

Parents Who Parent Differently

By: Loren Lomme, LPC, RPT

Counselor/Play Therapist at Just Mind

A little about me...

- Graduate of Texas A&M – Bachelor's in Psychology
- Graduate of Texas State University – Master of Arts in Professional Counseling
- LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor) & RPT (Registered Play Therapist)
- TBRI Practitioner – Trust Based Relational Intervention
- Mom and wife

WHY does it happen?

- Differing attachment styles
 - Attachment Theory – the quality of our early attachments strongly influences how we behave as adults in relationships and as parents
- Differing Life Experiences
- What's Important to you as a parent
 - Goals for yourself as a parent and goals for your child

WHAT to do about it:

- Communicate about how and why you are making your decisions →
- Discuss alternatives and share ideas about different ways to handle situations
- Communicate to let your partner know why you're happy or unhappy about how something was done

Examples: Why did you use that specific discipline strategy? Why was this decision important to YOU? What happened before that your partner didn't hear or see?

WHAT to do about it
(continued):

Remain a united
front...don't
throw your
partner under
the bus!!

- Scares kids and communicates that you aren't parenting from a solid foundation
- Confusing....who do we listen to?
- Leaves opportunities for manipulation and triangulation
- Only undermine in emergencies
- Discuss disagreements away from kids or pause a situation that isn't going well (code word)
 - put your kids on hold while you and your partner problem solve; give a deadline if possible

WHAT to do about it (continued):

- Work on understanding why you do what you do as a parent
 - Take time to make sense of your own childhood experiences (both positive and negative) and how those experiences affected you as a child and now as an adult – parents who do this are much more likely to raise securely attached children
 - Dr. Dan Siegel – Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation

Understand your attachment style

Secure: a child feels safe, soothed, seen, and secure;

Earned secure

Anxious: parents are sometimes there for them and sometimes isn't; child is confused and frustrated

Avoidant: parents may meet the child's basic needs but have trouble responding to emotional needs; parent is an "emotional desert"

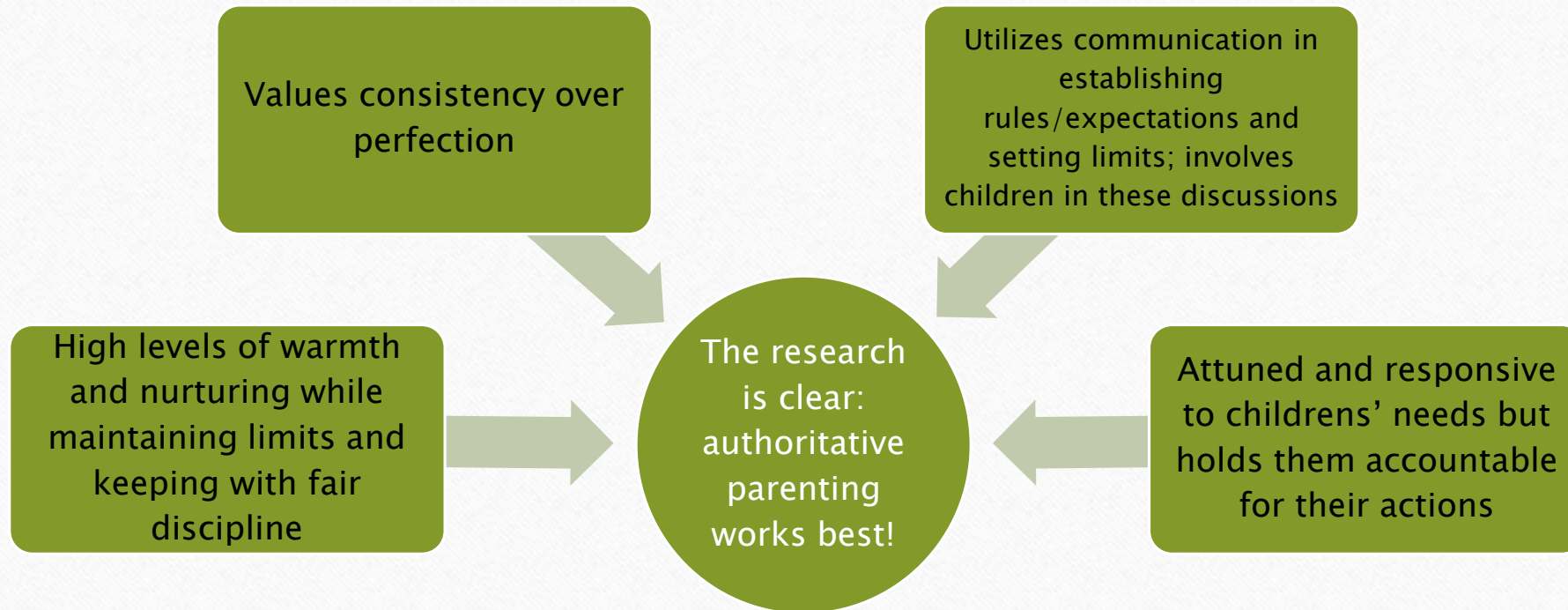
Disorganized: can occur when a parent is frightening to a child or when they are frightened by their child; when a child's source of comfort is also a source of terror

WHAT are the benefits of parenting differently?

- parents who can navigate their differing styles and problem solve in a way to work together will be modeling respect, understanding, and problem solving skills
- send the message that differences can be complimentary and productive
- communicate the value of compromise
- children will learn that relationships can handle differences and everyone agreeing about everything is not a requirement for a successful relationship

WHAT works best?

- Know your parenting style: authoritarian, permissive, or authoritative



WHAT works best?

- When you and your partner don't agree or when things aren't handled as well as you'd hoped in front of the kids, there is always room for correction (this can actually be very valuable!)
- Go back and correct missteps when they occur
- Redos work wonders
- Make repairs with your partner (do this in front of the kids when appropriate) – modeling is one of the best ways to teach our kids

References and Resources

Attachments Beyond Infancy

By: Mary S. Ainsworth

Psycnet.apa.org

Attachment Theory: How to Feel More Secure in Your Romantic Relationships

By: Kira Hoffman, PsyD

Wellsanfrancisco.com

How Your Attachment Style Affects Your Parenting

Psychologytoday.com

Mindsight: The New Science of Personal Transformation

By: Dr. Daniel Siegel

Parenting From the Inside Out

By: Dr. Daniel Siegel