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BUILDING CONSTRUCTIVE ALLIANCES WITH ANGRY, INSECURE, UNHAPPY, OR SUSPICIOUS PEOPLE (aka as the Other Important Adults in the Child's Life)

The principles of working with difficult adults are also true for working with children. Kids experience the same feelings more openly and with less socialization influences. Adults experience them with many layers of accrued socialization (some of which may be maladaptive).

The first thing to do when dealing with another important adult in the child's life (his or her parent, his or her teacher) is to build a **Professional Personal Relationship**. Invest in a positive alliance. You get the benefit of a doubt when there are problems to deal with CRISES or TROUBLE! Otherwise you will get suspicion and an adversarial relationship. How?

- ❖ Connection, Rapport: Others need to know that you are for and with them.
- ❖ Integrity, Honesty: Others need to trust in your word and actions.
- ❖ Competence, Knowledge: Others need to know that you know what you are doing; and doing what you know well.
- ❖ Experience: Others need to know that you have done it before and can deal with possibilities
- ❖ Availability: Others need to know that you are available to them.
- ❖ A Personal Relationship: Others need to know that you are a real person and not just a role.
- ❖ Professionalism: Others need to know that you will treat them fairly, respectfully, and with integrity.
- ❖ Confidence: Others need to know that you believe in what you are doing and that you know you can do it.

Playing at constructive relationships is as effective as playing at dieting. The other person eventually senses that you are faking it just like your waistline eventually senses that you are faking it!

First, become aware of what's going on in the other person. Do not play cop, judge, or referee- do not judge the feelings implicitly by judging the circumstances. Make the emotional connection to the person. **Validate** his or her feelings. If you are unable to do this, the person will continue until he or she gets the connection or validation or until he or she is depleted. It is important to note that a validating message is not judgmental. There is no intrinsic approval or disapproval of what is being labeled.

THE REALITY MESSAGE that addresses the lesson, reality, the limitations, etc. comes next. The other person, however, **cannot hear this part until and unless he or she hears, feels, and senses that he or she is ok-** that his/her feelings are legitimate and hence, s/he her/himself counts is paramount. Without this validation and connection, all communications are experienced by the other person as an **INVALIDATION OF HIS/HER FEELINGS**. It becomes the fuel for continued and intensified upset and anger.



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Afterwards, remember to **RENEW THE COMMUNICATION CONTRACT.** Thank the other person for bringing the problem up. Upfront people are much safer to deal with than people who hold in concerns and get all worked up.

Lastly, you need to be aware of how you may **SELF-SABOTAGE.** You need to recognize your own defensive style to being attacked becomes the key to recognizing the entire dynamic at hand!

- ❖ From recognizing that your defensive style has been evoked, then you know you have been attacked.
- ❖ From knowing you have been attacked, then you remember that a person usually attacks out of fear or insecurity.
- ❖ From knowing the attack is from fear and insecurity, then you remember and implement the validation process.

Is it worth all the trouble? Absolutely! Raising, educating, and developing children is a collaborative effort among all the caring important adults in a child's life. Working in opposition to other adults is doomed to failure, and the child suffers as a result. Invest in relationships with the other important adults. Model for children how conflict can lead to healthy resolutions. The kids are counting on you!

Biography

Ronald Mah, therapist and educator, combines concepts, principles, and philosophy with practical techniques and guidelines for effective and productive results. He uses humor and stories from his many experiences to illustrate important points in a stimulating and highly motivating and engaging style.

A Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist, his experiences include: Asian-American community mental health, Severely Emotionally Disturbed mental health & school partnership programs, vocational programs for at risk youth, welfare to work programs, clinical consulting & cross and multi-cultural training for Head Start, other early childhood education programs, social services organizations, & mental health agencies, supervising a high school mental health clinic, training and supervising therapists, private practice in Castro Valley, author of the Asian Pacific Islander Parent Education Support curriculum.

Professional Education experiences include: 16 years in ECE, including owning and running a child development center for 11 years, Kindergarten, elementary, & secondary teaching credentials and experience, ethnic studies curriculum writer, community college instructor, Masters of Psychology instructor, and former member Board of Directors of the California Kindergarten Association and of the California Association of Marriage & Family Therapists.