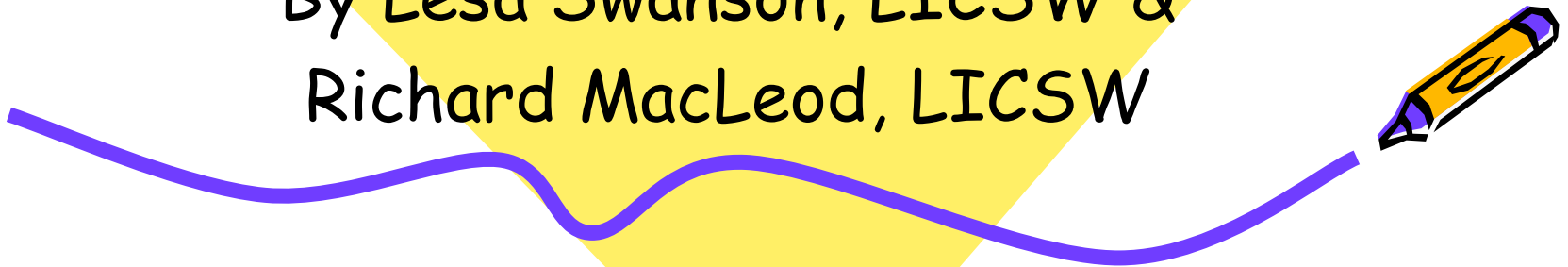


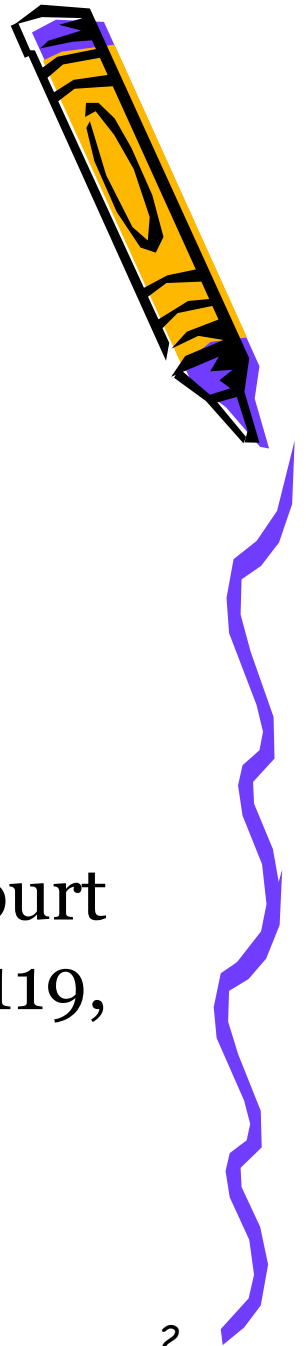
# What Children of Divorce Really Need

By Lesa Swanson, LICSW &  
Richard MacLeod, LICSW



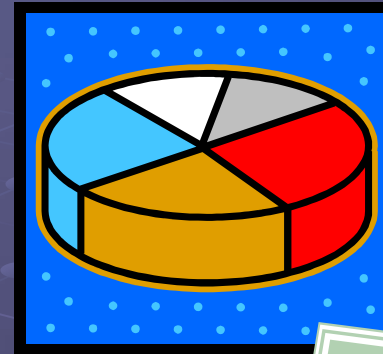
# Introduction

- Welcome
- Questions at the end
- Certificate of Completion options
- Introductions
  
- Legal questions (class & legal) - Court Facilitator, 930 Tacoma Ave. S., Rm 119, 253-798-3627



# Influences of Divorce on Children

- What affects your child's adjustment?
- What can you do to minimize the impact of change on your child?



# Influences of Divorce on Children

- Developmental Stages
- Divorced parenting style
- Grief & Stress Indicators
- Child's temperament
- Emotional Intelligence
- Communication
- Blended Families



# Developmental Stages



*Erikson theorized that humans go through normal stages, each with its own psychological conflict. Successful resolution leads to a well-adjusted adult.*

## 8 Stages of Development by Erik Erikson

1,350,796 views • Apr 23, 2017

18K 391 SHARE SAVE ...



**Sprouts**  
552K subscribers

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Support our channel with a small donation at <http://patreon.com/sprouts> or by spreading the word.

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development identifies eight stages in which a healthy individual should pass through from birth to death. At each stages we encounter different needs, ask new questions and meet people who influence our behavior and learning.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYCBdZLCDBQ>



# Children's Understanding of Parental Separation by Age Group



## Infants

- Infants notice changes in parents' energy level and emotional state.
- Older infants notice when one parent is no longer living in the home.

## Feelings

- More irritability, such as crying and fussing.
- Changes in sleeping, napping, and other daily routines.
- If a new adult moves into the home, older infants may be nervous and fearful.

**\*\* See handout that was included in your email for what parents and providers can do \*\***

# Children's Understanding of Parental Separation by Age Group



## Toddlers

- Recognize that one parent no longer lives at home.
- May express empathy toward others, such as a parent who is feeling sad.

## Feelings

- May have difficulty separating from parents.
- May express anger toward parent.
- May lose some of the skills they have developed, like toilet training.
- Toddlers may show some of the behaviors that they “grew out of,” such as thumb sucking.
- Sleeping and naptime routines may change.
- Older toddlers may have nightmares.

# Children's Understanding of Parental Separation by Age Group

## Preschool & Early Elementary Children



Preschoolers recognize that one parent no longer lives at home.

Elementary school children begin to understand that divorce means their parents will no longer be married and live together, and that their parents no longer love each other.

### Feelings

- Will likely **blame** themselves for the divorce.
- May **worry** about the changes in their daily lives.
- Have nightmares.
- May exhibit signs of **sadness** and grieving because of the absence of one parent.
- Preschoolers may be aggressive and **angry** toward the parent they “blame”.
- Because preschoolers struggle with the difference between fantasy and reality, children may have rich fantasies about parents getting back together.

# Children's Understanding of Parental Separation by Age Group

## Preteens & Adolescents

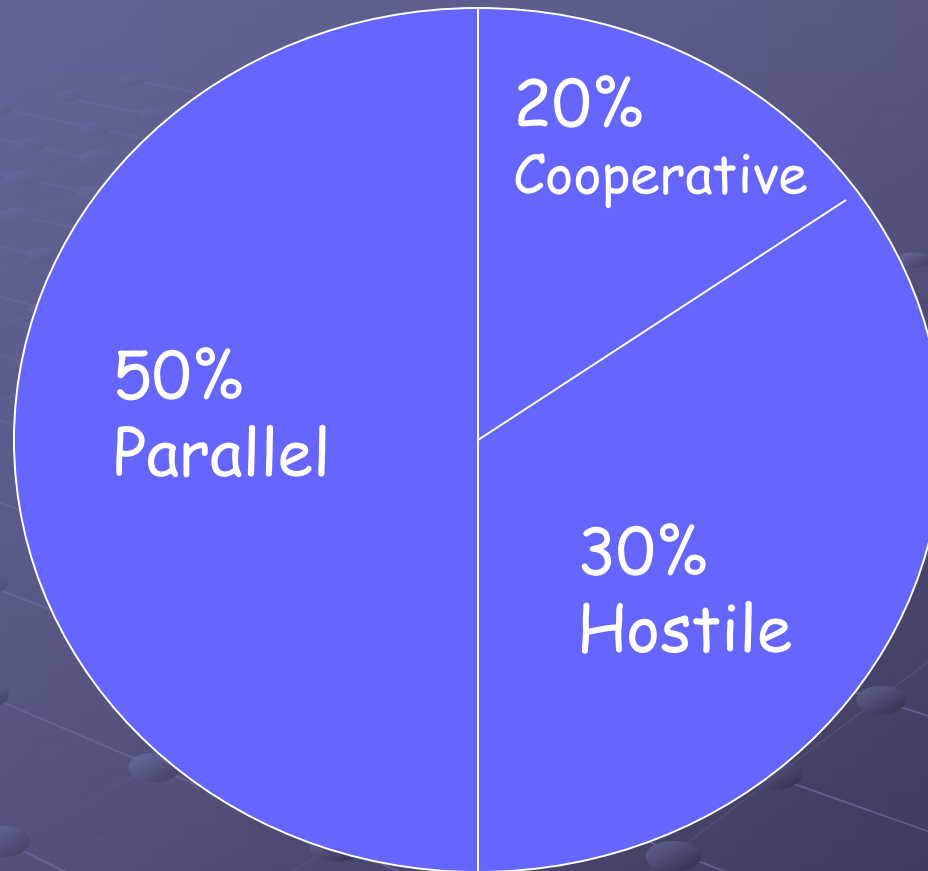


- Understand what divorce means but may have difficulty accepting the reality of the changes it brings to their family.
- Although thinking at a more complex level, still may blame themselves for the divorce.

## Feelings

- May feel **abandoned** by the parent who moves out of the house.
- May **withdraw** from long-time friends and favorite activities.
- May **act out** in uncharacteristic ways (start using bad language, become aggressive or rebellious).
- May feel **angry** and unsure about their own beliefs concerning love, marriage, and family.
- May experience a sense of growing up too soon.
- May start to **worry** about “adult matters,” such as the family’s financial security.
- May feel obligated to take on more adult responsibilities in the family.

# Parenting Style



55% of emotions are communicated nonverbally and 38% through voice tone. That leaves only 7% communicated through actual words.

# GRIEF

- When we suffer a loss, we will all grieve. Children will grieve according to their developmental stage.
- How any child or young person grieves depends on many things, such as their:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Developmental stage
  - Personality
  - Ways they usually react to stress & emotion
  - Family circumstances
  - Relationship w/the person who they have lost
  - Earlier experiences w/loss
  - How others around them are grieving
  - Amounts of support around them

# GRIEF (cont.)

- Babies, children & teenagers may often seem unconcerned, playing or doing their usual activities, so adults can assume they are not properly aware of the loss or affected by it. They are, but in their own ways. Babies, children & teens tend to grieve in bursts, & at other times will look for reassurance & comfort in their normal routines & activities.
- Bereaved children & teenagers will need ongoing attention, reassurance and support. It is not unusual for grief to resurface later on, even well after the loss. This can happen as the move through different life milestones and develop as individuals.

# Grief

## Normal Responses include:


- Disbelief
- Emptiness/sadness
- Anger
- Relief
- Guilt and self blame
- Yearning
- Fear
- Acting out / explosive emotions
- Disorganization and panic
- Regression
- Lack of feelings ... and more

# GRIEF

A video ...

Successful co-Parenting A Child's  
View

*If you could tell your  
parents one thing  
after divorce ... what  
would you tell them?*




these are their  
answers

0:26 / 4:11

Successful Co-Parenting A Child's View

87,323 views • Jan 30, 2012

545 23 SHARE SAVE ...

 Ohio State University Extension  
2.23K subscribers

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

The Successful Co-Parenting program was created by Ohio State University Extension for parents going through divorce. It aims to teach parents how to co-parent together cooperatively for the benefit of their child. This video was created to use with the program to help show parents some of the feelings their child may be going through during this time.

From: Ohio State University Extension

<https://youtu.be/Edb9plpHO7k>

# Stress Indicators

- We went over a variety of stress indicators in the Child Development Section



## 3. Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development

733,710 views • Sep 29, 2011

732 24 SHARE SAVE ...



Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University  
23.4K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

- Richard just covered additional ones in the Grief section
- Now let's have a look at how prolonged toxic stress derails healthy child development (2 min)

<https://youtu.be/rVwFkcOZHJw>

# Temperament

(Inborn dimension of personality)

- Describes how we see the world and our first and most natural response to those perceptions.
- By understanding temperament you will be better able to: understand your child's emotions, predict triggers, select strategies to minimize triggers, and stop trying to change your child.

# Temperament

Is easily overwhelmed by high levels of stimulation, sudden changes, and the emotional distress of others

Sensitive (-) ← → (+)

(Sensitive to their emotional & physical environment)

15-20% of children are born with a nervous system that is highly aware and quick to react to everything

## DOES

Depth of Processing

Easily Overstimulated

Emotional reactivity and Empathy

Sensitive to Subtle stimuli

Described as organized & predictable.  
Routines & rituals come easy. If you know what is expected ahead of time you have little trouble adapting to changes.  
Struggles w/being rushed or surprised

Has no trouble w/transitions, is very flexible, comfortable switching plans at the last minute. Doesn't see all of the transitions in the day b/c they don't bother you.

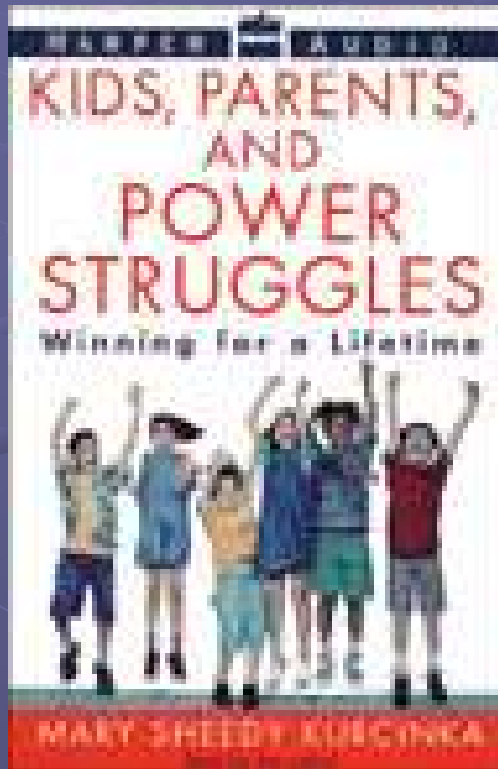
Adaptable (-) ←————→ (+)

(Adapting to change; if slow: change / transition is a struggle)

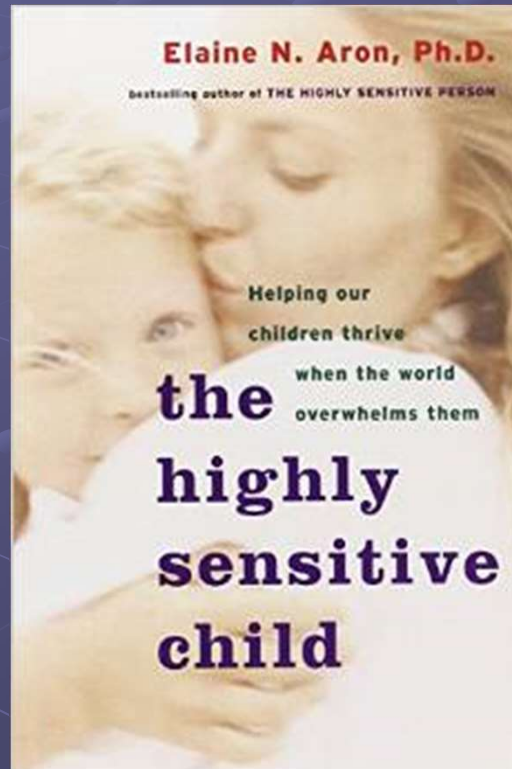
*When you understand your own style & emotions it is easier for you to recognize your triggers & understand those of your child.*

\* Also ... Persistence (committed to your goal), Intensity (emotional), Regularity (how you structure you time), Activity Level (amount of physical activity), Cautious 1<sup>st</sup> response (thinking before responding).

By Mary  
Sheedy  
Kurcinka



By Elaine  
Aron, Ph.D.

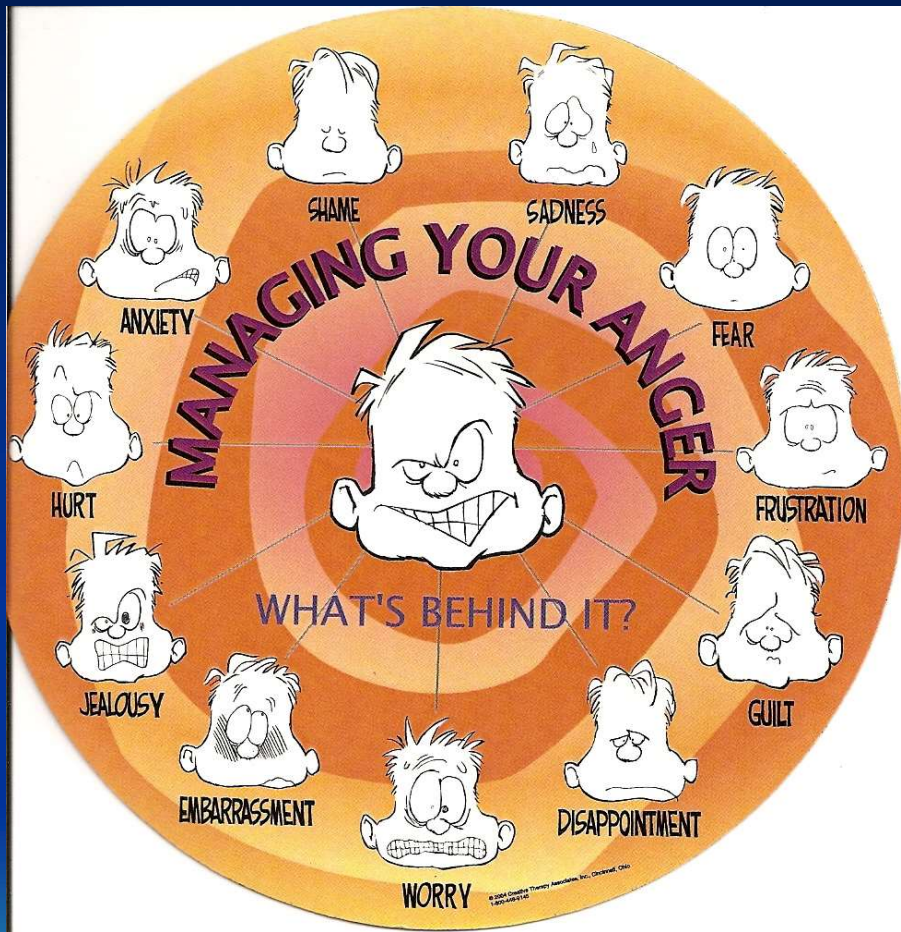


Sensitive -  
The Untold  
Story 2015



More information on temperament can be found in these  
books & documentary

# Emotional Intelligence



1. Identify Emotion
2. Gauge Intensity
3. Self Sooth

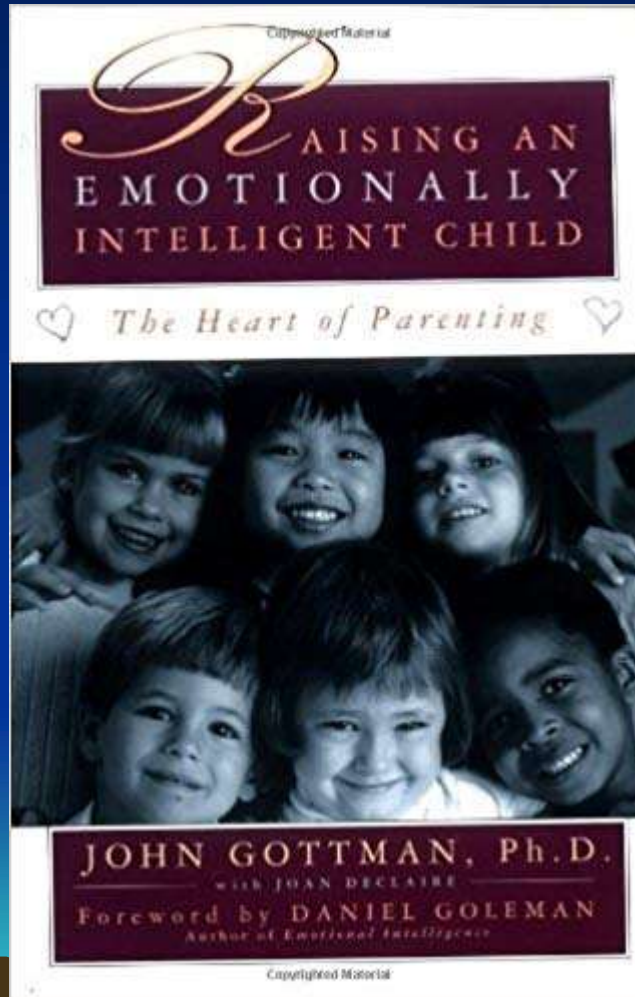
*\*You are the key to teaching your kids how to deal w/strong emotions and solve problems.*

*• This provides you w/an opportunity to connect w/your child!*

*• Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child by J. Gottman*

©Creative Therapy Associates, [www.ctrtherapy.com](http://www.ctrtherapy.com)

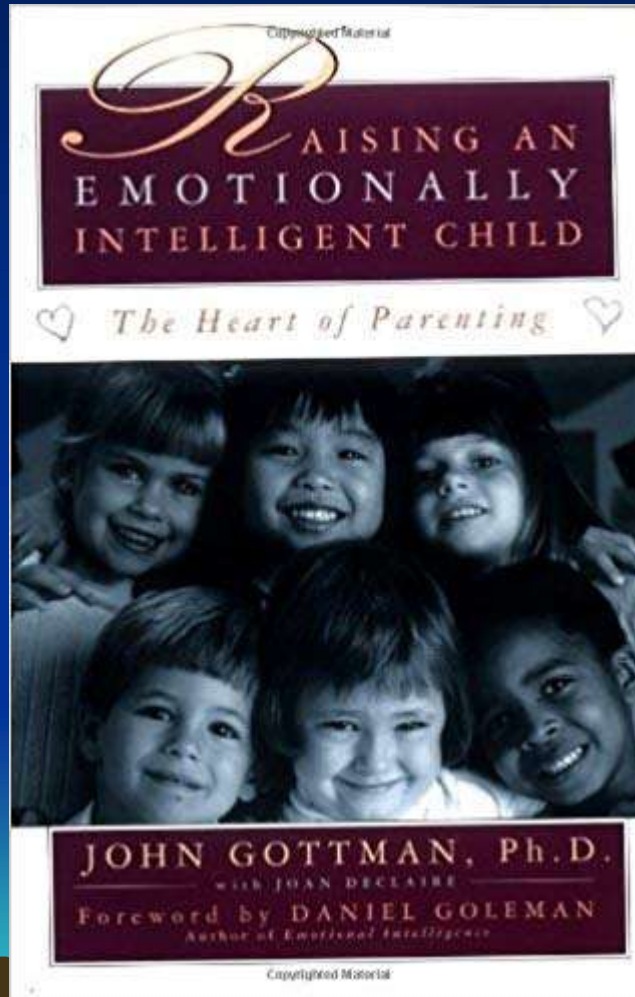
# Resource



## EMOTION DISMISSING:

- don't see and notice the emotions of the child and self
- see negative emotions as toxic & want to protect their child from having them
- believe - if the child has negative emotions they are failing as a parent and believe that the longer the child feels them the more toxic it is
- TEACH: give lots of info and then wait for them to make a mistake and then become "constructive critics," which causes more mistakes. Then parental criticism escalates to insults, labels and character attacks. Finally, they take over and become intrusive

# Resource



## EMOTION COACHING:

- Be aware of a **child's** emotions.
- Recognize **emotional** expression as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching.
- Listen empathetically and validate a **child's** feelings.
- Label emotions in words a **child** can understand.
- Help a **child** discover appropriate ways to solve a problem or deal with an upsetting situation.
- TEACH give a little info, ignore mistakes, wait / offer praise and then add a little more information (scaffolding)

\* mp3 download \$4.95

<https://www.gottman.com/product/raising-an-emotionally-intelligent-child-audio/>

# From: [humanemotionschart.com](http://humanemotionschart.com)

	Happy	Caring	Depressed	Inadequate	Fearful	Confused	Hurt	Angry	Lonely	Guilt		
S T R O N G	Thrilled Cloud Nine Ecstatic Overjoyed Excited Elated	Tenderness Toward Affection Captivated Attached To	Desolate Dejected Hopeless Alienated Depressed Gloomy Dismal	Worthless Good for Nothing Washed Up Powerless Helpless	Terrified Frightened Intimidated Horrificed Desperate Panicky Stagefright	Bewildered Puzzled Baffled Perplexed Trapped Confounded	Crushed Destroyed Ruined Degraded Pained Wounded	Furious Enraged seething Outraged Infuriated Burned Up	Isolated Abandoned All Alone Forsaken Cut Off	Sick At Heart Unforgiveable Humiliated Disgraced Horrible Mortified Exposed		
	Sensational Exhilarated Fantastic On the Top Of the World Turned On Euphoric Enthusiastic Delighted Marvelous Great	Devoted To Adoration Loving Infatuated Enamored Cherish Idolize Worship	Bleak In Dispair Empty Barren Grieved Grief Despair Grim	Impotent Crippled Inferior Emasculated Uscless Finished Like a Failure	Vulnerable Dread Paralyzed	In a Dilemma Befuddled In a Quandary Full of Questions Confused	Devastated Tortured Disgraced Humiliated Anguished At The Mercy Of Cast Off Forsaken Rejected Discarded	Pissed Off Fighting Mad Nauseated Violent Indignant Hatred Bitter Vengeful Hateful Vicious				
	M O D E R A T E	Cheerful Lighthearted Happy Serene Wonderful Up Aglow Glowing In High Spirits Jovial Riding High Elevated Neat	Caring Fond Of Regard Respectful Concerned For Hold Dear Prize Taken With Turned On Trust Close	Distressed Upset Downcast Sorrowful Demoralized Discouraged Miserable Pessimistic Tearful Weepy Rotten Awful Terrible Horrible Blue Melancholy	Inadequate Whipped Defeated Incompetent Inept Overwhelmed Ineffective Lacking Deficient Unable Incapable Small Insignificant Like Casper Milk Toast Unimportant No Good Immobilized	Afraid Scared Fearful Apprehensive Shaky Threatened Distrustfull Risky Alarmed Butterflies Awkward Defensive Jumpy	Mixed Up Disorganized Foggy Troubled Adrift At Loose Ends Going Around In Circles Frustrated Disconcerted Flustered In a Bind Ambivalent Disturbed Helpless Embroided	Hurt Belittled Shot Down Over Looked Abused Depreciated Criticized Defamed Censured Discredited Disparaged Lauged At Mistreated Ridiculed Mocked Scoffed At Used Exploited Slammed Cheapened Debased	Resentful Irritable Hostile Annoyed Upset With Agitated Offended Antagonistic Exasperated Belligerent Mean Vexed Spiteful Vindictive	Lonely Alienated Estrangd Remote Alone Apart From Others Isolated From Others	Ashamed Guilty Remorse Crummy To Blame Lose Face Demeaned	
		M I L D	Glad Good Contented Satisfied Gratified Pleasant Fine	Warm Toward Friendly Like Positive Toward	Unhappy Down Low Bad Blah Dissappointed Sad	Lacking Confidence Unsureof yourself Uncertain Weak Inefficient	Self Conscious On Edge JitteryNervous Anxious Hesitent Timid Shy Worried Uneasy Bashful Embarrassed Ill At Ease	Unsure Uncertain Uncomfotable Undecided	Put Down Neglected Minimized Let Down Unappreciated Taken For Granted	Impatient Uptight Disgusted Bugged Turned Off Put Off Miffed Irked Perturbed Ticked Off Teed Off Chagrined	Left Out Excluded Lonesome Distrust Aloof	Regretful Wrong Embarrassed At Fault In Error Responsible Blew It Goofed Lament

## WHAT TO PUT IN A CALM DOWN BOX

[www.andnextcomesL.com](http://www.andnextcomesL.com)

### Items that provide proprioceptive support

- Weighted lap cushion or weighted stuffed animal
- Weighted vest or pressure vest
- Stretchy resistance bands
- Sensory tunnel
- Mini massager
- Body sock
- Small blanket

### Items to squeeze & keep hands busy

- Fidgets like Tangle Jr. or puffer ball
- Rubik's Cube
- Play dough or silly putty
- Pipe cleaners
- Stress balls
- Bubble wrap
- Bag of tissue paper to rip
- Scarves or fabric scraps
- Spinning top

### Items to support breathing & relaxation

- Bottle of bubbles
- Pinwheels
- Straws and cotton balls or pom poms

### Items for olfactory sensory support

- Calming essential oil spray
- Smelling bottles
- Scratch and sniff stickers

### Items to get kids moving

- Book of yoga poses or yoga activity cards
- Skipping rope

### Items for auditory sensory support

- Noise cancelling headphones
- MP3 player with music
- Audiobooks

### Items for oral motor sensory support

- Chew toy or chew necklace
- Chewing gum, hard candies, or lollipops
- Snacks with a variety of textures
- Whistle, harmonica, party blowers, or similar
- Rescue Remedy Spray

### Items that give kids a brain break

- Puzzle
- Books to read
- Blank notebook and writing utensils
- Coloring books
- Scratch art doodle pad
- Small chalk board, Magna-Doodle, Etch-a-Sketch, or Boogie Board
- Activity books
- Photo album

### Items to visually calm

- Visual calm down cards
- Sensory bottle or calm down jar
- Light up toys
- Flashlight
- Plastic snow globe
- Kaleidoscope
- Hourglass
- Eye mask

# Stress relief (5 senses)

[www.andnextcomesL.com](http://www.andnextcomesL.com)

# Stress relief (5 senses)

From:

<https://weheartit.com/entry/238131143>



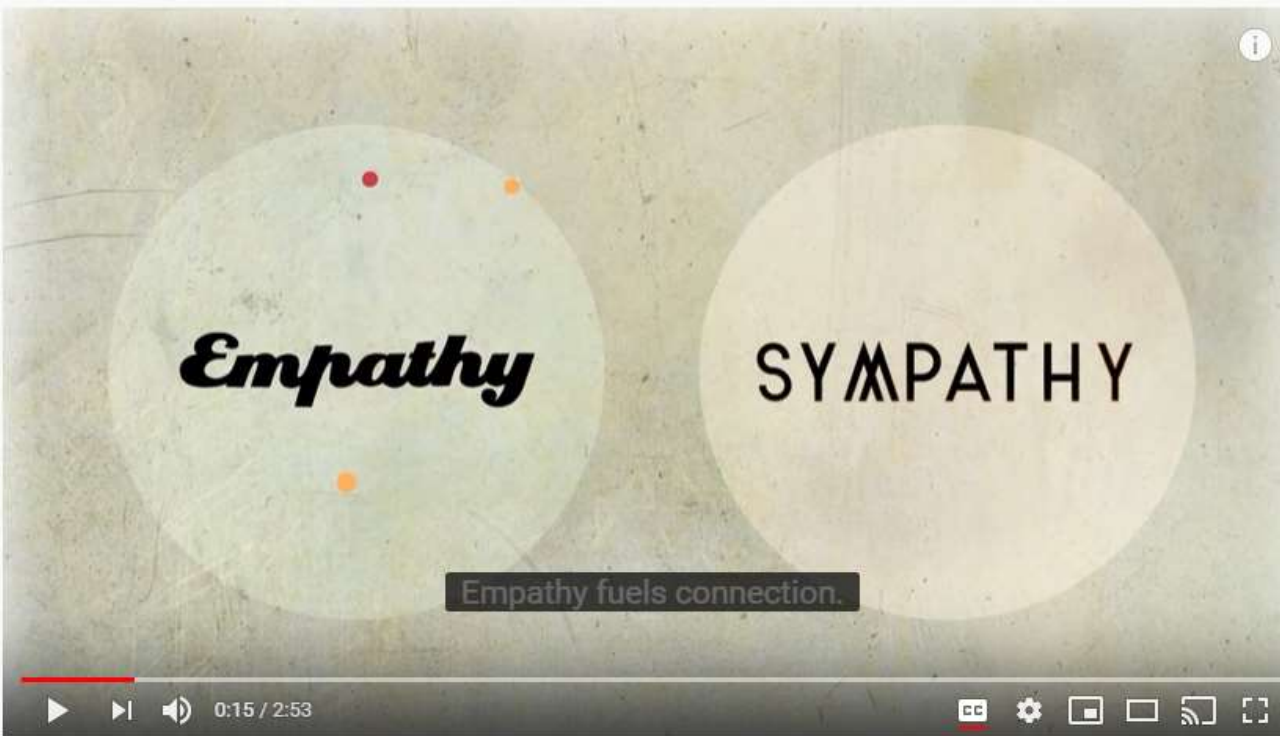
# 30+

## WAYS TO DE-STRESS IN LESS THAN 10 MINUTES

- LISTEN TO YOUR FAVORITE TUNES
- HEAD OUTSIDE
- STRETCH
- MEDITATE
- READ FOR PLEASURE 
- WALK, BIKE, SKATEBOARD AROUND THE BLOCK
- COUNT TO 10
- DANCE
- JOURNAL
- WRITE DOWN 10 THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR 
- DOODLE OR DRAW
- TELL SOME JOKES 
- CALL A FRIEND
- CHEW A PIECE OF GUM
- FOCUS & NOTICE YOUR PRESENT SURROUNDINGS (GROUNDING)
- DISCONNECT FROM TECH 
- LOOK AT A HAPPY PHOTO
- SQUEEZE A STRESS BALL
- WATCH A FUNNY YOUTUBE VIDEO 
- PUNCH A PILLOW
- DEEP, SLOW BREATHING
- READ AN INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE 
- SPEND TIME WITH YOUR PETS 
- PRACTICE YOGA POSES
- DO 20 JUMPING JACKS
- DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE
- SIT IN THE SUN 
- VISUALIZE A SAFE, COMFORTING PLACE 
- PICK SOME FLOWERS
- GIVE YOURSELF A NECK MASSAGE
- TAKE A SHOWER 
- KICK A SOCCER BALL

[www.SharonMartinCounseling.com](http://www.SharonMartinCounseling.com)


# Example by Brené Brown



The video player shows two large circles on a textured background. The left circle is light green and contains the word "Empathy" in a bold, italicized font. The right circle is light yellow and contains the word "SYMPATHY" in a bold, all-caps font. A subtitle at the bottom of the video reads "Empathy fuels connection." The video player interface includes a progress bar at 0:15 / 2:53, a volume icon, and various control icons like CC, settings, and full screen.

Brené Brown on Empathy  
13,549,769 views • Dec 10, 2013

93K 1.5K SHARE SAVE ...

 The RSA ✓  
695K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

What is the best way to ease someone's pain and suffering? In this beautifully animated RSA Short, Dr Brené Brown reminds us that we can only create a genuine empathic connection if we are brave enough to really get in touch with our own fragilities.

## EMOTION COACHING:

- Be aware of a child's emotions.
- Recognize emotional expression as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching.
- Listen empathetically and validate a child's feelings.
- Label emotions in words a child can understand.

# Communication

*Be aware of your  
child's emotions  
and recognize  
them as an  
opportunity for  
intimacy and  
teaching!*



# Communication

- BOOK - Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life, by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.
- Make observation w/o Evaluation
- State Feeling (yours or theirs)

# Some basic Feelings

- **WHEN NEEDS “ARE” FULLFILLED:**  
Amazed, confident, energetic, glad,  
inspired, joyous, optimistic, relieved,  
surprised, touched, comfortable, eager,  
fulfilled, hopeful, intrigued, moved, proud,  
stimulated, thankful, trustful

# More basic feelings

- **WHEN NEEDS “ARE NOT” FULLFILLED:**  
angry, confused, disappointed, distressed,  
frustrated, hopeless, irritated, nervous,  
puzzled, sad, annoyed, concerned,  
discouraged, embarrassed, helpless, impatient,  
lonely, overwhelmed, reluctant, uncomfortable

# Communication (cont.)

- Make Observation w/o Evaluation
- State Feeling (yours or theirs)
- State Need (yours or theirs)

# Some basic needs

- **AUTONOMY** (choosing dreams/goals/values)
- **CELEBRATION** (the creation of life & dreams fulfilled, & celebrate losses: loved ones, dreams, etc. [mourning])
- **INTEGRITY** (authenticity, creativity, meaning)
- **INTERDEPENDANCE** (acceptance, closeness, consideration, empathy, honesty, love, reassurance, respect, support, trust, understanding, safety)
- **PLAY, SPIRITUAL COMMUNION, & PHYSICAL NURTURANCE**

# Communication (cont.)

- Make Observation w/o Evaluation
- State Feeling (yours or theirs)
- State Need (yours or theirs)
- Make Request

# Blended Families

- 85% of divorces re-marry within 5 years
- 60% of these second marriages will also end in divorce
- About 40% of these 2<sup>nd</sup> marriages involve children
- 3 out of 4 of these twice-married-and-divorced individuals will marry yet again
- Over 50% of US families are remarried or re-coupled.



# Blended Families

- Communicate effectively
- Patience . . .
- Have an attitude of gratitude
- Be alone with your partner
- Do forgive and forget

# Blended Families (cont.)

- United front
- Don't expect
- Biological parent discipline
- Be flexible
- Find through humor

# Parenting Manifesto

- Above all else, I want you to know that you are **loved and lovable**. You will learn this from my words and actions – the lessons on love are in how I treat you and how I treat myself.
- I want you to engage with the world from a place of worthiness. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> You will learn that **you are worthy of love, belonging, and joy** every time you see me practice self-compassion and embrace my own imperfections.
- We will practice **courage** in our family by showing up, letting ourselves be seen, and honoring vulnerability. We will share our stories of struggle and strength. There will always be room in our home for both.
- We will teach you **compassion** by practicing compassion with ourselves first; then with each other. We will set and respect **boundaries**; we will honor hard work, hope, and perseverance. **Rest and play** will be family values, as well as family practices.
- You will learn **accountability and respect** by watching me make mistakes and make amends, and by watching how I ask for what I need and talk about how I feel.
- I want you to know *joy*, so together we will practice **gratitude**. I want you to feel joy, so together **we will learn how to be vulnerable**.

# Parenting Manifesto

- When uncertainty and scarcity visit, you will be able to draw from the ***spirit*** that is a part of our everyday life.
- Together we will cry and face fear and grief. I will want to take away your pain, but instead I will sit with you and ***teach you how to feel it.***
- We will ***laugh and sing and dance and create.*** We will always have permission to be ourselves with each other. No matter what, ***you will always belong here.***
- As you begin your Wholehearted journey, the greatest gift that I can give to you is to ***live and love with my whole heart*** and to dare greatly.
- I will not teach or love or show you anything perfectly, but I will let you see me, and I will always hold sacred the gift of seeing you, ***truly, deeply, seeing you.***

*by Brene Brown, Daring Greatly*

# *A HUGE Thank You!!*

- Please press “reply” to the email that we sent you.
- **Complete the quiz questions**
- Once received, we will upload your certificate of completion to your court file (Pierce Co.) For other counties, we can mail your certificate to you. Be sure to include your mailing address.