

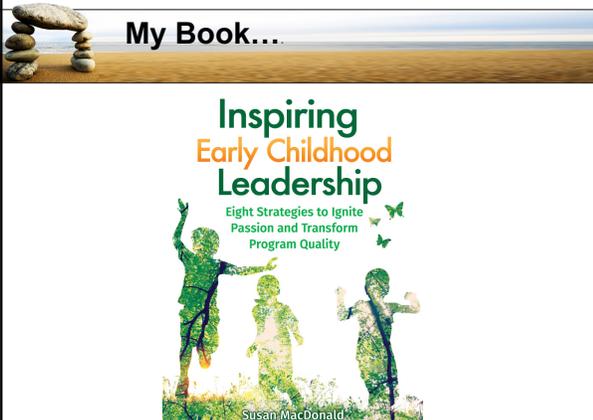
Early Childhood Investigations Webinar
February 11, 2019



Strengths-Based Communication – The Key to Building Positive Relationships



My Book...



Inspiring Early Childhood Leadership
Eight Strategies to Ignite Passion and Transform Program Quality
Susan MacDonald



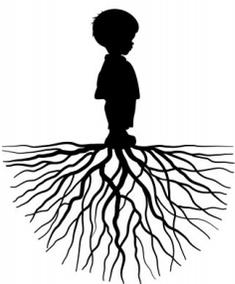
Time for Change is NOW!

“The possibility for substantial progress in our ability to dramatically improve the life prospects of all young children in real. The time to aim higher is NOW”

- From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families
Center on the Developing Child Harvard University –
<http://developingchild.harvard.edu>



Our Children Can't Wait!



“There are only 2,000 days between the newborn baby and when that child will show up in kindergarten. It is urgent that we use the best scientific information to make sure we support all our children so they can succeed in school. Our children can't wait.”

- Dr. Andrew Melzoff, University of Washington Institute for Learning and Brain Science



Toxic Stress





Cultivates Positive Relationships

- Builds Trust
- Communicates confidence
- Shifts conversations
- Reveals silver linings
- Gets people into flow






Create a Positive Classroom Culture

- The culture of the classroom teaches!
- The messages sent through the culture of the classroom communicate to students what it means to think and learn well
- These messages are a curriculum in themselves, teaching students how to learn and ways of thinking

• Harvard Project Zero – Cultures of Thinking, pz.harvard.edu/projects/cultures-of-thinking



Positive Climate = Positive Communication

Organizational Climate - is the distinct atmosphere that characterizes work settings

- it is made up of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and values of *ALL* the individuals in the work setting
- it influences our behavior, relationships, feelings and job performance



NAEYC Accreditation Standards...

1.B. – Building Positive Relationships between Teachers and Children

Teaching staff foster children’s emotional well-being by demonstrating respect for children and creating a positive emotional climate as reflected in behaviors such as frequent social conversations, joint laughter, and affection



Section III: Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

- In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained.
- Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs.
- The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace.



NAEYC Code of Ethics

Core Values...

- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

Strength Based Focus

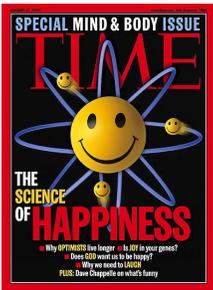
- Increases Engagement
- Creates Collaborative Teams
- Improves Student Learning
- Increases Productivity
- Restores HOPE!



The Upside of Strengths-Based Change

Discovering and exploring strengths awakens curiosity, engagement, cooperation, and the alignment of organizational systems.

It is a better way to change.



Create a Supportive Environment

When a flower doesn't bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.

-Alexander den Heijer





Heliotropic Principle

“The person-centered approach rests on a basic trust in human beings, and in all organisms, to flow toward the constructive fulfillment of their inherent possibilities.”
- Carl Rogers





Observable Actions of Highly Successful Teams..

When you encounter a group with good chemistry, you know it instantly...you see..

- Lots of short, energetic exchanges (no long speeches)
- High levels of mixing: everyone talks to everyone
- Few interruptions
- Lots of questions
- Intensive, active listening
- Humor, laughter Joy
- Small attentive courtesies (thank-yous, opening doors, etc)

Culture Code, page 8



Make Sure Everyone has a Voice

- Spotlight and value full-group contribution
- No meeting ends without everyone sharing something
- Hold regular reviews of work/projects in which anyone can provide feedback
- Establish regular forums where anyone can bring an issue or question before the team, no matter how controversial



Over Communicate Expectations

- Be explicit
- Send clear messages / signals that establish expectations
- Model communication
- Align language and roles
- Collaborate
- Go out of your way to help others

Culture Code, p. 159



Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

“When relationships are *not* nurtured by a sense of appreciation, the results are predictable:

- Team members will experience a lack of connectedness with others
- Workers will tend to become discouraged, feeling “There is always more to do and no one appreciates what I’m doing.”
- Employees will begin to complain about their work, their colleagues, and their supervisor.
- Eventually, team members start to think seriously about leaving the organization and they begin to search for other employment.” P. 22



Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

1. Words of Affirmation – Communicate a Positive Message to One Another
2. Quality Time – Giving your Focused Attention to Another Person
3. Acts of Service – Make Time to Help Each Other
4. Tangible Gifts – Giving the Right (small, simple) Gift Communicates a Powerful Message of Thanks
5. Physical Touch – A Handshake, High Five, Pat on the back



Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

- Appreciation = Engagement
- “Understanding what makes you and your co-workers feel encouraged can significantly improve your relationship in the workplace, increase your sense of engagement, and create a more positive work environment.”
P. 27



Workplace Engagement Poll Question

- What percent of employees are engaged at work?
 - 90%
 - 75%
 - 50%
 - 33%
 - 15%



POLL



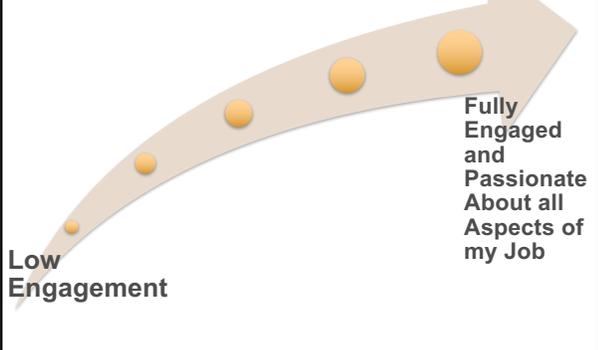
Engagement

The current Gallop Poll data released in March 2015 reveals that “only a third of U.S. employees are engaged at work, half (50.3 %) are ‘not engaged’ and 16.8% are ‘actively disengaged.’



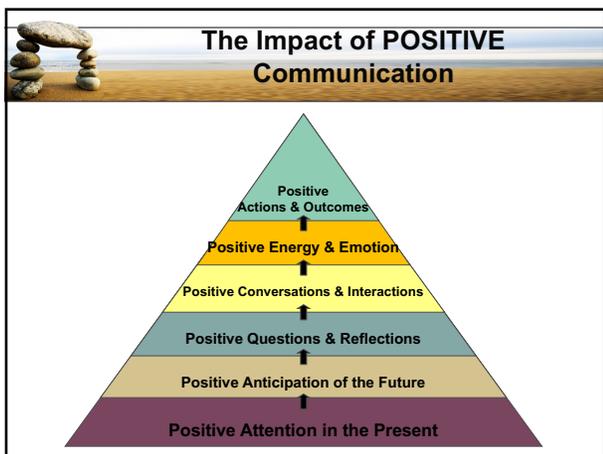
Three Types Of Employees...

1. **Engaged** – employees who work with passion and feel a deep connection to their work. They are involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace.
2. **Not Engaged** – Employees who are essentially “checked out.” They are sleep walking through their workdays, putting time but not **ENERGY** or **PASSION** into their workdays
3. **Actively Disengaged** – Employees who are not just unhappy at work, they are actively acting out their unhappiness. Everyday these workers undermine what their engaged coworkers accomplish.

Low Engagement

Fully Engaged and Passionate About all Aspects of my Job



Core Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry

- What we focus on becomes our reality
- Vitality is always there to be discovered
- People increase their confidence for change when they build on what they know

Five Core Strategies of Appreciative Leadership

- **Inquiry** – Ask positively powerful questions
- **Illuminate** – Bring out the best in people and situations
- **Inclusion** – Engage with people to coauthor the future
- **Inspiration** – Awaken the creative spirit
- **Integrity** – Make choices for the good of the whole (page 23, Appreciative Leadership)



Strength-Based Communication Techniques:

- Listening - LISTEN!
- Acknowledging and Validating
- Empowering Questions
- Inspiring
- Consciousness



Listening Takes Priority

- Be present
- Listen carefully, attentively, patiently, and deeply





How Do I Listen?



- "The heart of dialogue is a simple but profound capacity to listen. **Listening requires we not only hear the words, but also embrace, accept, and gradually let go of our own inner clamoring.** ... This means listening not only to others but also to ourselves and our reactions."

- William Isaacs, Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together

Quiet Listening



WAIT and SEE

- Why
- Am
- I
- Talking ?

and

- Stop
- Explaining
- Everything !



Asking Strengths-Based Questions

- Best Experiences
- Core Values
- Supporting Conditions
- Three Wishes





Empowering Questions

- *Tell me about one of your best experiences in the classroom lately.*
- *What is one of the most important lessons you have learned in your role as an early childhood educator? What else?*
- *What led you to go into early childhood field in the first place?*
- *Tell me about what you value most in your work. What else?*
- *Tell me about a challenging situation that you handled well. What's the silver lining in that situation? What else?*
- *Tell me about what helps you to be your best. What else?*
- *If you had 3 wishes to transform your work in the classroom – what would they be?*



Asking Good Questions

- Instead of good answers we need good questions; conversational questions, expansive questions that are informed by the conversation itself, the story you are listening to.
- Many questions are statements or judgments, which are posed in an attempt to get the other person to agree instead of coming from an exploration of our own ignorance.
- Questions as starting points or invitations for conversations, creating springboards for the future.
- Capacity to raise penetrating questions that challenge current operating assumptions.



Questions for Teams to Reframe Difficult Situations

- In what ways will our work together be better after having worked through this?
- What strengths does this situation, and what is good about it?
- What do we stand to learn or gain from this?
- Who do we know who deals well with these types of situations, and what can we learn from him or her? What questions do we want to ask this person?



- When was a time in the past when we dealt successfully with a similar situation, and what can we apply from that?
- What are our greatest strengths, and how can we use them to help us in this situation?
- What are two good things that could possibly come out of this?
- How will the learning from this situation spill over into other areas of our work?



The Flip -

A three-step process for moving from negative conversations to affirmative questions:

1. When presented with a complaint or a problem, listen carefully. Repeat what is said to be sure both that you understand it and that the other person feels heard.
2. Ask, "What is it that you really want? I understand that you are not happy with the way things are, but tell me what is it that you want instead?"
3. Reflect what you heard – The Flip. Describe what the person really wants in a two- or three word phrase – an affirmative topic."
(Whitney, 37)



Developing A Supportive Environment

- Ensure all team members respect each other
- Ensure there is an identified method to resolve conflict
- Ensure participants understand and respect the classroom team as a safe place to voice ideas, thoughts and opinions
- Concerns, issues and mistakes are openly shared and discussed

 **Tips and Strategies**

- Ensure all team members have a chance to provide input
- Encourage all team members to use each other as a resource
- Identify the core values that guide their classroom
- Share their vision and commitment to co-teaching with colleagues
- Engage in collaborative planning
- Identify clear roles and responsibilities
- Establish mutually agreed-upon classroom procedures

 **After Action Reviews (AAR) for Teams**

For teams to be successful they need to continually assess their performance and be willing to learn from their success and challenges. First used by the Army on combat missions, the AAR protocol is a structured approach for reflecting upon the teams work and learning what worked well and what pitfalls you can avoid in the future.

 **AAR - After Action Review**

1. What were our intended results?
2. What were our actual results?
3. What caused our results?
4. What will we do the same next time?
5. What will we do differently?



Some Guidelines:

- Participants need to be open and honest
- Everyone on the team must participate
- There are no right or wrong answers
- Discussions focused on the results of a project or event
- Identification of ways to continue what was done well
- Recommendations for overcoming challenges that were faced
- Be creative in proposing solutions to barriers



BAR – Before Action Review

1. What are out intended results?
2. What challenges can we anticipate?
3. What have we or others learned from similar situations?
4. What will make us successful this time?



Team Discussion Planning Form

Team Discussion Planning Form

Name _____

Professional challenge (with a colleague, classroom dynamic, etc.) _____

Key goals for team discussion: _____

Key questions to gain a broader perspective on the challenge: _____

Key questions to define the issues that needs to be addressed: _____

Key questions to define action steps: _____

Plan for follow-up: _____

Developed by Susan MacDonald, Inspiring New Perspectives
<http://www.inspiringnewperspectives.com> - www.inspiringnewperspectives.com



Assessing Your Work as a Team

Assessing Your Work as a Team

Directions: Circle the number that best reflects how true each of the stated descriptions is for your team

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	5
1. We engage in open and honest communication.	1	2	3	4	5	5
2. Everyone has a chance to participate in decision making.	1	2	3	4	5	5
3. We all feel comfortable expressing our thoughts and ideas during team meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	5
4. We listen actively to one another and try not to interrupt.	1	2	3	4	5	5
5. We cooperate to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5	5
6. We all follow through on the commitments we make.	1	2	3	4	5	5
7. We continually clarify everyone's team responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	5
8. Conflicts are dealt with constructively, respecting differing points of view.	1	2	3	4	5	5
9. We seek and give feedback to each other.	1	2	3	4	5	5
10. We regularly reflect on and evaluate the progress we are making towards achieving our goals for children and families.	1	2	3	4	5	5

Source: Adapted from *Leading Adult Learning: Supporting Adult Development in Our Schools* by Eleanor Drago-Severson, p. 96



Mother Teresa

“ I can do things that you cannot. You can do things that I cannot. Together we can do great things.”





S.H.I.F.T.

Creating Positive Lasting Changes in Your Life and Work!

- Take 100% Responsibility for Your Life
- Raise Your Energy and Consciousness
- Be the Leader
- Have More Fun!
- Not One, But Two

• Adapted from the IPEC S.H.I.F.T. Strategies to Help Innovative, Focused Transformation (SHIFT) is a movement that facilitates proactive change to recreate any, and all, Aspects of our lives – our careers, our communities, our families, our society.

Resources!



Join me in Italy – June 22 – 28, 2019

Early Childhood Leadership: Creating a Deliberately Developmental School Culture

<http://internationalstudytours.org/mercatello-sul-metauro-2019-tour/>




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