



EFFECTIVE
STRATEGIES
TO CARE
FOR CHILDREN

ATTACHMENT- FOCUSED PARENTING

DANIEL A. HUGHES

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Attachment-Focused Parenting

To my granddaughter,
Alice Rose Thibodeau

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My parents and siblings have been part of my safety and intersubjective experience over my whole life's journey. My three daughters have taught me—and continue to teach me—at least as much as I have taught them. Most recently I have discovered these realities from the perspective of a grandfather. Alice Rose does not yet know it, but she too is teaching me, possibly most of all at this time of my life. And so, this book is dedicated to her.

Attachment-Focused Parenting

INTRODUCTION

Connection versus Correction

Although he remembered that his mother said that he needed to do his chore before he could watch TV, 9-year-old John turned on the TV before finishing the chore. He broke the rule, and if someone asked him why he did so, most likely he would say, without much thought, “I wanted to watch the show.” If he thought more about the event, he would still be likely to simply say, “I just wanted to watch it.”

The meaning of the situation for the boy is likely to change if his mother discovers his behavior and responds to it. Her thoughts and feelings will further develop his own impressions about his behavior. If she experiences it as an act of disobedience, he is likely to experience himself as being disobedient. If she sees it as a sign of laziness, he is likely to think that he is lazy. If she thinks that he is selfish because he places his own wishes above her expectations, he is likely to see himself as selfish. Similarly, he might become sneaky, defiant, or disrespectful if that was his mother’s experience of the event.

The meaning of the situation would be still different for the boy if his mother experienced it less negatively. If she saw it as not uncommon for a 9-year-old child to disregard a minor expectation, he would experience it as an aspect of routine childhood behaviors. If she thought that he had a difficult day and wanted to relax for a little while before doing his chore, then most likely he would experience his motive as being similar. In either example, he will not experience any negative messages about himself that his behavior came to represent.

Another possibility is that his mother will note her son’s behavior and not make any assumptions about his reasons for it. She might think that its meaning lies in the thoughts, feelings, wishes, and intentions that underlie the behavior without knowing what they might be. She remains nonjudgmental about his motives while simply observing the behavior. She will then decide whether to respond to it or not. Or she might explore with him what his motives might have been before deciding how to respond. She does not attach meaning to the behavior, but rather becomes engaged with her son to understand its meaning. Since he may not know why he did what he did, this engagement may help them both to understand together what the behavior represents. Thus they might have the following dialogue:

Mom: I notice that you haven’t finished putting away your stuff.

John: I know, Mom, but I’ll do it when the show is over.

Mom: We spoke about your getting the stuff put away first. Any sense as to why you didn't get it done before turning on the TV? You had enough time.

John: I know, Mom. I was reading my book and didn't notice the time.

Mom: Okay, John, you can watch the end of the show. Then finish your chore. Then you have to tell me about the book you are reading. It must really be interesting!

In this example, John's mother decided that his interest in the book and the TV show were strong and as a result he had not left enough time to finish his chore. She might have further thought that he seldom broke rules and that her decision to allow him to finish watching the show would not encourage him to break more rules in the future. His reasons, namely his dual interests and limited time, made sense to her and most likely elicited a more flexible response than if she thought that he was deliberately testing her authority. If she noticed a pattern developing, she might have said that she would now expect him to get permission from her to watch the show before finishing the chore. If he failed to do so, she might then turn off the show until the chore was finished. If that was not sufficient, she might say that he must miss the show that day, or even the next day too.

However, John's mother might decide that he is disregarding her rules but still choose to avoid providing escalating consequences. She might, instead, explore with him his motives for his apparently deliberate testing of her authority:

Mom: John, I've told you a few times now that you need to ask me for permission before watching TV if your chores are not done, but you turned it on again. What's up?

John: I don't know. I just feel like it!

Mom: Sounds like you feel strongly about it. What makes it so hard for you to follow that rule?

John: I'm not a baby! Asking permission to watch TV is stupid!

Mom: You sure have a lot of anger about it. Must be hard if you think that I'm treating you like a baby.

John: Well, you are! I'm 9, not 2!

Mom: And as you get older you think that you should be able to do what you want. And not have to do what I say, like getting your chores done first.

John: Yeah. Why do I have to do them anyway?

Mom: As you get older, it seems like you think I shouldn't be able to tell you what you can do and not do.

John: Yeah, it does.

Mom: I hear you, son. This is an important, but difficult, part of growing up. And you and I are going to have some differences about what you can do and not do. We'll get through them. Right now I do want you to do your chores before watching TV and to ask permission if you haven't finished them. I know that you don't like that but I still think it is important enough to have you do it.

John: I don't like it.

Mom: I know you don't, John. I get that. Because you're getting older, you're more clear about what you want and don't want. And I think that's a good thing, though we will disagree at times.

John: Okay. I'll turn off the dumb show! But I don't think it's fair!

Mom: I understand. Thanks for doing it anyway. And I do know that you are certainly not a baby any longer. You can handle so many things so well now. It's like you learn to do some new things everyday. Way to go!

In this sequence, when John was testing his mother's authority, she openly explored his motives with him and he was able to realize that he thought that as he matured he would increasingly be able to decide what to do. He was beginning to think that simply doing what he was told was a sign that he was still a baby. His mother was able to support this emerging awareness, see its value in his development, acknowledge that it would lead to conflicts between them, be confident that their relationship was strong enough to manage the conflicts, and still tell him to follow the rule. She evaluated his behavior but not his inner life that led to his behavior. In so doing, she preserved her role in helping him to organize his experience of the events of his life, including his own behavior and her response. After hearing his mother differentiate his inner life from his behavior, John was much more ready to accept her authority over his behavior while still experiencing himself as an increasingly autonomous older child.

In this example, John's mother's response varies depending upon her perception of the reasons for the behavior and its frequency and importance, as well as John's response to her at each step of the exchange. If she chooses to address his behavior, then she explores his possible motives through nonjudgmental curiosity. In so doing, she is respecting his developing sense of self and her role in nurturing its development.

Attachment theory and research have convincingly taught us that our children are much more than the sum of their behaviors, and that our understanding of them and our relationships with them rely on much more than evaluating their behaviors. Attachment theory suggests that knowledge of a child begins from the inside out, and that such developing knowledge is fundamental to our emerging relationship with him.

I have been a therapist for children and their parents for over 30 years. During much of that time, I have worked with children who experienced abuse and neglect within their homes and who, as a result, lost the readiness and even the ability to trust and learn from their foster or adoptive parents. To understand and help these children, I have followed the teachings of those who have studied attachment and its role in human development. As I found ways to reach these children, I also developed a much more comprehensive appreciation for how attachment-focused research can guide all parents in their efforts to better raise their children. From the narrow perspective of a therapist focusing on children whose attachment relationships are the most damaged, I have gradually come to focus on the nature of these relationships themselves and their implications for child rearing. My clinical practice has also reflected this shift in that I now provide attachment-focused treatment to all families, rather than foster and adoptive families only (Hughes, 2007).

This book is written to be a guide for all parents and a resource for all mental

health clinicians and parent educators who are searching for ways to effectively love, discipline, and communicate with children, whether they are 3, 7, 13, or 17. It describes ways to set limits, provide guidance, and manage the responsibilities and difficulties of daily life, while at the same time communicating safety, fun, joy, and love. The theory and research that primarily emerged through the study of children from birth to age 4 has clear application to all children from infancy through late adolescence.

We are entering a new era regarding our understanding of how the human brain is designed to work in good relationships, and how such relationships are central to the cognitive, emotional, social, behavioral, and even biological development of the person. Nowhere is this emerging knowledge more evident than in the parent-child attachment relationship. Nowhere are the practical implications of this knowledge more important than in child-rearing decisions and recommendations. This work is one effort to build a bridge from the vast body of knowledge emerging from neuroscience and child development research to child-rearing principles and interventions.

At the core of successful parenting practices and optimal child development is the child's secure attachment relationship with his or her parents. This reality has often been overlooked, much as a fish overlooks water, in favor of theories that stress the importance of rewards and consequences for childhood behaviors to facilitate parents' influence over their child's development. This has been thought to be a straightforward, one-directional process, whereby a child's good behavior would increase when it was followed by a positive consequence chosen by the parents. Other behaviors were thought to decrease if they were followed by either no consequence or a negative one. The relational context in which such consequences were applied was often overlooked in early behavioral programs. Later efforts attempted to define the parent-child relationship within the same learning theory that stressed the parents' reinforcing opportunities and abilities. By doing so, the rich and comprehensive reciprocal relationship and interpersonal learning that exists between parent and child were often overlooked.

The parent-child attachment relationship is the pivotal environmental factor in the child's development. It is the connection between the parent and child that is central to his development, not the corrections that are applied. Connection—not correction—is repeatedly able to guide a child in a positive manner without sacrificing his autonomy and individuality. Successful parenting continuously strives to find the balance between independence and dependence, freedom to choose and following the rules, autonomy and emotional intimacy, and maintaining safety and seeking to explore. By focusing on the parent-child relationship, one is able to best find the most appropriate balance for the individual child.

A book on raising children would be much easier to write if we could say that at a certain age, in a certain situation, parents should always respond to their child's behavior in one specific way. A compilation of such behaviors could become the parental text to keep handy for review in a difficult situation. However, such a book would necessarily ignore fundamental factors in the nature of an effective parent-child relationship and attachment security. These factors involve the necessity of the parent knowing the meaning of the behavior before knowing how best to respond to it. Such meaning involves the thoughts, feelings, wishes, intentions, perceptions, values, and

memories associated with the behavior. Finding the meaning of the behavior, along with the most appropriate response, requires that there be a reciprocal relationship between parent and child. The child's response continuously guides the parent to choose to modify, fine-tune, or even completely change a prior decision.

Within the parent-child relationship—as in all relationships—it is the reciprocal influence that each one has on the other that contributes to the success of the relationship. By allowing her child to influence her, a parent's authority is not diminished; rather, the parent is wiser, more effective, and more accepted by the child. Because of the nature and presence of this fine-tuning, when a parent allows the child to contribute to her decisions, the parent becomes attuned with her child, which enables the intervention to be both helpful in the given situation and also beneficial to the developing relationship. It is this reciprocal dance of the experience of the parent and child of each other that enables the interaction to be helpful in dealing with the current situation. The child learns as much from his ability to influence his parent's guidance of his behavior as he does from the guidance itself. The child has a role in determining what the guidance is. His inner life is important in assisting his parent to decide what is in his best interests. His inner life is a part of her inner life.

By being responsive to the child's response to her directive, the parent is able both to provide a directive that is most suitable to the situation and also to facilitate the child's ability to self-direct. Rather than seeking compliance, the parent is providing an alliance in which her perspective and experience contribute to the success of the child's actions but do not control these actions. Within this context, the parent and child develop a cooperative stance toward discovering the most appropriate manner of dealing with a situation. Within a framework that is influenced by attachment theory and research, discipline actually serves to strengthen both the parent-child relationship and the child's own developmental skills.

But parenting, and especially attachment-focused parenting, is much more than guidance and discipline. The context in which such interactions facilitate development and relationship enhancement is one of safety, comfort, support, and reciprocal enjoyment and sharing. Such a context enables the child to experience a depth of confidence and commitment that enables all experiences, especially parent-child experiences, to become assimilated and integrated into a developing sense of self. Such experiences provide the child with a core sense of worth, of being loved, and of being able to love in turn. They provide an active stance of openness and exploration that generates momentum for the child to discover himself and his world, especially the world of his family.

The role of parents is to give their children life, and then to give them the opportunity to develop a life that balances autonomy and intimacy while deriving deep meaning and purpose from each. In attachment-focused parenting, the parent uses the unique knowledge that emerges from her relationship with her child as a guide to child rearing. The moment-to-moment attuned dance that a parent and child find themselves engaged in is a source of enjoyment and delight, as well as a source of awareness and understanding about each other's thoughts, feelings, and intentions. This awareness is the best guide to knowing what is best for our children and for our relationships with our children. This book attempts to describe the nature of this relationship-based knowledge and the factors that are central to its development.

For the sake of clarity, when referring to a parent, “she” is the pronoun used unless referring specifically to the father. Also, “he” is the pronoun for the child unless referring specifically to a girl. Using “she” and “he” makes it easier to differentiate parent from child in the discussion. This is in no way intended to minimize the equal importance of the father in his child’s development nor the relevance of this work for girls.

*Love your child
by learning the song that is in her heart
and singing it to her
when she forgets it.
—Anonymous*

CHAPTER ONE

What Is Attachment and How Does Parenting Affect It?

In understanding the nature of the parent-child relationship and the pivotal role of attachment, we are able to see its impact on a child's emotional, cognitive, social, communicative, and even physiological and neurological development. Similarly, although possibly less obviously, we are also able to understand how being a parent affects the parent's development as well.

Some Background on Attachment

The “founding parents” of attachment theory and research are Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby. They considered attachment to be characterized by six components, five of which were shared by other affectional bonds. The attachment relationship is:

1. Persistent or ongoing, not temporary
2. Directed toward a specific person
3. Emotionally significant
4. Directed toward maintaining contact with the other
5. Characterized by distress during periods of involuntary separation
6. Characterized by seeking security and comfort (This component is considered to be uniquely necessary for attachment [Cassidy, 1999, p. 12]).

While these six qualities might seem like common sense, they need to be stated because they are often taken for granted, and in the process may not influence child rearing as much as one might hope. Families are increasingly characterized by change, in the form of moves and loss of regular contact with extended family and friends, as well as divorce and blended families. With both parents often working long hours outside the home, the amount of time they are engaged in reciprocal and enjoyable activities with their children is likely to be less and the separations from their children longer. As the pressures on the parent-child relationship increase, the pressure to minimize its importance and focus on behavior also increases. Such behavioral focuses are appealing in the ease of application but often disappointing in their results.

It is also interesting to ask why these six qualities in relationships are important for human development. Why does the child need to have unique parents with whom to relate over time, rather than having parents in the present interchangeable with different ones in the future? Why should the contact be repetitive and lead to safety

and comfort when together, along with distress during periods of separations? Why—and just as important, how—do our attachment figures become the source of our learning and discoveries about ourselves and our world? In answering these questions, we get a sense of how a child’s development is intimately interwoven with the nature of his relationship with his parents.

A relationship that is characterized by attachment security facilitates many areas of development in the child. These include physiological and emotional regulation, self-reliance, resilience, social competence with peers, empathy for others, symbolic play, problem solving, intellectual development, communication and language skills, and self-integration and self-worth. The effects of attachment security on these areas of development are evident at the preschool stage, but also throughout childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood, as long as there were no significant disruptions in the security of the attachment relationships (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999; Grossman, Grossmann, & Waters, 2005; Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005).

About two-thirds of all children manifest attachment security and are able to benefit from its positive influence on their development. The other third have attachments characterized by insecurity. The majority of children with insecure attachments still have organized patterns of attachment, though the patterns are limited in their benefit to the child and leave them vulnerable to some developmental challenges. By “organized” I mean that the child will manifest a fairly predictable series of responses to his attachment figures when he is in distress. In one pattern—*organized, but avoidant*—the child tends to minimize the importance of his parents in his development and overemphasizes his self-reliance skills. Failures and distress that might be managed and more easily reduced are more prevalent because such children avoid turning to their attachment figures when their engagement would be very beneficial. In the other pattern—*organized, but ambivalent*—the child overemphasizes his reliance on his parents and minimizes the need to develop his self-reliance skills. Such children often manage life’s difficulties poorly because they do not develop the self-reliance skills needed to manage situations when their parents are not present. In essence, the first group stresses independence at the expense of relationships and the second group stresses relationships at the expense of independence. Neither is able to find the balance between the two that the securely attached child and adult can. The research is very clear that securely attached children do not become dependent on others as adults. If you meet your child’s need to feel safe, your child will develop excellent self-reliance skills and resiliency while still being able to rely on significant others when the situation calls for it.

There is a final group of children with insecure attachments to their parents who do not manifest an organized pattern of attachment-related behaviors when in distress. These children are considered to have a *disorganized attachment*. They are neither able to successfully rely on themselves nor on their parents in any consistent way. They tend to be unpredictable in their response to stress. They tend to try to rigidly control the events of their lives in order to create some sense of safety by avoiding stressful events, since they are lacking in self-reliance and relationship skills that might manage such events. These children not only lack the positive benefits of attachment security, they are also at risk for developing many psychological problems in childhood and adulthood, ranging from aggression to short attention span and

hyperactivity, conduct disorders and other behavioral problems, as well as anxiety, depression, and dissociation (Greenberg, 1999; Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 1999; Sroufe et al., 2005).

Secure attachment is the organizing principle of the parent-child relationship that I focus on in this book. It is also the organizing principle of the developing person.

Concepts Related to Attachment

This book looks at the parent-child relationship from a broader perspective than do some attachment researchers. Safety as well as exploration are central components in the parent-child relationship, and both are heavily influenced by attachment. To quote Grossman, Grossman, and Zimmermann:

When their adaptation is challenged, secure (attached) children can flexibly explore possible solutions or perspectives while retaining a secure feeling during exploration, and if their competence is depleted, they can rely on and summon social resources. We have called this a “wider view of attachment,” in which the freedom to explore in the face of adversity and the freedom to call for and accept help are both necessary and important aspects of security. (1999, p. 761)

Colwyn Trevarthen (2001) expands the parent-child relationship beyond safety when he speaks of the need of the infant for “joyful dialogic companionship” with his parents (p. 100). He refers to the attuned interactions between parent and infant as being central for development: “A major change in brain theory now gives emotions and their interpersonal transmission a regulatory role in both brain growth and cognitive mastery of experience” (p. 98). Trevarthen and others have stressed that our discovery of how infants develop in close intersubjective relationships with their parents leads to a new awareness of how parents might best guide the development of their children. The old understanding suggested that parents need to “constrain impulsive self-serving actions of children” through “instructive or corrective actions” so that they become “more socially responsible” (p. 99). Research on early childhood development now suggests that children need “a primary sharing of subjective impulses behind conscious experience and intentions” (p. 99). This research indicates that parents are wise to walk with, rather than stand above, their children while guiding them through developmental processes that will lead to a coherent life.

The intersubjective process that is referred to throughout this book is essentially a communication between parent and child whereby, through sharing their experiences, the inner lives of both child and parent are being deepened, expanded, and organized into more coherent selves. This communication process is nonverbal initially but eventually includes verbal processes as well. It is reciprocal. The parent will have the best influence on her child when her child is able to also have an influence on her. This communication process is crucial for successful development:

The expressive-receptive channel of communication for mind processes has a special importance for an infant, when growth of brain and body are most rapid. Elaborate intuitive behaviors on both sides facilitate communication between infant and adult caregiver, and when there is a fault in either one, the infant is unable to benefit from

care, and its psychological development will be affected. (Trevarthen, 2001, p. 98)

Dan Siegel (1999) has integrated much of the work of Trevarthen and others and demonstrated that what we are learning about attachment and development in infancy is equally true throughout life. Siegel believes that the essence of secure attachment involves the parent's ability to sensitively respond to the signals of the infant about his inner life and to communicate—essentially nonverbally—with the infant (p. 70).

Siegel devotes much of his work to describing how this shared, contingent communication between two individuals facilitates brain development for numerous emotional, cognitive, social, behavioral, and moral abilities. The need for this nonverbal, attuned communication persists throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. With maturity, words tend to dominate the sharing of information, but the nonverbal foundation of the relationship remains pivotal if the communication is to lead to a deep and meaningful understanding and influence between those engaged with each other.

While the role of attachment has become increasingly evident in thousands of studies in the various fields of child development, more recently its central place is also becoming apparent in neurological research emerging from the new technologies for studying the structure and function of the brain. With these advances in brain research, there is increasing evidence that the brain is organized to be in attachment relationships, and such relationships are crucial for basic—and optimal—brain development (Schore, 2000). When an infant and his parent are engaged in attuned, intersubjective, nonverbal dialogue, crucial areas of the infant's brain within the prefrontal cortex are developing and becoming organized. Such developments do not occur when the infant is alone. This area of the brain is crucial for central areas of our functioning including affect regulation, social cognition, empathy, response flexibility, self-awareness, and fear modulation (Siegel, 1999). These and other related findings in brain research demonstrate that attachment security is crucial for many areas of optimal development in the child (Schore, 2000, 2003, 2005).

Throughout this work, communication between parent and child is seen as being the core of the relationship, beginning when the infant is in the arms of the parent and ending when the parent—on her deathbed—is in the arms of her child. Through the parent's nonverbal and verbal communication with her child, she opens her mind and heart to him, letting him know centrally that he exists within her inner life. She openly shares her thoughts and feelings, wishes and intentions, perceptions and memories with him, knowing that he will be safe with her perceptions of him. She is confident that when he becomes aware of anger directed toward his behavior, he will remain safe, knowing that the relationship will easily be repaired since the anger was not directed toward his inner self.

In the same manner, the parent actively facilitates the child's readiness and ability to reflect on his own inner life and share it with her. She communicates that his inner life is safe with her. It will not be judged; it will be accepted. In fact, he is safe if he allows her to explore his mind and heart with him, discovering qualities that are emerging or which had been concealed. Her presence in his inner life will enable him to regulate any intense emotions and to make sense of events that have been frightening or shameful.

Defining the Terms

Attachment refers to the child's relationship with the parent, rather than the parent's relationship with the child. Being securely attached to his parent, he turns to her for safety and support. She does not turn to her child for safety and support but rather to her partner, her own parents, or her friends. As the terms are used in this book, parents have an affectional bond with their child but are not attached to him.

Intersubjectivity refers to the process whereby the subjective experience of each member of a pair influences the subjective experience of the other. Through joining with the subjective experiences of their parents, children are able to regulate their own states and discover central qualities of their inner lives as well as the inner lives of their parents. Within such intersubjective experiences, the child develops the process of organizing and deepening his thoughts and feelings, perceptions and memories, wishes and intentions, values and beliefs. His parents' experience of him greatly influences his developing experience of himself. His parents' experience of the events and objects of his world greatly influence the manner by which he begins to experience these events and objects.

In this work, *affect* is defined as the nonverbal expression of one's emotional state. Affect is demonstrated in one's facial expressions, voice prosody (tone, speed, inflections, pitch, intensity), gestures, and posture. According to Dan Stern, a theorist and researcher, affect can be measured according to its intensity, rhythm, beat, contour, shape, and duration. Specific emotions have their unique affective expressions. It is quite easy to tell if a person is experiencing anger, fear, or happiness by observing the affective expression in his face, voice and gestures. Communicating an emotion primarily involves demonstrating its unique affective expression.

The distinction between an emotion and its affective expression is very important for two reasons. First, when a parent matches her child's affective expression of an emotion, without feeling the emotion herself, her child will experience acceptance, understanding, and empathy. When she matches her child's facial expression, voice prosody, and gestures, he will sense: "she gets it!" Second, when a parent matches the affect of the child, the child's affective state is being coregulated. If a child's emotion is becoming extreme, and his parent matches the affective expression of the emotion without feeling the emotion herself, the child's affect (and the underlying emotion) is likely to become less extreme and remain regulated. This difference is explained further in Chapters 3 and 7.

A child may convey anger in his voice, face, and gestures when he shouts, "I don't want to clean my room now!" A parent may respond with a similar nonverbal expression of affect, matching the intensity and rhythm of his voice and his unique facial expression, "You don't want to clean it now! You'd rather play with your friends!" But the parent's affective expression is of her child's emotional state, not her own. She is not angry. Rather she is conveying acceptance, understanding and empathy for his wish not to clean his room, which he is communicating through his affective expression of his angry emotion. His anger is much less likely to escalate when his affective expression is being matched. This affective matching is called "attunement" and it will be in evidence frequently throughout this book.

Reflective functioning refers to a specific form of thinking whereby the focus is on

our inner life as well as the inner lives of others. Through reflecting, we become aware of the thoughts, emotions, wishes, intentions, perceptions, values, and memories that led to a behavior. Through enhanced reflective functioning, the child is better able to understand why he did something as well as why his parents did something too.

Central Principles of Attachment-Focused Parenting

Any consideration of attachment-focused parenting must begin by giving attention to safety and its central role in development. *Safety* refers to the general felt sense of safety rather than actual physical safety only. Without the experience of safety, children—and their parents as well—will become limited in their ability to develop their overall resources and to determine the best possible response to a given situation. Safety is explored in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 focuses on understanding intersubjectivity. This word, which is not yet well known, attempts to describe how the core of emotional, social, cultural, and much practical knowledge develops and deepens when a child is able to experience his parents' experience. This process is very evident when observing how infants learn from their parents. This book will hopefully demonstrate why it is equally important in facilitating such learning for older children as well.

Attachment researchers have found that the most important predictor of a child's attachment patterns is the attachment patterns of his parents. This connection as well as its implications for child rearing is explored in Chapter 4.

When attachment security is maintained, there is a vital connection between the inner life of the child and the inner life of the parent. Chapter 5 focuses on an attitude that serves to facilitate this connection. This attitude has four components that tend to facilitate the child's affective and reflective skills within a context of both safety and exploration: playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy (PACE).

Chapter 6 focuses on the core communication patterns that facilitate both attachment security and intersubjectivity. The same patterns are evident between parent and infant and are centered upon reciprocal nonverbal expressions that convey both interest in and understanding of each other's inner life. Such communications more closely resemble storytelling dialogue than giving lectures and advice.

In Chapter 7, the importance of emotional development and its close ties with the affectional bonds referred to earlier is considered. Skills involved in identifying, regulating, and expressing specific emotions and general affective state emerge within a relationship where such skills are valued and where the parent has achieved a high level of comparable skill development.

A child's emotional development is enhanced when he is also able to develop his reflective skills. This enables him to make sense of the immediate situation as well as his overall life path (i.e., his autobiographical narrative) and so organize it better. The integration of both affective and reflective skill development is of great benefit to the developing child, and parents can play an active role in helping their child develop reflection. Reflective skills are the topic of Chapter 8.

Chapter 9 focuses on the need to repair the parent-child relationship following conflicts, separations, misunderstandings, discipline, or periods of being unavailable. Such relationship breaks are a natural part of any ongoing relationship and their repair

is necessary if the child is to have the confidence necessary to develop attachment security with his parents.

Finally, Chapter 10 focuses on understanding serious problems that may be associated with failures to establish attachment security and providing means to facilitate the resolution of these problems and repair of the relationship. When significant attachment problems emerge, there is a great risk that a downward spiral will develop that creates intensifying conflicts and problems. When the attachment relationship can be strengthened, these problems can be addressed with an increased likelihood of success.

These principles can be applied to all children, from infancy through late adolescence. The applications will certainly look different based on the age of the child, but the core principles, derived from how the brain functions and how all aspects of learning and development occur, are relevant for all ages.