PARENTING BRAIN POWER-UP

Let's connect!

@JessicaSinarski

Brains get very protective!

The same things that keep kids alive get them in trouble later!

Adults too!

1. Name it

TRUST HEAL GROW

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PROTECTION MODE: PORCUPINE

- ✓Grumpy
- ✓Predicting the worst
- ✓Complaining and blaming
- ✓Irritable or snapping at others
- ✓Turning away from others
- ✓Rejecting new ideas
- ✓Taking others' behavior personally

Where do you feel it in your body?
What do you need?

PROTECTION MODE: TIGER

- ✓Taking frustration out on others
- ✓Ready to explode
- ✓Yelling, posturing, or getting in someone's face
- ✓Judge-y thoughts
- ✓DO DO DO to "fix" the problem
- ✓Jumping to power and control instead of cooperation

PROTECTION MODE: CHAMELEON

- ✓Just wanting to blend in
- ✓Looking for acceptance on social media
- ✓Hiding the real you
- ✓Feeling paralyzed & unsure of yourself
- ✓Never feeling like enough

PROTECTION MODE: TURTLE

- ✓Zoning out or escaping reality
- ✓Paralyzed by the weight of it all
- ✓Not connecting with peers and other supports
- ✓Doom scrolling on your phone
- ✓Feeling sad and alone
- ✓Avoiding others

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2. Befriend your (whole) brain

Even the parts that get extra protective!

BLOCKED CARE IS

Coined by Dr. Jonathan Baylin

- A protective mechanism in the nervous system that suppresses the higher brain functions needed for caregiving.[A]

2 CATEGORIES OF BLOCKED CARE:

PRIMARY

- Blocked care in a primary caregiver (i.e. parent) who provides fundamental, life-sustaining care for the well-being of a child.
- The relationship is not optional except under extreme circumstances.

SECONDARY

- Blocked care in an adult with a role that does not have full responsibility of sustaining the life and well-being of the child (i.e. teacher, day care provider, residential treatment worker, etc).
- The responsibility is not permanent and can be ended by the adult.

COMMON SIGNS OF BLOCKED CARE

- ✓ Am isolating myself from others
- ✓ Feel defensive or irritable
- ✓ Feel cynical about helpful ideas

- ✓ Have lost my curiosity for the meaning behind their behavior
- ✓ Jump straight to punitive consequences
- ✓ Can't stand the sight of them

- ✓ Feel like I can't do anything right
- ✓ Feel like a failure with this kid
- ✓ Feel paralyzed or run over

- ✓ Feel burned out or fatigued
- ✓ Feel apathetic or shut down
- ✓ Feel no pleasure in parenting

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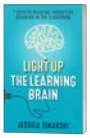
Shoulders—Breath—Face

Practice this miniature upper body scan often. With repeated use, it will become a reliable 10-second reset strategy.

1. **Roll your shoulders forward, up, and around, letting them settle down your back.**
2. **As you do that, breathe in deeply, pause, and slowly expel all the air from your lungs.**
3. **At the end of your long exhale, let your face relax. Release any tension in your forehead and temples, allowing a slight smile to form.**



3. Get some (S)P A C E

To reawaken connection mode

TRUST HEAL GROW

(S) P A C E

- **Self-Regulation (steadying practices)**
  Neurobiological self-care and burnout prevention: physical health, sleep, grief, mental breaks, gratitude, etc.
- **Playfulness**
  Joy plan, laughter, little moments of fun
- **Acceptance**
  A community that "gets it" without getting stuck
- **Curiosity**
  Someone who will non-judgmentally explore with you
- **Empathy**
  From yourself, from trusted others

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