

“What Do You Say?” by William Stixrud, PhD & Ned Johnson

Notes on Glenbard Parent Series 11.17.21 Noon, Agnes Knott, Hersey High School

- EMPATHY first
 - Remember that the basic function of communication is CONNECTION
 - Who do you feel close to? Those who listen without judging
 - Empathy and Validation
 - We are talking to connect, so we will give you tools to help you connect with your kids
- Demonstrate to our kids that we are seeking to understand
- WIG-Reflective Listening
 - “What I get from what you said is...”
- VALIDATE-recognize that the person has a valid reason for thinking what they do
- 1st step: Try to understand them
 - “You sound really upset. That must be hard.”
 - Help them come up with a kid-driven plan
- Think about our role as PARENT CONSULTANTS
 - We want to help our kids figure out what they want, not tell them what they want
 - Offer to help them (Get Buy-In first)
 - Goal is to have them make their own decisions--we want them to have a lot of practice in making decisions before they head off on their own
 - We want them to run their own lives
- “I have confidence in you and your ability to make decisions about your own life and learn from your mistakes.”
- Encourage kids to solve their own problems
- Offer to give your ideas, but get buy in first
 - “For whatever it is worth,...”
 - “I’m not going to try to force you because I know I can’t make you do anything.”
- Be a Non-Anxious Presence:
 - Hard because stress and anxiety is contagious
 - We convey messages very often that the world is dangerous and we have to be careful
- Talked about the Puzzle Study of Moms and Kids
 - Kid was asked to do an online puzzle that was pretty hard. Moms were told not to help. Both kids and moms were monitored with heart rate monitor

“What Do You Say?” by William Stixrud, PhD & Ned Johnson

Notes on Glenbard Parent Series 11.17.21 Noon, Agnes Knott, Hersey High School

- As kids could not figure it out, moms stress went up until the point, the moms jumped in to help. When the moms helped, their heart rate went down (they were less stressed)
 - Interestingly, when the moms helped, the kids' heart rate (stress level) went up.
 - When we jump in and help our kids, it might make us feel better, but it makes our kids more stressed
- Calm is Contagious: motto of the Marines
- John Gottman 5:1 Positive to negative ratio.
 - In order to build connections in relationships, we should have a positive to negative ratio of 5 to 1. Saying 5 positives to 1 negative.
- Another excellent tool for helping with being calm-meditation
- Communicating about helping kids to be self-motivated
 - Take force off the table
 - Self Determination Theory
 - Confidence--"I have confidence in you"
 - Autonomy--parent as consultant
 - Relatedness--connection
 - Talked about the importance of passion and engagement--doing what you love to do
 - The importance of how "off-handed" small comments can be
 - Ned shared story of girl he helped with SAT--how geeky (smart) she was
- **Motivational Interviewing** as a technique to use to help our kids solve the problems themselves. This is a tool to try to help people solve the problem on their own.
 - Story of girl the counselor worked with who was smoking a lot of pot and how the counselor asked her about it, listened for "change talk" and then encouraged to solve her own problem
 - Helps people articulate for themselves why they want to change
- Anxiety in kids
 - SPACE program for parents--a program for parents whose children have anxiety
 - Often as parents, we help them avoid the very things making them anxious by offering accommodations, but that can lead to more anxiety
 - 1st-use supportive statements "I know it's hard for you to go to sleep on your own."
 - 2nd-let them know you are confident in them: "I know you can handle it and figure out a way to fall asleep on your own."

“What Do You Say?” by William Stixrud, PhD & Ned Johnson

Notes on Glenbard Parent Series 11.17.21 Noon, Agnes Knott, Hersey High School

- We can't change our kids, but we can change ourselves as parents
- Hard Ones: Technology and Sleep
 - Mentor versus monitor
 - We need them to struggle in order to figure it out. We want them to have some of these struggles while they are home with us, so they can figure out what to do.
 - Ned gave example of his son who spent his entire day off playing Fortnite and then on Sunday night was stressed about his homework
 - Rather than getting angry and lecturing, listen and validate
 - Then, ask for buy-in: “Would it help if mom and I tried to help you manage your technology?”
- Happiness and what makes people happy
 - Shared sad research about kids saying that getting into a good college is what they think is going to make them happy
 - Laurie Santos--researcher at Yale--who studies happiness. Recognized that her students were unhappy. Now teaches a Science of Happiness course
 - PERMA--acronym for happiness:
 - P-positive emotion
 - E-engagement
 - R-relationships
 - M-meaning and purpose
 - A-achievement
 - Too much of our society values only achievement, so help our kids realize the importance of all these other things. Talk to kids about what is meaningful to them.
- Bottom line is the Relationship with our children and teens is what is most important
 - Put the CONNECTION first
 - We may not say exactly the right thing, but if we offer warmth and affection and try to understand, we are putting the connection with them first