



The Paradigm Shift

Adapted from Sandra McConnell, PDA Mama Bear
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Traditional Parenting

Behaviorism

The theory that human and animal behavior can be explained in terms of **conditioning**, without appeal to thoughts or feelings, and that some mental conditions are best treated by altering behavior patterns.

Rational Economics

A person makes decisions based on the rational analysis of potential and desired outcomes, and acts in their **own rational self-interest**.

- Hard power: **Position, Authority**
- Children **automatically** respect your authority (hierarchy)
- Children **willfully** make ‘bad choices’
- You have to teach them **WHAT** to think
- “How do I **get them** to...”
- **Rewards/punishments/anger/disappointment** are effective
- You **double-down** and it works
- Adult: **My way or the highway**
- **Adult wins** and the conflict is over
- **Adult** is the catalyst, stimulus, protagonist & **hero**
- “I can’t just let them **get away** with it!”
- Parental **image, reputation matter**

PDA Parenting

Attachment

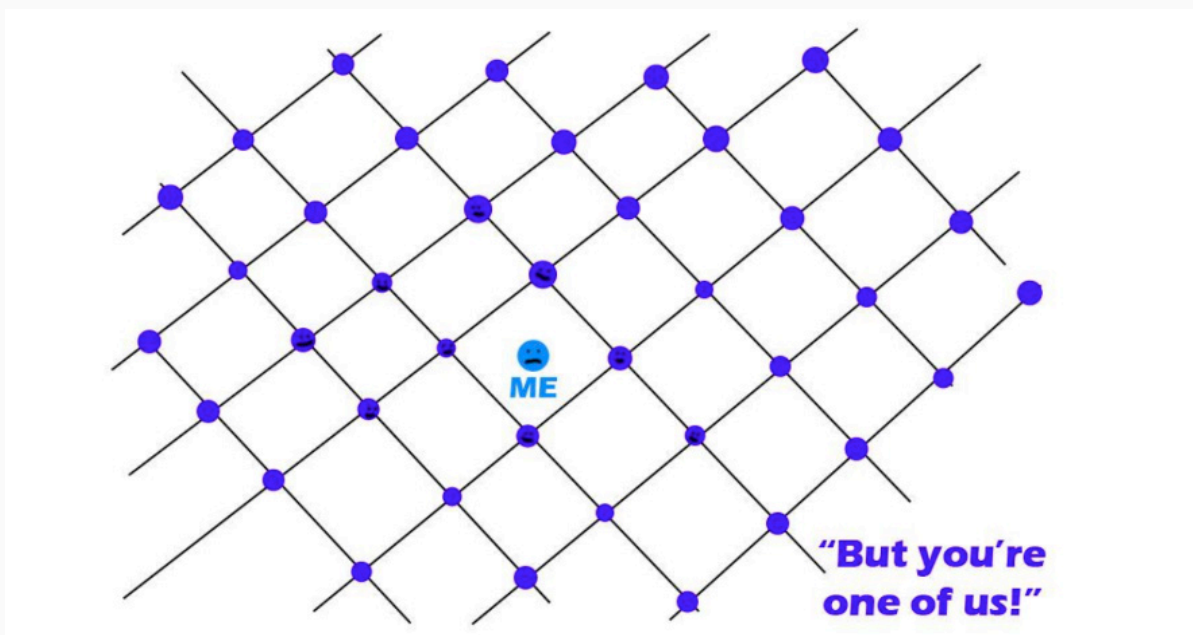
Attachment Theory describes the propensity to form close **relationships** with others and the way emotions are regulated in these attachment relationships.

Trauma informed

Care and practices that promote a culture of **safety, empowerment, and healing**.

- Soft power: **Intrinsic, Inspirational**
- Hierarchy unknown, authority **earned/deserved (meritocracy)**
- Children need help and/or **lack** understanding/skills
- You teach them **HOW and WHY** to think
- “How can I help them **understand...?**”
- Reward/punishments/anger/disappointment **backfire**
- You double-down and it **backfires**
- Adult: **Let’s negotiate (and I’ll teach you how)**
- **No one wins** and the conflict **deepens**
- The **child** is the **protagonist... adult still the hero?**
- “They need my help.”
- You’re a better parent now but **others don’t see it**

- Adult: “I just want what’s **best for my kid.**”
- Adult’s timeframe: **Future**
- Success to adult: **Job, house, money, family**
- **Your dreams**
- Child: **Success makes you proud**
- Adult: You’re **looking out** for them
- **Push yourself**, go outside your comfort zone
- Adult: **No pain no gain, don’t quit**
- Adult: The anxiety just **can’t be that bad**
- “Evidence-based” means **research**
- Focuses on **FACTS**: Math, writing, history, science
- **No need** to teach the “Hidden Curriculum”
- Problems? **Direct, talk it out, immediately**
- You get their **verbal confession/commitment** on the problem
- Connection comes from **talking it out, sharing, self**
- Expected result: **Success, skills, expertise**
- Pushing/criticizing: “**Now do that all the time!**” or “**Finally!**”
- Medication: **No way**
- Child: “I don’t want to **feel bad** anymore.”
- Child’s timeframe: **Now**
- Success to child: No more **anxiety, angst**
- **Dreams irrelevant** without relief
- Child: **Success is the price of love (and they can’t pay)**
- Child: You’re **out of touch** with me
- Learning stops outside the “**Window of Tolerance**”
- Child: I need to **rest**, why is this activity **worth my pain?**
- Adult: How did the anxiety get **so bad?**
- “Evidence-based” means **your kid**
- Focuses on **ACTS**: Life skills, experiences
- **You teach** the “Hidden Curriculum” **explicitly w/o shame**
- Problems? **Indirect, later** (when regulated)
- They can’t articulate it so you **trust your observations**
- Connection comes from **gestures, activities together, unsaid**
- Expected result: **Practice, failure, rinse, repeat**
- Pushing/criticizing sends them **reeling, give up**
- Medication: **Maybe?**





I am not my house - my car - or my money
I am not my photos - or my diary
I am not my education - or my job
I am not my skills - or abilities
I am not my eyes - my arms - my legs - or my body
I am not my husband - my children - my parents - or my family
I am not my friends - or my enemies
I am not my past - or my memories

I am my values - my honor - and my duty
I am my persistence - and my resilience
I am my faith - my hope - and my will
I am my kindness - and my curiosity
I am my forgiveness - and my mercy
I am my choices - my struggles - and my sacrifices
I am my Love - and my Life
I am - just - a Light

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PDA Communication Tips

Common Mistake

Saying what you need to say.
Saying what they need to hear.
(Prof. Michael Drout)

Emotional Undertones

Rejection sensitivity
Pathos/logos
Non-judgment
Safety
Confidence (especially in uncertainty)
Humor

Validation

Flattery
Tactical empathy
Do you see what I see?
You're right v. That's right
(Chris Voss)

Theming

Indirect persuasion
Exit strategy
Saving face
Safe retreat (accept apologies)

Declarative/explanatory language

Said/meant
You/me pronouns
Citing things not people
Thinking out loud
Forward and back chaining

Talking it out

Badgering the witness
Advice falls flat
Powerlessness
Becoming the demand

Talk less about what matters (love, affection, safety),
Talk more about what doesn't

Distraction

Hey, look, a squirrel!
Stubbing your toe
Peripheral commentary
Getting something wrong
Answering a question they didn't ask

Distancing

Laws
physics
"Don't blame me, I just work here."

Sabotage, sniping

"Why can't you do that all the time?"
"Finally!"