

SEAS CONFERENCE, AZ

I am grateful you are here today!

Follow me on Social Media!

→ @DrChrisCulver



Dr. Chris Culver, Ed.D.

→ Kindness Advocate
Orange Sparrow, LLC



the power of
gratitud

THANK YOU!

e

elbow partner share

Who was **the one teacher** (or adult) who encouraged/shaped/impacted *you to be a teacher?*

What 3 adjectives would you use to describe them?

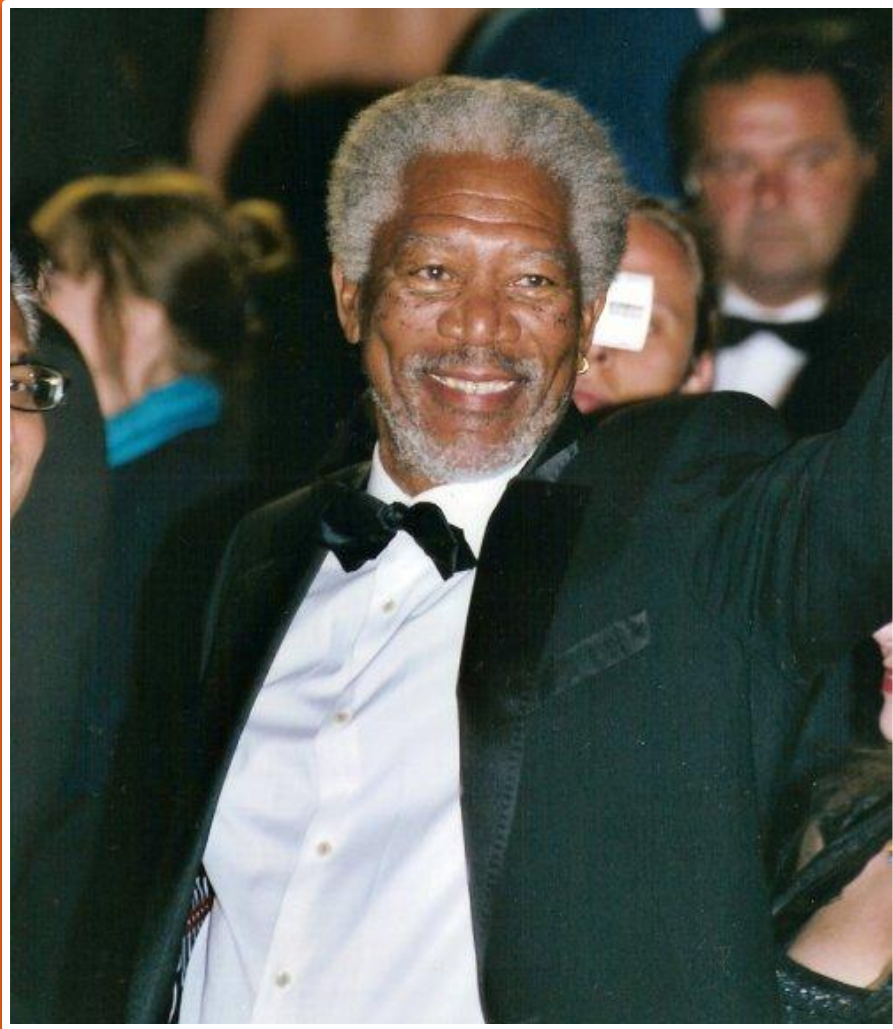


itv

My question is, when you were
younger, was there someone who,

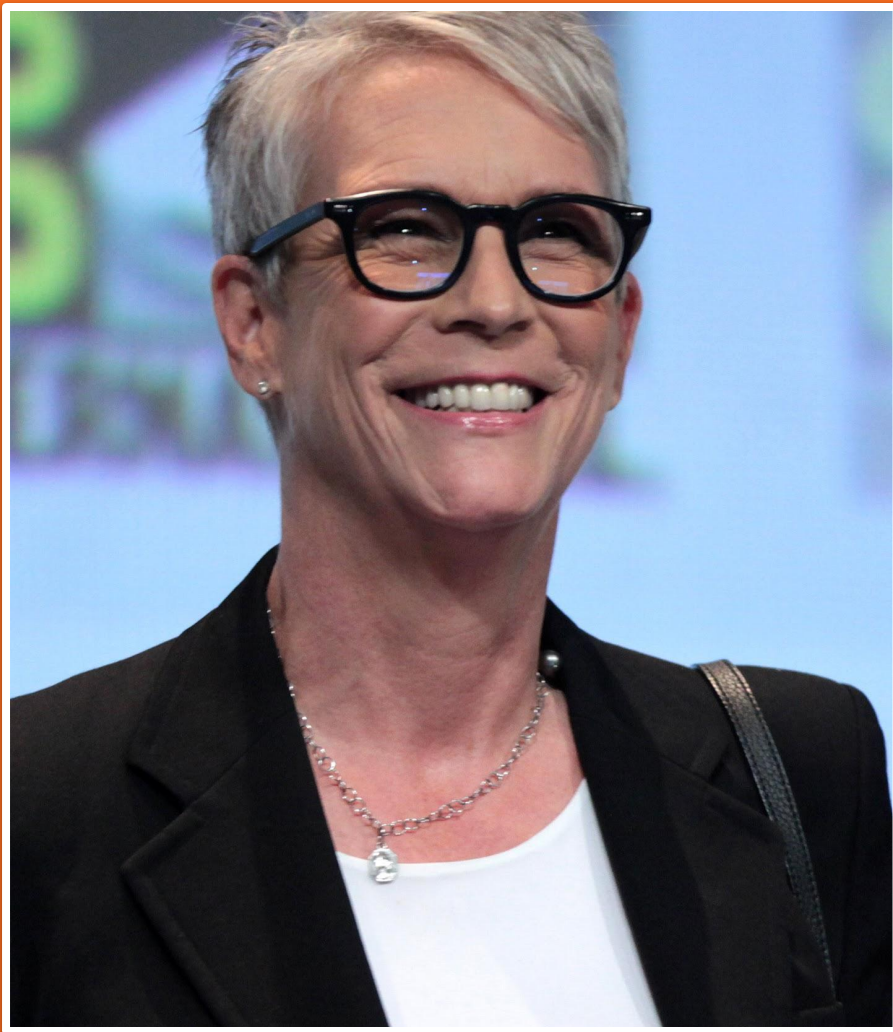


dealers of
**hope &
belief**



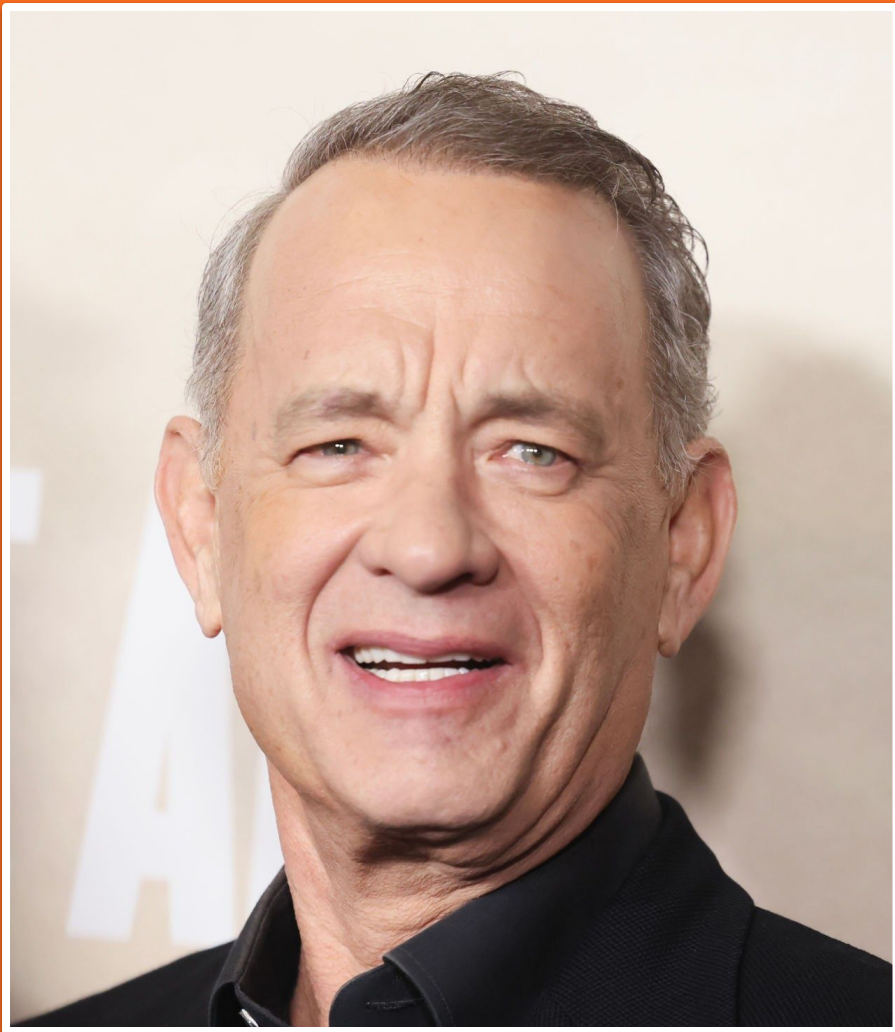
“My sixth-grade teacher, Ms. Connie Taylor, taught me the importance of reading and expanding my imagination. She ignited my love for storytelling, which ultimately led me to pursue a career in acting.”

morgan freeman



“[My teacher] saw something in me and nurtured my passion for acting. She instilled in me the importance of empathy and understanding the human experience. Her guidance and support shaped me not only as an actress, but also as a person. I will forever be grateful for her influence on my life.”

jamie lee curtis



“My high school drama teacher, Rawley Farnsworth, saw that I had some talent and suggested that I hone my skills. **That was a turning point in my life.** He taught me the fundamentals of acting and **instilled in me the importance of hard work and dedication.**”

tom hanks



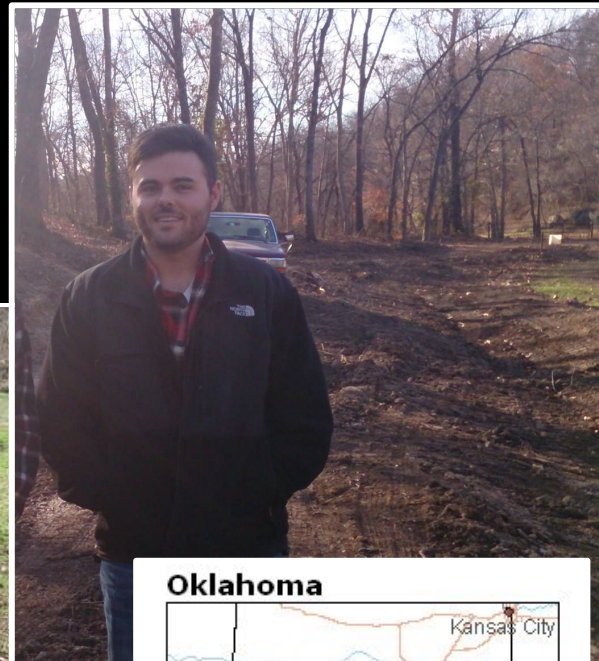
“Mrs. Rodriguez, my high school speech and drama teacher, completely changed my life. She saw something in me and encouraged me to pursue acting. She taught me to embrace my heritage, to be proud of who I am and to believe in myself. Her belief in me gave me the confidence to chase my dreams and paved the way for my career in Hollywood.”

eva longoria



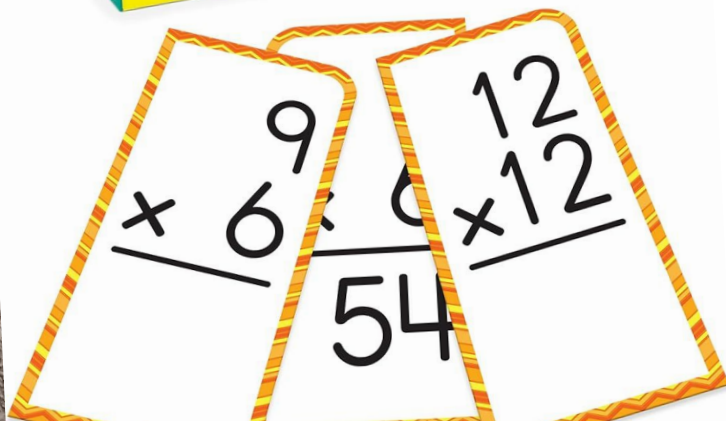
**“Education
doesn’t call the
equipped—it
equips those
who answer
the call.”**











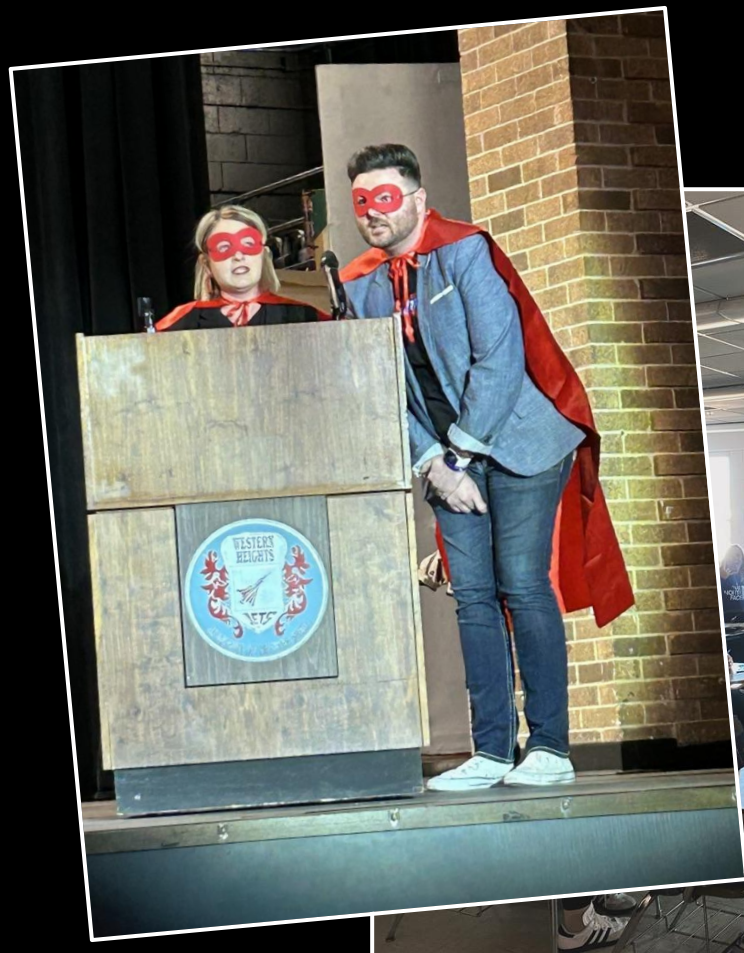






some of dealers of hope and belief

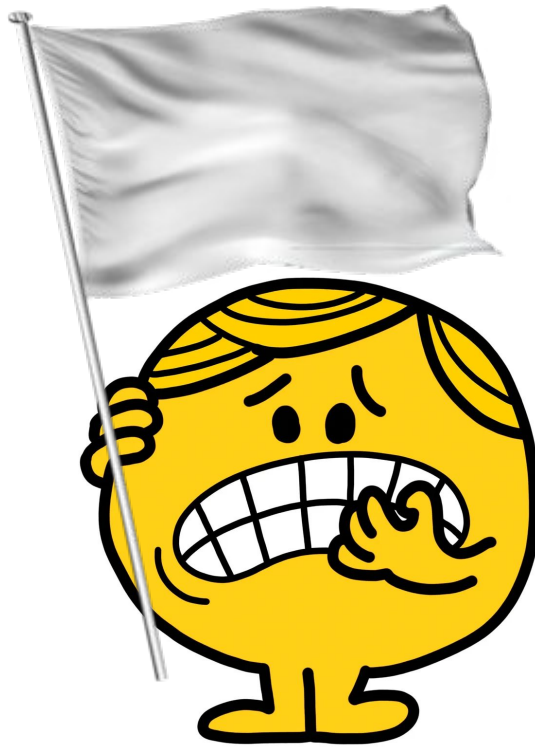




2019

Assistant Principal





A lot of what we call “kindness...”

- Feels forced
- Sounds scripted
- Breaks under pressure
- And people can feel it

That's why it's **CRINGE!**

KINDERGARTEN KINDNESS

- Be Nice
- Don't Interrupt
- Share
- Say Sorry
- Be Good
- Sit criss-cross on the mat



Neuroscience

Regulates the brain



Psychology

Builds resilience



Sociology

Stabilizes culture



Health Science

Impacts longevity



Leadership Research

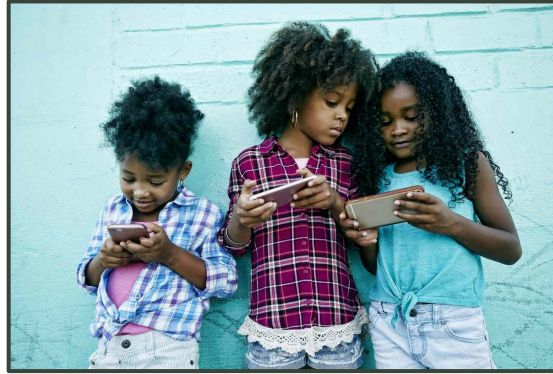
Drives performance





Gen Z

9th-12th Grade



Gen Alpha

PK-8th Grade



Gen Beta

Joining us 2030!

2026-2027 School Year

ACTIVITY

Notecard Jot

Jot down **key characteristics, challenges, and strengths** you associate with Gen Z/Alpha students

Characteristics:

- Social media loving
- Fad following
- Slang using
- Cell phone addicted



**WHO ARE
Gen Z/A**

Who are

Gen Z/A

They are private

They are restless

They are anxious

They are tech savvy

They are nurtured

They are entrepreneurial

They are digital



FACT ONE:

They can be present in a room with adults yet not present at the same time if he or she has a smartphone in his or her hand.

FACT TWO:

They can live in an entirely different world on a screen even while at home with family and friends.

FACT THREE:

Culture and society influence them just as much as parents do.

Did you know? Real facts about Gen Z/A

did you know?

- **72% of children age 8 and under** have used a mobile device of some sort
- **At age 4, 75% of kids** used their own mobile devices
- **28% of 1 year olds** use a tablet computer
- **28% of 2 year olds** can navigate a mobile device without help
- **27% of parents** using mobile devices to put kids to sleep

Technology has evolved over the years:



Boomers



Gen X



Millennials



Gen Z



Gen Alpha



In 1990, **less than 3 hours** of TV was consumed a day.



**Today, 6-8 hours of screen
time per day!**



**They feel more
comfortable on a
screen**

Can multitask on 5 screens

they are growing
up with tons of
information at
their fingertips

National Institute of Health (2018)
shared that **kids who use
smartphones, tablets, and video
games more than seven hours a day**
are more likely to **experience
premature thinking of the cortex,**
the outermost layer of the brain
that **processes thought and action**



Helplessness

- Many Gen Z/A have characteristics of helplessness – when they pursue a goal and nothing happens for a period of time. They conclude the goal is out of reach and quit trying.
- Hopelessness promotes irresponsible behavior.

the paradox of the generation

They are independent

They are trendy

They are often alone

They have it so good

They experience virtually no dramatic moments

They are cognitively advanced

Their life is authentic

Their world is easy

They want autonomy

Yet dependent on adults

Yet traditional in practices

Yet never alone

Yet have it so difficult

Yet feel so much drama

Yet emotionally behind

Yet so artificial

Yet very hard

Yet no responsibility

68% of Gen Z/A live at home
beyond 20 years old.

Life on the internet changed how our brain sought information.

It **reduced our ability to focus and reflect** because there's a craving for constant stream of information.

Harder for young people with a frontal lobe that is not fully developed.



Executive Functioning

- Planning
- Problem Solving
- Motivation
- Judgement
- Decision Making
- Impulse Control
- Social Behavior
- Behavior
- Memory
- Learning
- Reward
- Attention

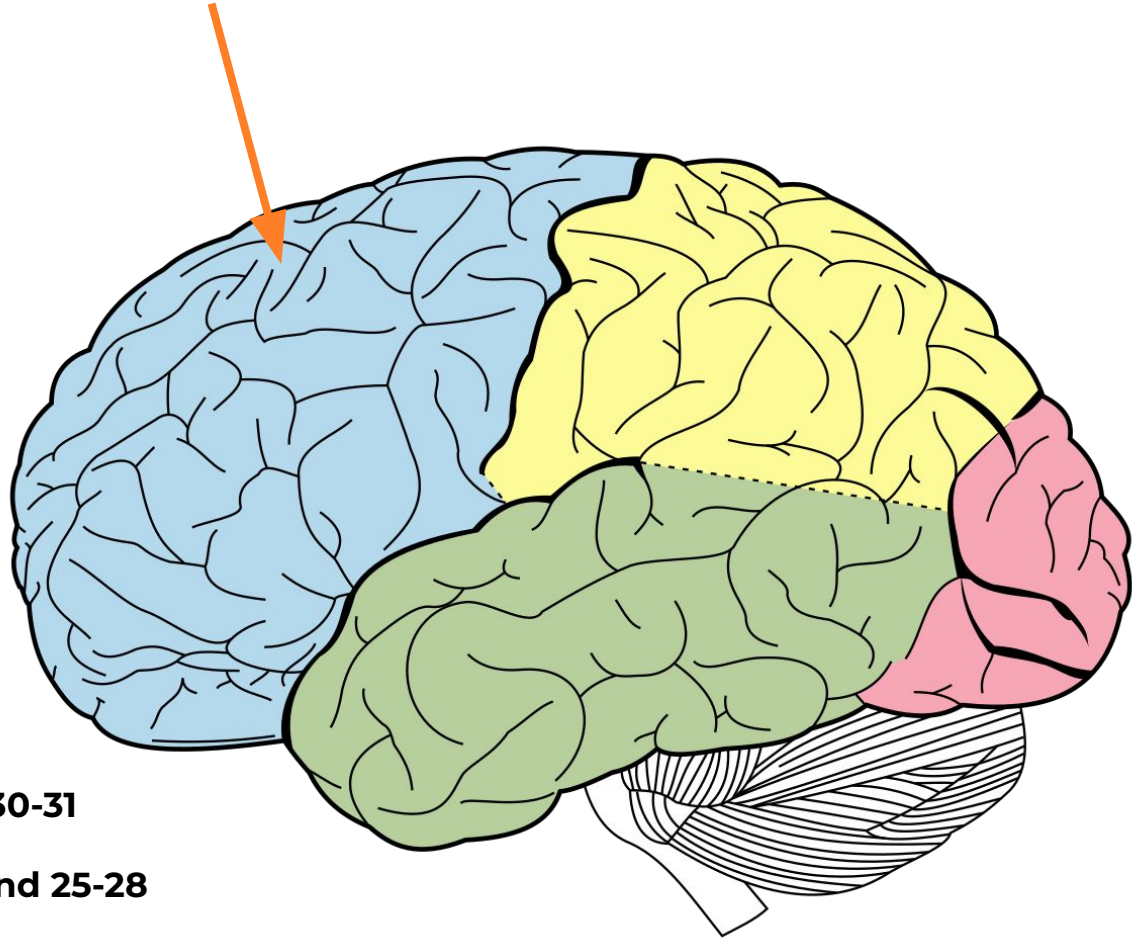
Usually develops around mid-20's, yet

2024 research suggests that:

Men fully develop frontal lobes around 30-31

Women fully develop frontal lobes around 25-28

Frontal Lobes of the Brain



teens are
more
likely to
be
impulsive
and prone
to desire
risky
challenges



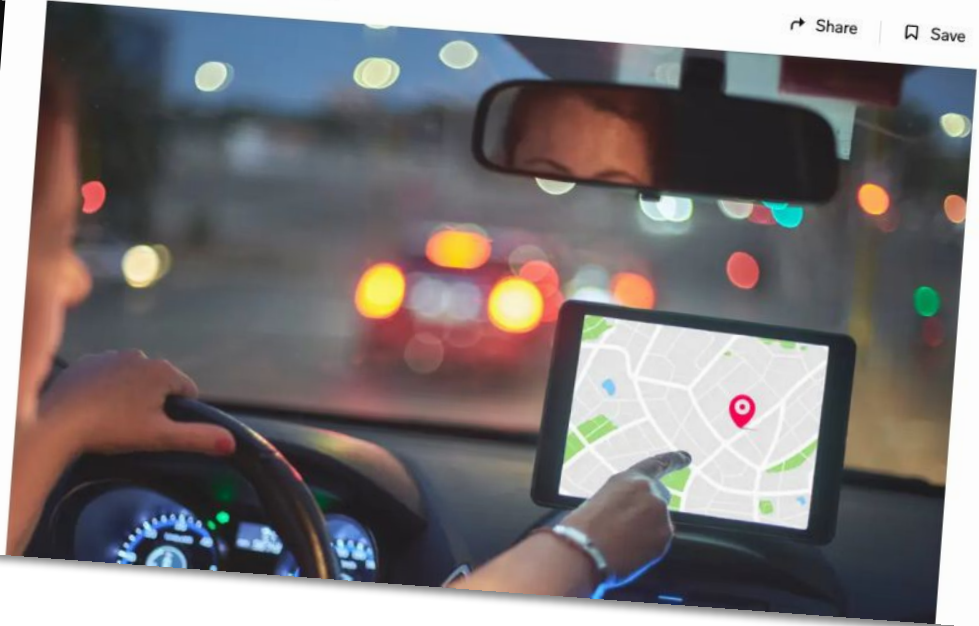
teens are
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Tourists in Hawaii followed their GPS and drove their car straight into a harbor: 'Pretty sure that was not supposed to happen'

[Aditi Bharade](#) May 3, 2023, 3:21 AM CDT

Share

Save



teens are
more
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and prone
to desire
risky
challenges

Tourists in Hawaii followed their GPS and drove
their car straight into a harbor: 'Pretty
was not supposed to happen'



⚠️ **Distractions can kill**
Daren Fentiman/Zuma/Eyevine

Using a mobile phone while driving is dangerous. Trying to catch Pokémon at the wheel could be even worse. According to a new analysis, the mobile game *Pokémon Go* may have contributed to nearly 150,000 traffic accidents, 256 deaths and economic costs of \$2 billion to \$7.3 billion in the first 148 days after its introduction to the US.

ADDICTED • DESIRES

Cell phone, instagram,
vaping, Netflix , tech
platforms, series

overly

DISTRACTED

generation

Gen A attention span is 8 seconds
and they multitask on 5 screens

They pay attention to many things
but pay little attention to any one
item for much time

Students today lack focus, appear
superficial, and fail to practice
critical thinking

ON DEMAND

Instant world • generation

Entertainment is on demand

Instant automatic gratification →
Alexa and Google

Patient levels seem to be declining

Entitlement rises when we expect it to
be simple and easy

High diagnosis of mental
health disorders

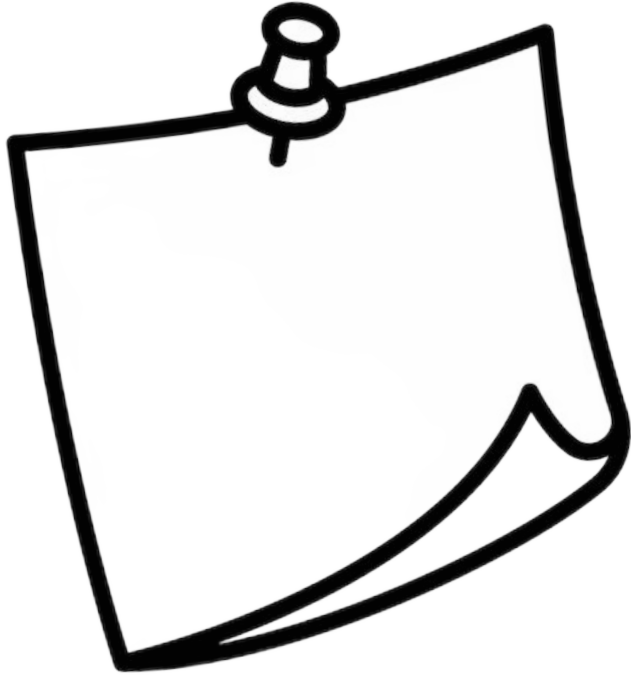
Increased panic attacks
and anxiety

ACTIVITY

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.



Our **internal state affects everything:**
our **thoughts**, our **actions**, our **mood**,
our **perception** of people/tasks/time



WORKING MEMORY

- Like writing notes on a sticky note
- 4-7 pieces of information at a time

The **brain cannot hold two dominant narratives** simultaneously

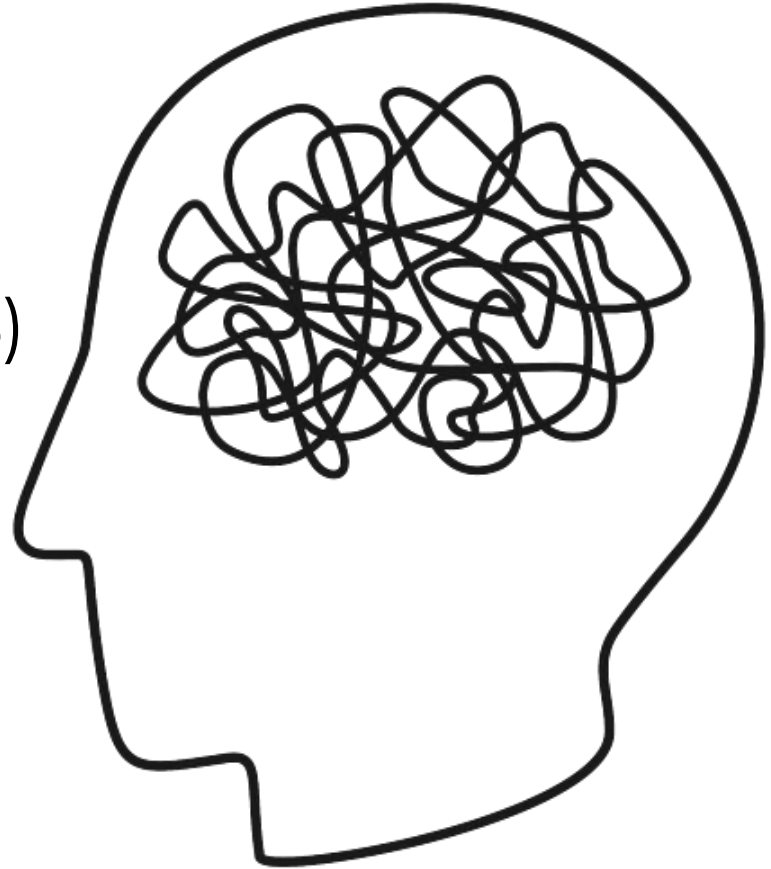
Multitasking: that [x] distracted

→ Distracted = + stress



The World Health Organization (WHO) declared **mental health** (13%) a far greater threat to global health than:

- Heart Disease (1%)
- Cancer (5%)
- Diabetes (1%)



**People may not lose their
capacity for kindness, they
may lose access to it.**

— Research (2025) suggests that, **humans are naturally wired for connection, empathy, fairness, and helping behavior** early in life, but access to *those behaviors changes under stress, burnout, fear, shame, overload, and lack of psychological safety.*

The Brain Is Asking One Question...

Am I safe?

kindness baseline



HIGH ACCESS TO KINDNESS

- Empathy
- Patience
- Listening
- Connection
- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Belonging behaviors

LOW ACCESS TO KINDNESS

- Defensiveness
- Withdrawal
- Numbness
- Irritability
- Aggression
- Disconnection
- Self-protection
- Shame, Worry, Doubt, and Fear



anxiety

The defining mental health issue facing our young people today.



2022 study found **that more than 37,000 HS students in WI found an increase in anxiety of more than a 10% increase in a 5 year period.**

2023 study found that **college aged students (concurrent, too) study anxious always or most of the time**

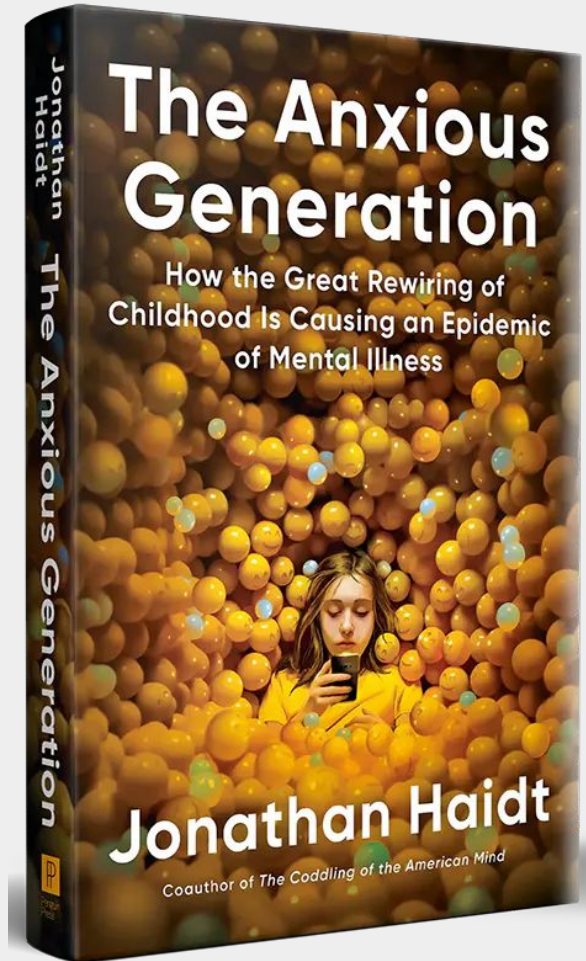
- Anxiety:
 - **Body** - tension or tightness in chest or abdomen
 - **Emotionally** - dread, worry, exhaustion,
 - **Cognitively** - ability to think clearly

depression

2nd most catastrophizing disorder

When Gen Z/Alpha
becomes or *feels*
socially disconnected.





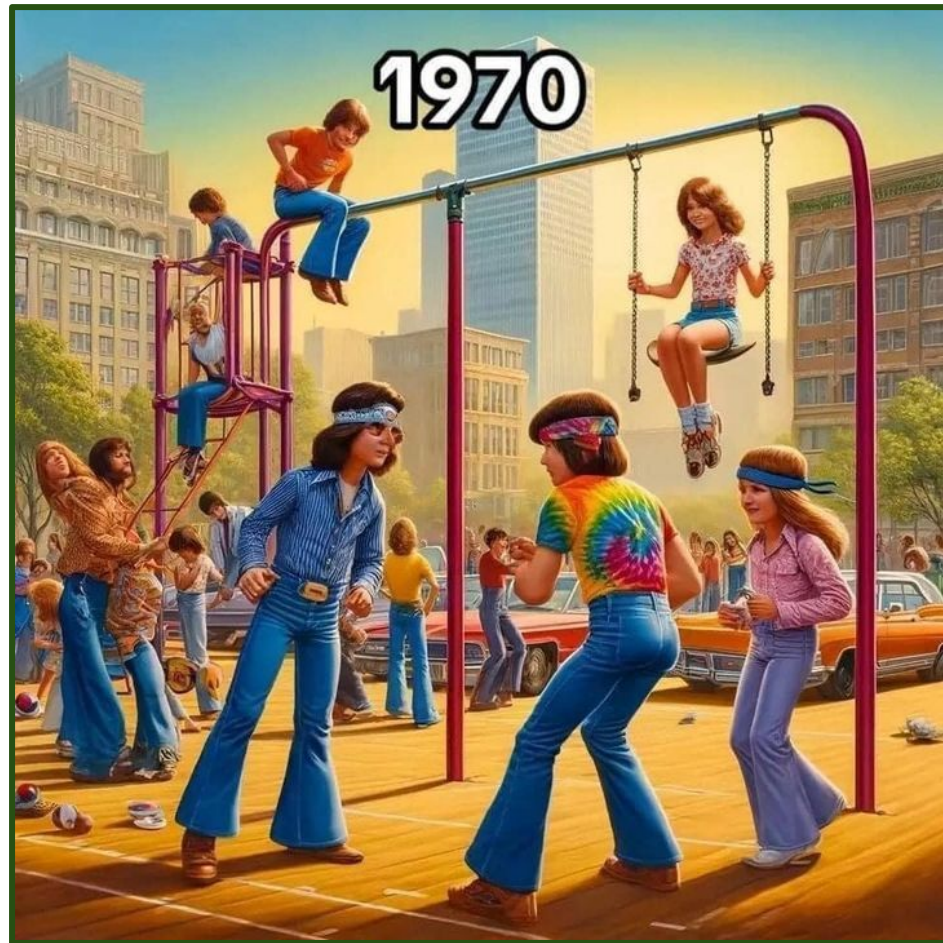
Decline of Play-Based Childhood: Haidt argues that the **decline in unsupervised outdoor play**, starting in the 1980s, has **significantly impacted children's mental health**. Free play is **crucial for building resilience and problem-solving skills**, but its reduction has left children **less prepared to handle real-world risks and challenges**.

Rise of Phone-Based Childhood: Haidt discusses how the rapid adoption of **smartphones and social media** in the early 2010s has **contributed to increased mental health issues** in Generation Z. This "phone-based childhood" leads to **social isolation, sleep deprivation, and emotional dysregulation**, especially among young girls.

1960



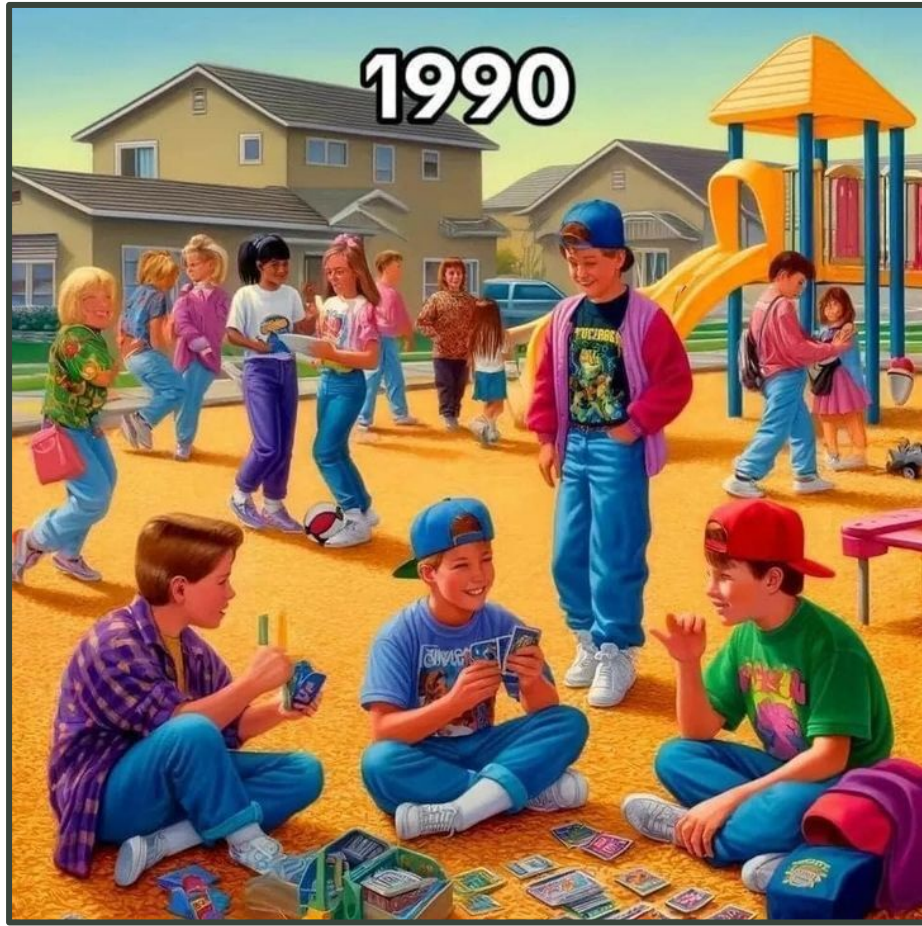
1970



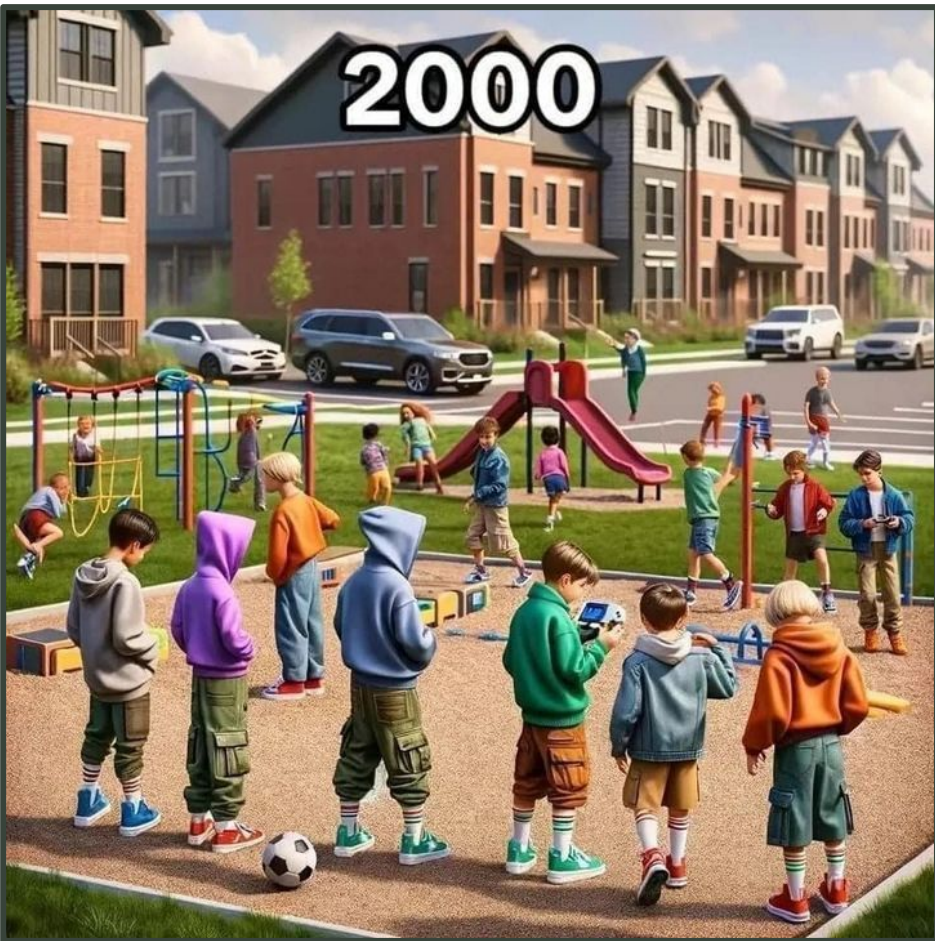
1980



1990



2000



2010

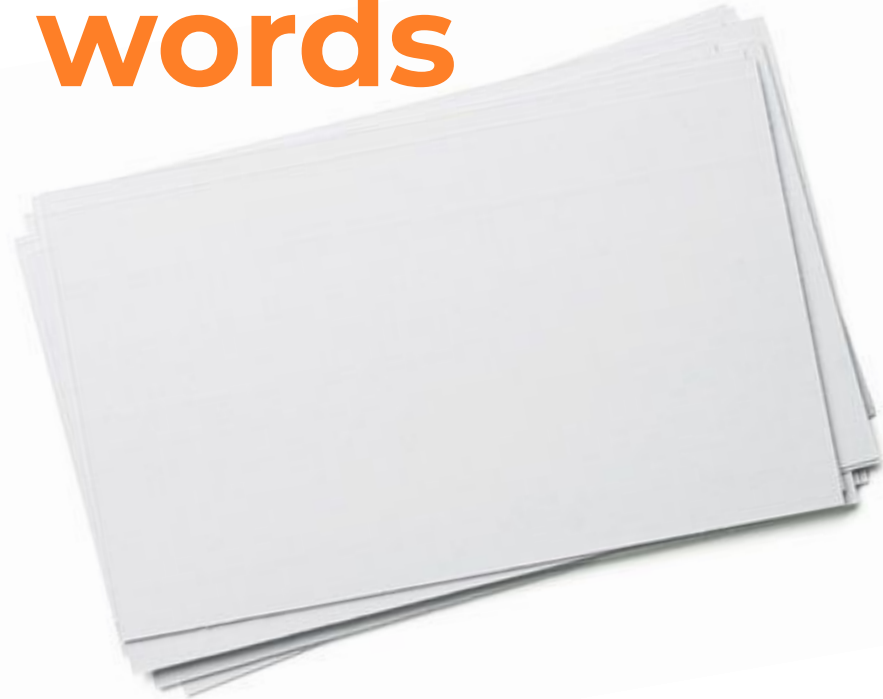


2020...



Best music artist ever and why in 20 words exactly.

Summarization
(Note Card Warm Up)





**Let's read "Brain Rot' Isn't Ruining
My Generation: What This Student
Wants You to Know"**

**Summarize Brain Rot in
exactly 20 words. Not 19,
not 21.**

Summarization
(Note Card Warm Up)



SHOW

10 words exactly!

The subject + what is important

10 words exactly! Main idea!
Subject + What is important



Compare

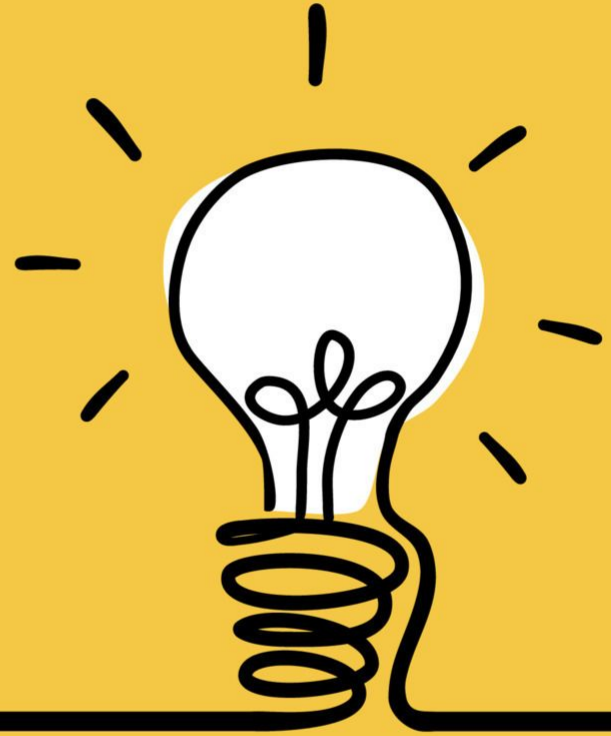
VS

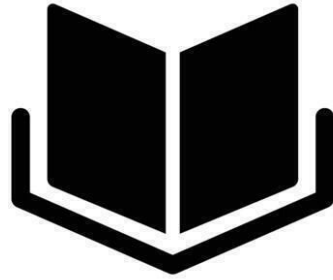
Contrast

COUNT! Keep them honest!

When students walk into a situation **where they uncover an insight** that will help them grow in a relevant manner, **that insight will remain with them for years to come.** They did the work.

They discovered that valuable idea. They initiated the effort

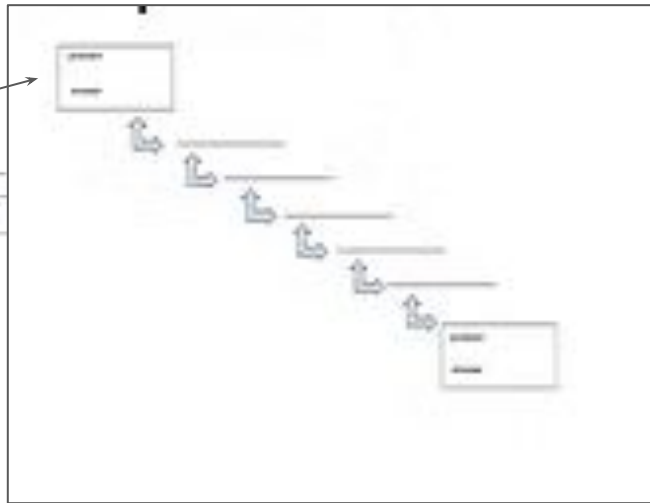




Communication has changed. Less speaking at home. More listening to devices. Less writing. More texting, more emojis. More shorthand.

Six Degrees of Separation

Demonstrate your mastery of the content by connecting one problem to the other. You can use as many or few steps as you need. A blank example is included here.



Problem
→
Answer

One Item from today's students list:

- Anxiety
- Stamina
- Instant gratification
- Device dependency
- Poor executive functioning
- Low resilience
- Limited communication skills

One Item from classroom challenges list:

- Students shutting down quickly
- "IDK" answers
- Not reading directions
- Struggling with problem-solving
- Incomplete work
- Low independence

Problem
←
Answer

Name _____ Assignment _____ Date _____

Six Degrees of Separation

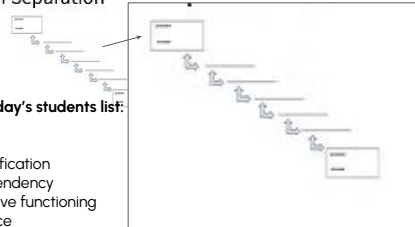
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- Incomplete work
- Low independence

←

Problem
 Answer



Instant Gratification



Low tolerance with discomfort. When something feels slow, confusing, or effortful, they feel stress or frustration quickly.



Avoidance of challenge. To escape discomfort, they avoid difficult tasks or seek the fastest way out (asking for help before trying, guessing, off-task behavior).



Reduced stamina & persistence. They struggle to stay with a task longer than a few minutes without external prompting because persistence has not been built.



Learned helplessness. Students begin to believe: "I can't do this" or "I don't want to feel uncomfortable, so I'll stop."



Give up. Students will stop mid-task or lack pride in their work, skim instead of read.



Therefore, students end up with **missing and/or incomplete assignments.**

Incomplete Work



1 in 5 adults report chronic loneliness.

1 in 10 children report they do not have friends.



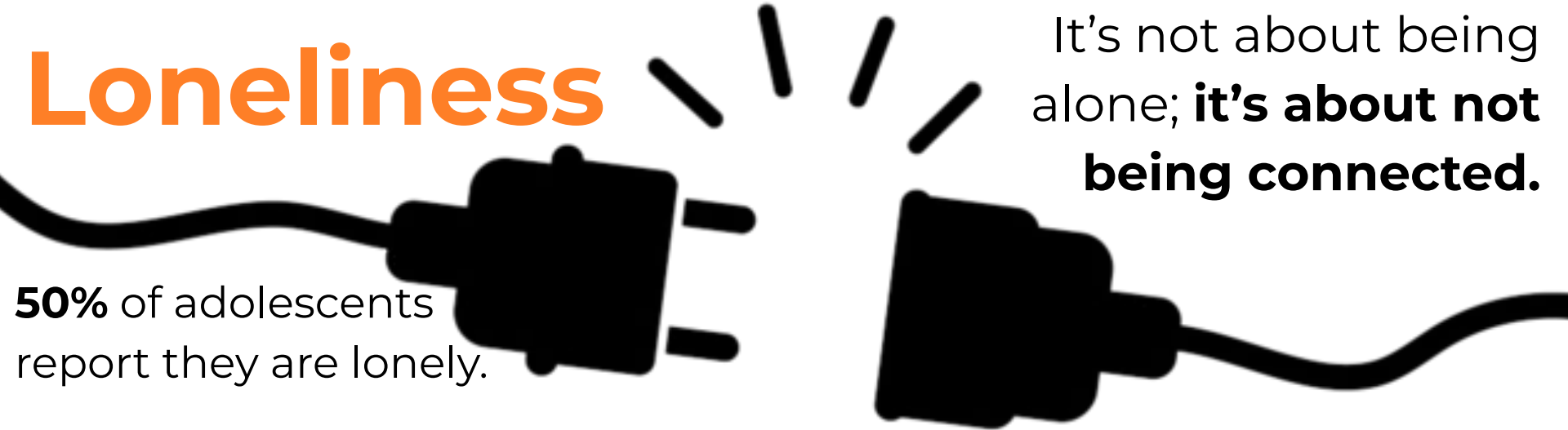
Loneliness is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Loneliness leads to avoidance of others, lowers self-esteem, and creates pessimism.

Loneliness

It's not about being alone; **it's about not being connected.**

50% of adolescents report they are lonely.



our **brains** are brilliant— but, *imperfect*

We mishear, missee, misremember

We forget things, confuse events,
and fill in the blanks

Once our minds **create meaning**,
we **cling to it**—even when it's
flawed



ACTIVITY

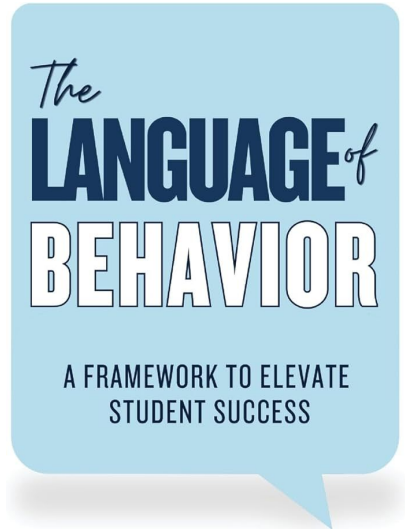
Guess the word:

F _ _ K

SH _ T

_ ELL

D _ M _



ACTIVITY

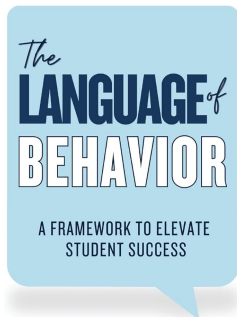
Guess the word:

FORK

SHOT

BELL

DIME



CHARLE PECK JOSHUA STAMPER

- This is a metaphor of what happens in our minds every day.
- **When we don't have all of the information it's easy to fill in the gaps with negative responses.**
- It's human nature, *and happens everyday in our lives*, as way for our brain to protect ourselves from threats in our environment

We **don't always see reality**—we see our *interpretation* of it

Our brains are always scanning:

- Tone of voice
- Body language
- Eye contact
- Emotional energy



Finding Your ACE Score



While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** or **very often**...
Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?

or

Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** or **very often**...
Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

or

Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**...
Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

or

Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

4. Did you **often** or **very often** feel that ...
No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

or

Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

5. Did you **often** or **very often** feel that ...
You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?

or

Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

7. Was your mother or stepmother:
Often or **very often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

or

Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?

or

Ever repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Yes

No

If yes enter 1 _____

Now add up your "Yes" answers: _____. This is your ACE Score.

Adapted from: http://www.acestudy.org/files/ACE_Score_Calculator.pdf. 052408RA40R

ACE Assessment



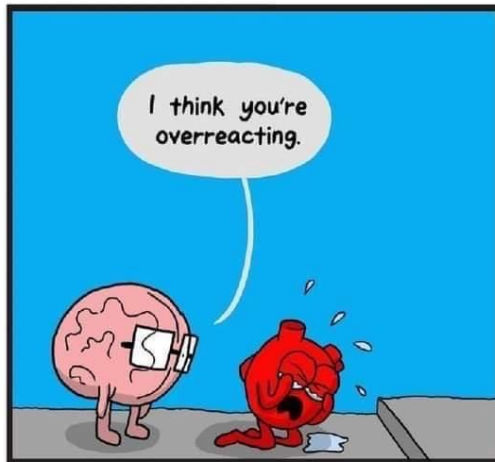
ACE Scores

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Phrase coined to **describe the chronic, unpredictable, and stress-inducing events** some children experience: divorce, neglect, abuse, parents with addictive behavior and/or mental illness.

In 2015, a study was conducted on 17,000 K-12 students and $\frac{2}{3}$ had encountered Adverse Childhood Experiences

A lot of our **kids have endured chronic stressors** and feel as if no adult has offered them hope





think of students as a
SODA
CAN

**DO NOT take it
personally!**

in the chat

How might knowing a student's ACE score shift the way you interpret their behavior or performance?

What's one behavior you might now see differently?



Stress of exposure to frequent yelling *alone can be detrimental to a child's health* as **physical punishment**

stress

hijacks your mood and body

It creeps in quietly...

- A deadline
- A packed inbox
- A never-ending to-do list

it creates:

SELF DOUBT

PROCRASTINATION

COMPARISON

DOOM-SCROLLING / DISCONNECTION



shift: bullying

Study found that

1997 to 2017 a

*decrease in face
to face bullying,*

**but an increase in
cyberbullying.**



Today's Generation & **BULLYING**

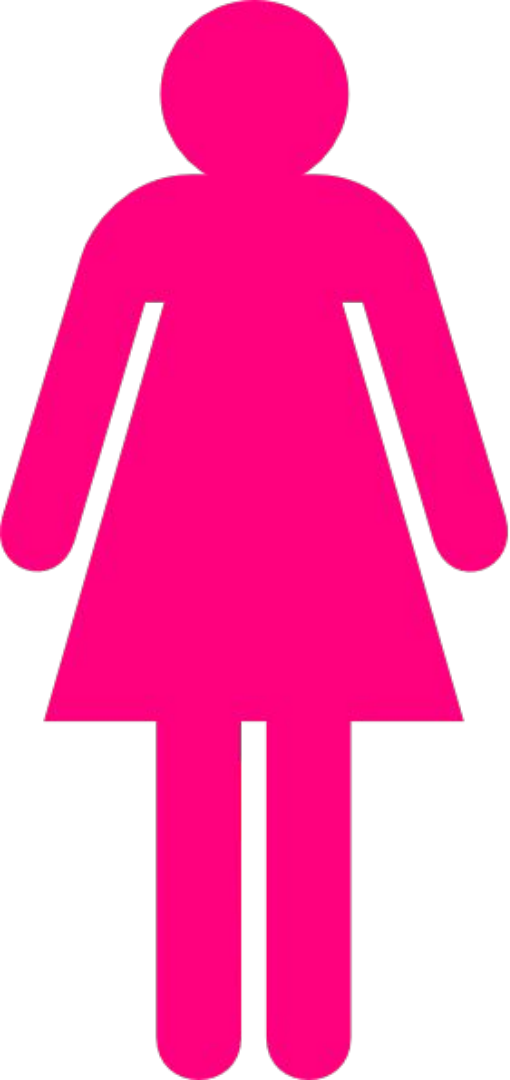
- Previous Generations:
 - Bullying occurred → went home and could find relief

45% experienced
cyberbullying

through social media

Today, bullying **stays in their faces** and continues when they get home.

- **YouTube:** 79%
- **Snapchat:** 69%
- **TikTok:** 64%
- **Facebook/Instagram:** 49%



Between 2011 and 2019,
approximately **1 in 10 boys**
experienced cyberbullying
and **1 in 5 girls experienced**
cyberbullying.

2024 study found that
suicide rates from bullying
for **12-15 are down**, but **are up**
for ages 8-11

Social media fuels the
insecurity of our
adolescents

**Survival instincts are hardwired
in our brain, but negative beliefs
about ourselves are not.**

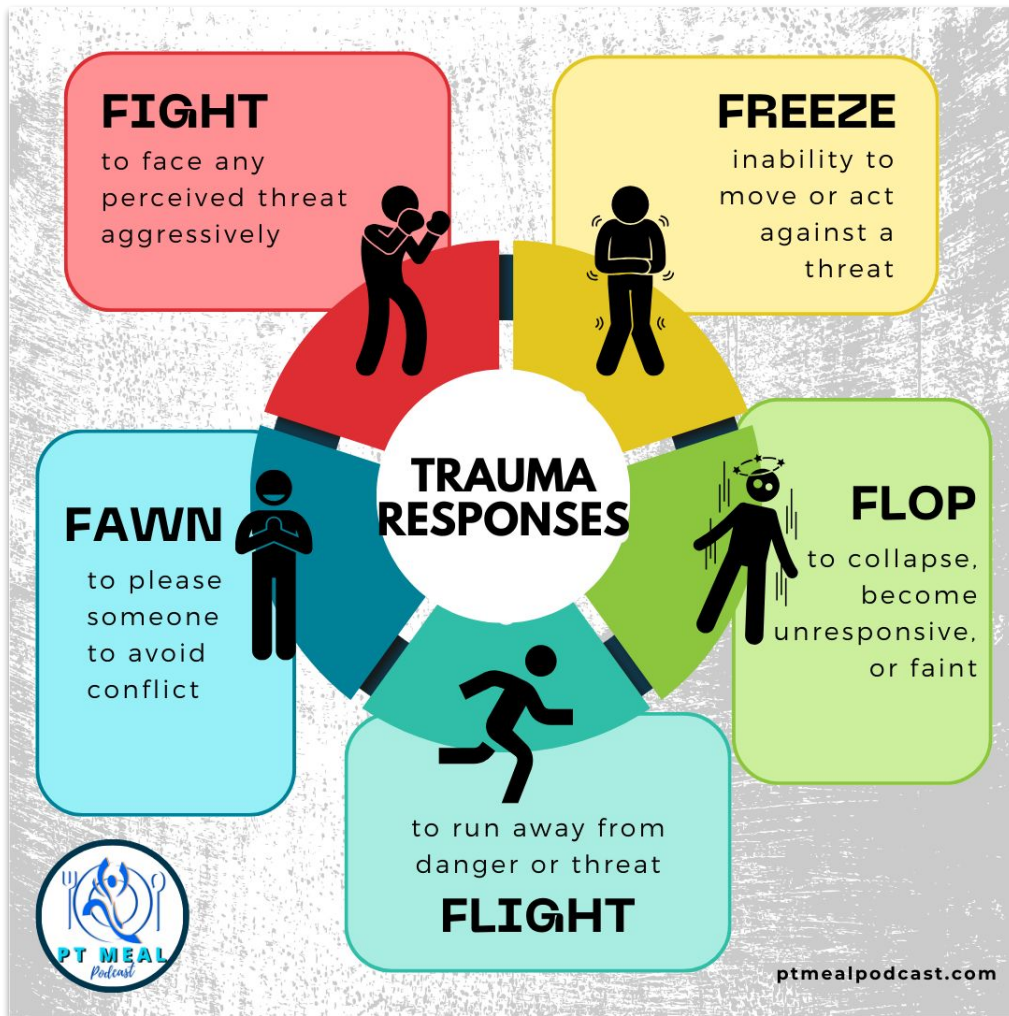


Gen Z became focused on their online presence to gain **acceptance** from peers,

Acceptance = Gen Z/A
oxygen

Online Shaming = Gen Z/A
nightmare

2023 Pew Research found that 58% of teens reported that **social media helps them feel accepted**



Someone who **feels rejected or isolated** acts **stressed, fearful, and hypervigilant** like **someone in physical danger**

(Fight, Flight, Freeze, Flop, or Fawn)



Shame is the interruption of positive emotions, leading to the thought: "I am bad."

Can cause us to **withdraw from or have defensive reactions and impacts.**

common emotional responses:

- Anger/Rage
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Fear
- Loneliness
- Frustration
- Resentment



shame responses

Withdrawal: Isolation, running/hiding – Avoiding social situations.

Attacking Self: Negative self-talk leading to lower self-esteem.

Attacking Others: Projecting feelings onto others, blaming, lashing out.

Avoidance: Denial, addiction, thrill-seeking.

strip the shame

Once we've **recognized what this reaction actually is**, there **are things we can do to help people deal with their shame in a positive way.**

- You call a friend with exciting news, and you get voicemail.

>>The situation is not shame, but if you interpret as “they do not care about me” or “I am not important” this could lead to shame.

- You are at a stoplight and rocking out to your favorite music. You don't notice the light changed, and someone beeps at you.

>>The beep itself is neutral, but if it makes you feel like an embarrassment or that you look foolish in front of others, it could cause a moment of shame.

- You are excited to spend time with someone you haven't seen in a while, and they cancel unexpectedly.

>>If you see it as “They don't value me” or “I must not be worth their time,” it could stir feelings of shame.

think. pair. share.

What are some others forms or examples of shame that may be demonstrated by students?



When a child **does not receive appropriate love during childhood**, it can **trigger anxiety, hypervigilance, and aggression** to **improve survival**.

1 out of every 2 kids has an insecure attachment to their parent(s). This comes from **absent, unrealistic, or overbearing parenting.**

Leads to trouble expressing oneself and regulating feelings

Insecure attachment can lead to **increased cortisol levels, lower hippocampal volume area of the brain (involved in memory and learning), and greater risk for physical and mental illness.**

insecure attachment





Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Hurt people, hurt people try putting yourself in their shoes
it's harder to dislike someone when you get to know them.

Research shows that **empathy is the gateway to compassion**, and
compassion is a higher-level skill we can harness for growth and healing.



Empathy - feeling what someone else is feeling

Compassion - recognizing someone else's emotions state and seeking to alleviate.

empathy

"**Choosing kindness** doesn't
mean ignoring problems;
it means

solving them with empathy."



I wish my _____ knew...

Dr. Culver wishes his students knew...

I wish my students knew that I was bullied and made fun of in school. That experience shaped me, and I promised myself I would never make anyone else feel that way. I wish my students knew that I had a rough childhood and struggled to complete my undergraduate degree, which taught me the importance of grace—and I strive to extend that grace to others.

I wish my students knew how excited and passionate I am about learning and education. I work hard to make learning fun, but as a perfectionist, I often overanalyze things, which can lead to anxiety or negative self-talk. That's why I am deeply committed to kindness, both to myself and others.

I wish my students knew how much I want them to be successful. I am so grateful for each of them answering the call to become future teachers. I am kind, caring, and compassionate, but I also ask that they not take advantage of that. Instead, I hope we can collaborate and work together to make this semester a meaningful and enjoyable experience. I wish my students knew how much I am rooting for them. You got this!

I wish my teacher knew that I am very blessed. I grew up in a "picture-perfect" household. My parents were in love and rarely argued. I never had to worry about anything. Going to college or having a car was never a problem. If anything, I grew up spoiled rotten by my family.

I wish my teacher knew that my mom got diagnosed with pancreatic cancer when I was 15. I wish my teacher knew I had to shave off my mom's hair when she started chemo. I tried to make dinners that my mom could keep down. I tried to help maintain the house, but I was lost.

I wish my teacher knew that my grandparents moved in when I was 16. My grandma had dementia and was forgetting everyone. My grandpa was not able to maintain his health.

I wish my teacher knew that my mom lost her battle to cancer on Thanksgiving of 2023. I was there for her the whole time. I wish my teacher knew my grandma lost her battle to dementia a few days after Christmas in 2023. I wish my teacher knew my grandpa died of heartbreak a few days before Valentine's Day of 2024.

I wish my teacher knew how very blessed I am. During all of those hard times, I had school and teachers that were my steady rock. None of them truly knew what was going on at home and the impact they had on me. They kept me afloat during a horrible storm.

I wish my teacher knew that it feels like I've lived a lifetime in 19 years.

practice!

If you were to write “I wish my students”, “I wish my colleagues”, or any variation, **what would be some things that you include?**





we are hardwired for **control**

It makes us feel **safe**

So **we try to control people**, plans, and problems—often unconsciously

But **the only person you can truly control is YOU**

- Your thoughts
- Your reactions
- Your emotional state

change the **CHANNEL**

Today's students often **engage in inaccurate thinking, tending to focus on the negative.**

Teach students that their brain is like a remote control that they can use to "**switch the channel**" to help them calm down (Minahan & Rappaport, 2012).



YOU can positively
impact 1,000 lives
around you.



find a partner

Partner A and Partner B

your behavior is the ripple effect

Your **habits, emotions, and energy**
are contagious

Your impact extends **up to 3 degrees**
of connection

Your behavior affects **your friends'**
friends' friends



Your smile has power

Smiling **tricks your**
brain into releasing
feel-good
chemicals



“If the student doesn’t possess the skills to work through adverse or stressful situations, punishment will not magically create a skill set to help them better manage themselves through a fear-based approach.”

Charle Peck & Joshua Stamper

emotions are
not the **enemy**

**...they're
signposts.** *Learn
to read them, not
run from them!*





Help create a space to process their **full range of emotions**.

Approach with compassion:

"I know you wanted _____"
"It's okay to be upset."

Try to Avoid
"Stop Crying"
"Get over it"
"Calm down"



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO DRAKE
HOW R U FEELING?



On a scale of Golden Girls, how are you feeling?



“Change the Channel” Strategies

These **switching activities** are called **cognitive distractions or thought breaks** and are incompatible with negative thinking.

younger children

- Listening Center
- “Find the picture”

older children

- Mad Libs
- Trivia
- Counting all of the green items
- Alphabet backwards
- First 10 lines of your favorite movie

How to instantly feel better

Angry —————→ **Sing**

Burned out —————→ **Walk**

Overthinking —————→ **Write**

Anxious —————→ **Breathe**

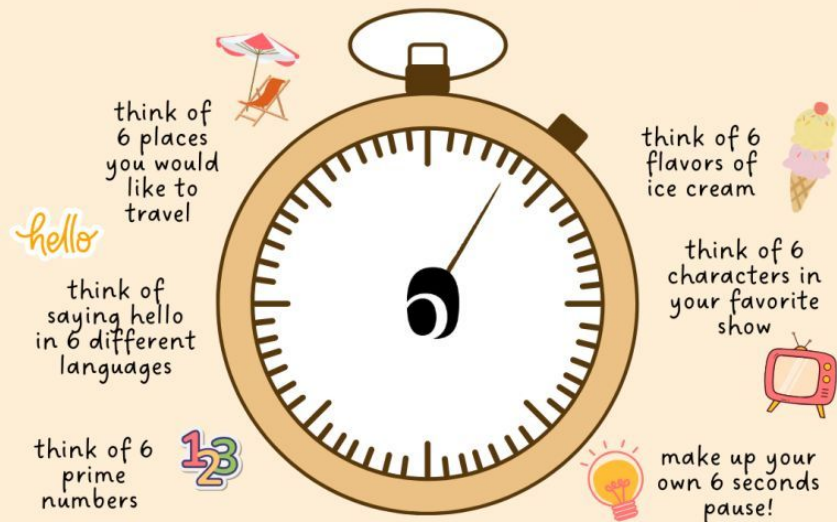
Stressed —————→ **Exercise**

Sad —————→ **Gratitude**

Lazy —————→ **Cold shower**

Impatient —————→ **Reflect on progress**

PRACTICE THE 6 SECONDS PAUSE



when you feel yourself about to react

PAUSE for 6 seconds and THINK ...

This pause gives you time and interrupts your impulse to react with anger. You can break the reaction and respond with more care

2.9013

is the ratio of positive to negative
interactions necessary to rewire your brain

TAKES 3 POSITIVE COMMENTS, EXPERIENCES, OR EXPRESSIONS



We don't learn social and emotional intelligence from watching a *YouTube video* or reading a *manual*; **we learn it by practicing. It starts with us.**

Activity

18 Affirmations

A. Write 18 affirmations
about yourself

i. i.e. "I am..."

*Affirmation Activity
Section*



I am a kind
educator!



Mindfulness

the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us

Mindfulness can improve sleep and sickness

Helps alleviate depression, anxiety, and pain

MINDFULNESS IN THE DAY

- Mindfulness minute
- Teacher-Led mindfulness
 - Model



the
KIND VOICE
OFFICIAL BLOG OF ORANGE SPARROW

NEW BLOG!

**THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS
IN EDUCATION**



GUEST WRITER: DR. CATHY HARMON
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



WWW.ORANGESPARROW.ORG | CHRISTOPHER@ORANGESPARROW.ORG



Mindfulness can happen anywhere:

- Take a walk without headphones or drive without radio and just pay attention to what's around you
- Stop and notice 3 things that are good right now
- Can also practice mindfulness while doing chores
- If your mind wanders, wiggle your toes to bring your attention back to the present.

mindfulness



Let's Practice:



**What are 3 things
that are good right
now?**

mindfulness

EVERY DAY
MAY NOT BE
GOOD...
BUT THERE IS
SOMETHING
GOOD IN
EVERY DAY.





We can't control the events in our lives, but we can control how we perceive them and how our perceptions and response to the events determine our outcome.

$$E+P=O$$

(event s + perception = outcome)

Help entitlement disappear, but aiding in gratitude

- Build time within the day to have 3-5 minute reset for stillness and quietness
- Use gratitude as a bell ringer



GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Use prompts like:

- "What is something small that made you smile today?"
- "Who is someone you're thankful for, and why?"

GRATITUDE CIRCLES

Begin class in a circle, allowing each student to share one thing they are grateful for. Introduce a weekly theme to keep it fresh, such as "Grateful for an experience" or "Grateful for something I learned."

GRATITUDE GRAFFITI

Designate a section of the classroom wall or whiteboard as a "Gratitude Wall." Allow students to write or draw something they are grateful for each day as they enter the classroom.

Gratitude Jar

- At the end of each day (or each class period during reflection time), take a moment to **write down something positive that happened or something you are grateful for.**
- **Place the note** into a designated "Gratitude Jar."
- **At the end of the school year,** open the jar and **read all the positive notes** to reflect on the good moments throughout the year.



when you need a pick me up...

CALL
707-873-7862

Service project of an elementary school



Think of a **colleague who has helped you, is kind to you, and you are grateful for.**

Write down what would you say to them to let them know that they or the situation means something to you?

think and write



Golden Rule:

Treat people *the way you would
want to be treated.*

the science of **KINDNESS**

- **10x More Engaged** with Jobs or Activities

(Bakker & Demerouti, 2017)

- Kindness **Increases Mood by 90%**

(Curry et al, 2018)

- Increased **Feelings of Belonging by 80%**

(Musick and Wilson, 2003)

- **75%** are More Likely to be **Kind to Others**

(Pressman et al., 2015)

- **Reduces Stress by 28%**

(Lyubomirsky et al., 2005)

- Increases **Motivation by 50%**

(Algoe & Haidt, 2009)

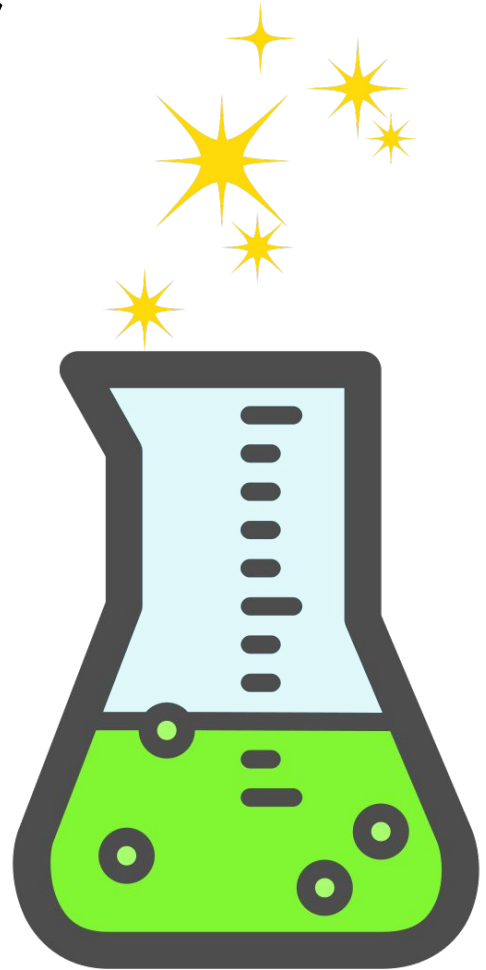




Photo Credit: Google Images

Relationships

“*People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.*”

- Theodore Roosevelt





What it is not → NOT COMPLIANCE



When students **know you care about them** as individuals, **they become more motivated, more engaged,** and **more willing to challenge themselves.**

DR. CHRIS CULVER



Over 90% of Gen Z/A prefer to have human interaction instead of just screens.

40% want daily interactions with their teacher/leader and **they feel like something is wrong** without it.

60% want regular check ins from their teacher/leader.



the KIND VOICE

OFFICIAL BLOG OF ORANGE SPARROW

NEW BLOG!

THE POWER OF THE EDUCATOR'S KIND VOICE



GUEST WRITER: AMY JORDAN
SECONDARY INSTRUCTIONAL COACH



WWW.ORANGESPARROW.ORG | CHRISTOPHER@ORANGESPARROW.ORG



"Shut up!"

"Listen, boy."

"Maybe you should be in special class."

"What's wrong with you?"

We are only a few days into the new school year and already several students have reported to me these things being said to them from educators in our building.

What are 8 words that can
change a child's life?

What are 8 words that can
change a child's life?

“I am grateful you are in my class!”

“Kindness isn’t just about being nice; it’s about creating a space where every student feels seen, heard, and respected. It’s in this environment that real learning happens.”

Dr. Chris Culver



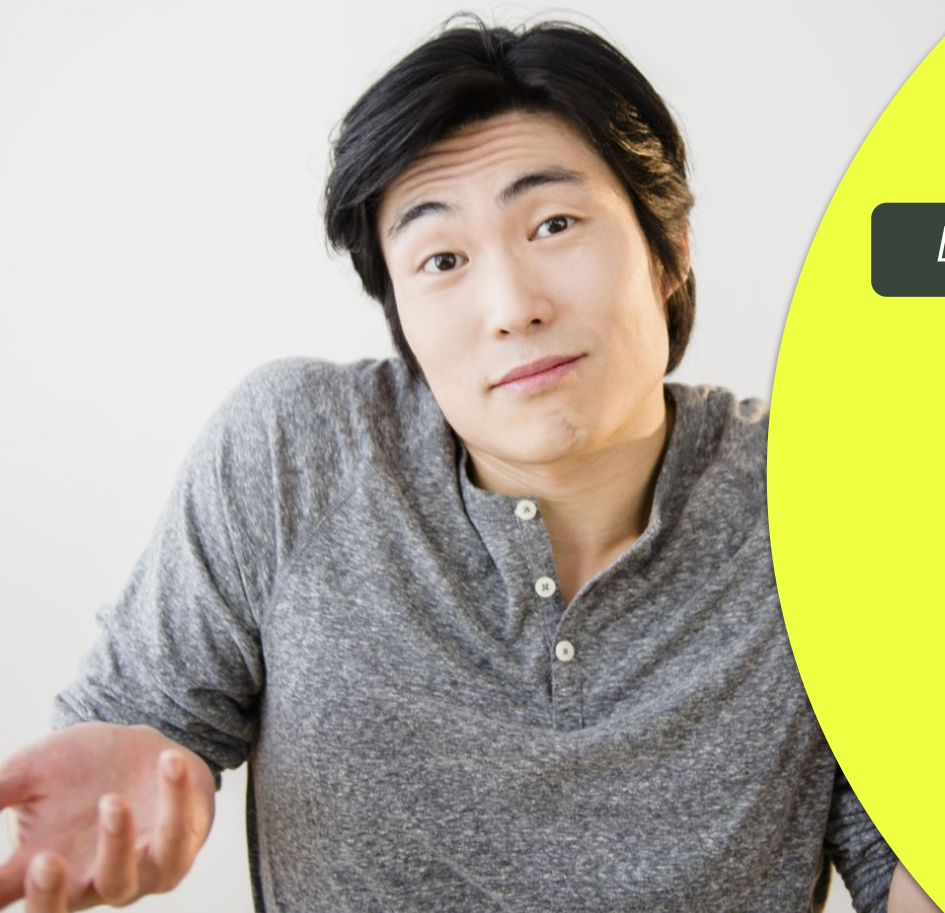
RELATIONSHIPS

Our people are **seeking mentors** → people *who care* about them.

Are we **building relationships with all?**

the least • the last • the lost • the left out





“Building Relationships”

_____ can be _____

VAGUE

Leaves too much to teachers instinct

**Greet students at the door each and
everyday by name**

**Ask students questions about their
interests?**

Ask “how are you?”

**Let students know that you are glad
they are there today!**

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

WALK-UP SONG

Allowing students to choose a walk-up song, in any language, celebrates their individuality, personal tastes, and possibly heritage. It also creates a positive and energetic atmosphere, making students feel enthusiastic about starting the day or a new activity. Additionally, it can help boost confidence and set a positive tone for student participation while allowing for multi-cultural awareness.

This activity will likely take more than one day and should probably not be completed on the first day. You want to ensure that students have enough time to pick their song. **TIP:** Once students select their song, incorporate a few each day until all songs have been played.

FREE!

Resource

SCAN HERE!





Wyandotte, Oklahoma • Small Rural Town

*“In order **to trust others,**
we must trust ourselves
first...”*

Brené Brown

***Trust is slow
building and
is a layered
process that
happens
over time.***

Brené Brown



Activity | Trust

On a scale of 1-5, rate yourself in relation to the following:

- *I create opportunities to connect with individuals and show genuine interest in their emotions and well-being.*
- *I actively listen to individuals without interruption or judgment, validating their feelings even when they differ from my own perspective.*
- *I collaborate with individuals to identify and address their concerns, working together towards a solution.*
- *I establish and communicate my core values and guiding principles, seeking to align them with the values and aspirations of individuals.*
- *I create opportunities to share my expertise and insights, particularly in areas relevant to individual well-being and development.*
- *I build credibility with individuals by consistently acting in ways that align with my expressed values and principles.*

**Trust is the most important
ingredient in any relationship**
for the simple reaction that
without trust, the relationship
does not mean anything!

trust building activities

NAME, STORY, STRENGTH

- **Name** (how they prefer to be addressed)
- A **piece of their story** (something meaningful to them—could be fun, deep, or silly)
- A **personal strength** (what they're proud of or something they're good at)

BE CONSISTENT

BE CLEAR

CELEBRATE SMALL WINS & MOMENTS

- Celebrate **someone who showed kindness.**
- Highlight **someone's growth mindset.**
- Acknowledge birthdays, new haircuts, or outside accomplishments.

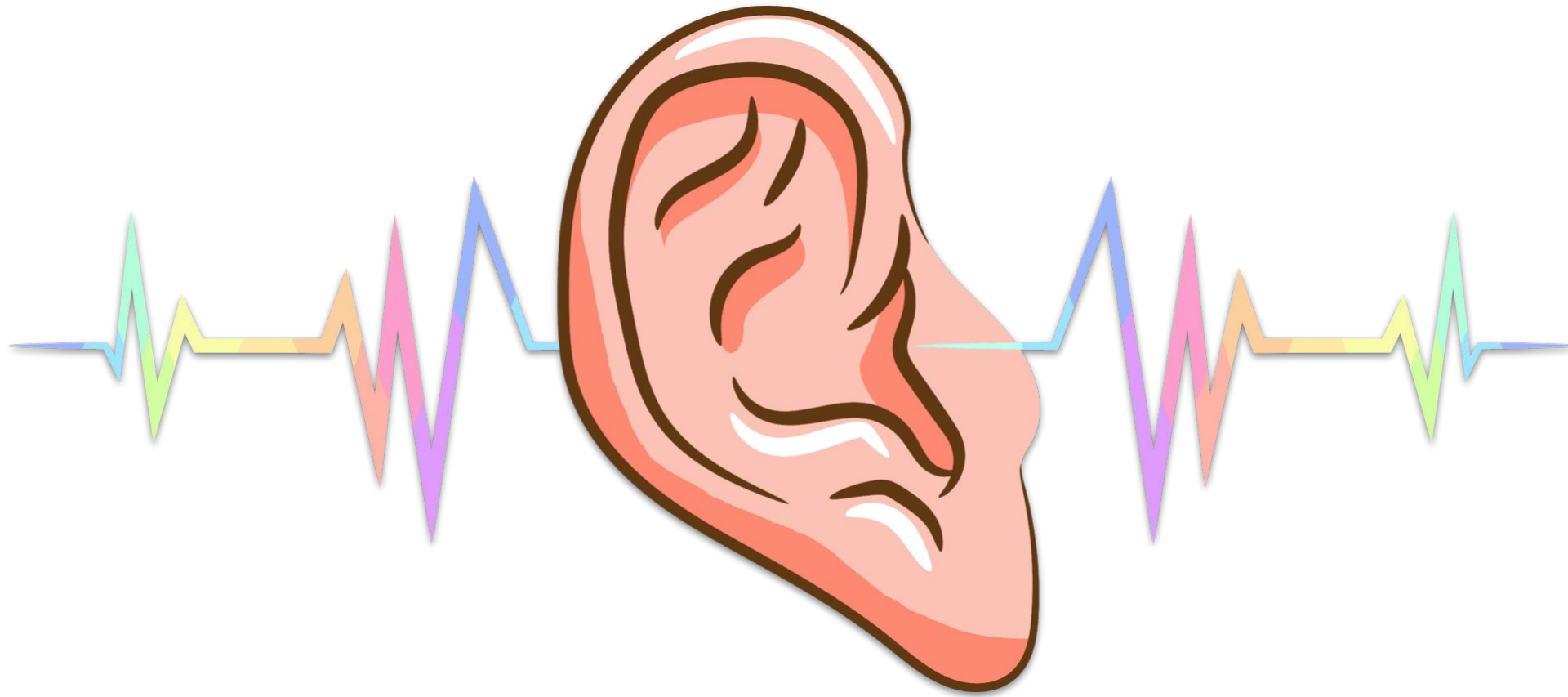
2x10 rule

TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITY

What is it: Spending **two minutes per day for 10 consecutive school days** connecting with an individual student **to build authentic relationships** and offer **extra social-emotional support**

Recognize that one day that you won't have time? See if someone can cover a class for 2 minutes or a duty to help you achieve this.

Super helpful **to do throughout the year** especially **after a student exhibits anger or frustration** and **after school vacations or long weekends.**



The power of **listening** is a display of respect and expression of care.

Listening is a way of **offering our scarcest, most sacred gift:** our attention

People who
are **treated
with dignity
and respect**
are **55% more
engaged
with their
work.**



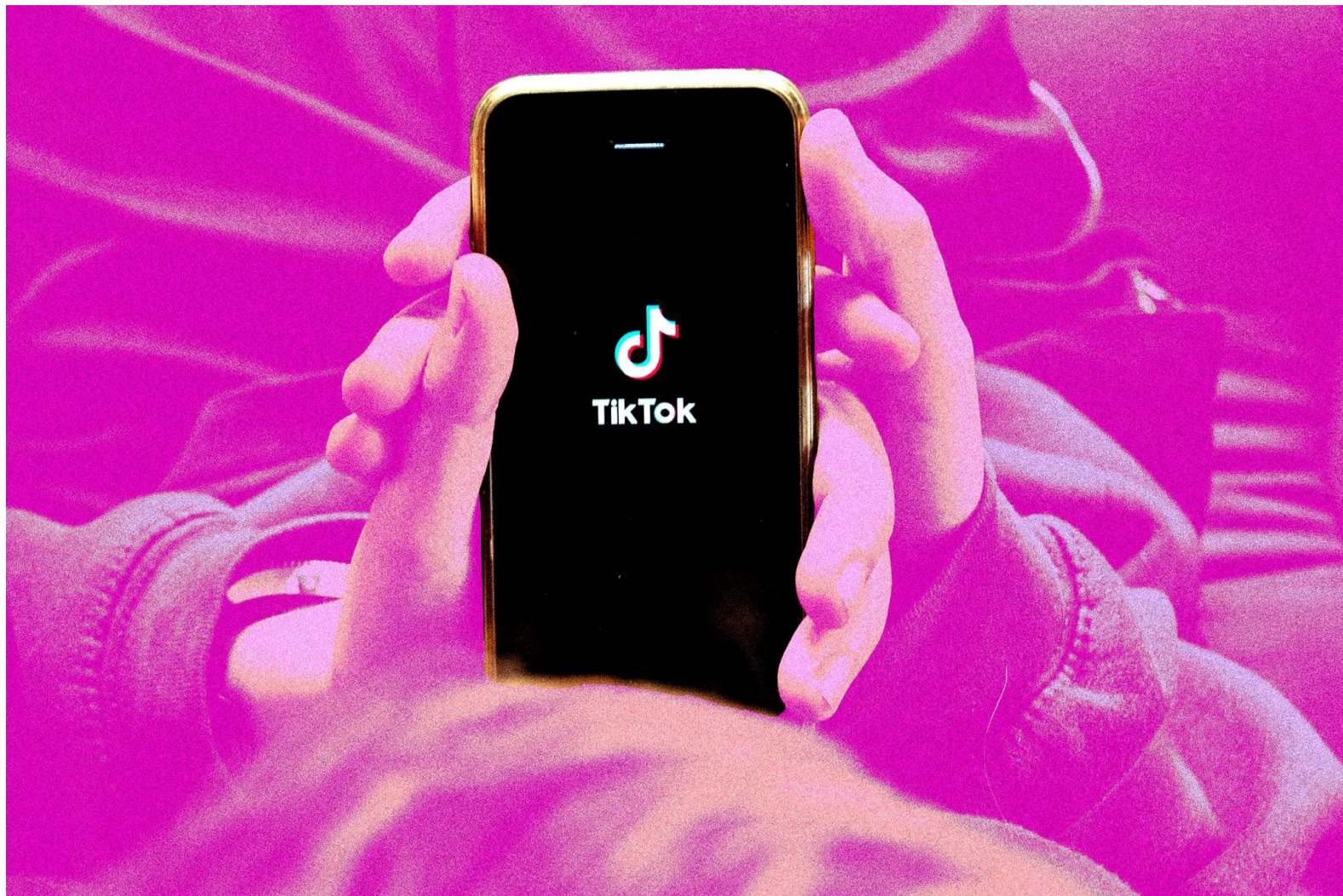


turn and talk

How will students
know that you
treat them with
dignity and
respect?



humans are wired for...
CONNECTION



Everyone experiences kindness and connection differently.
Let's do a quick check-in on **what feels most meaningful to YOU.**

Read these five options and choose the **ONE** that feels most like *you*:

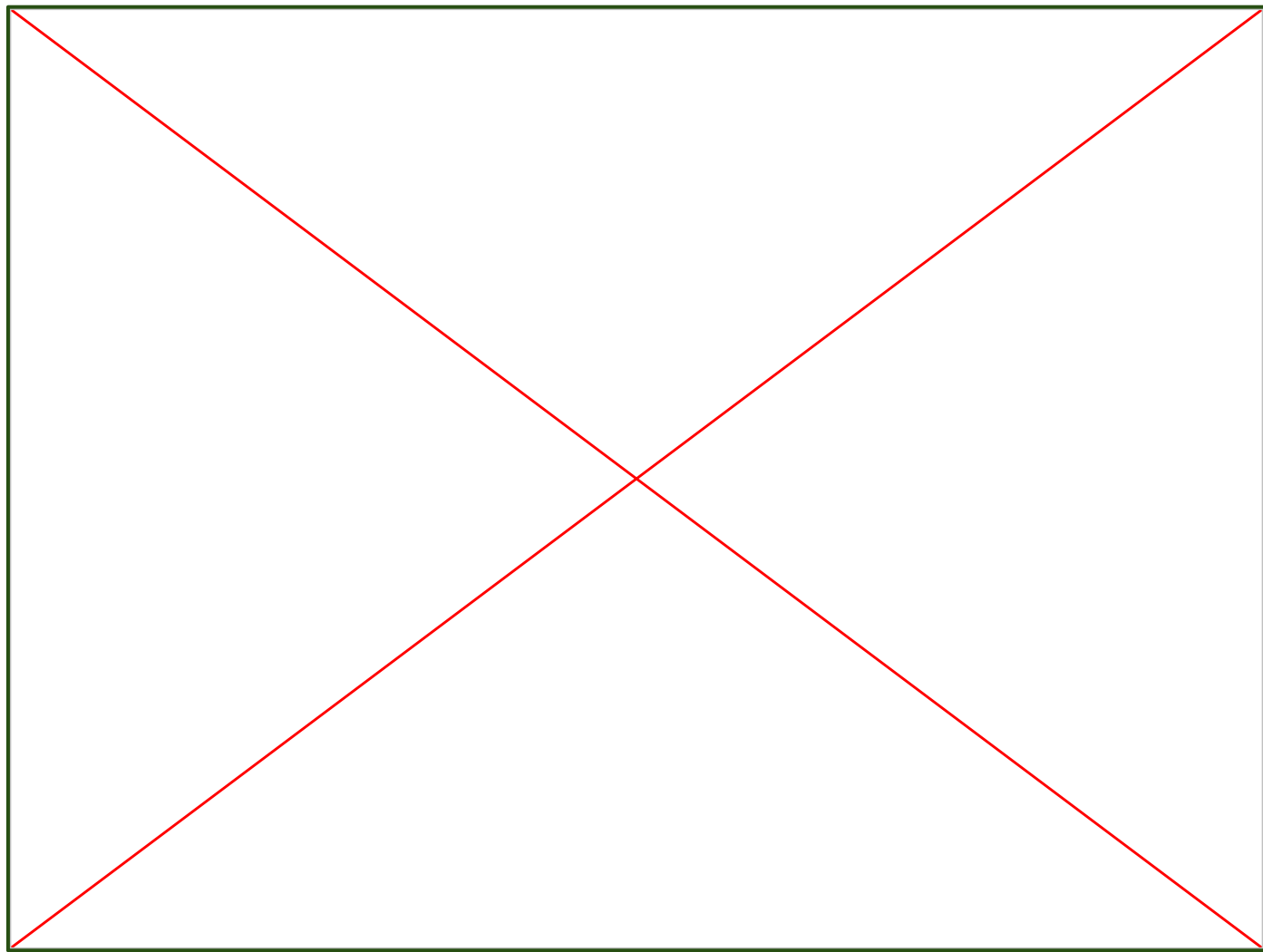
- I feel most seen when someone says something kind or encouraging to me.
- I feel most seen when someone spends quality time with me.
- I feel most seen when someone surprises me with a small gift or thoughtful gesture.
- I feel most seen when someone helps me with something, even without being asked.
- I feel most seen when someone offers physical comfort like a hug, high five, or pat on the back.

Connection—even brief—can ignite your energy.”

- » **Smile & say hello** to everyone you pass
- » **Compliment people** everywhere you go
- » Pause to **say “good morning”** → social sparks light up the brain
- » Commit **5 conscious acts of kindness** → boosts happiness & lowers stress



Don't be afraid to **be who you are!** Someone out there **needs someone like you!**



desks in pods of 5



Give them jobs: Leader, Researcher, Time Manager, and give clear expectations and procedures.

Everyone writes!

No cross pod talking!

Teach them over and over until they get it.

Encourages collaboration

- Builds **connection**
- Creates **relationships**
- Fosters **trust**
- Builds **empathy**
- Encourages **teamwork**
- Builds **confidence** and **competence**
- Allows for **conflict resolution**
- Prioritizes **goal setting**
- Rooted in **kindness**

the **power** of
collaborative groups





TIER I CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to help you:

- Reflect honestly
- Identify strengths
- Pinpoint gaps
- Take clear, actionable steps forward

As you move through the checklist:

- Rate each practice honestly
- Identify evidence of what it currently looks like
- Choose one next step to strengthen the practice

RATING SCALE

0: Not In Place 1: Inconsistent 2: Consistent 3: Embedded (routine and students expect it)

PRACTICE	RATING (0-3)	WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?	TRY THIS NEXT...
Positive Greeting at the Door			
Banking Time with Students			
5:1 Ratio			
Restoring Relationships after conflict			
Building student-to-student connection			
Expectations explicitly taught			
Consistent classroom procedures			
Pre-correct before transitions			
Expectations are visible			
Opportunities for Voice/Choice			
Frequent Opportunity to Respond			
Use Proximity before Correction			
Redirects before confront			
Give clear, concise prompts			
Regulates self before responding			
Teaches expected behaviors			
Offer choices			
Follows through consistently			

Students today want...

AUTONOMY



the power of WRITING

- **Organizing Thoughts:** Helps structure ideas logically, promoting independent thinking.
- **Exploring Perspectives:** Encourages evaluation of different viewpoints and ownership of learning.
- **Problem-Solving:** Challenges to navigate complex prompts, enhancing problem-solving skills.
- **Reflection:** Promotes self-awareness and regulation through self-reflection in writing.
- **Expressing Autonomy:** Allows space to express unique voice and ideas confidently.





Think
Pair
Share



Try this instead...

Think • Share • Write • Share

Encourages reading, writing,
speaking, and listening each day

- DOK 3 and 4 Questions
- 2x think time
- Refinement of thoughts and ideas
- Encourages reflection

Are you doing your best?

Are you doing your best by waking up every day **ready to serve** to the best of your ability **to build relevant relationships between their normal, your normal, their context, and your content?**



CHAPTER CHOICE BOARD - demonstrate your understanding of each respective chapter through selecting one of the following:

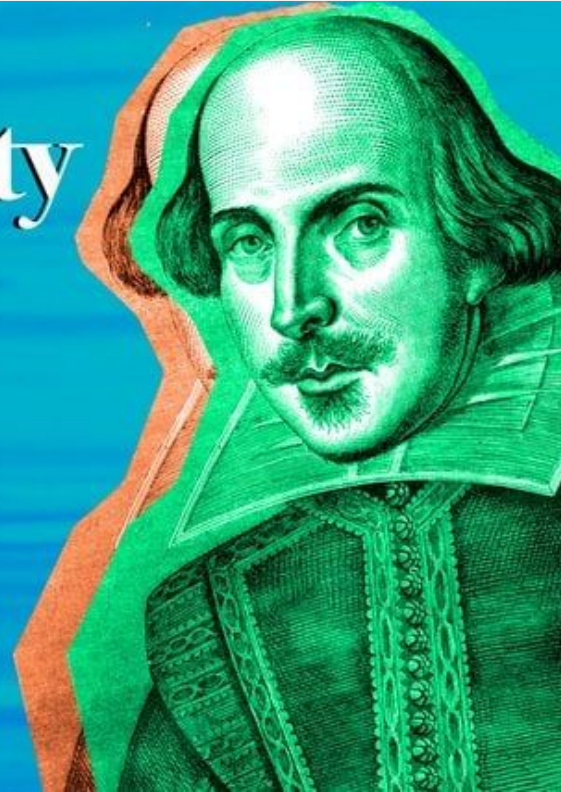
- Podcast Episode
 - Blog Post
 - TikTok Video/Instagram Reel Video
 - Infographic
 - Video Presentation
-
- **Podcast Episode** | record a 5-7 minute podcast episode discussing the main ideas of the chapter. Provide an engaging introduction that clearly outlines what you will cover in the episode. Additionally, discuss at least three examples or case studies from the chapter's content that demonstrates your understanding. Lastly, submit the audio file of the podcast to D2L. *Tip: Use Zoom to record (Free Version) and submit the .mp4 file* **Maximum of 3 uses during the semester.**
 - **Blog Post** | write a 1500-1800 word blog post on the chapter's key takeaways. Clearly explain how the concepts relate to your personal experiences and/or your future career. Include three external sources (article, video, picture, etc. and the book may be one source) to support your discussion. Lastly, submit the word document and/or .pdf to D2L. **Maximum of 3 uses during the semester.**
 - **TikTok Video/Instagram Reel Video** | create a 60-90 second TikTok or Instagram Reel that highlights the chapter's key ideas. Use creative elements like text overlays, voiceovers, and music to make your video engaging. Incorporate at least two examples and/or real-world applications of the concept. Ensure that your video is informative and clear enough to teach someone unfamiliar with the topic. Lastly, submit your video file to D2L. *If you post to your personal account, send the URL.* **Maximum of 3 uses during the semester.**
 - **Video Presentation** | create a 2-3 minute video summarizing the key points of the chapter. Include visuals (e.g. slides, images, animations, etc) that reinforce your points. Explain how at least two or three concepts can be applied to real life situations. Be sure to make personal connections highlighting your ah-ha moments. Upload your video to D2L. *Tip: Use Zoom to record (Free Version) and submit the video file* **Maximum of 3 uses during the semester.**
 - **Infographic** | design an infographic that visually summarizes the chapter's key concepts. Include at least four sections: major ideas, examples, practical applications, and next steps. Use clear, concise text and visually appealing graphics or charts. Ensure that the graphic is clear enough to teach someone unfamiliar with the topic. Lastly, submit your file (.pdf or .png) to D2L. **Maximum of 3 uses during the semester.**

There are 13 chapters that we will study throughout the semester. **You are required to submit chapter mastery choice board assignments for 10 of the 13 chapters.** If you submit all 13, I will drop the 3 lowest grades at the conclusion of the semester.

SHAKESPEAREAN INSULTS

"Thou crusty
batch
of nature!"

From Troilus
and Cressida



Shakespeare



Are these happening in each of your class periods?

A student **taught/explained** something to the class, partner, or a small group.

The class spent part of the time together in **group/partner activities**.

Students **used hands-on technology** to enhance their learning.

The class performed a lab or **hands-on activity** for part of the time together.

Students were **called on randomly** instead of voluntarily throughout the class period.

Students **laughed out loud** at something appropriate in class.

The class was given **time to self-reflect** during the time together.

Students were **out of their seats** for at least one activity during the class.

Students were **presented with a media clip** (video, audio, internet, newspaper, etc.)

Students **gave their opinion** on a topic in a group or whole class setting.

“The brain goes dumb when the butt goes numb!” *Marcia Tate; Kim Campbell*

Kids should never sit longer than their age in minutes. This means we have to be intentional about building in movement every, single, day!

movement matters!





Create an
environment in
which **kids can
become exactly
who they are
without fear of
judgement.**

COMPASSION

EACH DAY is a NEW SLATE - FRESH START!

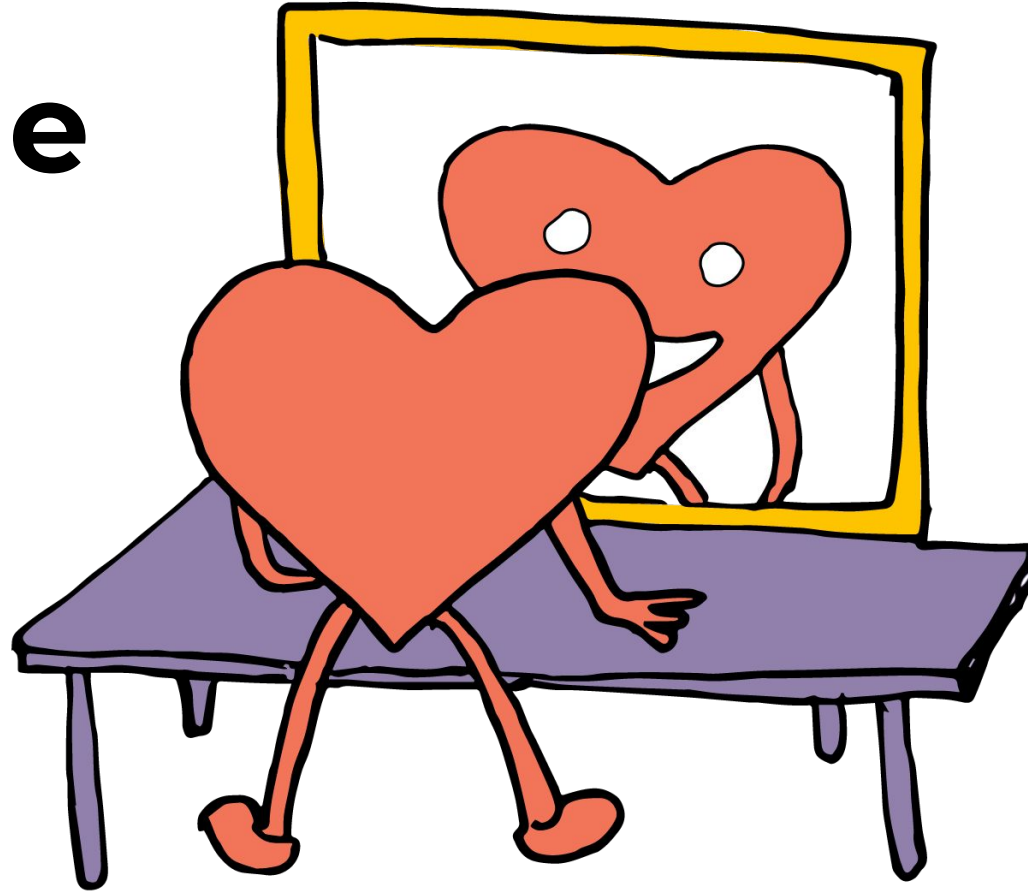
*It's not about them **liking you**, but it is about **understanding their perspective**, while **continuing to make choices that are best for their learning experience.***

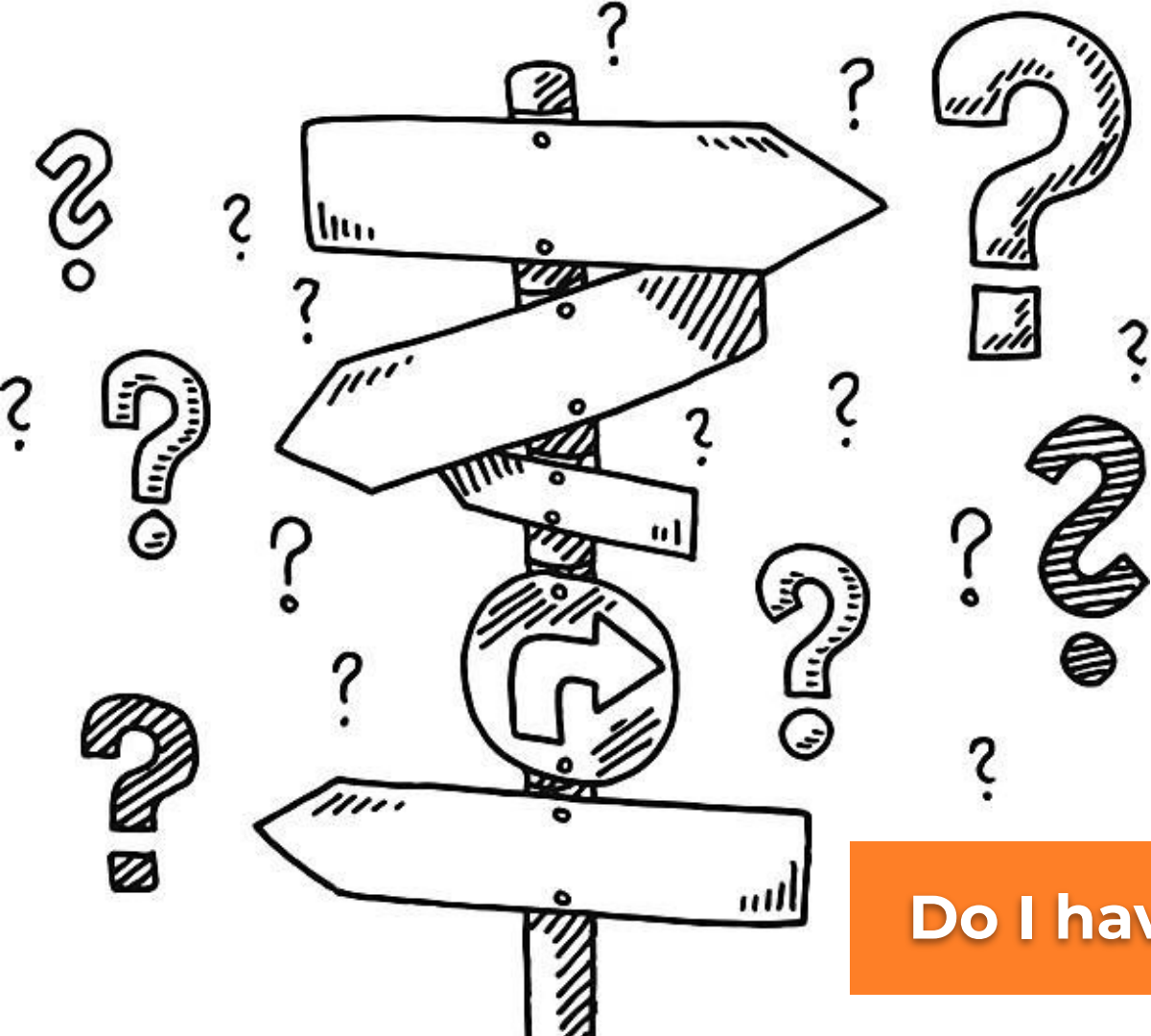
be vulnerable

- Participate in activity
- Teach life lessons
- Tell your experiences
- Tell jokes

BE YOU – you're exactly what the world needs!

& show them we are human, too!





**Create
choices**
around your
assignments

Do I have a choice in this?

**Bring your thoughts, questions,
or experiences on this notecard.**

Read them anonymously and answer
questions; helps build trust and
confidence.

Soft Skills

Do's and Don'ts

Work Ethic

Do: Work hard without having to be asked and without complaint
Don't: Think this is about hours - outcomes matter most of all



Growth Mindset

Do: Welcome feedback, embrace learning, and incorporate both
Don't: Think you know everything



Adaptability

Do: Rethink your plan when you gain new information
Don't: Fail to make adjustments after setbacks



Self-Awareness

Do: Understand how others perceive your words and actions
Don't: Fail to self-reflect or think you're above critique



Emotional Intelligence

Do: Learn to identify emotions and control your responses
Don't: Fail to pause when heated



Communication

Do: Speak and write simply and clearly
Don't: Use complex language, bury your point, or ramble



Motivation

Do: Get going on projects quickly and without being asked
Don't: Require constant hand holding or encouragement



Resilience

Do: See every setback as a lesson
Don't: Fail to get back up after getting knocked down



Professionalism

Do: Build trust by speaking and acting maturely at all times
Don't: Assume you can cross the line in more relaxed settings



Reliability

Do: What you say you will do by when you say you will do it
Don't: Break promises



Active Listening

Do: Listen to hear, not respond, and validate what people say
Don't: Forget the importance of body language



Time Management

Do: Prioritize and be organized, so you stay on top of your work
Don't: Allow distractions to steal your attention and waste time



Collegiality

Do: Be easy to work with
Don't: Think this means being a pushover - you can still be you



People Reading

Do: Watch the reactions, body language, and mood of others
Don't: Fail to ask people if you're unsure how they're feeling



Collaboration

Do: Work well with other people, sharing ideas and credit
Don't: Think you'd be better off on your own



Integrity

Do: Be honest and ethical, whether or not others will know
Don't: Think you can hide things



- Write each soft skill on a piece of paper
- Fold and place in a cup/hat/bowl; students draw 1
- Act out what it means to them
- Then show the image on screen (so all can see)

Don't do them all in one class period; **2-3** until you have gone through them all.

Then, place a card with the word and do's on the board in the room as a reminder.

Active Listening



If you **improve by just 1% each day**, by the end of the year, you would be **approximately 37 times better** than when you started.

$$1 \times (1.01)^{365} = 37.78$$

HOPE & BELIEF

- Speak words of belief:
 - incentives for doing work
 - boundaries for devices
 - motivation to pursue goals and achievements

we need to be the leaders
(teachers and leaders) who
can help these students
see their full potential



iMessage
Today 9:32 AM



Delivered

Awesome thank you so much for one of the happiest calls in my life to hear something good about him I knew he had it in him thank goodness and you have a wonderful day these type calls just make my day even tho I've had a tough week this is so good to hear!!

Awesome thank you so much for one of the happiest calls in my life to hear something good about him I knew he had it in him thank goodness and you have a wonderful day these type calls just make my day even tho I've had a tough week this is so good to hear!!

meet derrick

Some people just need
a chance to shine.
Some need a second,
third, or fourth chance
to shine!”

Dr. Brad Johnson • Educator

three easy ways to recognize individuals



Verbal Recognition



Awards / Certificates



Public Recognition

make it personable and **be** specific



The Arm Cross



“Kindness isn’t just something you
give—**it’s something you live.**

And every time you choose it, you change
your brain, your energy, and your world.”

it all starts with
KINDNESS

» Kindness to **yourself**

» Kindness with your **thoughts**

» Kindness through your **actions**

» Kindness behind your **intentions**

2026 KINDNESS RESEARCH

20,000+ people **STUDY** // 2,000+ acts of kindness

ONE CLEAR FINDING:

Kindness was not measured by sacrifice; it was **measured by benefit.**



“Students may forget the details of the lessons you taught them, but **they will never forget how you made them feel.** Let them **remember you for your kindness.**”



FREE! **Kindness** Tools

- **60 Second** Kindness Reset
- **10 Ways** to Build Belonging in 10 Minutes
- **Connection Starters** for Classrooms and Teams

If you *can't find the*
light, **be the light!**



DR. CHRIS CULVER

thank you

Kindness Advocate | The Science of Kindness™

Follow me on social media:

@DrChrisCulver



Reach out today! I would love to help you & your team!

CONTACT ME

Dr. Chris Culver

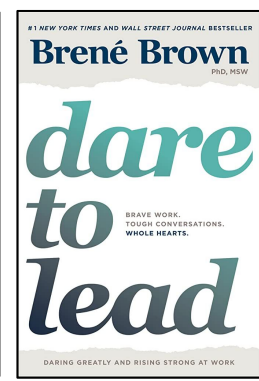
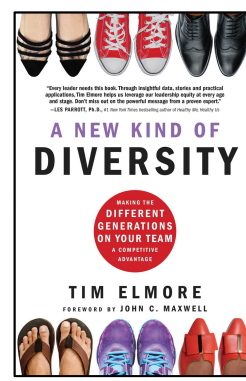
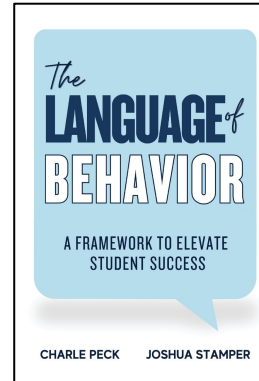
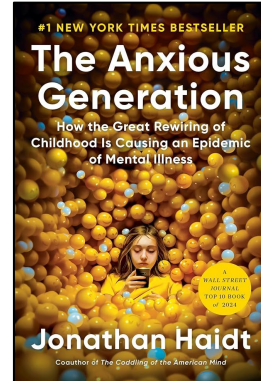
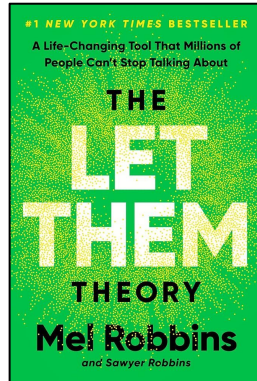
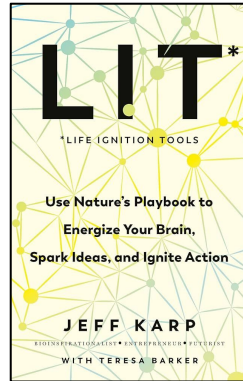
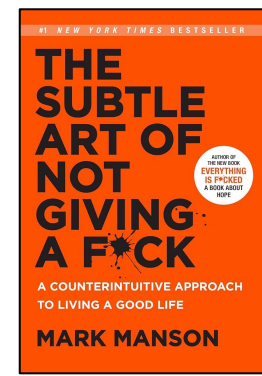
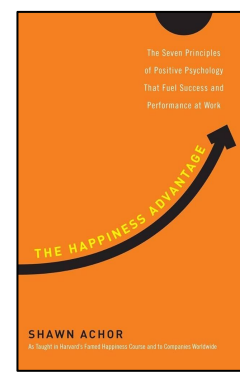
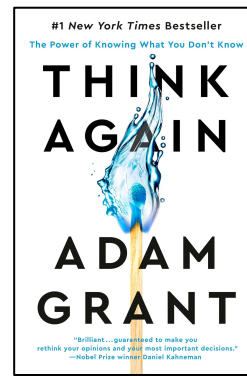
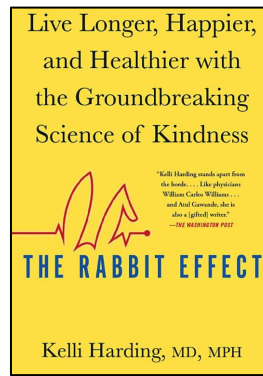
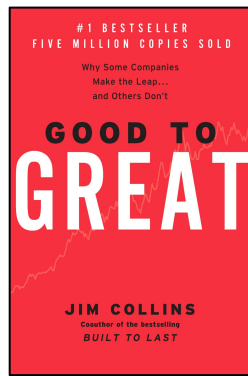
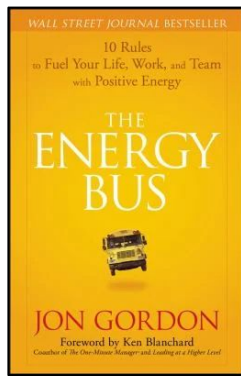
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