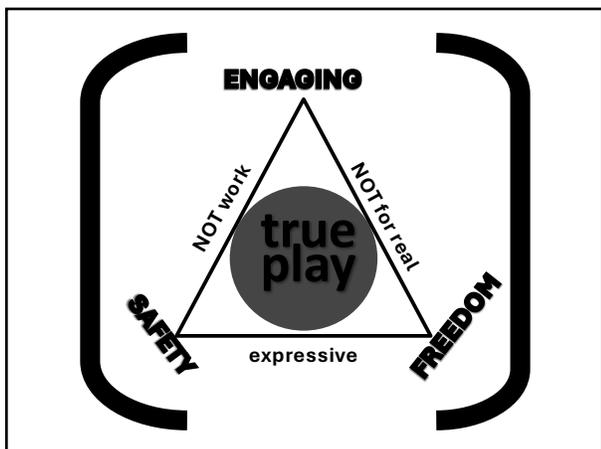
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- Vulnerable feelings more likely to go 'missing'**
- feelings of shyness and timidity
 - feelings of embarrassment including blushing
 - feelings of shame (that something is wrong with me)
 - feelings of futility (sadness, disappointment, grief, sorrow)
 - feelings of fulfillment (joy, delight, enjoyment)
 - feelings of dependence (emptiness, loneliness, insecurity)
 - feelings of appreciation (thankful, grateful, indebted)
 - feelings of caring (compassion, enthusiasm, concern)
 - feelings of alarm (apprehension, anxiety and fear)
 - feelings of woundedness (hurt feelings, anguish, pain)
 - feelings of responsibility (guilt, remorse, to make things better, protective)

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What role does play serve in development?

1

Play programs the brain's problem-solving and learning networks

24

What role does play serve in development?

2

Play is where we develop a sense of agency and responsibility.

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What role does play serve in development?

3

Play is where the self is discovered and future work interests are born.

26

What role does play serve in development?

4

Play preserves emotional health and well-being.

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PLAY CARES FOR THE HEART

Activates and discharges emotion

Prepare & optimize the systems for real life

Lighen moods and revitalize the spirit

Fosters emotional maturity

Fosters healing and recovery and effect deep transformation

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EMOTION IS NATURE'S WAY OF TAKING OF US

PLAY IS NATURE'S WAY OF TAKING CARE OF EMOTION

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Play and the Displacement Principle

Play should be the lightning rod for the thunderbolts of aggression.

eg, play fighting, mock aggression, war games, attack games, sword play, attack sports, attacking in fantasy, insult games, as well as attacking energy in art, music, wit, writing and stories

Play, if the stage is set, should naturally and automatically attract any stuck or residual attacking energy

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Draw pent-up **FRUSTRATION** into **PLAY**

<p>vent frustration through playful CONSTRUCTION</p> <p>provide a safe place to express frustration via effecting change or by making things work</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>constructing and crafts</i> • <i>organizing and orchestrating</i> • <i>solving engaging problems</i> • <i>designing perfection</i> 	<p>vent frustration through playful DESTRUCTION</p> <p>provide a safe place for impulses to attack or destroy (ie, to relieve oneself of foul frustration)</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>destroying and demolishing</i> • <i>hitting and throwing</i> • <i>kicking and screaming</i> • <i>war games, attacking games</i>
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Anxious for our children to succeed in a global economy, we now regard **play as a luxury** that the contemporary child cannot afford.

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How can we create the roots of relationship and wings of play?

- 1 Believe You Are the Answer**
Trust that your relationship is what your child needs most — not more strategies or skills.
- 2 Invite Dependence**
Welcome their need for you. Feed their hunger for closeness and belonging.
- 3 Collect and Bridge**
Rebuild connection before directing. Bridge every separation so attachment stays intact.
- 4 Create spaces free from peers and screens**
Provide closeness and then freedom to explore, letting boredom be filled themselves.
- 5 Build a Village**
Surround your child — and yourself — with caring adults who share your values.

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Attachment and play don't slow down growth, they *fuel it*.

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Grab the free guide:
SIX ATTACHMENT RITUALS: Staying close through the years




www.macnamara.ca

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