



I'M NOT NAUGHTY



Newsletter of the
Society for the Promotion of
ADHD Research and Knowledge

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Anything Special Happened?



What is the first question you ask your son the moment he reaches home from school? “Any homework today?” Why not ask him instead, “How was school today?” or “Anything special happened?” This was just one of the many useful tips shared by Prof Low Guat Tin in her talk to us in August this year.

Similarly, Mrs Patrice Lee showed us how important it was to top up our children's love tank and how to do it. Apart from them, we have also had speakers sharing ideas on Auditory Integration Training to communicating more effectively with our child's school.

Swee Huat, author of the “I'm Not Naughty” handbook on ADHD and a committee member, has digested these talks into this newsletter especially for those of you who weren't able to attend. And a useful reminder to the rest of us who did.

Meanwhile, don't forget to join us for wushu at our Annual Picnic this Saturday, Nov 25. We're meeting from 2–6pm at the field next to McDonald's on West Coast Park. And have a good holiday.

Bella Chin, President

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Major in Major Things

Too often, we spend a lot of precious time doing things that produce results that do not matter, says Assoc Prof Low Guat Tin to Spark members on 5 Aug 2006.

We need to take a serious look at the life that is given to us and spend time doing the major things. What are the major things in your life, in your work and in your family, do them and let the minor things take care of themselves.

Many parents may be putting too much emphasis on academic or school performance when there are actually many different areas to focus on (e.g., physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual development).

Education is more about lighting a fire than pouring into a pail. Many people do not look at the “whole” person, but look instead for “holes” in the person. It is more important to focus on the strength that a child has than to focus on his weaknesses. On a scale of 1–10, all a child needs to do is to score between 7 and 10 in any of the following areas for the child to perform relatively well in society: logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistics, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or any other specialised trade or profession.

Remember the importance of having sufficient “chips in the bag.” Each time something good is mentioned about the individual, the individual gain additional chips in the bag. Each time the individual is scolded or did something wrong, the individual loses some chips from the bag. Some are born with more “chips” than others. With more “chips in bags”, he or she will be able to survive bad times or experience as they still have excess chips, despite losing some chips.

Some may have barely any chips and a mild or bad experience or incident is enough to cause the individual to be stressed out or be unable to cope. The role of parents is to give their children as many “chips” as possible when bringing up the children so that the children will be more resilient in handling difficult problems when they grow up.

Outdoor activities are typically more suitable for a child with ADHD. But it is important for children to learn the consequence of their own actions. It is fairly common that when children do something wrong, the parents often end up facing the consequences. If this happens, the child will not get to learn the consequence of his own actions and is likely to get into more serious problems when he grows up.

Parents of children with learning difficulties can sometimes be over-protective. I do not believe in having special schools for children with learning difficulties because these children may not learn how to properly interact with society when they grow up. Dr Low quote an example of how a person with low IQ in the past ending up as a road-sweeper to earn his own living because of the need to survive. Nowadays, children in special schools may not master the life-coping skills to deal with the real-world society if they are overly sheltered.

Studies on organizations indicate that those with quality actions produce quality results. But quality actions are present in organizations with quality collective thinking. And quality collective thinking comes from quality relationships. This “Core Theory of Success” emphasizes the importance of good quality relationship and interactions among others to produce good results.

So building a good relationship with your child with learning difficulties will go a long way in helping him deal with other problems as he grows up. For example, do not make this question the first thing you ask when your child comes home from school: “Any homework today?” It does not enhance the relationship between the parent and the child. Instead, caring and engaging questions such as “How was school today?” and “Anything special happened?” are more helpful in building a better relationship with the child.

Dr Low Guat Tin is an associate professor in policy and leadership studies at the National Institute of Education. Her basic training is in school psychology but she moved on to study educational management at the University of Michigan.

The Five Love Languages for Teens

Counsellor Patrice Lee shares the concept of filling up your children's love tank to help them cope better when she spoke to Spark members on 7 October 2006.



Sometimes children share their problems in school with their parents not for the solutions they will get. They share in order to get some emotional support or input to charge up their emotional love tank. Attempting to advise the children on possible solutions may backfire especially when the child's emotional love tank is low. What is required is to first fill up their emotional love tank (e.g., through showing empathy on what has happened) and talk about the possible solutions later.

So how do you top up a teen's emotional love tank? (By the way, filling up another person's love tank also applies to adults and younger children.)

Teenagers face problems today that are so different from what they were 20 years ago. Back then values advocated by home, school, friends and society were quite similar, and teenagers had fewer problems understanding what was good or bad, right or wrong. In today's society, the messages from home, school, friends, society and through the internet can often conflict, creating more problems for the teenagers. Teen related issues could start as early as when the child is in Primary 5.

The teen period is where children encounter more problems when they transition from children to young adults (from dependence to independence).

Some of these problems could be due to:

- Physical and mental changes,
- Entering the age of reasoning,
- Confronting personal morality and values,
- Thinking about sexuality and relationships,
- Questioning the future.

But the most important emotional need for teens is the need for unconditional love and acceptance. According to Drs Cloud and Townsend, "There is no greater ingredient for growth for your child/teen than love".

So what are the five love languages you can use to top up your child's love tank? Each teen react differently to these love language. You will need to find out (by asking or observing) which works best for your teen.

Words of Affirmations. The teen feels loved when he or she hears "I love you" or other positive affirmations. For these teens, nasty and harsh words do hurt although young children are often taught that only "sticks and stones" do hurt them. It is better to use positive, encouraging and affectionate words rather than negative, nasty and harsh word. And when praise is used, the specific action(s) being praised should be mentioned.

Acts of Service. Your teen feels loved when someone does something for him or her. Although parents will be wise to remember the need to balance the amount of service against the level of independence that the teenager should have.

The act can be conveyed also through the use of body language and actions that communicates respect, care, sacrifice and love.

Quality Time. Teens feel loved when someone important to him or her spends quality time with him or her, doing something enjoyable together. These teens gets charged up when you give them your undivided attention or spend time alone with the teenager. It could be spending leisure time (e.g. on sports or hobby) together, taking an interest in each other's activities or spending time with the teenager when he or she is ready to spend that quality time with you. Note that teenagers typically will want to spend more time with their friends than with their parents.

Physical Touch. Your teenage child feels loved when he or she is appropriately touched. Touch should be age appropriate. Teenagers typically do not like to be hugged by their parents, although they may like it during their younger childhood years.

Some sensitivity has to be applied (e.g., not right in front of the soccer team) and fatherly touches are important for daughters – for daughters to learn to build calming, affectionate, close and healthy relationship with the opposite sex without sexual connotations.

Gifts. For some teens, getting a present is the best way to top up their love tank. But bear in mind that the gift can be a simple note or card. And more frequent small gifts are often better appreciated than fewer big gifts.

The gift means "I have been thinking about you." You will also need to know what the person likes for the gift to be appreciated.

Of the 5 love languages, 1) Words of Affirmation, 2) Acts of Service, 3) Quality Time, 4) Physical Touch and 5) Gifts, most people have between 1 and 3 primary or dominant love languages where they can better appreciate.

The following are ways to identify the primary or dominant love language of that person:

Observe. Watch what your teenagers do to others to express their love for others.

- Do they often say nice things about others?
- Do they like to do things for others?
- Do they try to spend quality time with others?
- Do they like to hug or touch others?
- Do they like to give simple gifts to others?

Experiment. Try out each of the love languages and see which language your teenaged child response to most.

- Different love language are likely to evoke different levels of response from the individual and repeat the love language(s) that the person responses well to.

Ask. Be direct and ask your son or daughter to find out his or her preferred love language.

- He or she will be able to indicate his or her preferred love language. You can use the 5 questions above relating to the 5 love languages (in point a) to guide his or her preference.

I asked my younger son on his preferred love languages and he stated his preference in the following order: 1) Quality Time, 2) Gifts, 3) Physical Touch (hugs and kisses), 4) Acts of Service and 5) Words of Affirmation.

My older son (who has ADD) has stated his preference in the following order: 1) Gifts, 2) Act of Service, 3) Physical Touch (hugs & kisses), 4) Words of Affirmation, 5) Quality Time (indicating he does not mind spending time alone?).

Teenagers often like parents to understand their feelings and feedback to parents such as "you are not really listening to me" are not uncommon. Take time to find out what your teenager likes or dislikes. To find out more about your teenager, you can also ask a neutral third party to provide valuable observations and feedback on him or her.

The following are useful books and movies that can help you better understand your teenager:

Books such as Five Love Languages of Teenagers by Gary Chapman, Teen Proofing by John Rosmond, Parenting Adolescents by Kelvin Huggins, and 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families.

Movies such as Freaky Friday (where a teenager and mother swap places after eating fortune cookies), and The Rookie (a true story of a baseball coach who attains his dream of playing professional baseball after promising his students he would do so if they win their baseball game).

Mrs Patrice Lee is Director for Family Life Education at HOPEWorldWide Singapore (www.sg.hopeww.org). She can be contacted at 1 Edgefield Walk, Singapore 828850. Tel: 6312-9671, email: patricelee@hopewwsea.org.

She has a BA from the University of California at Berkeley, a Masters in Counseling from Monash University and a graduate diploma in Parent Education Leadership Training. She is a member (professional) of the Australian Counseling Association and the American Counseling Association.

An American who has been in Singapore for the past 18 years, she and her husband have conducted numerous marriage and parenting seminars and workshops throughout Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. For past four years, she has done individual and family counseling in local schools. She has three children, one in primary school and two in secondary schools.

AUDITORY INTEGRATION TRAINING

JUNE WEBB SPOKE TO SPARK MEMBERS ON 2 SEPT 2006 ON THE BENEFITS OF AIT.

Children most likely to benefit from the Auditory Integration Training (AIT) will have 7 or more of the symptoms below.

- 1 Has a history of hearing loss or ear infection
- 2 Does not listen to verbal instructions 50% or more of the time
- 3 Does not learn well through the use of the auditory channel
- 4 Cannot relate what is heard and what is seen
- 5 Frequently misunderstands what is said
- 6 Ask for repetition of verbal instructions
- 7 Has short attention span
- 8 Easily distracted by background noise
- 9 Experience problems with sound discrimination
- 10 Startled by sudden noise or movement
- 11 Notice sounds before others do
- 12 Give unusual descriptions of sounds or auditory stimulation
- 13 Constant humming or audible self-talk
- 14 Need frequent "quiet time" to regain mental energy and composure
- 15 Has an articulation problem

With Auditory Integration Training (AIT), there have been some cases of miraculous healing for some children with autism or other learning difficulties (especially for children seriously affected by auditory stimulation – e.g. sensitivity with certain sound frequency, etc.).

AIT is a form of intensive non-invasive treatment for those who suffer from hearing sensitivity and distortions in hearing. It provides stimulation to the hearing mechanism, which produces more normal hearing following treatment.

Hearing anomalies can affect many aspects of normal everyday life, especially behaviour, sensitivity to noises in the home, social interaction, speech and language development and learning.

AIT is a sound and music programme used by professional speech-language pathologists who seek to remediate speech/language delays in their patients and by audiologists who seek to normalise the hearing patterns.

It is a device to facilitate an individual's responsiveness to his or her surroundings, often including a corresponding increase in more attentive behaviour in the school, work and home environments. The programme may be used to remediate sound-related perceptual distortions, "unbalanced" hearing proprietary device substantially similar to an electronic stereo equalizer to play pre-recorded selections through high quality stereo headphones.

The programme is used extensively in USA, Australia and South Africa especially for those diagnosed with ASD and is one of the recommended interventions for those children diagnosed with CAPD or APD or encountering language delay.

Training consists of 20 half-hour sessions (costing about S\$1,700). Two sessions per day are scheduled for 10 days. Some flexibility in the schedule is possible but a major delay would require the restart of the program.

Before starting AIT, parents should bring their children to the ENT Clinic at the National University Hospital (contact Saira Mathews at 6772-4479) to check for possible hearing-related impairment and also their sensitivity to various sound frequency levels (tympanogram, pure tone audiogram and oto-acoustic emissions test).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.focusonindividuallearning.com or email info@focusonindividuallearning.com. Focus On Individual Training is located at 28 Tomlinson Road, #08-34, Singapore 247854 (Tel: 9835-4030).

June Webb set up FOCUS On Individual LEARNING in response to the need for more options for special children. She trained as a neuro-developmental therapist and is a Licentiate of the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology in Chester, UK.



Rapport, clear language and the right tone will help ensure the communication between home and school meets your and your child's needs, says Katherine Krummert who spoke to Spark members on 1 July 2006.

For more effective communication with schools, the following are the key steps:

- a Find allies in the school to communicate the more important issues.
- b Determine what, when, where and how to communicate.
- c Your tone of voice, approach and body language must also be considered (communication can be more effective if the parent is professional, empathic, patient and accessible).
- d Determine which mode of communication the teachers are more comfortable with (e.g. phone, email or face-to-face). Some teachers are more comfortable with email given the hectic pace of activities in schools.
- e Weekly communications are normally the most that the average teacher can handle given the 40 students in each class to work with.
- f Yearly communications to new teachers: Need to also communicate the strengths of your child, besides the problems that the child has. Children with ADHD are usually visual and/or kinesthetic learners and are usually weak in auditory learning. It is also good to enlist the help of the previous year's teachers to communicate to the new teachers since they are familiar with issues that your child faces in school.
- g Volunteering in school related activities can also help to enhance your effective communications on issues encountered in school.

Katherine Krummert has relied on communication skills to make meaningful and effective transitions as she moved several times between corporate and non-profit worlds, from one side of the globe to the other. In Singapore, she works for a communication firm as an editor, writer and trainer for various projects. She has a BA from Carnegie Mellon University. A mother of two primary school children, she is the chairperson of the Parent Support Group at CHIJ Katong Primary School.

Parent Support Group Meetings: January to March 2007

“The Myth of the ADD Child: 50 Ways to Improve Your Child’s Behaviour and Attention Span Without Drugs, Labels or Coercion” by Thomas Armstrong. Part 1
6 January. Speaker: Bella Chin, President, Spark

Thomas Armstrong is a psychologist, teacher, and consultant with years of experience working with children with attention and behaviour problems. He believes that many behaviours labeled as ADD are in fact a child’s active response to complex social, emotional, and educational influences. Dr Armstrong offers 50 non-drug strategies for helping a child overcome attention and behaviour problems. He also provides a checklist to select the interventions that are best suitable for a particular child. Parents can use these strategies to help their children experience positive changes in their lives.

“The Myth of the ADD Child: 50 Ways to Improve Your Child’s Behaviour and Attention Span Without Drugs, Labels or Coercion” by Thomas Armstrong. Part 2
3 February. Speaker: Bella Chin, President, Spark

This is a continuation of the talk in January.

Nutritional Supplements for the ADD/ADHD Child
3 March. Guest Speaker: Dr John Yeo

John has a Master of Science degree in Exercise and Nutrition from the University of Liverpool. He is a registered acupuncturist and is also listed as a trained physician in the Defeat Autism Now!, a project of the Autism Research Institute in the United States that supports biomedical research in the treatment of autism. John is also trained in bio-resonance therapy and neurofeedback therapy.

A father of an autistic teenager, he has devoted much time of his time in researching alternative approaches to the treatment of autism. He currently consults jointly with a pediatrician in The Autism Clinic at Thomson Medical Centre offering services in functional assessment, clinical nutrition, diet, hyperbaric therapy and neurofeedback therapy.

PS: We will be holding our 7th AGM on the same day before the start of the talk.

All meetings are held from 9 AM to noon at the Child Guidance Clinic, 3rd storey, Health Promotion Board, 3 Second Hospital Avenue (Singapore General Hospital grounds). Most meetings begin with a sharing session. The talk usually starts at 10 AM and is followed by Q+A.