

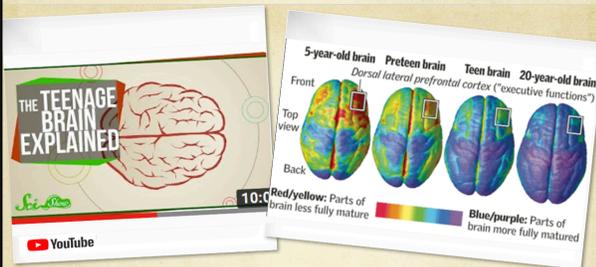
Presentation outline

- **An explosion of awareness**
- **An individuation process**
- **An emotional journey**
- **When taking a wrong turn**
- **What do teens need from us?**

Developmental changes at ADOLESCENCE

An Explosion of awareness

Developmental changes



The Teenage Brain Explained

SciShow, Hank Green
10 min video clip

Judgment is last to develop

National Institute of Mental Health
Jay Giedd and Paul Thompson
UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging

Developmental changes

At puberty begins a new adult-type awareness:

- **Reflective consciousness:**
to look inwards, to take up a relationship with yourself
- **Speculative consciousness:**
to look upwards, to see what could be, the ideals of things

This new awareness is meant to facilitate the **discovery of the SELF** in the context of both inner experience and one's ideals.

Explosion of awareness

- **Self-concerned**
 - Me, me, me! It's all about me!
 - Everybody is so hard on me!
 - It only matters what I think
- **Self-conscious**
 - Everyone is looking at me!
 - I can't do that - I'll look dumb!
 - I can't wear that to school, everyone will laugh!
- **Idealistic**
 - I can easily live in an apartment all by myself
 - That would never happen to me!
 - I don't need to finish school to be successful in life

Explosion of awareness

To resist thinking and feeling

To stay engaged and embark on the journey

Explosion of awareness

**Our ROLE
as the adult**

teacher
mentor
parent
coach
grandparent
caregiver
counsellor

- **Adjusting our VIEW**
 - Requires patience and trust in the developmental process
 - Taking the self-centeredness less personally
- **Adjusting our STANCE**
 - Restraining oneself from imposing own reference points
 - Providing tools and opportunities for self-reflection
- **Making ROOM**
 - For teen's own thoughts and ideas
 - For own expression and exploration

Explosion of awareness

Tools for the quest

Activities which can help teens stay engaged on their journey:

- **Journaling/poetry**
- **Sketchbook**
- **Musical instrument**
- **Voice/song**
- **Time in nature**
- **Photography**
- **Dance**

Developmental changes at ADOLESCENCE

An Individuation process

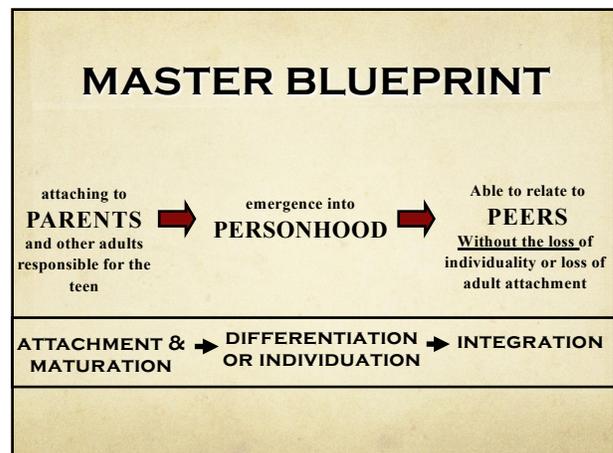
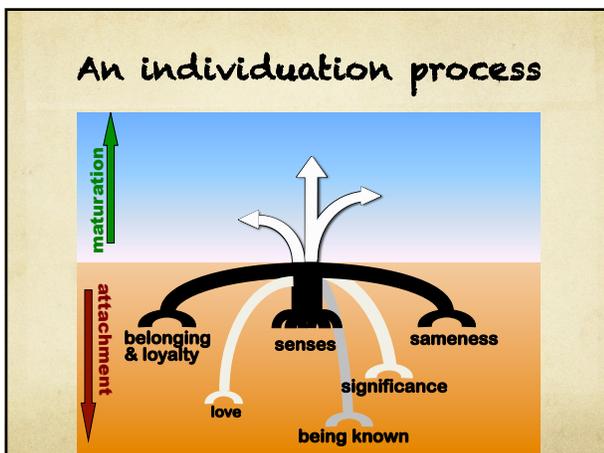
An individuation process




A maturing identity

- Through **identifying with** (one's own attachments)
- Through **one's emergence** (development of self)

Finding your place in society as an individual stems from safety & connection with one's home base



An individuation process

To conform
...or not to form

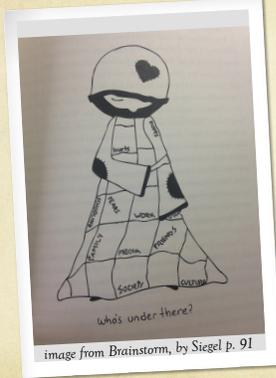
To be oneself

TEMPTATION CHALLENGE

WHEN ATTACHMENT & MATURATION DON'T DEVELOP

attaching to **PARENTS** and other adults responsible for the teen → emergence into **PERSONHOOD** → Able to relate to **PEERS** Without the loss of individuality or loss of adult attachment

DEFENDEDNESS & STUCKNESS → IMMATURITY → **FUSION TO PEERS**



WHO AM I?

- making room for ALL the parts
- "I am this too!"

An individuation process

Our ROLE as the adult



- **Adjusting our VIEW**
 - Recognizing the temptation to conform
- **Adjusting our STANCE**
 - Knowing when to step back and when to step in
 - Staying present in the process
 - Coming alongside the angst and confusion
- **Making ROOM**
 - For adolescent to be themselves
 - To explore own identity

An individuation process

Tools for the quest

Exploring all aspects of the self:

- **Physical:** how we see ourselves, trying things on and experimenting
- **Emotional:** emotions acknowledged and invited
- **Thinking:** questions, opinions, views, values, interests
- **Social:** who am I with friends, family, in community
- **Spiritual:** beliefs, meanings, existential questions

** Includes experimenting with "masks" so to speak (personas)*



Increased appetite for autonomy

Discovering one's own will

the Counterwill instinct (opposition and resistance)

... is a defensive reaction to perceived control and coercion

... serves development by preparing the way for separate functioning

The first step in finding one's own WILL is to resist and counter the WILL of others.

Counterwill (opposition and resistance)

happens when the experience of coercion is greater than the sense of one's own *WILL*

expectations	>	initiative
pressure	>	purpose
demands	>	desires
have to's	>	want to's
directives	>	intentions
input	>	curiosity
incentives / rewards	>	interest

Increased appetite for autonomy

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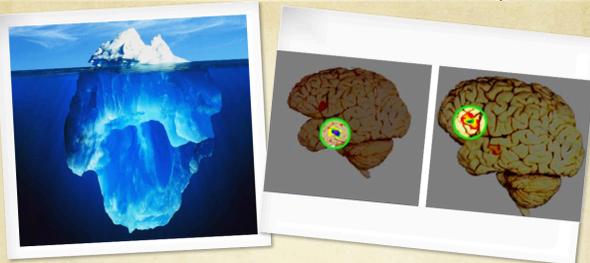
- **Adjusting our VIEW**
 - Taking things **LESS PERSONALLY**
 - Recognizing instinct involved
 - Aiming to "do no harm"
- **Adjusting our STANCE**
 - Normalizing by conveying that some pushback is part of the process
 - Placing teen in charge when possible (this also means shifting accountability)
- **Making ROOM**
 - For adolescent to display own "will"

... *being patient*

Developmental changes at
ADOLESCENCE

An Emotional
Journey

An emotional journey



- Adolescent behavior is driven by **EMOTION**
- Emotional center for teens stem from the **AMYGDALA** (limbic system) rather than from the prefrontal cortex

Many intense feelings

- Feelings of **separation, separateness & changes** in relationships
 - *Everything is changing around me*
 - *I'm not as close to my parents anymore*
 - *I can't tell them what is inside me anymore, because I'm not even sure how I feel*
- Feelings of **alarm, fear**... the world is opening-up and becoming larger
 - *Everybody is looking at me! everybody is judging me!*
 - *I feel anxious about everything happening around me! This is too much!!!*
 - *I'm critical about everything because I can imagine how it should be...so why isn't it!*
 - *I'm so frustrated and irritated with everybody around me!*

Many intense feelings

- Feelings of **loss and grief**
 - Nothing is the same anymore... I want to be a child again
 - I want things to slow down, things are becoming too complicated
 - I want things to be easy like they were before, I don't want to grow up
- Feelings of **sadness and aloneness**
 - I feel so alone
 - No one understands me
 - No one gets me
 - I am the only one going through this

Many intense feelings

- Feelings of growing **need for independence**
 - If you tell me to do something, I will do the opposite
 - If you demand I do it, I will refuse
 - If you keep nagging me, I will tune out
 - If you force me to feel or think a certain way, I won't
- Feelings of **confusion, mixed feelings, uncertainty**
 - I don't know how I feel about anything
 - Nothing feels definite, everything feels cloudy, sometimes I feel crazy
 - Nothing is black and white anymore, only grey
 - Sometimes I can't handle my own thinking - it scares me



Defense system

How our brain protects us by:

- **NUMBING OUT** feeling that are too much
- **TUNING OUT** from seeing things that would be too hard to see
- **BACKING OUT** of relationships where you might get hurt



An emotional journey

To fill the void rather than feel it

To make room for emotions
Including sadness

An emotional journey

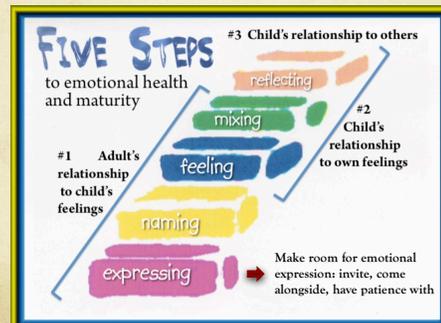
Our **ROLE** as the adult

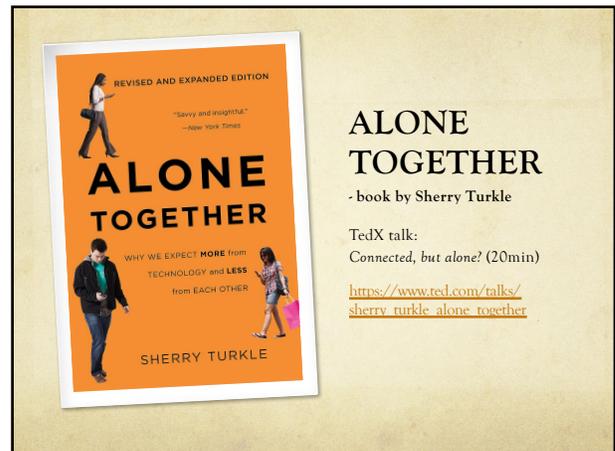
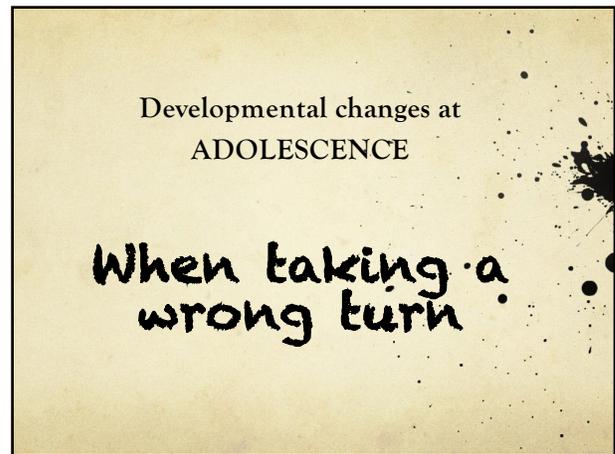
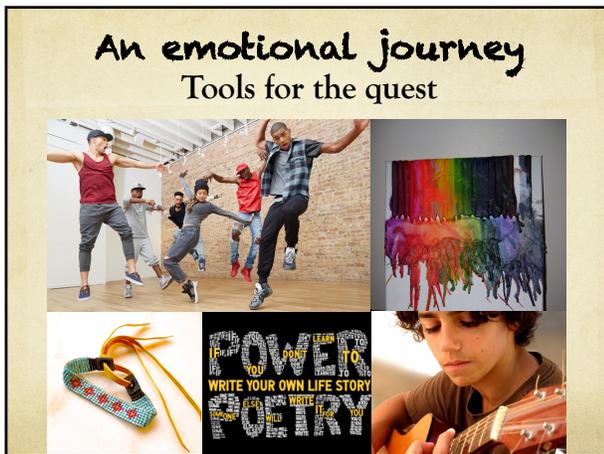
teacher
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- **Adjusting our VIEW**
 - Acknowledging emotions happen to us as opposed to under our control
 - Understanding maturation as key to managing emotions
 - Recognizing emotions as being untempered and intense
- **Adjusting our STANCE**
 - Staying present all the way through
 - Keeping them (& others) safe
 - Not alarming them with our own alarm, frustration or disapproval
- **Making ROOM**
 - Emotions that come up, including fears, darkness and despair
 - Expression and type of release
 - ...even for the uncomfortable stuff

An emotional journey

Our **ROLE** as the adult





positive polarity	negative polarity
seeks to be with	shies away from
makes contact	resists contact
endears	alienates
looks up to	looks down upon
attends & listens to	ignores & disregards
imitates & emulates	mocks & mimics
possesses	disowns
is loyal to	opposes & betrays
holds dear	holds in contempt
attempts to find favour	ridicules and derides
makes things work for	spoils things for
seeks to matter to	discounts as not mattering
seeks to please	annoys and irritates
befriends	eschews
loves	loathes
shares secrets with or keeps the secrets of	keeps secrets from or creates secrets about

When taking a wrong turn

TEMPTATION CHALLENGE

To connect superficially
...or to disconnect

To develop healthy roots

When taking a wrong turn

Our **ROLE** as the adult

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- **Adjusting our VIEW**
 - Recognizing when we are losing our teen to their peers
 - Acknowledging that "HOWTOs" aren't the answer
- **Adjusting our STANCE**
 - Staying present
 - Deepening the relationship
 - Taking the lead in keeping the adolescent safe
- **Making ROOM**
 - For teen's thoughts and feelings
 - Own "self"
 - Competing attachments (finding a way to keep peers on the same side)

making room for a wider village

When taking a wrong turn

Tools for the quest

Working at the Teacher-Student relationship



Developmental changes at ADOLESCENCE

What do teens need from us?

What do teens need from us?

Our **ROLE** as the adult

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counsellor

- **Adjusting our VIEW**
- **Adjusting our STANCE**
- **Making ROOM for**

Need for adult involvement

- **Attachment and changing relationship**
 - Stay keen (enjoyment + warmth)
 - What's the 1st thing your teen sees when s/he walks through the door?
 - Really 'seeing' your teen – past their mistakes....
- **Involvement**
 - Meet them at their interests too!
 - Be actively engaged in their lives where you can
 - Don't be afraid to get silly, or show your humorous side

Need for adult involvement

- **Communication**
 - It becomes about listening more-and-more, rather than being heard
 - Adolescents need to process things and talk their way through things, start to finish
- **Dialogue and consultation**
 - Move more into a consultative role in their lives, recognizing that they are moving more in-charge of their lives
 - Include them and make room for their thoughts about things, recognizing that they are indeed growing

Need for adult involvement

- **Timing**
 - Pick your timing to deliver thoughts...
 - ✓ Do you have a soft and listening adolescent?
 - ✓ Do you have a teen that wants to hear what you are saying right now?
 - Plan your thoughts, take time to cool down and process your own emotions
 - Put things in your back pocket for later or another time. Unless there is a risk of safety at that exact moment, you can allow time to cool down and time to think first