

How Are Kids Doing Today?

Session 3

Hurt by Chap Clark (*Baker Books*)

"Tell them our story...tell them the truth—that nobody cares, that nobody listens, that teachers and coaches and cops and parents don't even know who we are. Tell them that and see if anybody listens. Ha! Not a chance!"

Hardwired to Connect—*The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities*

SIX KEY FINDINGS

1. Humans are hardwired to form relationships.
2. The presence or absence of a nurturing environment during childhood not only shapes a child's psychological and emotional development but also alters brain development in ways that profoundly affect long-term health.
3. Animal studies suggest that possible nurture may neutralize genetic vulnerabilities to depression and similar problems and perhaps even transform what would otherwise be genetic vulnerabilities into strengths.
4. The nature of brain development during adolescence creates a continuing need for a nurturing environment.
5. Human beings are biologically primed to seek moral and spiritual meaning, and nurturing relationships are a central foundation for positive moral and spiritual development.
6. Nurturing relationships and a spiritual connection to the transcendent significantly improve physical and emotional health.

“To raise a healthy child, that child must have at least one adult who is irrationally involved in his or her life.”

—Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner

Professor of Human Development at Cornell University

Both studies conclude: Kids need adults who will engage them in a discovery-rich relationship

Activity:

If you're doing this exercise in a group setting, follow these instructions:

1. Look at the stickers on your representative's arm, and pick the two characteristics of today's kids that are most disturbing.
2. Brainstorm with your group what kind of courageous relational actions adults can take to counteract those disturbing characteristics found in today's kids.

If you're doing this exercise on your own, look at your list of characteristics from the previous session, and circle the two that you find most disturbing. Then use the space below to write down some courageous relational actions adults can take to counteract those characteristics.