

# RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING THE EMOTIONAL ROOTS OF TROUBLING BEHAVIOUR AND EXPERIENCE

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## **JACK HIROSE SEMINARS**

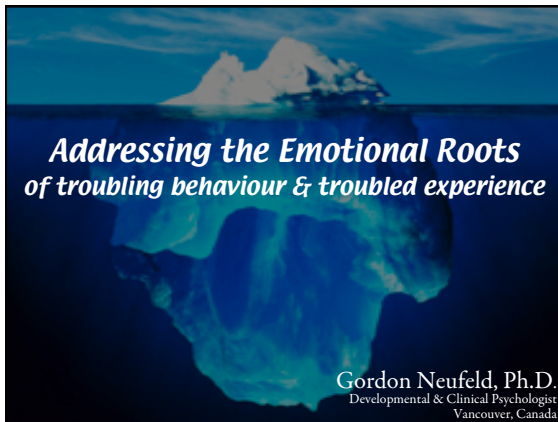
*Developmental & Emotional Challenges  
with Children & Adolescents*

Calgary, Alberta  
November 18, 2025

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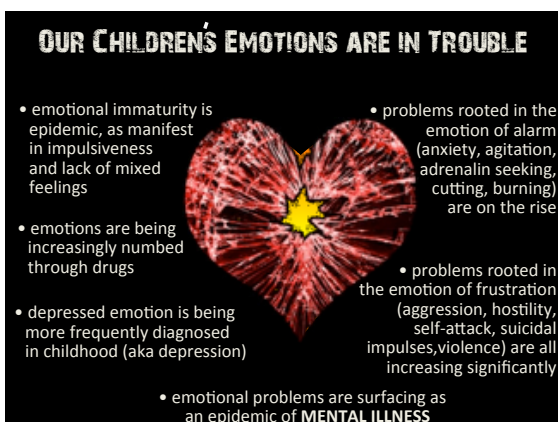
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### EMOTION IS AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER

- emotion is in charge of managing the brain, including development, priorities, attention, and memory
- the stress response is an emotional process
- emotional processes precede and undergird mental processes – in evolution, in development, and in everyday functioning
- almost all troubled thinking and behaviour (including diagnoses) are found to have roots in the animating brain
- most problems in learning and attention are rooted in emotion
- psychological maturation is emotional in nature
- adaptation (including healing & recovery) is an emotional process
- mental processes are primarily derivatives of emotion, rather than the other way around
- emotions need to be resolved to reduce symptoms as well as to effect deep and lasting change

**EMOTION NEEDS TO MATTER TO US**

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### EMOTION IS STILL DISCOUNTED & ECLIPSED

- STILL MISREAD & MISINTERPRETED
- STILL CONSIDERED INFERIOR TO REASON
- MOST MEDICATIONS NUMB EMOTION WITH LITTLE PROTEST FROM SO-CALLED EXPERTS
- MORE CONCERNED WITH MANAGING EMOTIONS THAN UNDERSTANDING THEM
- MEDICAL DIAGNOSES ECLIPSE THE ROLE OF EMOTION
- WOMEN & CHILDREN STILL BLAMED FOR BEING TOO EMOTIONAL
- MORE CONCERNED WITH 'CALMING DOWN' THAN MAKING ROOM TO BE 'STIRRED UP'
- STILL ECLIPSED BY THEIR EFFECTS ON COGNITION & BEHAVIOUR

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### KEY INSIGHTS ABOUT EMOTION

- there is **PURPOSE** to emotion - it is Nature's way of moving us and taking care of us
- emotion has **WORK** to do - serving the attachment instincts primarily
- emotions need to be fully **FELT** to optimize their work of adaptation & growth
- emotions seek **DISCHARGE** through expression which, if restricted, can adversely affect emotional health and development
- emotion is **ELECTRICAL** in nature, obeying its laws (vs like steam)
- emotions need sufficient **REST** in order to continue to work effectively
- emotions need to be **RESOLVED** in some way or another or they will get stuck and stale
- the emotional system takes many years and conducive conditions to fully **DEVELOP**

**animating brain**

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**EMOTION** ↔ *feeling*

emotion = **TO MOVE** ↔ to feel = **TO SENSE** or **TO TOUCH**

triggered as a automated **FIX** ↔ optional **FEEDBACK** to the fix

emotions have **WORK** to do ↔ provide a **WINDOW** to that work

energetically **IMPULSIVE** ↔ **REFLECTIVE & INTERPRETIVE**

**POWERFUL** and **ENDURING** ↔ **FLEETING** and **FRAGILE**

extend the reach of **INSTINCT** ↔ extend the reach of **EMOTION**

stored as **ACTION POTENTIALS** ↔ stored only as **MEMORIES**

emotions take turns **DRIVING** ↔ feelings **MIX** if able for best results

emotions came **FIRST** and come **FIRST** ↔ came **LAST** and come **LATER** if conditions are conducive

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*For OPTIMAL functioning of our animating brain, we need to FEEL ...*

• <b>HURT</b> when wounded	• <b>CARING</b> where attached
• <b>TIRED</b> when needing rest	• <b>SHY</b> where not attached
• <b>PRESSURE</b> when bladder is full	• <b>REJECTED</b> when not invited
• <b>SORRY</b> when bad things happen	• <b>FRUSTRATED</b> when thwarted
• <b>HOPEFUL</b> when looking forward	• <b>ANGRY</b> when facing injustice
• <b>YEARNING</b> when hungry for closeness	• <b>HUNGRY</b> when needing food

- **FUTILITY** when it is encountered
- **SHAME** when exposed in a negative light
- **ALARMED** when togetherness is threatened
- **SATIATED** when attachment hunger is fulfilled
- **MISSING**/empty/lonely when apart from attachments (feeling **bored** instead)
- **CAUTIOUS** when sensing that something could go wrong
- **CONFLICTED** when impulses conflict (requires development)

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**Healthy Emotional Development**

reflecting

mixing

feeling

naming

expressing

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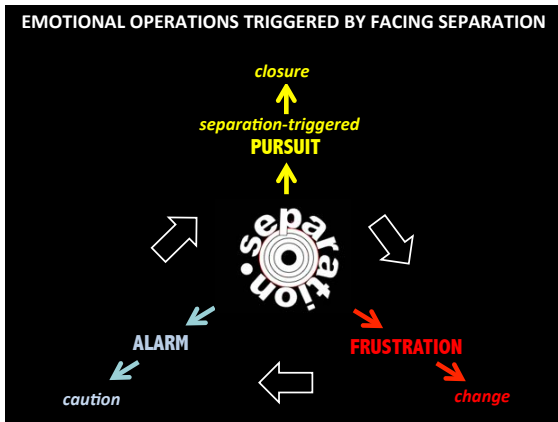
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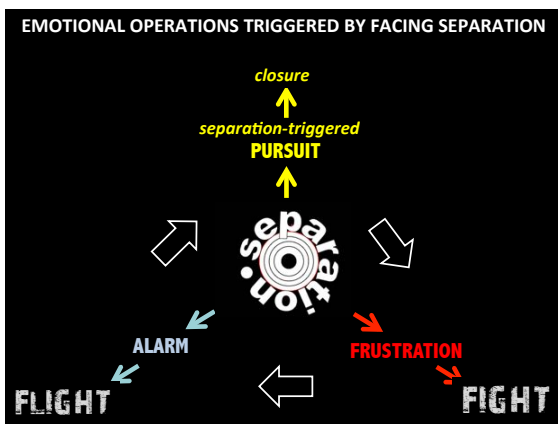
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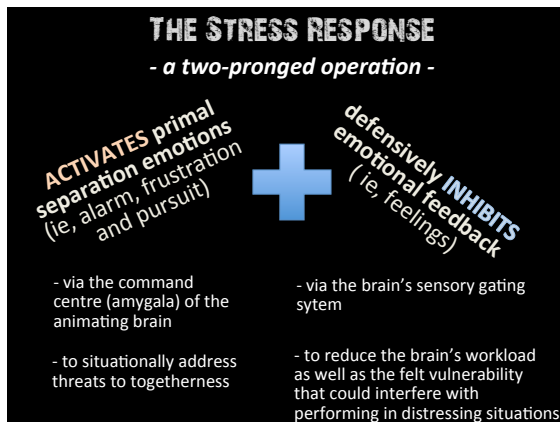
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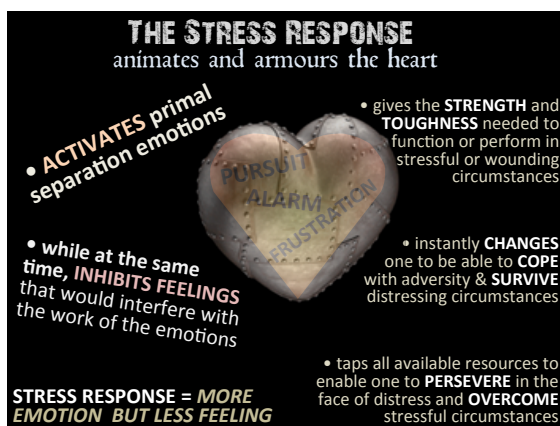
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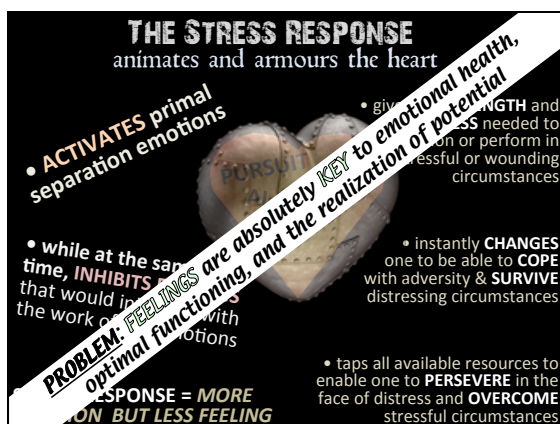
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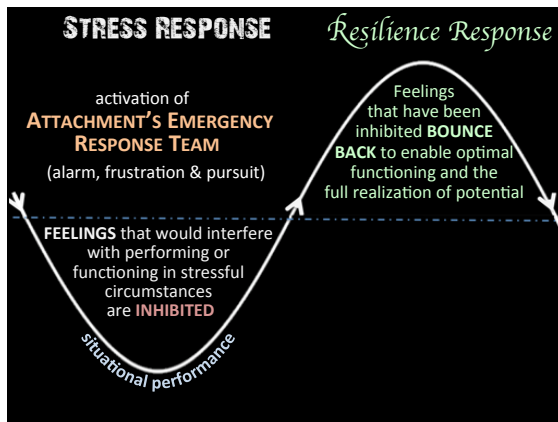
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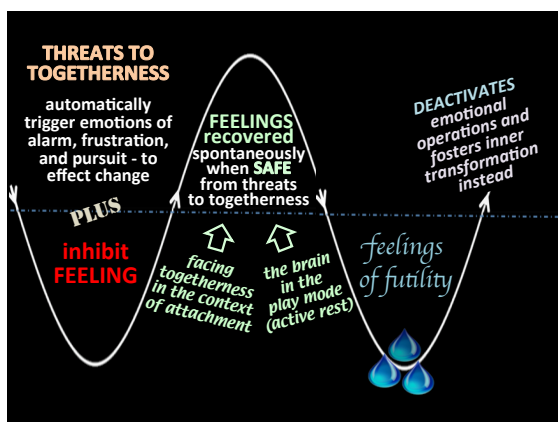
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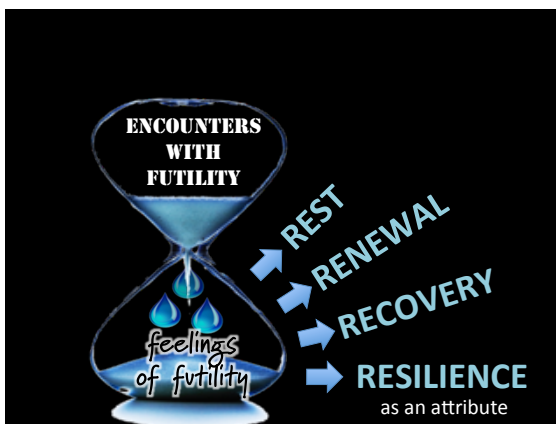
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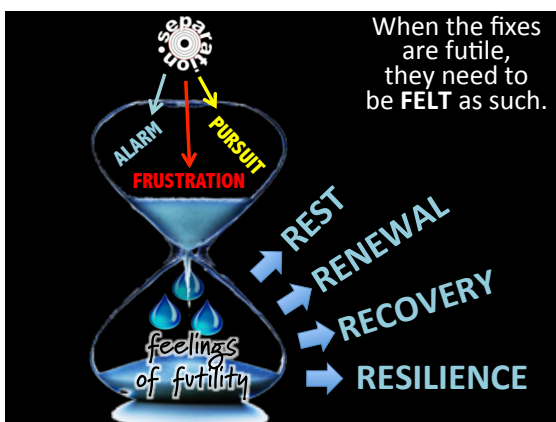
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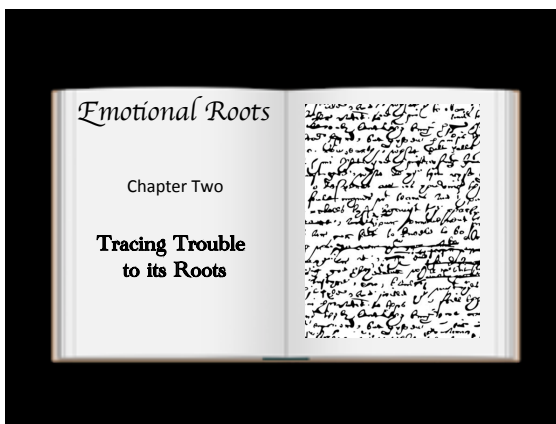
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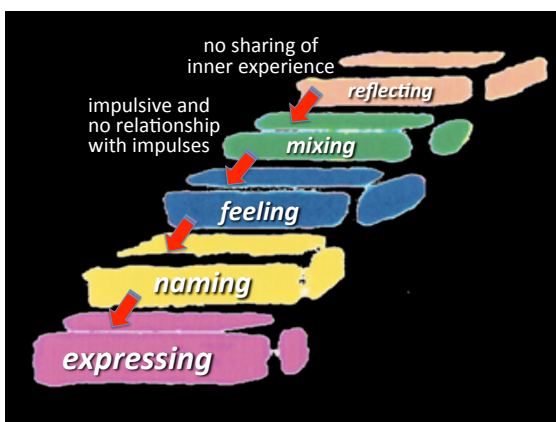
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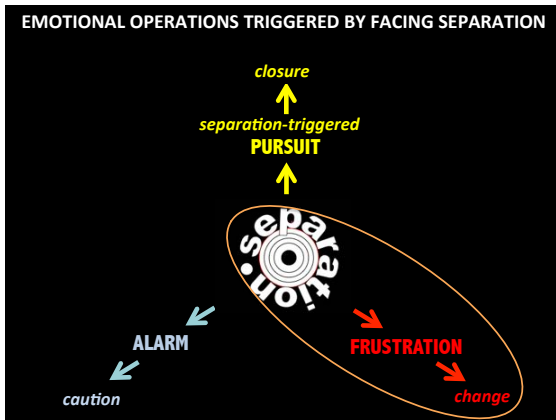
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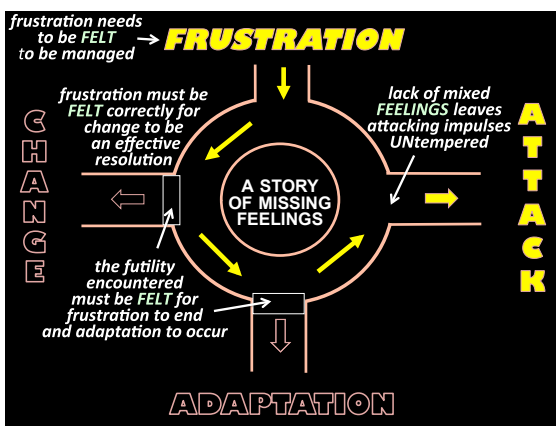
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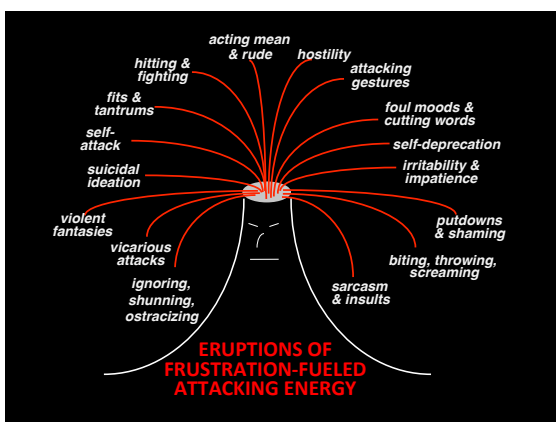
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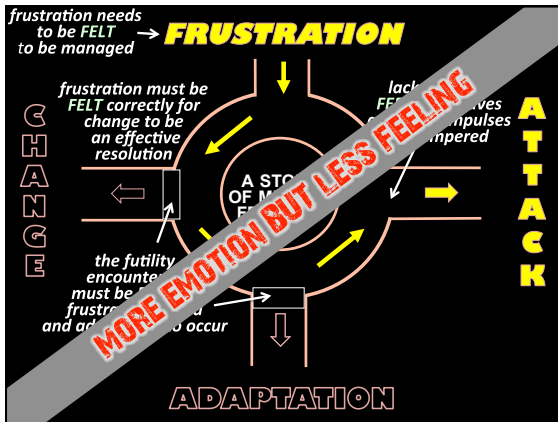
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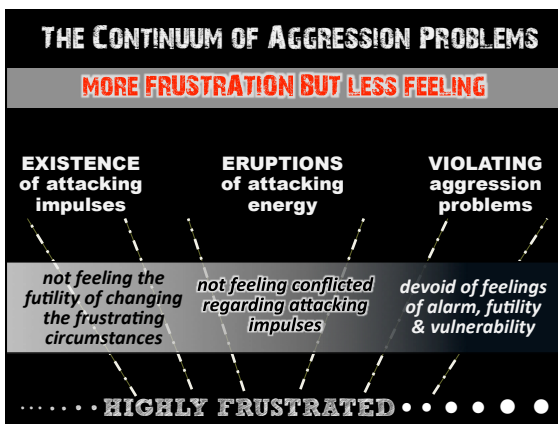
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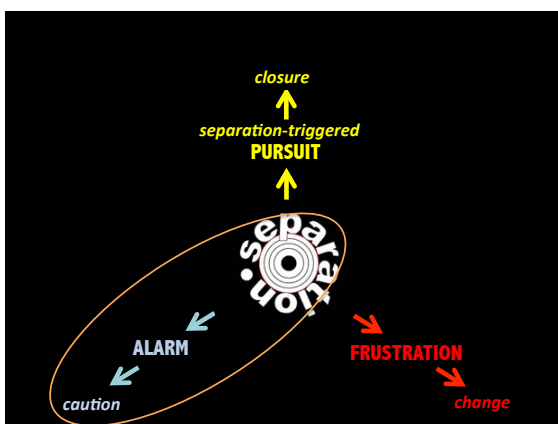
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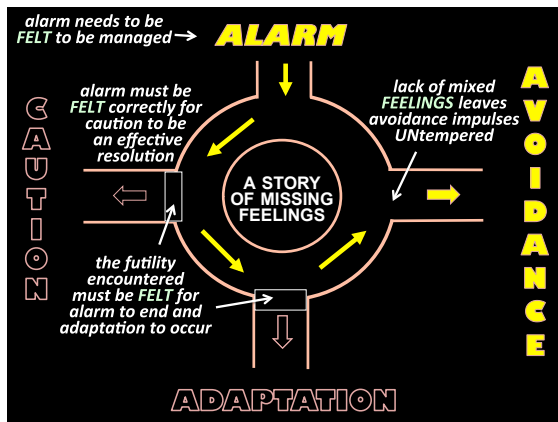
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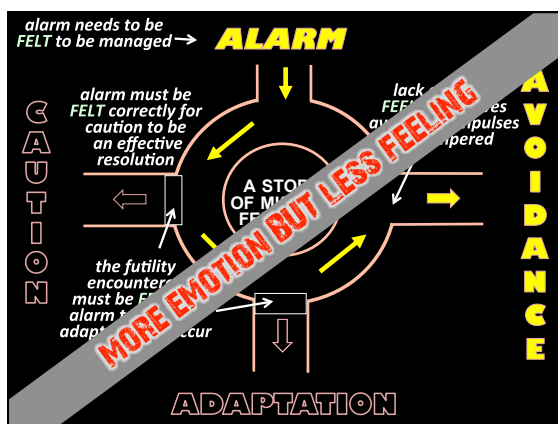
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### **ALARM - BASED AVOIDANCE**

**LEVEL 1 – ANXIETY PROBLEMS**

- **avoiding alarming things and situations** – results in obsessions and compulsions, including phobias and paranoia, as well as a preoccupation with staying out of trouble

**LEVEL 2 – AGITATION & ATTENTION PROBLEMS**

- **avoiding attending to what alarms** – results in significant attention deficits, not being able to stay out of trouble, not being moved to caution, recklessness and carelessness

**LEVEL 3 – ADRENALIN SEEKING PROBLEMS**

- **avoiding any sense of vulnerability** – the adrenalin rush involved in doing alarming things when devoid of a sense of vulnerability results in being attracted to what alarms and a predisposition for being a trouble-maker

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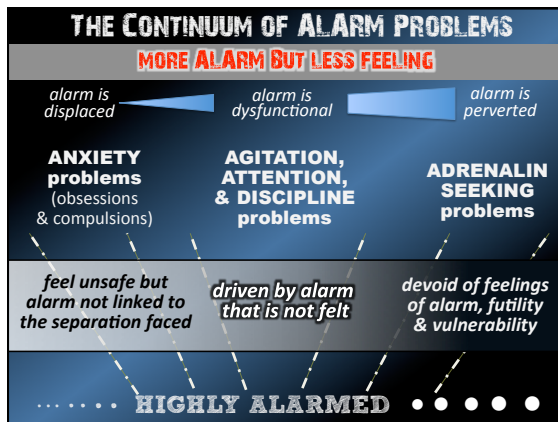
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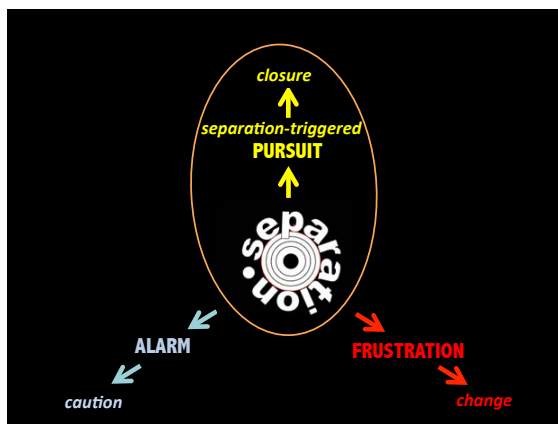
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**The Depersonalization & Fragmentation of Pursuit**

the PURSUIT	of PROXIMITY	with a PERSON
ATTRACTING	the ATTENTION	of Sarah
WINNING	the APPROVAL	of Matthew
MEASURING UP	to be VALUED	by Genevieve
DEMANDING	to be SPECIAL	to Rorie
IMPRESSING	to be ESTEEMED	by Scott
HELPING	to be IMPORTANT	to Ms. Korn
BEING NICE	to be LIKED	by Kendall
BEING CHARMING	to be LOVED	by Sherry
SEEKING STATUS	to be RECOGNIZED	by Uncle Jack

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### The Depersonalization & Fragmentation of Pursuit

the PURSUIT
ATTRACTING
WINNING
MEASURING UP
DEMANDING
IMPRESSING
HELPING
BEING NICE
BEING CHARMING
SEEKING STATUS

The absence of timely feelings results in losing the connection between the separation faced and the triggered pursuit that was meant to fix this.

The result is fragmented and depersonalized 'fixes' that are divorced from their original purpose. These 'fixes' often develop into obsessive 'fixations' that can permeate our personalities.

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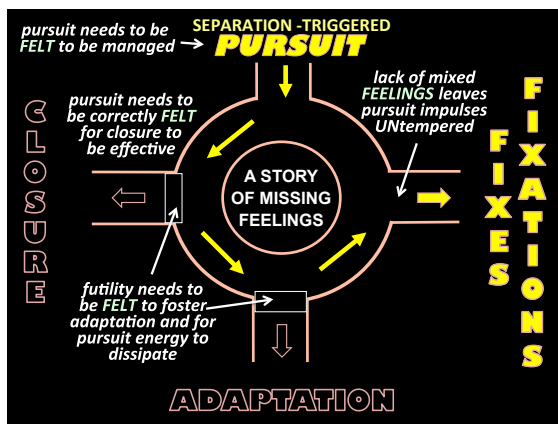
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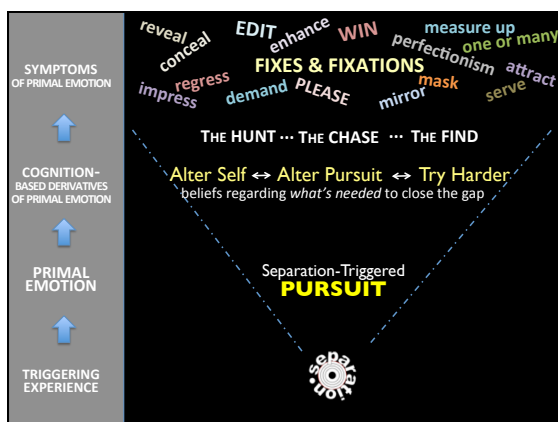
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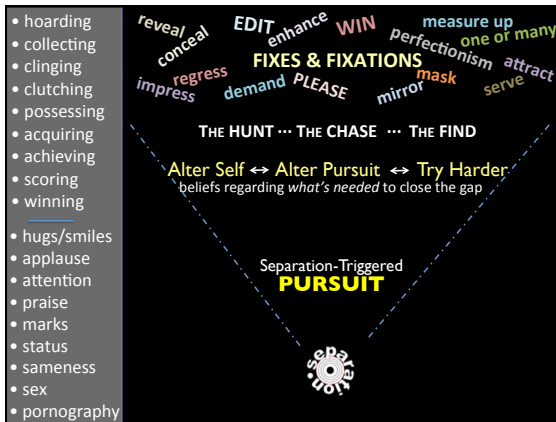
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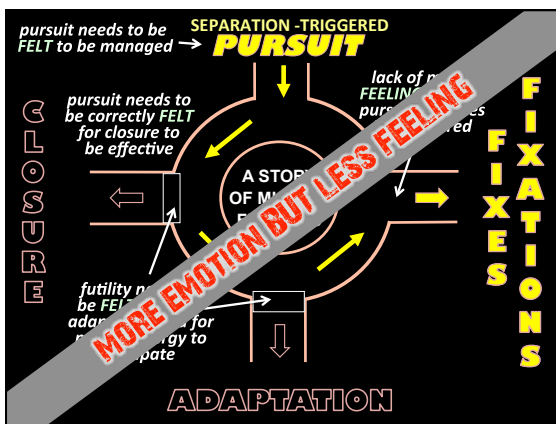
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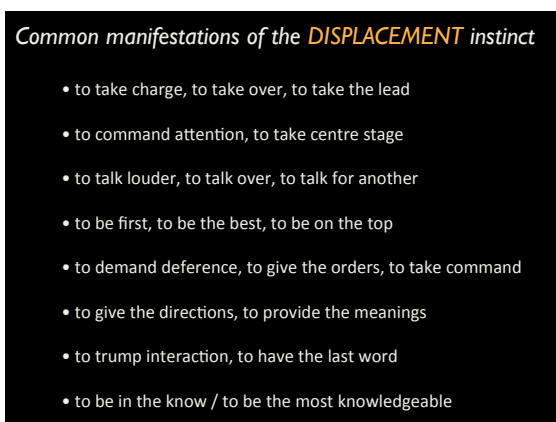
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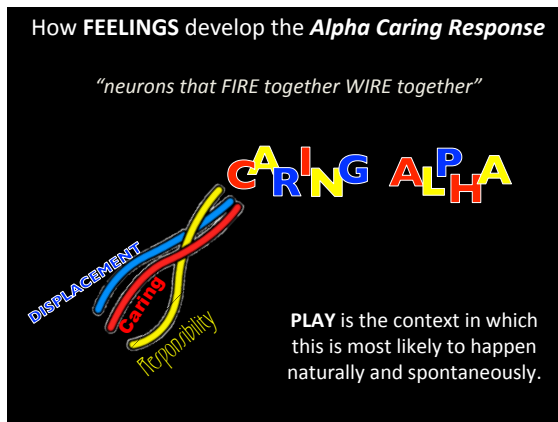
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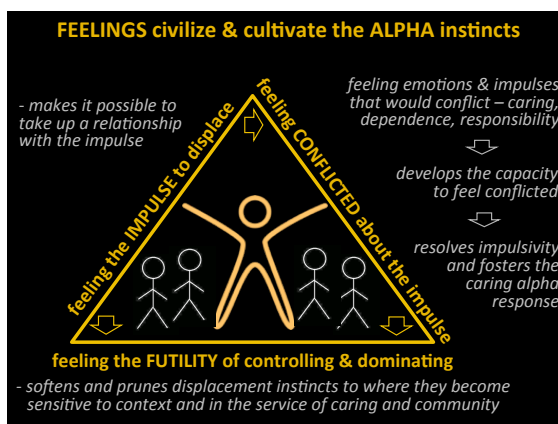
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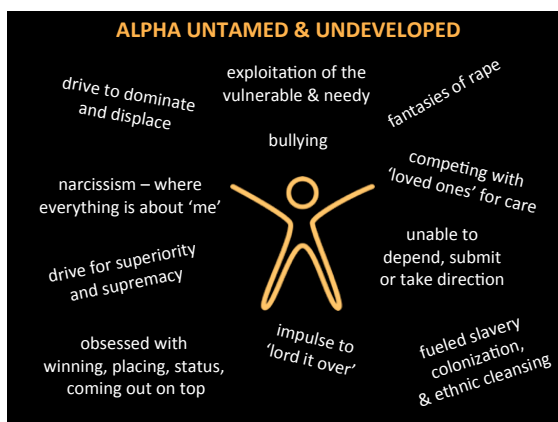
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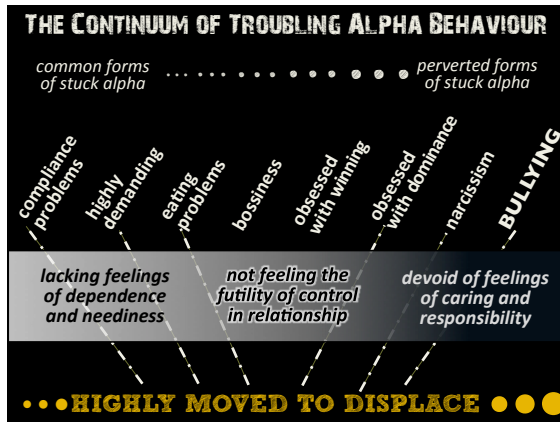
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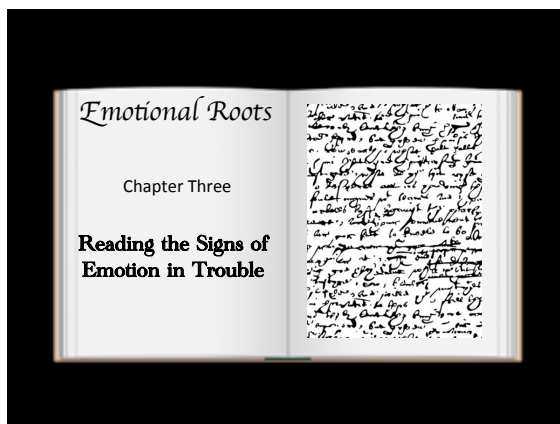
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**SIGNS OF AN ACUTE STRESS RESPONSE AFTER A DISTRESSING EVENT**

- typically referred to in the 'disorder approach' as a post-traumatic stress syndrome or disorder

Blinded by:

- diagnoses
- 'empathy'
- 'dysregulation'

**ALARM** **PURSUIT** **FRUSTRATION** **IMPULSIVENESS**

- elevated startle response

- flashbacks and nightmares

- avoidance of whatever alarms

- intrusive thoughts & memories

- unable to focus and concentrate

- hyper-arousal and hyper-vigilance

- irritability and impatience

- eruptions of attacking energy

- self-attack and suicidal impulses

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**SIGNS OF STUCK EMOTIONAL OPERATIONS**

- clutching, clinging, possessing, hoarding, acquiring, impressing, pleasing, etc

- fragmented fixes & fixations with pursuit as the theme – winning, placing, hunting, chasing, attracting, demanding, reducing, seeking, enhancing, etc

- preoccupations with altering self in pursuit of belonging, love or significance

- preoccupations with concealing oneself in pursuit of belonging, love or significance

**ALARM** **PURSUIT** **FRUSTRATION**

- anxiety

- irrational obsessions

- irrational avoidance

- anxiety reducing behaviour

- an attraction to what alarms

- inability to stay out of trouble

- recklessness and carelessness

- attention deficits around alarm

- chronic agitation and restlessness

- fits & tantrums

- hitting and fighting

- obsessions with change

- aggression and violence

- rudeness and meanness

- irritability and impatience

- eruptions of attacking energy

- self-attack and suicidal impulses

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**Some common attachment-driven FIXES & FIXATIONS where the pursuit is divorced from its relational context:**

**THE HUNT** **THE FIND** **THE CHASE** **GAMING** **PORNOGRAPHY**

**PURSUITING PRAISE** **WINNING** **GOING FOR HUGS/SMILES**

**ATTRACTING** **CHASING APPLAUSE** **SEEKING ATTENTION**

**SEEKING STATUS** **PURSUITING SAMENESS** **HUNTING FOR SEX**

**CHASING APPROVAL** **PLACING** **ACHIEVING**

**PLEASING** **ACQUIRING** **CLUTCHING** **COLLECTING** **HOARDING** **POSSESSING** **SCORING**

**FRAGMENTED FIXES & FIXATIONS**

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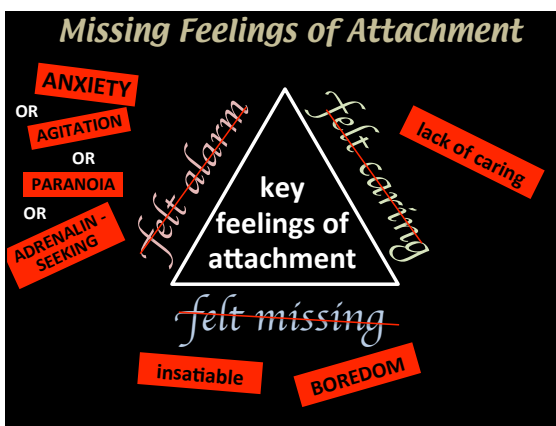
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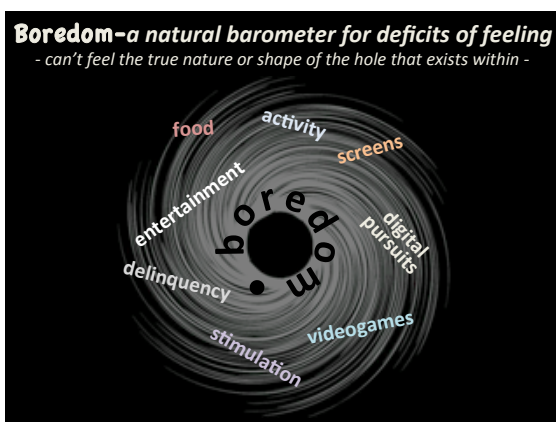
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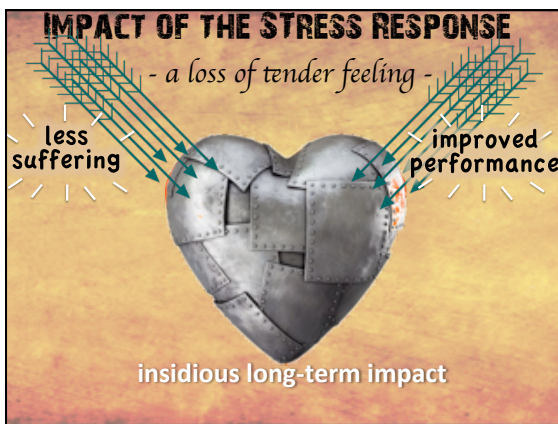
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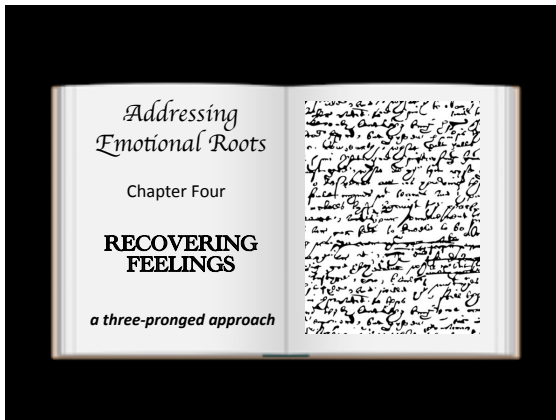
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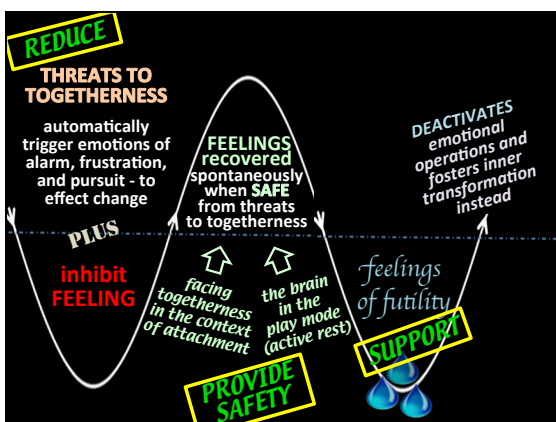
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**REDUCE THREATS to TOGETHERNESS**

- **SUPPORT** the **ADULTS** in the child's life to **assume responsibility** for providing proximity – generously, continuously & securely
- **REFRAIN** from **separation-based responses or reactions** to problem behaviour, including using what children care about against them
- **reduce separation experiences** that can be avoided wherever possible; help a child to hold on when apart
- employ **developmental solutions** to holding on when apart (ie, sameness, belonging, significance, warmth and affection, relational foreverness, understanding from inside out)
- prevent and reverse **peer orientation**
- **SHIELD** against external wounding by mattering most to the child

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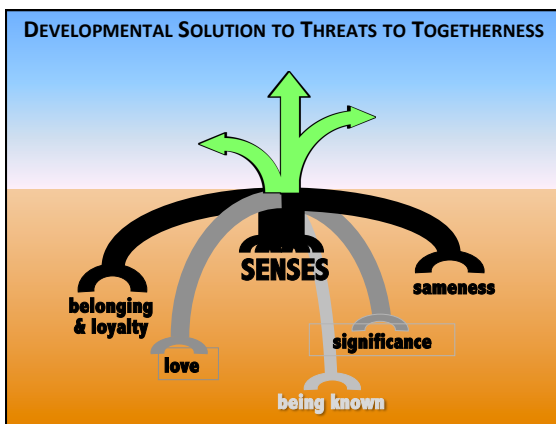
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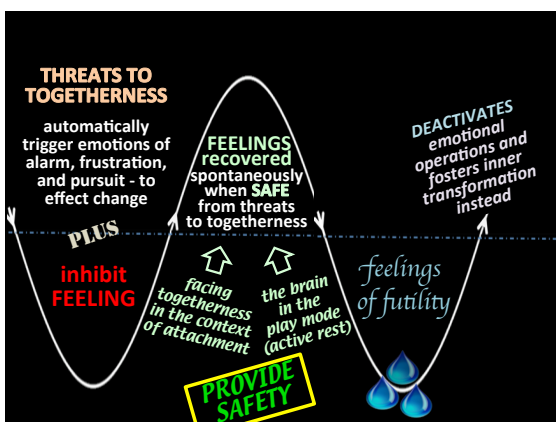
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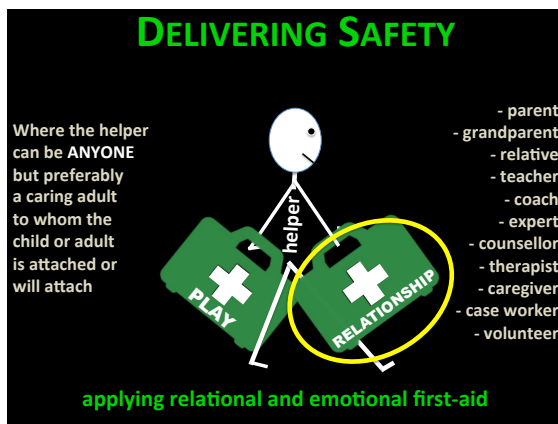
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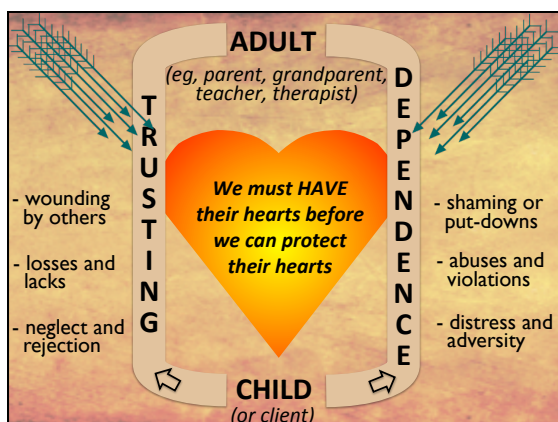
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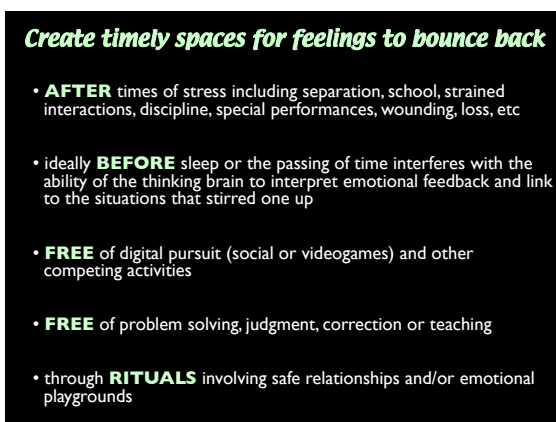
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*Through another's attachment to us, we can **BE** their **ANSWER** even when there are no answers:*

- **BE** their **HOME**
- **BE** their place of **REST**
- **BE** their sanctuary of **SAFETY**
- **BE** their **SHIELD** in a wounding world
- **BE** their **REASON** for holding on
- **BE** their source of **WELL-BEING**

The answer is in **BEING** - not in **DOING** or **SAYING** or **KNOWING** the right things – when empowered by the other's attachment to us.

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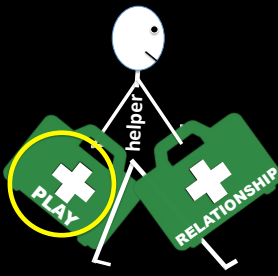
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### DELIVERING SAFETY

Where the helper can be **ANYONE** but preferably a caring adult to whom the child or adult is attached or will attach



- parent
- grandparent
- relative
- teacher
- coach
- expert
- counsellor
- therapist
- caregiver
- case worker
- volunteer

applying relational and emotional first-aid

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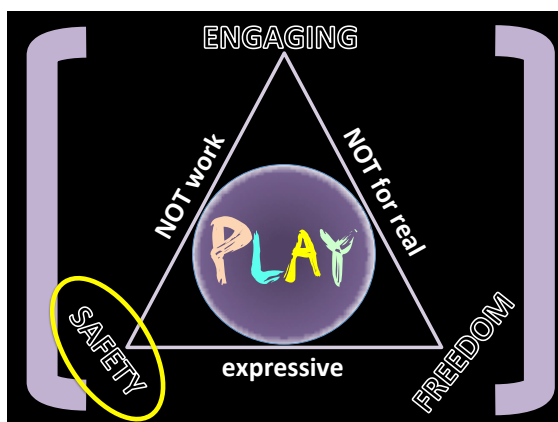
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### Harness the Power of Play

- to safely engage and **DISTRACT** in alarming situations
- to give the brain a chance to **REST** and **RECOVER**
- to provide for **SAFE EXPRESSION** of primal emotion
- to provide a bubble of **SAFETY** in a distressing times
- to **LIGHTEN** the emotional load
- to aid the **RECOVERY** of feelings so that the stress response does not get stuck
- to set the stage to access **SADNESS** when emotionally ready

*When drawing into play, we are transferring into the arms of NATURE itself so it can gently and wisely restore lost feelings*

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Emotions are not at work, so the inhibition of feelings is reversed

Play is safe so feelings won't get hurt

Emotions are freer to move and so more likely to be felt and identified

Emotions are easier to feel when one step removed from real life

Words or their lack, do not get in the way

Feelings of futility are much easier to access

*Feelings are recovered when emotions are at play*

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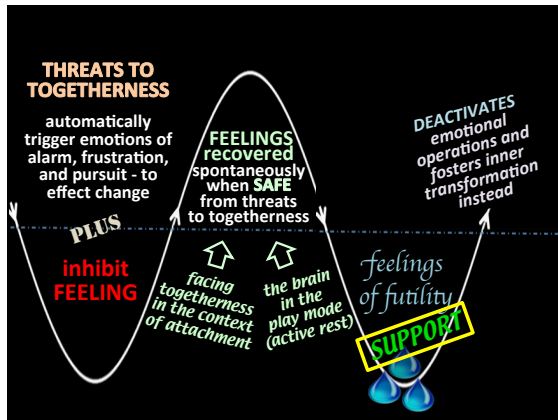
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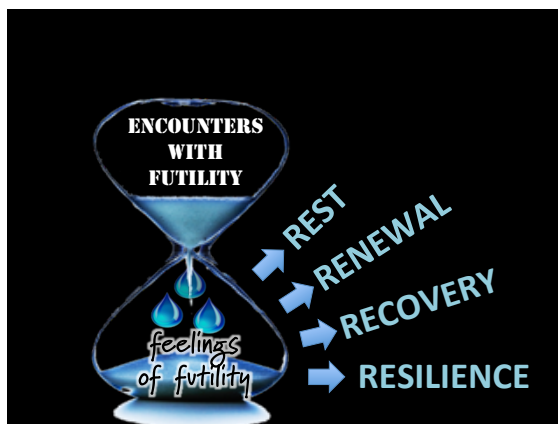
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*Sadness is easier to access when emotions are at play*

- the engagement of play is usually greater than the aversion to sadness, setting the stage for what needs to happen
- shifts the locus from the 'head' to the 'heart'
- removes the impediments to 'tears', including shame and self-consciousness
- gives us something to 'cry' about that is one step removed and thus not too much to bear
- suffering is contained and so much easier to bear in the play mode, and sadness feels 'sweeter'
- finds & releases stuck or orphaned sadness, making it easier to access wordless tears

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**PRESS PAUSE**

- ... in our pursuit of happiness
- ... in avoiding negative thoughts
- ... in attempting not to be upset
- ... in trying to stay in perspective
- ... in attempting to stay optimistic
- ... in trying to cheer each other up
- ... in putting limits on grief and sorrow
- ... in denying that the glass is half empty
- ... in trying to change the Eeyores into Tiggers

**& PLAY**

into the **SADNESS** whose task it is to facilitate needed endings, strengthen as required, and deliver us back to what happiness exists

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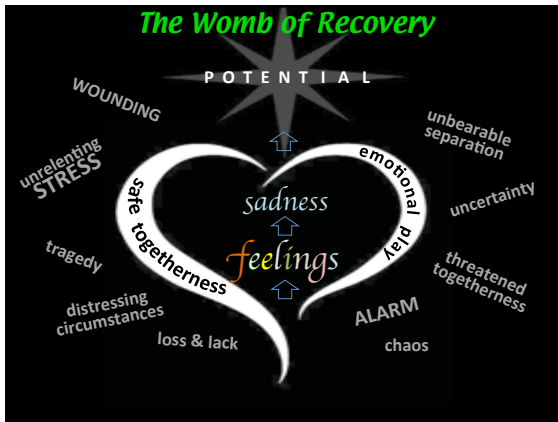
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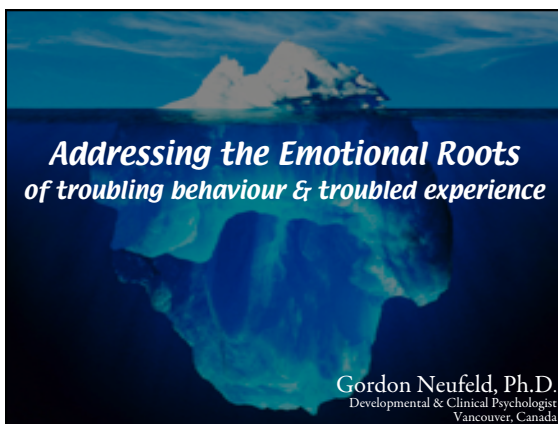
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