*An Introduction to the Relational Parenting Approach: Concepts, Theory, and Technique*

*\*\* Turning Point Training \*\**

***September 24, 2013***

* Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals
* Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting
* Suggested References (General and Scientific)

*James Tobin, Ph.D.*

Licensed Psychologist PSY 22074

220 Newport Center Drive, Suite 1

Newport Beach, CA 92660

949-338-4388

Email: [jt@jamestobinphd.com](mailto:jt@jamestobinphd.com)

Website: [www.jamestobinphd.com](http://www.jamestobinphd.com)

Module I:

Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed –

What Videotaped Analysis Reveals

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**A Parent-Teen Dialogue: Transcript**

***Transcript:***

**A Parent-Teen Dialogue**

***(note: the transcript is fictionally created to protect patient privacy but represents the characteristic features, tendencies, and psychological distress of family members common in Dr. Tobin’s practice)***

|  |
| --- |
| *F: Father*  *M: Mother*  *D: Daughter* |

M: So, where do you wanna start,1 this is your meeting.2 It’s your serve--3

D: My meeting?--4 , well, I want you guys to back off,5 you’re on top of me and it sucks because I’m doing everything I’m supposed to do, and it’s still not enough for you--6

M: I can’t believe you, Samanth!7 We’re on top of you?8 Yeah, we’re on you.9 Let’s talk about what’s not getting done10– where do I start, I should have made a list11…. And what’s on the list is important12 … I don’t know what you expect, we give you everything, your father works long hours, I have in the past and now I take care of you and the girls, what do you think we live for13 – we live for you kids.14 That’s it!15 You are our lives.16  And, well, take this morning--17

D: What about this morning?18

M: I asked you to make the bed before Annie [housekeeper] came over, you didn’t do that, you didn’t feed the cat, the registration thing for the SAT class you didn’t send in,19 it’s like what do you expect,20 we’re on you because we have to be on you and if we’re not, well, look at what happened this year—21

D: That’s what I mean!22 How long will I be told what I haven’t done – or what I did that was wrong?!23 … The other day I went to tennis practice, I dropped off the stuff at school for the community service thing, I picked up Jenn [sister] from the tutor’s, I washed the cars, and then I vacuumed because that was on the list24… your list, Mom, which drives me crazy!25…. Then I studied for the stupid test-prep service and sent the form in online …… what else am I supposed to do?26 Lisa was at the beach all day, my friends are like enjoying their summers, like they’re supposed to27 …. you and Dad are on me, all the time,28 and I’m good,29 I do most things I’m expected to do (tearful), maybe not all of them, all the time, but most things I’d say, I try – no other kids are held to such standards – Lisa isn’t, Tom isn’t, Sandra isn’t – you know how her parents are--30

F: We’re not like other parents.31 And we never will be.32

D: How long will I be on probation?33 It’s ridiculous.34 What do I have to do to prove that I’m good, that I’m responsible?35

M: Don’t start that routine again.36 How long are you gonna say that?37 This is a pivotal time for you.38 We’re still seething over the last 4 months – in the passenger’s seat with your best friend driving who was legally drunk? And then getting caught with pot at a school dance!?39 How can we trust you?!40 Are you nuts?!41 I trusted you before, I always did, but you broke that …. You broke it and that’s just the reality--42

D: Broke it?!43 It was never fucking there—44

M: Yes it was, sweetie!45

F: Honey, you pick up the paper and it’s one tragedy after another – bodies thrown 100 feet from cars on the 405 crashing with drunks … getting high, the whole lifestyle: is that gonna be you?46 How the hell do you think your mother and I would not do everything in our power … we’re not gonna let that happen to you--47

D: That is not me!48 See, this is how it always is – we get nowhere.49

F: Honey, you’re an adolescent.50 When I was an adolescent, I started drinking, using, just like you – I was in an alcoholic family and I didn’t even know it51 … you’re lucky; you’re in a different place—52

D: How am I in a different place?53 You’re an alcoholic, Mom drinks, takes her Ambien and Ativan and whatever else --, how is that any different?54

F: It’s different because we don’t want you to go down the same road we went down …55. And there is a way out for you,56 we have to stay on top of you because the way out is your education, your activities, the tennis, the writing you do, the college applications, …57 The letter from Princeton has been sitting on your desk unopened for a month?!58 What the hell is going on with that?--59

D: Another thing I haven’t done (tearful)--60

M: We’re not saying that, hon, we’re saying that you have so many gifts, so much potential, that we want you to capitalize on that, to use it, to have a life …61

F: You have what I didn’t have. 62 And it took me 20 years to recover, though the alcoholic thinking is always there, it will always be there …63 I need to push you, you haven’t convinced me you’re on top of things, so I just don’t know, I don’t have any idea;64 just get the stuff done and let me know, just shoot me an email, send me a text – Dad, I sent this in, just wanted to let you know … I mean, how hard is that?65

D: Have you thought maybe there’s a reason why I don’t want to do that?--66

M: Whatever the reason, it doesn’t matter!67 These are just the practical things of life, Samanth ….68 They’ve got to get done.69 Maybe you have too much lounge time on your hands – you’re too preoccupied with yourself.70 When I was growing up, there was me and my sisters, Grammy was working and I had to work and that’s what I did since I was a kid, it was survival …71 you will never know what that’s like ….. 72 you and your sisters have the privileges I didn’t, and I think it makes you a little too sensitive, you get into your own head and get all worried and worked up and think the world’s out to get you, that we are out to get you, and it’s not true ….73 Daddy and I love you, we want the very best for you, we want you to make the A’s and do the tennis thing and go on recruiting trips and have what we didn’t have.74 You can’t get there the way you’re doing it.75 I mean, come on! 76 And I have to keep track of things because Daddy’s at work and he barely has time to email me to make sure what’s getting done is getting done and so I have to go to you ….77 Do you think I like being in the middle?--78

D: I think you do like it! Since I was little, you-- 79

M: What?!80

D: Mom, you’re over the top – it’s crazy.81 Drama is your fucking middle name.82  Remember when you forgot to make the vet appointment last week, it was like, Oh my god, World War III, it was like the world was going to end;83 it’s a cat, Mom …84 I wasn’t at the courts last week right at 5:00 because Michael picked me up to go and get the rackets down on PCH ...85 we were 3 miles away and you went ballistic and thought we were doing crack or having sex or whatever you thought we were doing, I don’t even know anymore …86 it’s like you’re imagining all this drama when there isn’t any—87

M: There isn’t any?! –88 what drama do you think I imagined when I got the call at 2:00 AM in March when you were at xxxxxx Police Station and me and Daddy needed to come down to get you …89. What drama—90

D: I know, I know, 91 but I’m 16, I make mistakes, 92 I mean it’s like I’m supposed to be perfect –93 this achievement thing is over the top, it drives me nuts, I can’t do it, I cannot not make mistakes—94

F: If I don’t pound it into your head you just don’t seem to get it95 …. How do you think I got to business school, and on to the firm,96 … do you realize the competition out there, do you want to be like Jack and move in with your parents?-- 97

D: I’m not Jack,98 I’m not you, 99 and I’m not you, Mom ….100 Why do you think I’m somebody else? 101 I’m me, goddammit –102

M:We’re just trying to help you, protect you! 103 You get so angry at us when we’re —104

D: You think?!105

F: But honey, you remind me of me, 106 and I know where you’re going …107 I partied in high school, I took some beers, I took some pot, and what I thought it was it wasn’t, and I couldn’t handle it – one was never enough 108…. You don’t know that yet, it’s our job to teach you.109 That’s our job as parents – to steer you, to guide you, and you’ve got to understand certain things—110

D: I’m supposed to understand all these things but I’m only 16 – isn’t that a double-standard, Dad?111  Don’t I have to experience life for myself?! 112

M: You should be an attorney, dear. 113 You can debate with the best of them to get what you want which is what??? – to sit around the whole summer, go out at night and go to Michael’s, -- get to stuff when you get to it?–114

D: I don’t even know what I want, Mom, so your little theory about me is wrong115 ….. in your mind I’m always the bad guy--116

F: We want you to do what you need to do to become a woman, to have confidence, to do whatever you want in the world, remember how we talked about this?117 That it’s not about the money or the prestige it’s about being in the position to accomplish whatever you want—118

D: But I don’t know what I want!119 And I hate to say it to you 120 – I’ve told Dr. Tobin, he knows121—I don’t have confidence in myself.122 You didn’t know that, did you?!123 I have the worst fucking confidence of anyone I know – I can’t stand myself sometimes.124 I think people are staring at me, I don’t like my body, I think my grades are mostly due to all the tutoring and not my real intelligence—125

M: That’s not good, honey.126 You should have confidence,127 you’re not thinking right.128 You have so much.129

D: So typical130 …

…..

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Introduction**

1. Many parents’ efforts at controlling or influencing their teenage child don’t work. Due to this problem, parents’ roles with regard to their children **erode and devolve over time and become quite minimal and highly restricted**, i.e., policeman, worry-wart, micro-manager, etc. Meanwhile, the teen’s acting out and/or psychiatric symptoms/distress consistently increases.
2. Parents often view the establishment of **control/influence/power/punishment/the instillation of moral values** and “correct” behavior into their child **as the sole focus of their parenting efforts.**
3. In today’s climate, **teens are actually less emotionally well-developed during adolescence than in prior generations**; these deficiencies have been shown to exist across numerous factors including autonomy, self-generative initiation capacities, communication of feelings, internal regulation of emotion, and the maintenance of relationships.
4. Due to these deficient capacities, and the adolescent’s typical denial of them, the common position parents are forced to take with regard to their teen is to **inject or intrude themselves into their teen’s life (i.e., with harsh, punitive authoritative parenting; micro-management; frustration, etc.)**, hoping to set things on the right course. Research findings and clinical evidence have convincingly shown that this position is **counter-productive to aiding in the adolescent’s development and overall psychological and emotional health.**

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Introduction**

1. **Current research suggests that adolescents want and need a relationship with their parents** (prior notions that that the teen simply wants to move out of the home into the peer group have been refuted) **and to be known and recognized by their parents as a unique individual.** My approach toward helping parents with their teens involves helping parents **shift their parenting focus to listening and relating to their child.**
2. The parents’ capacity to relate to their child **directly promotes other central functions of parenting including the parents’ “authoritative” capacity and ability to influence. In my practice, it seems as if parents believe that the “relational functions” of parenting** are secondary and unrelated to these other parenting functions (e.g., Dad and son can play catch together, but this has nothing to do with Dad’s enforcing of a curfew – THIS IS NOT TRUE!). **Most research shows that the quality of the parent-child relationship is at least correlated with, if not predictive of, the child’s overall level of adjustment currently and in the future.**

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

**#1: Constriction vs. Expansion**

* The relational approach views the optimal dialogue between family members as moving from communications of shorter duration to longer duration.
* The parents’ capacity to evoke elaboration in their teen’s communications reflects the overall quality of the relationship.

**#2: Interruptions/Silences between Change-Overs**

* The relational approach seeks to limit interruptions and actively utilizes meaningful silences.
* Create spaces for self-reflection.

**#3: Cues**

* The relational approach capitalizes on opportunities for parents to learn more from their teen before responding and asserting a viewpoint or opinion.
* The premise is that learning in detail what the teen is thinking or feeling neutralizes the interaction and begins to establish the parents’ power/capacity to influence.

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

**#4: Judgment (“Good” vs. “Bad,” “Right” vs. “Not Right”) of Inner Reality**

* Anongoing pattern of good vs. bad judgments of the child’s feelings may result in her *objectification* of her own inner states/her own self (i.e., “if I feel x, that’s good, but if I feel y, that’s bad); this, of course, is less preferable than a dialogue with parents that stimulates in the adolescent self-acceptance and a curiosity about her own feeling *states.*
* Parents’ negation of their child’s thoughts or feelings (e.g., “you shouldn’t feel that way,” or “it’s not good for you to feel that”) will often have the opposite effect intended by parents, i.e., the teen will remain further entrenched in and/or attached to her feelings**, largely to use what she feels as a means of differentiating from her parents. If parents communicate judgment, they are then creating the very monster they fear, i.e., their child will attach to what is “disproved” of by the parents (which often contains negative self-concept material) and avoid the more positive elements of their self-concept.**

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

**5:“Process” vs. “Content”**

* Emphasis is on *how* the dialogue is unfolding (tone, feelings, non-verbals, strains, impasses, etc.) between parent and child instead of simply what is being said.
* I encourage parents to comment directly on the “process” in dialogue with their teen and to inquire about it, without judgment or blame. To focus on “process**,” I encourage parents to de-emphasize their agenda in discussions with their child.**

**#6: Induction and Role-Responsiveness**

* Each family member is gradually indoctrinated into roles which are taken up and enacted in a repetitive fashion.
* The entry of the teen in treatment usually reflects an unconscious wish in the family for the induced roles to be deconstructed and revised.
* Parents must acknowledge the induced roles they consistently co-create and enact with each other and with their children; **once this has occurred, the next challenge is for parents to dis-embed themselves from such processes and resist the role they are being forced to play.**

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

**#7: Triangulation**

* The relational approach sensitizes parents to “triad” arrangements that may occur in family dynamics for any number of reasons, often to avoid/deny relatedness between specific family members.
* Triangulation is a form of induction in the family system in which roles/scripts are triggered in an effort to defend against certain feelings, truths, or ways of relating that are unconsciously feared.

**#8: Containment**

* Containment has to do with the parent’s capacity to take what the teen is feeling, digest it psychologically, and transmit it back to the teen in a more manageable form so that she can continue to work with it.
* As parents listen to their teen without judgment or evaluation, they take in and “metabolize” her inner reality, thereby affirming and validating her experience of herself.

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

* **Containment also helps the parent “marinate” on the child’s experience and discover what the parent does not yet know about his/her child, thus recognizing a bit of discrepancy between what the parent has always thought about the child/concluded about the child and what the child actually is.**
* If the teen sees that her parent can tolerate all that she feels, and if the parents continuously feed back to her digested versions of her feelings along with curiosity in them, this will gradually enable the teen to **(1) tolerate and attach to her feelings (develop “subjectivity” or a unique sense of self and individuality),** and (2) regulation intense emotional experience on her own (i.e., approach the scope of her feelings as manageable, meaningful, and ultimately *separate* from her identity because they are just ***feeling states – not necessarily who he or she is***). It will also secure her view of her parent’s strength and credibility.

**#9: Over-Identification**

* The relational approach sensitizes parents to unconscious identifications with their child.
* Over-identification **limits parents’ capacity to listen and not assume things about their child.** **I emphasize to parents that their teen wants to be *known uniquely* by them and, specifically, not through a filter that characterizes more the identity of the parent than the identity of the child.**

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

**#10: Identity Diffusion/Narcissistic Attachment**

* The relational perspective acknowledges that some parents may have unresolved issues (related to lack of fulfillment, failed aspirations, depression, marital discord, envy of their child’s circumstances, guilt, distress re: their own family of origin, etc.) which **challenge their capacity to view their child as a separate and distinct being** **(this is known as “identity diffusion”).**
* In some families and for a variety of reasons, ***narcissistic attachment patterns may prevail and can be expressed to children in various ways, communicating to the child that he or she is not SEPARATE nor DISTINCT from the parents and NEVER SHOULD BE.***  This is often expressed in the parents’ idealized dream for or vision of the child (i.e., in which the parents’ lives become less important than the child’s and/or the parents attempt to remedy their own unresolved issues through the teen’s success or happiness).

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

* ***These narcissistic attachment tensions typically place a significant psychological burden on the teen: the teen wants to SEPARATE and BE SEEN, RECOGNIZED AND KNOWN AS UNIQUE AND DISTINCT and the parents (unconsciously or otherwise) attempt to thwart this natural evolution of the child’s development ….. what then transpires is the teen’s often dramatic attempts to differentiate from the parents.***
* There are three types of differentiation efforts adolescents use in these circumstances:

1.) ***Self-sabotage/under-achievement***: the teen directly challenges the parent’s narcissistic wish for the teen by resisting becoming the wish or acting in accordance with the parents’ vision of the child. Acting-out behaviors, substance abuse, eating disorders, etc. may be conceptualized from this perspective and work well in achieving the developmental need for differentiation.

***Module I: Parent-Teen Conflict Deconstructed – What Videotaped Analysis Reveals***

**Transcript Review & Ten Key Relational Concepts**

2.) ***The “false self”:*** when attempts at differentiation on the part of the teen have been attempted and failed, the teen may give up on making further attempts at differentiation; as a result, the teen surrenders to the parent’s narcissistic wish for or vision of the child (literally, the teen gives up on the development of their own unique identity). In this scenario, the teen “identifies” with the parent’s narcissistic wish or vision and embodies it/becomes it (THROUGH MIMICRY), which is **often manifested in significant achievement and compliance.**

3.) ***Identification with the parent (“cloning”):*** in this attempt at differentiation, the teen resists the parent’s narcissistic wish by, instead, **becoming the parent.** Literally, bit by bit the teen unconsciously takes on the attitudes, characteristics, and emotional style of the parent (e.g., “droning” the parent). This is the child’s ultimate accomplishment and the narcissistic parent’s worst fear: the child will not become the parent’s dream or vision but, instead, will be all that is unresolved (“broken”; “dysfunctional”) in the parent.

Module II:

The Three Components of Listening

in Relational Parenting

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

*D: “Why are you spying on me?”*

*M: “I am not spying on you; you don’t tell me things, so I need to find out some other way.”*

*D: “That’s not fair. I tell you things. But I need my privacy. I’m 16.”*

*M: “You’re an immature 16, and you don’t know what you’re doing. Sending texts about a sex party – are you out of your mind?”*

*D: “It wasn’t a sex party, Mom. That’s just what you put together about what we were talking about. It’s in your own mind. You’re going crazy thinking we’re doing all these things.”*

*M: “Then what was it? How was it not a sex party?”*

*D: “I’m not gonna tell you. You wouldn’t understand anyway, and you wouldn’t believe me! You never believe me!”*

*M: “You’re right, I don’t believe you because you don’t tell the truth. If you told the truth, then it would be a different story. Give me your phone right now.”*

*D: “I’m not going to give you my phone.”*

*M: “Then you must be hiding something.”*

*D: “You’re right, Mom. I’m hiding something. I’m hiding the sex party we are planning.”*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting**

* Relational Parenting involves 3 components of listening (these listening modes need to be established for the parent to fulfill a RELATAIONAL FUNCTION with their child):

***(1) Accurate Reflection***

***(2) Containment***

***(3) Intersubjective Relatedness***

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**I: Accurate Reflection**

|  |
| --- |
| *Reflective listening involves mirroring what has just been said, without judgment or commentary, and capturing the essence of the entire utterance. Reflection must be accurate, not biased or distorted. This may seem easy, but it is actually very difficult.* |

***D: “That’s not fair. I tell you things. But I need my privacy. I’m 16.”***

***M: “You’re an immature 16, and you don’t know what you’re doing. Sending texts about a sex party – are you out of your mind?”***

*What is an alternative response the mother could have made that is “accurate reflection”?*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**I: Accurate Reflection**

Accurate reflection immediately creates a new dynamic between the parent and teen:

* It shows the teen that the parent is listening;
* The sheer act of accurately reflecting guarantees that the parent moves **from an induced position into a position of neutrality/inquiry/curiosity;**

* It begins to **reveal the leaps in the child’s thinking and logic that are unclear** (and are exactly what the parent needs to pursue with curiosity to further understand the child – and help the child understand him- or herself).

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**II: Containment**

|  |
| --- |
| *Containment involves identifying tonally heated or difficult emotional material the teen is presenting and “taking in” the material, storing it within a calm, secure parental presence that allows it to marinate and* ***does not cover it up or move past it or attempt to resolve it*** *(the parent must be prepared to withstand storms of intense emotion, anger, rage, the child’s own self-hatred, and the child’s hatred toward the parent). Containment does not “fix” anything – it only contains and* ***increases the parent’s confusion and curiosity about the child! Good containment should disorient the parent and invite/active the child to elaborate and amplify their thoughts and feelings to the parent.*** |

***D: “I’m not gonna tell you. You wouldn’t understand anyway, and you wouldn’t believe me! You never believe me!”***

*What is an alternative response the mother could have made that is “containment”?*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**III: Intersubjective Relatedness**

*From an intersubjective perspective, accurate reflection and containment need to be utilized within a broader framework of relating to the child with an eye toward the child’s specific developmental needs AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT. At any moment, your adolescent may be approaching you from any of the following four states.*

* **I. Organizing State**: the child is not a self and needs to attach/connect to a self (the parent). *The parent’s intersubjective relational function here is to provide a solid, containing presence for the child to attach to.*
* **II. Symbiosis State**: the child begins to form a sense of self in close proximity to the parent; the child’s emerging identity is dependent and referential (what I see in my parent is me). *The parent’s intersubjective relational function here is to contain and mirror the child’s emotional states.*
* **III. Separation State**: the child is a self who is dependent yet separating (the parent is used, then rejected/admonished, by the child). *The parent’s intersubjective relational function here is to tolerate neutrally the child’s ambivalence (not take it personally), to inquire/be curious about the child’s desires, and to mirror/contain when necessary.*
* **IV. Individuation State**: the child has incorporated the parent and establishes independence from the parent. *The parent’s intersubjective relational function here is to celebrate the child’s emerging subjectivity, to express his/her own subjectivity to the child, and to mourn the “*loss” of the child.

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**Your Relational Function as Parent**

|  |
| --- |
| ***At any moment, your job is to “read” your child’s state (which comes in part from knowing your child well) and provide a response consistent with your child’s intersubjective level (“relational need”). If you engage your child at an intersubjective level that is a mismatch, a misattunement will occur. Misattunement is an error of listening/relating in which the parent does not provide the reflection, containment, and presence the child needs. If misattunements between child and parent become repetitive and patterned, the child’s psychological adaptation to these mismatches becomes permanently embedded in his or her personality.*** |

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**Examples**

Example #1.

Teen: “I don’t want to go to practice today. The coach is an asshole.”

Parent: “You have to go. You missed practice already this week.”

Teen: (sighs)

*1) assess the degree of accurate reflection, containment, and intersubjective relatedness indicated in the parent’s response, and 2) assess whether or not a misattunement**exists.*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

Example #2.

Teen: “My friends don’t have parents who ground them. It’s bizarre you do that.”

Parent: “When I was your age, I would never question my parents. You need to learn some damn respect!”

Teen: (starts to cry, then says, “You asshole!”)

*1) assess the degree of accurate reflection, containment, and intersubjective relatedness indicated in the parent’s response, and 2) assess whether or not a misattunement exists.*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**Examples**

Example #3.

Teen: “I had pot and I got caught. There’s this meeting on Thursday and you and Dad have to go. I am sorry, but that’s what happened. Deal with it.”

Parent: “You know Dad and I will be there for you.”

Teen: “Of course you will – and what are you gonna say? Your son is really screwed up?”

1. *assess the degree of accurate reflection, containment, and intersubjective relatedness indicated in the parent’s response, and 2) assess whether or not a misattunement exists.*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

Example #4.

Teen: “You are not hospitalizing me again. I am not going back to that fucking place. And if you try I will run away again. Don’t push me: you have no idea what I am capable of.”

Parent: “You don’t want to go back there, do you?”

Teen: “What I want? You don’t know what I want.”

*1) assess the degree of accurate reflection, containment, and intersubjective relatedness indicated in the parent’s response, and 2) assess whether or not a misattunement exists.*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**Sample Responses**

*Example #1. Better: “How is the coach an asshole?” Trickier, but perhaps optimal: “So you’re gonna let the asshole hold you back?”*

*Example #2. Better: “So you’re the only one who gets grounded – I could see how that would feel strange” or “I wonder how you deal with that?”*

*Example #3. Better: “I’m not sure what you mean?”*

*Eample #4. Better: “If you feel pushed, you’ll really do something. I don’t want that to happen.”*

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**The Impossible Task That is Parenting**

* The parenting task is to accurate reflect and contain, while simultaneously doing so at the right level of intersubjective relatedness the child needs or demands
* This is an IMPOSSIBLE TASK!
* ***The child’s capacity to be injured by a misattunement, and learn how to negotiate the failure, is “gold” for development and for the child’s capacity for healthy relationships in the future – love isn’t perfect, it’s imperfect.***
* If attunement occurs and the child’s subjectivity is promoted, this legitimizes the child’s emotional turmoil and helps the child understand that he/she is actually a self whose inner experience is of value and is not destructive. ***The child must learn, through the parent’s capacity to contain and survive the child’s severe emotional states, that the child’s emotions will not destroy him- or herself or another person***. **This provides the basis for self-experience, identity, individuality and mutuality (romantic love) – and makes it possible for the child to grow up and, as a young adult, discover his/her unique personhood.**

***Module II: The Three Components of Listening in Relational Parenting***

**The Impossible Task That is Parenting**

***Therefore, a parent’s major job in parenting (and in being husband and wife) is to model authentic intimacy – the parent creates a space for the child to process intense and unique emotional experience:***

Teen: “You’re a fucking whore and a bitch! Go ahead, say something now.”

Parent: “You must be trying to tell me something.”

Teen: “Yeah, that you’re a bitch and you always have been. Why do you think I am so depressed – it’s because you’re a fuck up.”

Parent: “I know I’ve made mistakes and they have hurt you, but I really love you even though you see me as a fuck-up.”

Teen: “That’s not love!”

Parent: “What isn’t love?”

Teen: “What you did to Daddy.”

Parent: “Tell me what you think I did.”

**Suggested General References**

*My Father Before Me: How Fathers and Sons Influence Each Other Throughout Their Lives* (Michael Diamond, 2007)

Block quotations from Michael Diamond included in this presentation are taken from his unpublished work in progress entitled *“Rivalry, Neglect, and Desire: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Fathering Throughout Life”* and are used by permission.

*Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive* (Daniel J. Siegel and Mary Hartzell)

*“Angels in the Nursery: The Intergenerational Transmission of Benevolent Parental Influences”* (Alicia F. Lieberman, Elena Padron, Patricia Van Horn and William W. Harris): Infant Mental Health Journal (2005), 26, pp. 504-520.

*Parent/Teen Breakthrough: The Relationship Approach* (Mira Kirshenbaum)

*Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters: 10 Secrets Every Father Should Know* (Margaret J. Meeker)

*Connection Parenting. Parenting through Connection instead of Coercion, Through Love Instead of Fear* (Pam Leo)

*The Language of Letting Go (Hazelden Meditation Series)* (Melody Beattie)

*The Power of Parental Influence and the Art of Feeling* (Tim Chapman)

*Parenting Teens with Love and Logic: Preparing Adolescents for Responsible Adulthood* (Foster Cline)

*The Whipped Parent: Hope for Parents Raising An Out-of-Control Teen* (Kimberly Abraham, Marney Studaker-Cordner, with Kathryn O’Dea)

*Surviving Your Adolescents: How to Manage – and Let Go of – Your 13-Year Old* (Second Edition) (Thomas W. Phelam)

*Allowance Before or After I’m Grounded?: Stop Fighting, Start Talking, and Get to Know Your Teen* (Vanessa Van Petten)

*Please Stop the Rollercoaster! How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride* (Sue Blaney)

*Having a Nervous Breakdown Being Their Mother* (Beth Harpaz)

*Take Out Your Nose Ring, Honey, We’re Going to Grandma’s: Hanging In, Holding On, and Letting Go of Your Teen* (Carleton Kendrick)

*Get Out of My Life …. But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall* (Anthony E. Wolf)

*12 Going on 29: Surviving Your Daughter’s Tween Years* (Silvana Clark)

*Secrets from the Sofa* (Kenneth Herman)

*Help Me with My Teenager! A Step-by-Step Guide for Parents That Works* (Christine Botto)

*Getting Through to Your Kids* (Michael Popkin and Robyn Freedman Spizman)

**Suggested Scientific References**

**I. ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

*1. Predicting Alcohol Use Across Adolescence: Relative Strength of Individual, Family, Peer, and Contextual Risk and Protective Factors*, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, M. Cleveland et al.

*2. Developmental Emergence of Alcohol Use Disorder Symptoms and Their Potential as Early Indicators for Progression to Alcohol Dependence in a High Risk Sample: A Longitudinal Study From Childhood to Early Adulthood*, 2012, Journal of Abnormal Psychology, A. Buu et al.

*3. The Context of Desire to Use Marijuana: Momentary Assessment of Young People Who Frequently Use Marijuana*, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, L. Shrier et al.

*4. White Matter Integrity, Substance Use, and Risk Taking in Adolescence*, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, J. Jacobus et al.

*5. Onset of Alcohol or Substance Use Disorders Following Treatment for Adolescent Depression*, 2012, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, J. Curry et al.

*6. Parental and Peer Disapproval of Alcohol Use and Its Relationship to Adolescent Drinking: Age, Gender, and Racial Differences*, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, S. Mrug & R. McCay

*7. Accuracy and Bias in Adolescents’ Perceptions of Friends’ Substance Use*, 2011, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, D. Henry et al.

*8. Longitudinal Twin Study of Borderline Personality Disorder Traits and Substance Use in Adolescence: Developmental Change, Reciprocal Effects, and Genetic and Environmental Influences*, 2013, Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment, M. Bornovalova et al.

*9. Adolescent Work Intensity, School Performance, and Substance Use: Links Vary by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status*, 2013, Developmental Psychology, J. Bachman et al.

**II. ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT**

*10. Adolescents’ Emotional Reactivity Across Relationship Contexts*, 2013, *Developmental Psychology*, E. Cook et al.

*11. Late Adolescents’ Self-Defining Memories About Relationships*, 2003, Developmental Psychology, K. McLean & A. Thorne

*12. New Empirical Evidence on the Validity of the Satisfaction with Life Scale in Early Adolescents*, 2012, R. Bendayan et al.

**III. PARENTING**

*13. Adolescent Mothers’ Relationships with Their Own Mothers: Impact on Parenting Outcomes*, 2011, Journal of Family Psychology, K. Sellers et al.

*14. Tried-and-True Approaches to Teaching Parenting Skills: An Update*, 2012, L. Slavin (Book Review of “Everyday Parenting: A Professional’s Guide to Building Family Management Skills”)

*15. The Association Between Parent Early Adult Drug Use Disorder and Later Observed Parenting Practices and Child Behavior Problems: Testing Alternate Models*, 2012, Developmental Psychology, J. Bailey et al.

*16. Substance Use and Delinquency Among Adolescents with Childhood ADHD: The Protective Role of Parenting*, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, C. Walther et al.

*17. Marital Adjustment as a Moderator for Genetic and Environmental Influences on Parenting*, 2013, Journal of Family Psychology, J. Ulbricht et al.

**IV. DIVORCE**

*18. Distress Among Young Adults From Divorced Families*, 2000, Journal of Family Psychology, L. Laumann-Billings & R. Emery

*19. Mother-Child Relationship Quality and Effective Discipline as Mediators of the 6-Year Effects of the New Beginnings Program for Children From Divorced Families*, 2008, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, Q. Zhou et al.

*20. Stepchildren’s Perceptions of Noncustodial Mothers and Noncustodial Fathers: Differences in Socioemotional Involvement and Associations with Adolescent Adjustment Problems*, 2004, Journal of Family Psychology, M. Gunnoe & E. M. Hetherington

*21. Predicting Marital Separation: Do Parent-Child Relationships Matter?* , 2012, Journal of Family Psychology, H. Schindler & R. Coley

**V. THE FAMILY**

*22. Personality Development From Adolescence to Emerging Adulthood: Linking Trajectories of Ego Development to the Family Context and Identity Formation*, 2013, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, M. Syed & I. Seiffge-Krenke.

*23. Family Traditionalism and Family Structure. Attitudes and Intergenerational Transmission of Parents and Adolescents*, 2008, European Psychologist, I. van der Valk et al.

*24. The Early Development of Coercive Family Process*, 2010, Book Chapter, G. Patterson

**VI. TEEN PROMISCUITY**

*25. Developmental Relations and Patterns of Change Between Alcohol Use and Number of Sexual Partners From Adolescence Through Adulthood*, 2010, Developmental Psychology, S. Dogan et al.

*26. An Ecological Analysis of the Effects of Deviant Peer Clustering on Sexual Promiscuity, Problem Behavior, and Childbearing From Early Adolescence to Adulthood: An Enhancement of the Life History Framework*, 2012, Developmental Psychology, T. Dishion et al.

*27. Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2002*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**VII. TREATMENT**

*28. Adolescent Brain Development, Substance Use, and Psychotherapeutic Change*, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, R. Wetherill & S. Tapert

*29. How Do Therapists Ally With Adolescents in Family Therapy? An Examination of Relational Control Communication in Early Sessions*, 2012, Journal of Counseling Psychology, C. Muniz et al.

*30. Listening to Youth: Adolescents’ Reasons for Substance Use as a Unique Predictor of Treatment Response and Outcom*e, 2012, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, S. Dow & J. Kelly

*31. Brief Strategic Family Therapy Versus Treatment as Usual: Results of a Multisite Randomized Trial for Substance Using Adolescents*, 2011, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, M. Robbins et al.

*32. Direct and Indirect Effects of a Family-Based Intervention in Early Adolescence on Parent-Youth Relationship Quality, Late Adolescent Health, and Early Adult Obesity*, 2013, M. Van Ryzin & P. Nowicka

*33. Does Team-Based Planning ‘Work’ for Adolescents? Findings from Studies of Wraparound*, 2012, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, J. Walker et al.