

Q & A from Social-Emotional Learning Lecture

Q: I think it is so difficult to say the right thing when the child is feeling disappointed. How do we as parents say the right thing?

A: Do you know how to say the right thing to yourself when you're disappointed? If you don't know what to say to them ask yourself "what do I say to myself?" How do you yourself deal with disappointment? Deal with disappoint in front of your kids, and that is what you "say." Children do as we do, not as we say.

Q: How do we support kids who react wildly physically aggressive without crossing personal space/boundaries? (Child is 6-7 years old)

A: At this age, kids are likely influenced by something (another kid, TV, mentor, someone or something that showed them that they can act this way). This needs to be checked. Also, when someone acts physically they most probably feel that they don't have the time or words to explain themselves so it's faster to be physical. Search for the "Wheel of Emotions" on the internet. Use it as a guide to ask your child "What do you feel?" and have them be specific.

Q: Why do we use Dabrowski's overexcitabilities and how do we measure IQ, EQ, SQ, and CQ?

A: Dabrowski's overexcitabilities are commonly experienced in gifted individuals and often they have three or more overexcitabilities. We try to give kids and adults a good understanding of them because they learn the symptoms of each type of overexcitability and thus understand themselves better. This way they can reach a feeling of belonging much faster.

When we are talking about these things we do not care about tests or to see numbers for us to measure their existence. We care to see improvement. The World Game is a good place to start. We want to provide the tools and help them understand these quotients and how to use them for themselves. We want to see the progress. We create the environment appropriate to work on and learn about these things.

More information available about overexcitabilities on the Gifted Institute website and there is also an available documentary.

Q: There are individuals with a high IQ, but not high social and emotional quotients. They should work together, but how can they if they are not on same level?

A: When there is fluctuation of this type in a group, it is the best way for them to learn from each other. In a protected environment they feel safe to try, to fall, and then to get up and try again.

Q: How does one find motivation and keep being motivated to do something while maintain self-care and self-perseverance?

A: After helping find what is important to them and what interest them then motivation lies with the self-management skills that connect what interests them and what is important to them. Anything they do to satisfy what is important to them in a way that they are interested is what gets them motivated and doing. Self-management skills are needed for self-care. How do you fuel yourself? (eat, sleep, waking up, exercise). When we realize health is the most important thing and loving ourselves is needed for the entirety of our lives, we do the self-care that is needed in order to keep us focused on what we want.

Q: Is there any general lack of skills the gifted find difficult due to perfectionism?

A: Most of the time they do not have the skills for how to face disappointment, how to face failure, and how to face loss. The loss is the loss that comes from rejection, and in general there is a heightened fear of rejection. Gifted individuals need to be taught how to bounce back, how it is most important to have a really good opinion about themselves, and how to face rejection.

Q: How do you help underperformers and those who believe that it is better to not try than to risk failing? (Child is 10 years old)

A: We either underperform or perform, because you cannot “overperform.” We can work with a child to discover “Why do you perform that acting role over the other acting role?” In other words, whether they underperform or perform, there is some kind of action happening. If we think of that action as taking on a role – either a victim role or a protagonist role – the child chooses one. We can explore the reasons they choose a particular role and the fears possibly connected to it, and create motivation and work on self-management skills needed that lead to the child performing in a way that the child is not afraid of.

Q: As a parents, how do we help children disappointed with school and communication with some teachers?

When someone is extremely disappointed they feel despair. Despair equals the feeling of suffering without meaning. If you find meaning to the suffering, then despair is taken away. First, help the child find meaning. What’s the lesson learned? What can you lean best from this? Help the child find this for themselves. If the parents/guardian find the meaning, then child learns what you focus on and not what meaning it has for them. Disappoint equals expectations minus reality. The more the child realizes their expectations and perhaps their imaginal overexcitability and how it affects them facing reality, then disappoint will be easier.

Q: How can we help a teenager turn off their inner critic/negative self-talk? Especially when they have high expectations and do not meet these expectations?

A: That's the inner voice being taught for many years. The inner voice comes from around them. Most likely, the family was very judgmental – not necessarily in a harsh way. We may have shared the criticism but did not give to the child the solution on how to do whatever action was being asked or expected. Our inner critic is a style of being authoritarian to ourselves. Being disappointed in ourselves. We may have high expectations with not a lot of guidance on how to meet them. Start being the role model that you would love to see your child being to themselves.

Q: What do you learn is the meaning of suffering when the suffering is with educational system? How about when the child feels like they do not have friends? (Child is 12 years old)

A: What we are teaching them is how to find meaning. Do not create the meaning for them.

When we are not able to make friends, you may ask, what is making a friend? Making a friend is a matter of luck. Every day we find people that we do not know and people that we do know. There are coworkers, peers, people in the same class, people you have to work with. You might not have friends, but you can have the skills of a good host. Being able to listen to people, saying “hi”, being welcoming, being the person that makes them happier and feel good. And maybe then this brings you close to having a friend. Then come in inclusion and exclusion skills to be able to be okay with yourself and interact with others in a way that aligns with who you are as well.