

RAVES for Therapists

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Good News

We now know what
babies and children need for
positive development.

Human Evolved Nest for Young Children

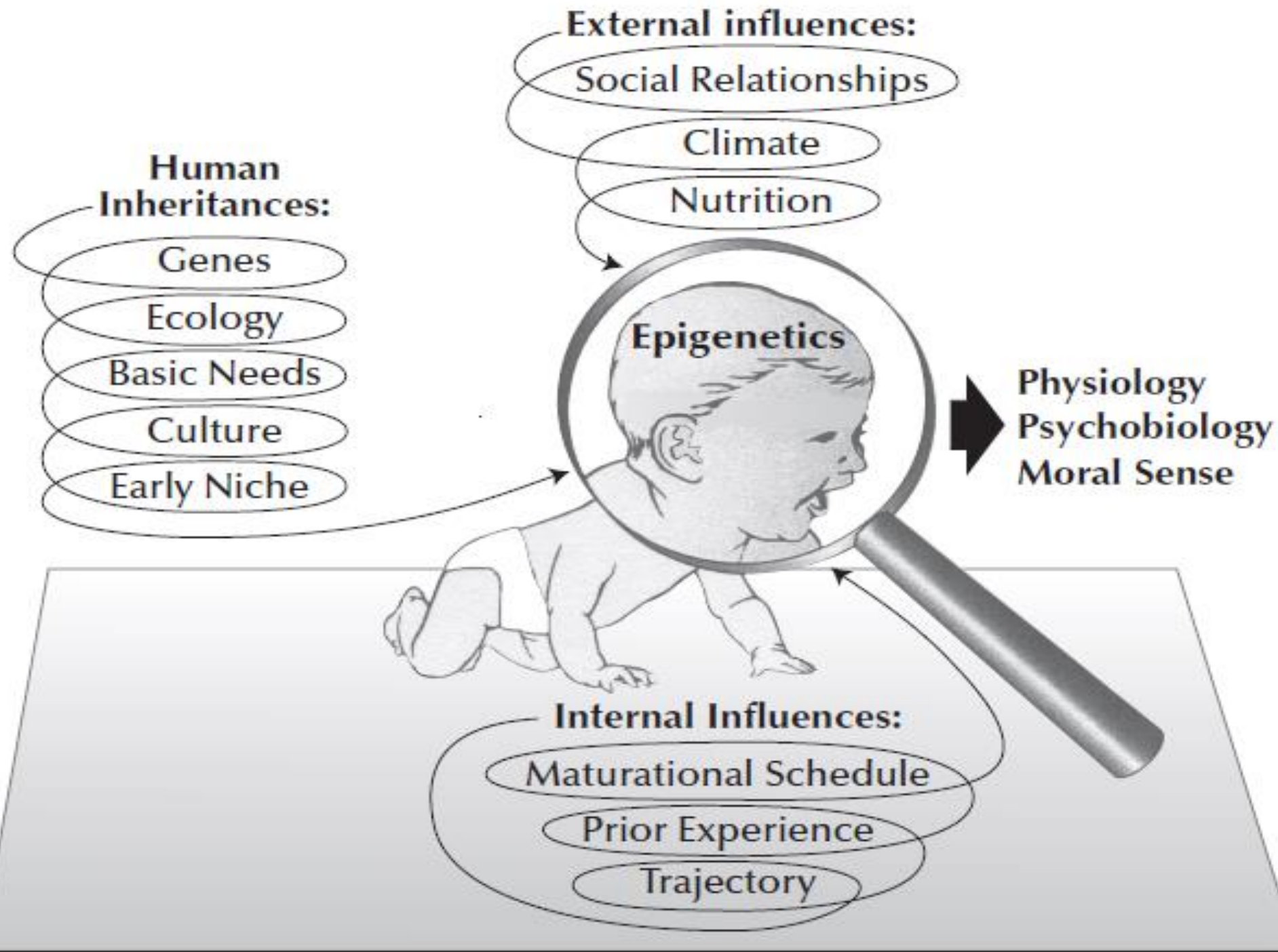
Provisioned by a community

Hunter Gatherer Childhood Model: Recurring patterns around the world (Konner, 2005)

aka Evolved Developmental Niche (Narvaez, Gleason et al., 2013)

(Most practices are 30-40 million years old)

- **TOUCH:** Epigenetics for anxiety (Meaney)
- **RESPONSIVITY:** Stress response (McEwan), Vagus nerve (Porges)
- **BREASTFEEDING:** Intelligence, health
- **ALLOMOTHERS:** Greater openness, greater maternal responsiveness (Hrdy)
- **PLAY:** More self control, social skills (e.g., Panksepp)
- **SOCIAL SUPPORT:** Greater health and wellbeing
- **NATURALISTIC BIRTH:** Sociality, intelligence, immunity



Brain system function with good care

Protoreptilian

Survival systems: anger, fear, panic (fight, flight, freeze, faint)

Control

Mammalian

Social: care, play

Heart-centered imagination

Executive functions and neocortex:
imagination interacts with survival and prosocial systems

Right Hemisphere and Prefrontal Cortex Development

- Self-regulation
- Intersubjectivity and social pleasure
- Emotional intelligence
- Empathy
- Beingness (presence)
- Self transcendence
- Higher consciousness
- Receptive intelligence

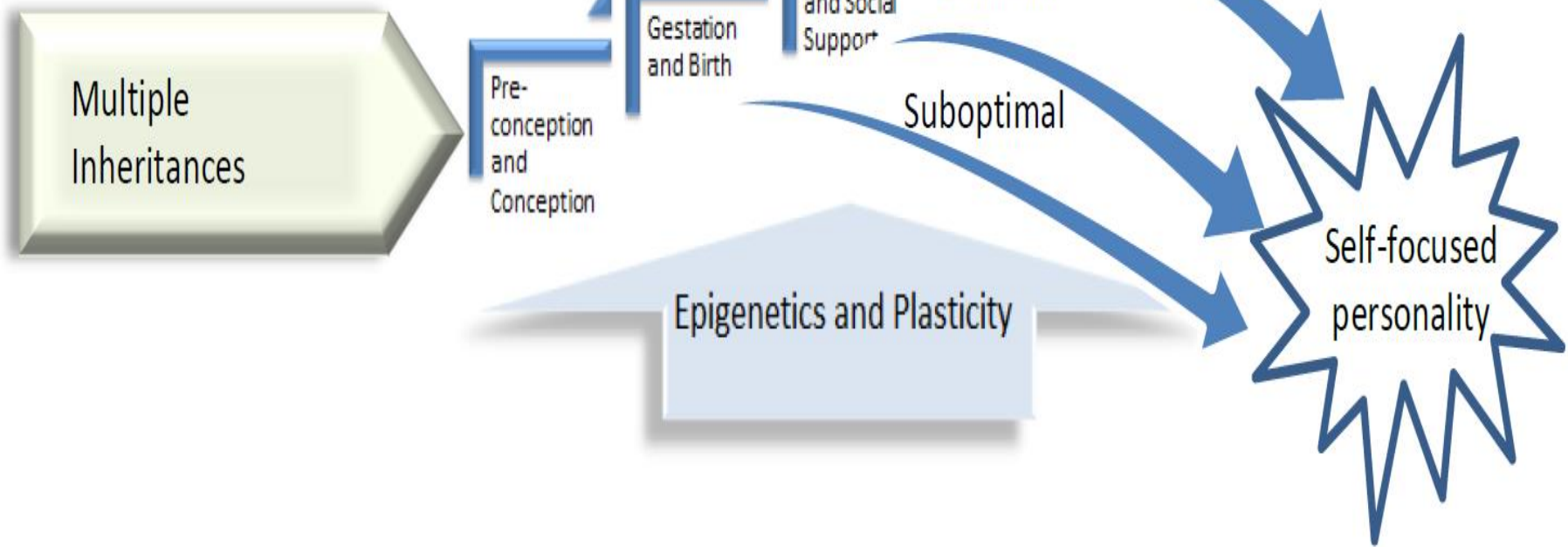
(Allan Schore, 1994, 2001, 2003; Narvaez, 2014)

Bad News

Babies and children are
not getting what they
need to develop
positively.

Evolved Human Developmental Niche

Narvaez, 2014



Stress changes gene expression which alters synapses

Kang HJ, Voleti B, Hajszan T, Rajkowska G, Stockmeier CA, Licznanski P, Lepack A, Majik MS, Jeong LS, Banasr M, Son H, Duman RS (August 2012). Decreased expression of synapse-related genes and loss of synapses in major depressive disorder. *Nature Medicine* 18.

Power of Survival Systems from Early Undercare

Toxic Stress leads to self-protection disposition

Protoreptilian

- Survival systems: anger, fear, panic (fight, flight, freeze, faint)

Control
Stress Reactivity
controls

Mammalian

- **Social:** care, play

Heart-centered
imagination

Executive functions and neocortex:
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WHAT CAN WE DO?

How do we grow morally agile adults?

Relationships (secure attachment, positive climate)

Apprenticeship (coached practice)

Virtuous models (guiding narratives, role models)

Ethical skills (sensitivity, judgment, focus, action)

Self authorship (client independence, autonomy)

Initiated under the Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education project
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RAVES

Caring, Responsive Relationship

- Engages the **emotions**
 - Fundamental to learning
- Fosters a **secure attachment**
 - Builds the bridge for instruction
 - Secures the client's attention
 - Establishes a line of influence
 - Physiological orientation toward engagement ethic (oxytocin, opioids)
- May take longer with some clients

Provide a Supportive **Relational** Social Climate

- Keep group members calm
- Foster face-to-face relational engagement
- Encourage prosocial imagination
- Promote positive purpose
 - Enhancement of human potential
- Foster Broad ethical skills
- Encourage global awareness
- Link to community contexts

Well-Structured Social Group Environments Meet Basic Needs

❖ **Client autonomy, self-direction, & influence**

❖ **Client interaction, collaboration, & participation in open discussion**

❖ **Therapist warmth, acceptance, support, & modeling**

❖ **Training in social skills**

❖ **Opportunities for helping others**

❖ **Discipline through a sense of citizenship to the group**

(From Solomon et al, 2002)

Belonging (connectedness), Understanding (meaning), Sense of control (choices), Enhancing Self (competence), Trust (community support)

Apprenticeship

- Modeling
- Guidance
- Focused, extensive practice

How do people learn naturally?

Apprenticeship

- How does apprenticeship look?
 - **Modeling** by someone more “expert”
 - thinks aloud while solving problems
 - Therapist **coaches** the client
 - Therapist **explains** (reasoning, meaning) at the same time as authentic experience
 - client **practice** is *focused and extensive*
- Will be described again, later, in more detail

Virtuous Models

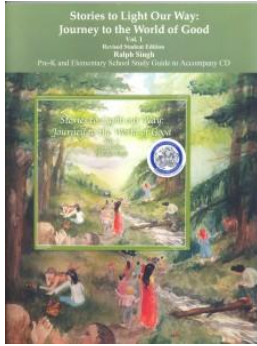
- Generosity
- Respect
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Forgiveness
- Humility
- Courage
- Role models
- Stories
- Expectations

Virtuous Village of Stories, Safety and Support

- Adults come together with their stories about their own development
- Understand that their own characters are “under construction”
 - by the activities they pursue
 - by how they use their imaginations

Nelson Mandela

- "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."
- "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."
- "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."



The Power of Stories

- Shape what we believe about ourselves and the world
 - they guide our actions
- Community members learn whom they can/should become
 - from the stories they are told
 - how we treat a child is a type of story neurobiologically internalized

Ethical Expertise



“A wise (or virtuous) person is *one who knows what is good and spontaneously does it.*

Varela (1999, p. 4)

What can an ethical expert do better?

- More Ethically Sensitive (*perceptive, imaginative, deeply feeling*)
- Better at Ethical Judgment (*reasoning, reflection*)
- More Ethically Focused (*attentive, motivated, personal identity*)
- Better at Completing Ethical Action (*effectivities, steadfastness*)

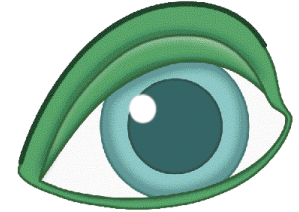
Ethical Skills: A Toolbox

1. Ethical Sensitivity
2. Ethical Judgment
3. Ethical Focus
4. Ethical Action

Ethical Skills to Embed in Therapeutic interventions

Toolbox 1: Ethical Sensitivity

NOTICE!



- ❖ Notice the need for ethical action
- ❖ Feel empathy
- ❖ Put yourself in the other person's shoes
- ❖ Imagine possibilities
- ❖ Determine your role

Ethical Sensitivity Skills

Understand **Emotional Expression**

Take the **Perspectives** of Others

Connect to Others

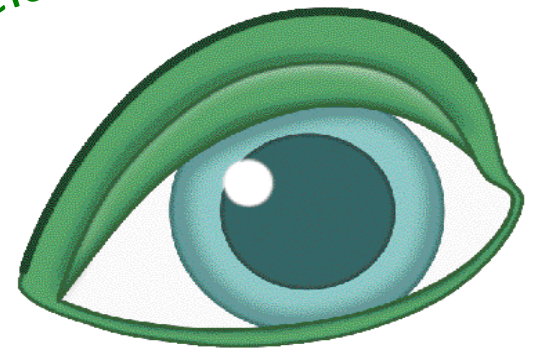
Respond to **Diversity**

Control **Social Bias**

Interpret Situations

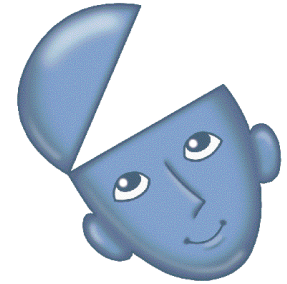
Communicate well

Relational Skills



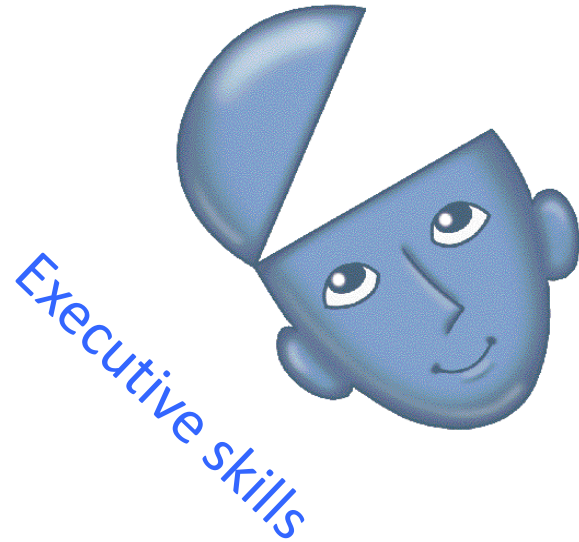
Toolbox 2: Ethical Judgment

THINK!



- ❖ Reason about what might be done
- ❖ Apply your code of ethics
- ❖ Judge which action is most ethical

Ethical Judgment Skills



Reason Generally

Reason Ethically

Understand Ethical Problems

Use Codes & Identify Judgment Criteria

Understand Consequences

Reflect on the Process and Outcome

Coping & Resiliency

Toolbox 3: Ethical Focus AIM!



- ❖ **Make the ethical action a priority over other needs and goals**
- ❖ **Align ethical action with your identity**

Ethical Focus Skills

Respect Others
Cultivate Conscience
Act Responsibly
Be a Community Member
Find Meaning in Life
Develop Ethical Identity & Integrity



SocioEmotional
& Community
Skills

Toolbox 4: Ethical Action ACT!



- ❖ Implement the ethical action by
 - ❖ Knowing what steps to take
 - ❖ Getting the help you need
- ❖ Persevere despite hardship

Ethical Action Skills

Resolve Conflicts and Problems

Assert Respectfully

Take Initiative as a Leader

Planning to Implement Decisions

Cultivate Courage

Persevere

Work Hard

*Relational,
SocioEmotional,
Communal and
Executive Skills*



Ethical character requires all four toolboxes!



Back to the “A” in RAVE:

Apprenticeship

- Cultivate moral character through four levels of expertise development
 - Immersion in examples and opportunities
 - Attention to facts and skills
 - Practice procedures
 - Integrate across contexts

Expertise Level 1: Immersion In Examples & Opportunities

- Attend to the **big picture**
- Learn to recognize **basic patterns**

Multiple, engaging examples

Learn to recognize broad patterns in the domain
(Identification Knowledge).

Develop gradual awareness and recognition of
elements in the domain.

Expertise Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

- Focus on **detail** and **prototypical examples**
- Build knowledge

Attention focused on the elemental concepts in the domain in order to build elaboration knowledge.

Skills are gradually acquired through motivated, focused attention.

Expertise Level 3: Practice Procedures

- Set goals
- Plan steps of problem solving
- Practice skills

Skills are developed and combined through practice, exploration and problem solving in the domain (planning knowledge).

Expertise Level 4: Integrate Knowledge & Procedures

- Execute plans
- Solve real-life problems
- Solve problems in multiple contexts

Gradual systematic integration and application of skills across many situations.

The client learns how to take the steps in solving complex domain problems (execution knowledge).

Self-Authorship of Ethical Skills

Steering one's own further self-development

Self-Authorship

- Virtuous individuals must be autonomous enough to monitor their behavior and choices.
- Once developed, virtues must be maintained through the selection of appropriate friends, activities and environments (Aristotle, 1988).

Power of Survival Systems from Early Undercare

Protoreptilian

- Survival systems: anger, fear, panic (fight, flight, freeze, faint)



Toxic Stress leads to self-protection disposition

Stress Reactivity controls

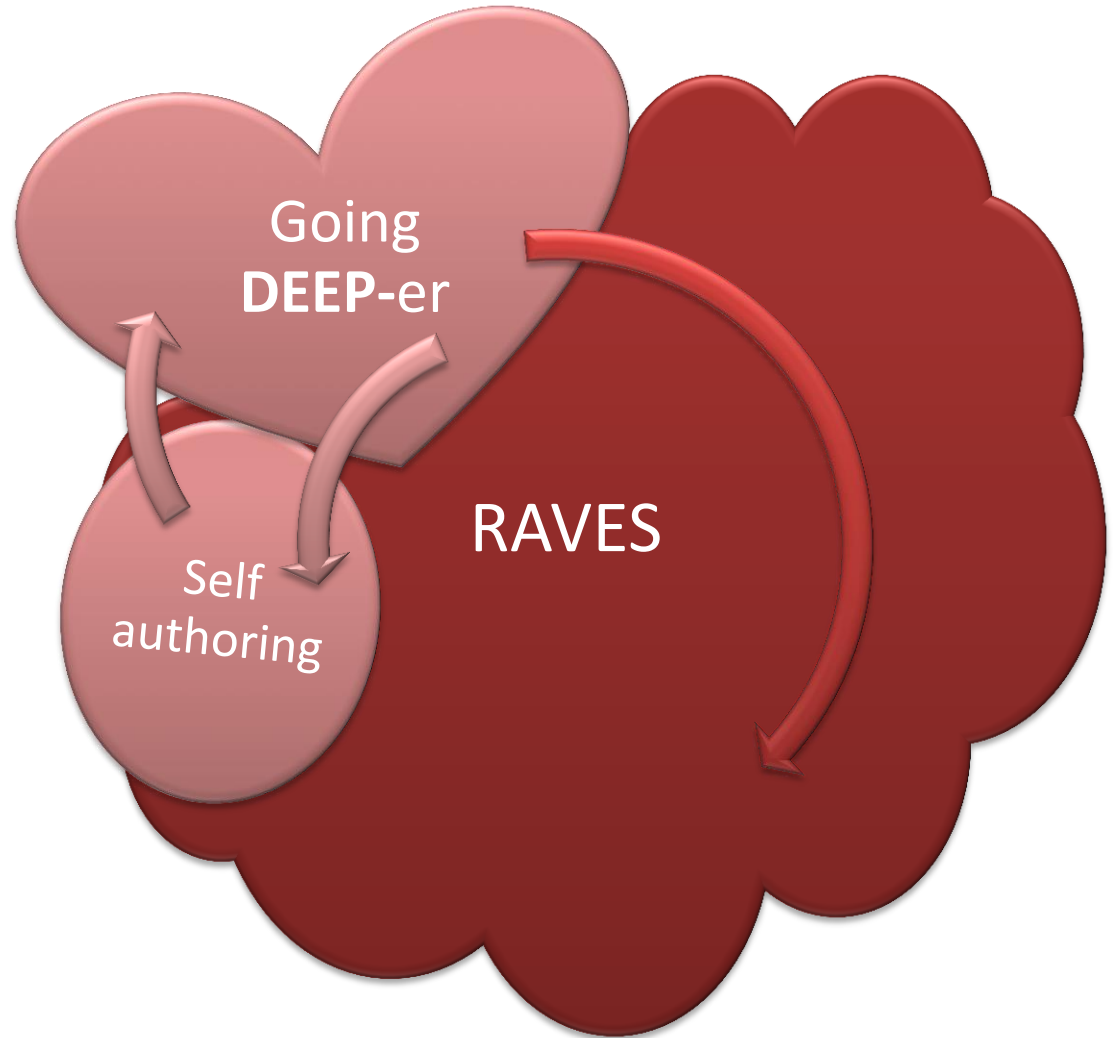
Mammalian

- **Social:** care, play



Executive functions and neocortex:
imagination interacts with survival and prosocial systems

DEVELOPMENTAL ETHICAL ECOLOGICAL PRACTICE (DEEP)



*Starting with individual
self development*

Narvaez, 2014

Restoring our human capacities

Protoreptilian

Learn Self-Calm

- Survival systems: anger, fear, panic (fight, flight, freeze, faint)

Mammalian

Experience Social Joy

- Social: care, play

Executive functions and neocortex:

imagination interacts with survival and prosocial systems

Build Communal Imagination

I. Practice Self-Calming

- Learn healthful relaxation techniques.
- Slow down, revamp and reframe reactions and self-talk.
- Learn to shift attention and mindset from distress and bracing, to openness.



Acceptance and attunement



Defensive

Compliant but withdrawn

FALL: Self-disowning

Imbalance

Balanced Centered Self

FALL: Relationship disowning

Imbalance

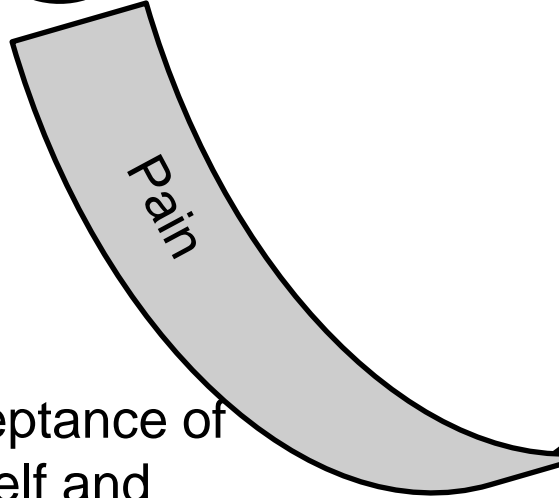


Defensive

Combative and/or Controlling

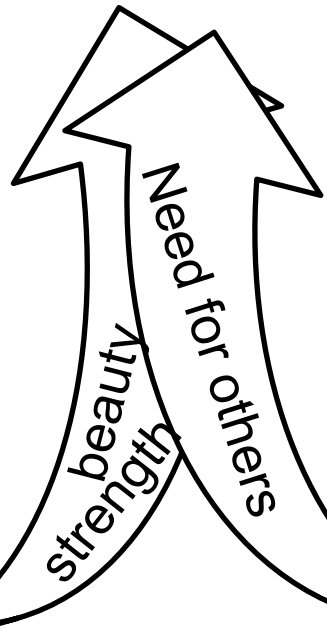
I am inferior

I am superior



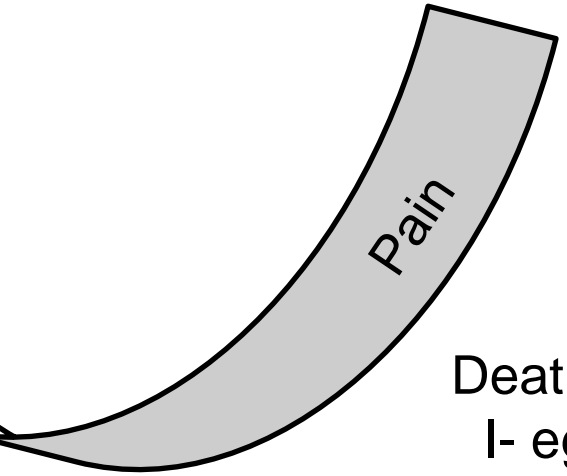
Pain

Acceptance of self and responsibility



beauty
strength
Need for others

Embrace one's humanity with humility



Pain

Death of I- ego



Interventions



- Therapy can rewire the brain
 - Reactivate the right brain (Siegel)
- Individuals can learn to foster engagement ethic
 - Keep bonding hormones active
- Epigenetics is ongoing
 - Immediate gene expression
 - Behavioral state-related gene expression
 - Experience or activity dependent gene expression

*Developmental Ethical Ecological
Practice (DEEP)*

II. Grow Sociality

1. Expand your social self
 - Connect
 - Enjoy
2. Practice presence
 - Art. music, play

Playful activity is a good way to learn to stay in the present.

Self-Authorship of Right Brain Hemisphere

- Self-awareness activities
 - Journal
 - Pay attention to likes and dislikes
 - Spend more time doing things that bring joy

Immersion

- Community immersion
 - Active, full body experiences with others
- Find pleasure from social relationships
 - Embodied, positive sense of community
 - singing, playing, dancing, laughing

III. Expand Communal Imagination

1. Link personal development to community development
2. Create prosocial niches for self and others
3. Promote global awareness
 - Increase awareness of and comfort with diversity

Altering Imaginations


- Shift our consciousness
- Understand humanity's heritages
 - Naturally cooperative
 - Inclusive imagination

III. Expand Ecological Imagination

1. Nurture ecological attachment
2. BE in nature
3. Foster I-ego-detachment and small I-ego
4. Build receptive intelligence
5. Build primal wisdom skills

Think of a favorite place in the natural world

Core Routines for Connecting with Nature

- 
- **Develop a regular “Sit Spot”** (sitting still in nature to observe and listen).
 - **Story of the Day:** Return from your experience with nature
 - to tell your story to somebody.
 - or journal on your own if no one can catch your story.

From *Coyote Guide to Connecting with Nature* by Jon Young, Ellen Haas & Evan McGown

Know your local habitat: Be Place-ful



- Commune with and support Life, as partner and companion.
- Opposite of:
 - Restlessness
 - Placelessness
 - Ever searching
 - “Hungry ghosts”

Foster Primal Virtue

- Expand the circle of concern to include Nature
 - Small I-ego but large self
 - Human responsibilities:
 - Care for all life
 - Maintain biodiversity
 - Live sustainably
- Commonself worldview
 - Partnership with Nature
 - Animals and natural forms as agents too

Adopt a Common Self Mindset

- Relationships are fundamental
- Nature is full of living agents, a community of beings
- All are connected through a Web of Life
- Individualism AND collectivism
- Eternity is now (enlightenment)

Thanks!

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My blog at Psychology Today:
[Moral Landscapes](#)

