



Welcome to 'Harbucks' Virtual Coffee House

**Keys to Promote and
Maintain Positive Relationships
with your Children: Happiness
and Grit, May 14, 2021**



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Ask the Experts....



- **Amy Warren, Ph. D., Tufts University**
 - **Longitudinal Study on Resilience**
- **Charisse Nixon, Ph.D., Penn State**
 - **Keys to Promoting and Maintaining Good Relationships: 4 “Gems”**
- **Angela Duckworth, Ph.D., U of PA**
 - **Teens and Grit**



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Amy Warren's Research



- Followed 700 at risk children, 40 years
- Would they thrive even after suffering from extreme conditions?
- Poverty
 - Kids → adulthood
 - More successful/resilient when...



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Amy Warren's Research



- They were more successful in life when had developed two protective factors
- What were they?



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Amy Warren's Research



- **#1: Meaningful relationships with non-parent adults**
 - **Hard-wired to connect with other people**
 - **Those connections provide resilience, protect us, nurture us**



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Amy Warren's Research



- **Hard-wired to connect with other people**



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Amy Warren's Research



- Those connections provide resilience, protect us, nurture us



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Amy Warren's Research



- **Two Protective Factors:**
 - **#2: Faith or a sense of spirituality→ identity**
 - Found a relationship between spirituality and positive youth development
 - A team: sociologists, biologists, theologist
 - Faith → group belonging



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Amy Warren's Research



- Suggests that well-being comes from feeling connected to someone or something outside of ourselves



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Ask the Expert....



- **Charisse Nixon, Ph.D, Penn State**
 - **Developmental Psychologist**
 - **Peer mistreatment → resiliency**
 - **TED Talk**
<https://behrend.psu.edu/video/28322/2017/07/03/core-what-adolescents-or-teenagers-need-thrive-charisse-nixon-tedxpsuerie>
- **Extended Amy Warren's research**



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Charisse Nixon's Research



- Studied peer to peer relational aggression
- Was interested in the absence of this aggression
- Asked:
 - Are there protective factors?



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Charisse Nixon's Research

- **Protective factors?**
 - **Promote health and wellness**



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Charisse Nixon's Research

- Protective factors?
 - Promote health and wellness
 - Push back against hostility



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Charisse Nixon's Research

- **Protective factors?**



- **Promote health and wellness**
- **Push back against hostility**
- **Promote teen happiness**



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Charisse Nixon's Research



- **Shocking statistics**
 - **1 in 5 teens suffer a major depressive episode in H.S**
 - **1 in 6 teens consider suicide in H.S.**
 - **1/3 of those who committed suicide had no prior pathology**
- **What are the contributing factors?**



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Nixon's Research: Contributing Factors



- **#1: Being an Adolescent**
 - **Struggle with perspective taking**
 - **Consumed with themselves**
 - **Consumed with negativity**
 - **A time of loss**
 - **Struggling with a new identity**
 - **Feel more isolated, alone**

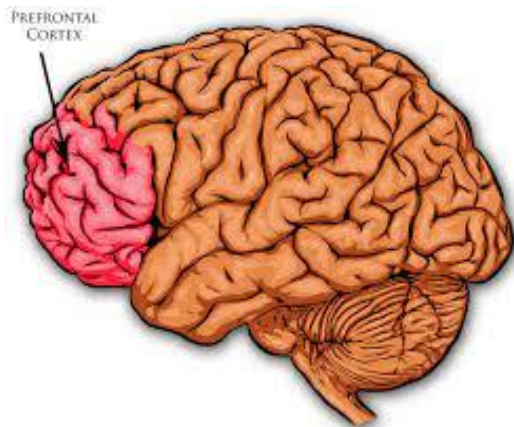


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Nixon's Research: Contributing Factors

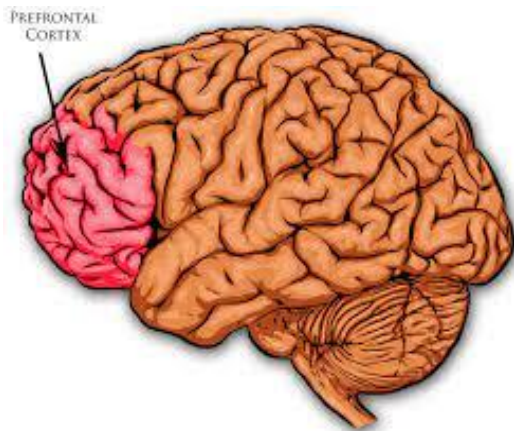


- **#2: Brain Development**
 - Adolescents process through the amygdala/limbic system
 - Not the PFC





Nixon's Research: Contributing Factors



- **#2: Brain Development**
 - **Tend to over attribute anger in their impressions of facial expressions**
 - **“Not surprising why they are overprotective or angry”**





Nixon's Research: Contributing Factors



- **#2: Brain Development**
 - **Conversational Intelligence:**
 - **Positive, collaborative conversations release of neurotransmitters, hormones**
 - **Nixon agrees: create new neural pathways with teens by using “gems”**



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Nixon's Research: Contributing Factors

- **#3: Our Culture**
 - Is our culture promoting meaningful relationships?
 - Are kids are plugged into tech not people?
 - Meaningful connections?
 - Sharing ideas?
 - Developing a sense of belongingness?
 - Acceptance?



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Nixon's Research: Contributing Factors

- #3: Our Culture

- How are social media platforms affecting our kids mental health?



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Nixon's Research: How to Help

- **How to Help:**
 - **Create a culture that moves from “individual me” to “cultural we”**



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Nixon's Research: ABC & ME



- **How?**
 - **“ABC & ME”**
 - **Focus on:**
 - **Acceptance**
 - **Belonging**
 - **Control**
 - **Meaningful Events**
 - **Important in adolescence**



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Nixon's Research: Teach These Gems



- **Empathy and Compassion**
 - Gateway to the other gems
 - Perspective taking
 - Precursor to belonging
 - Show our own vulnerability
 - Share our backstory



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Empathy & Compassion



Adolescents:

Empathy Teaches:

Alone→

Connected

Self-serving → Focus on others

Judging →

Seek to understand

identity →

Explore who we are



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Nixon's Research: Teach These Gems



- **Gratitude**
 - A predictor of overall health
 - Thank you notes increase happiness
 - Helping ourselves starts with helping others



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Gratitude



Adolescents:

Gratitude Teaches:

Isolated→

Increased connection

Negative mood→

More positive mood

Pessimistic →

Optimistic

Self-focused →

Others-oriented

Struggle with purpose→ Appreciates life



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Nixon's Research: Teach These Gems



- **Forgiveness**
 - **Frees us from the control of others**
 - **Frees us from the worry of constantly being in the good graces of others**
 - **Removes resentment**
 - **Reduces anger and improves perspective taking**



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Forgiveness



Adolescents:

Forgiveness Teaches:

Broken relationships → Repaired

Helplessness →

Empowered

Pessimistic →

Helps us reframe

Angry →

Positive emotions



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Nixon's Research: Teach These Gems



- **Humility**
 - It's about how we look at others
 - Valuing someone else besides ourself
 - This one key helps with all of the previous ones
 - What does humility look like in our culture?



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Humility



Adolescents:

Humility Teaches:

Superficial relationships → Deep connections

Self-focused →

Value others

Fractured relationships → Restores this

Preoccupied with self → Acceptance/Belonging



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Nixon's Research: Teach These Gems



- **How do we do this?**
 - **By passing the baton**
 - **The older “runner” passes these skills to the younger running**
 - **“The 4 gems change our focus and our hearts.”**
 - **Model these behaviors**



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Angela Duckworth, Ph.D. on Grit



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVl84lpZHV0&t=94s>
- How parents can teach teens grit



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**Positive Relationships with Teens
Questions & Discussion**



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**THANK YOU
FOR JOINING US!**



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Resources

- Amy Warren, Ph.D.
- <https://www.researchgate.net/scientific-contributions/Amy-Eva-Alberts-Warren-83906061>
- Angela Duckworth, Ph.D. :
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVl84lpZHV0&t=94s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVl84lpZHV0&t=94s>
- <https://parentandteen.com/qa-duckworth-grit/>





Resources

- **David Kozlowski: TED Talk:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzhmBDrB8E4>
- **Charisse Nixon, TED Talk:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S05PBOIdSeE>
- **Martyn Richards, Ph.D, TED Talk:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbruY110Ql8>



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