

## Ways to Heal Each Other and Calm Each Other's Amygdala

- **Eye Gaze:** Look at them with love, joy, delight, belief; our eyes *do* tell what we feel in our souls and they get it no matter what we say. So, be careful and pay attention to what your eyes are saying. Babies' distance of vision is from breast to mother's eyes (meant to see delight) Our brain chemistry responds and changes based on what we see in other's eyes.
- **Touch:** The reason why our biggest organ is our skin! People need non-sexual, comforting, safe touch. Lots and lots and lots of it. Can be hugs, arm around, manicures, playing with hair, foot massages; anything that is appropriate for your relationship. Need to respect their boundaries, especially if they have had abuse in past and don't want to be touched. Find ways that are safe to them. Arm wrestling? A pat on the back?
- **Tone of voice:** All of us are greatly impacted by the tone of voice. Kids from rough beginnings are particularly sensitive to it. In arguments people are often responding to tone of voice, vs. the words. Have you ever noticed how young mothers talk differently to their babies in that high, melodic, playful voice? That is because that voice releases dopamine in a baby and is experienced as tremendously pleasant and calming. Incredible! Be aware of your tone and try to speak in calming and playful ways.
- **Undistracted attention:** We all need undistracted attention from those in our lives. Put down the phones, turn off the T.V. and look and listen and be with each other.
- **Body postures:** All of us are sensitive to this, but particularly kids from difficult beginnings. We can present ourselves as open and non-threatening or closed and threatening. We need to be aware and communicate with our bodies what we want to communicate.
- **Playing:** Playing with one another is hugely comforting and bonding. It communicates delight in another in a deep and profound way. We all like to play differently and some of us are not good at it, at all. We need to learn to play with each other in ways others enjoy. We need to get better at it ourselves. Playing with each other builds connection and trust.
- **Acknowledging:** Listening to the underlying emotions or needs and acknowledging those versus minimalizing, discounting, or trying to fix people. We can acknowledge emotions by simply naming them, "I see you are hurt, angry, frustrated, etc."
- **Comforting:** crying, hugging, fixing a meal, or simply being present
- **Saying "Yes" to other's needs as often as possible:** God's design is for the first 18 months a baby cries and the caregiver says "Yes" by meeting the need, even in the middle of the night, even the 10th night in a row. When we say "Yes" to others whenever it is reasonable—and we can—we communicate profound worth to that person. Primarily, we say "Yes" by meeting a need, although at times we actually use the word, "Yes." For example, when a kid is always interrupting, we need to ask ourselves, "What is the need?" Is it my attention? How can I say "Yes" to that need?

*Imagine Jesus doing this with you at any second of any day? How does that feel? Imagine doing that for another?*

What are the needs we are talking about? Obviously, if there are physical needs (food, water, clothing, shelter, sleep, exercise, sensory issues) we are usually pretty quick to value those and try to meet those. But what about soulish or emotional needs? Remember from the beginning

and our experiment with the monkeys how necessary it is to meet those needs for others. These are the non-verbal messages of attachment.

To be seen- acknowledged that you exist as a separate and unique entity

To be heard- valued, respected, to have some power over your life

To be delighted in- loved

To be comforted-secure

To be protected

To be provided for (needs met) } safe

To have companionship (I will be there for you)- belonging

**Think about it.** If your consistent experience with those closest to you *and* with those out in the world (at your office, at the gym, in the airport) was one of feeling seen, heard, comforted, protected, delighted in, wanting to meet your needs, then how would that impact you? Would you feel differently? Would you relate to others differently?

### **Messages of Felt Safety:**

1. I see you
2. I hear you
3. I will meet your needs in adequate, predictable, and nurturing ways
4. I will be here for you, you are not alone
5. I will comfort you
6. I will protect you
7. I will delight in you