

“Thinking” With Connector Rx by Dr. Dasaratha Rama

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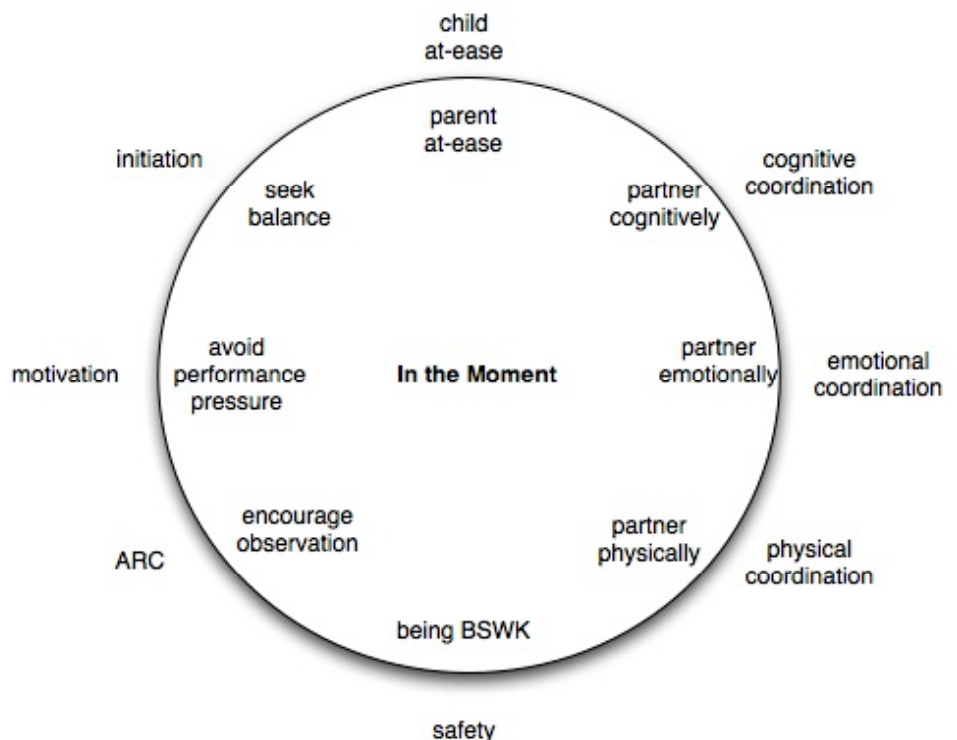
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Since my return from PACE Place, I have been “thinking”¹ (thinking + tinkering) with Connector Rx in different ways. I like the sound of “thinking” since as parents we want to “do” things and put the tool to use immediately and learn as we go. However, I also prefer to have a big picture to thinker effectively. Thus, I see thinking as aligning the small steps with the big ideas!

The figure below shows the big ideas or intentions of Connector Rx. Intentions for the parent are within the circle, whereas the ones for children are outside. This figure represents my current thinking based both on my experiences as a parent and my current efforts to help PACE Place develop a workbook that can guide parents in the use of Connector Rx. This figure and ideas below are the result of numerous discussions with Eric Hamblen, as well as feedback from Kathi Calouri and Steve Ryan on earlier drafts of this work. While the workbook is a work in process, we hope an initial exploration of these ideas in the newsletter will be helpful to parents.

... Continued on PAGE 3



¹ Brown J.S. Learning 2.0: The Big Picture. <http://www.johnseelybrown.com/learning2.pdf>



Seminars and Workshops

9/09: Minneapolis, MN

Topic: Immersion Workshop

10/8/09

Boise, Idaho
Conference

9/09: Date to be announced

Minneapolis, MN

(Free Seminar)

Topic: Emotional Regulation

November 2009: Boise, ID

Date to be announced

Topic: Immersion Workshop

10/7/09

Boise, Idaho

(Free Seminar)

Topic: Emotional Regulation

Please refer to our website at

(www.paceplace.org/register)

for additional information or email

Kathi Calouri:

kcalouri@paceplace.org

Remember the referral program for previous PACE Place families...

If you refer 2 new clients to PACE Place, the fee for your next visit will be \$3,000.

You may schedule your reduced fee visit after your two referred families have booked their visits. The Referral Program is valid through December 2009.

Free Seminars

With your help, we can set up a free seminar for your community. If you are interested in finding a free location and can help us advertise the event, please contact Kathi at kcalouri@paceplace.org.

PACE Place Availability

	Weeks Available
July	Fully Booked
August	Fully Booked
September	Fully Booked
October	Week of October 26
November	Weeks of November 16, 30
December	Weeks of December 7, 14

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Supported Living For Teens & Adults With ASD

As our clients grow to become teens and adults, we are frequently asked for referrals to supported living facilities. For some individuals, we are looking for programs on a university setting. Sometimes we are looking for programs with a vocational training component. What programs offer a high level of support? What options are out there for individuals who need only minimal support? We are curious about the options that are available across the country and your experience with any programs.

If you have some wonderful recommendations, please contact Dr. Kathi Calouri at kcalouri@paceplace.org or 503.356.8334.



Thinkering ... Continued from Page 1

Under neuro-typical development, parents do not have to be aware of ideas such as attending, referencing, and coordinating (ARC) consciously. However, while parenting children with social learning difficulties, we may need to pay attention to these ideas explicitly. The key “big idea” or intention of Connector Rx powerful is to shift many of these ideas, especially ARC to the subconscious both for parents and for children so that both can be *in the moment* (see figure on page 1) in their shared experiences.

Starting at the bottom of the figure, a fundamental intention of Connector Rx is safety. Connector Rx can foster a sense of safety in the child through being in the rhythm of someone bigger, stronger, wiser and kinder (BSWK). A child cannot attend, reference, and coordinate if he is anxious and feeling stressed. Moving to the right, the second item on the figure is encouraging observation. In order for Connector Rx to be effective, parents have to create the conditions for development. By holding the space and not organizing the experience for the child, we allow the child to observe and be engaged in the situation. Along with encouraging observation, reducing performance pressure is a third critical element. By avoiding performance demands, we can provide room for the development of internal motivation through the use of effective partnering strategies.

The next element in the figure is seeking balance. One of the key intentions of Connector Rx is to restore balance in the parent-child relationship. Parents of children with social learning deficits might find themselves planning excessively and organizing their child in order to prevent them from resisting or disengaging. The physical connection supports the restoration of balance. Once the child accepts Connector Rx, and continues to stay with the parent through diverse experiences, parents can reduce over-compensation. Restoring the balance supports the development of initiative capacity in children. This is another critical area of balance - the capacity to respond to others’ initiations and the capacity to initiate themselves.

The feeling of safety, development of ARC, development of motivation, and the development of initiative will support the child being more at ease in varied situations.

In contrast to the left side of the figure represents broad intentions, the right side represents specific actions that the parent can take. The key idea is that we partner with the child rather than doing everything for the child or letting the child do everything by himself. Partnering is important to the effective use of Connector Rx since the basic idea of Connector Rx is that the child attends to the parent to make sense of and engage with his environment. We have to create opportunities for partnering with the child in order to use Connector Rx effectively.

If you are interested in exploring these big ideas and discussing specific ways of using Connector Rx on our Connector Rx forum, please email me at sisl.rama@gmail.com.

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Story of Success

We are an active family of five - the youngest members of our family are identical twin boys with an early diagnosis of autism. After a few years of intensive early intervention, we decided to take our family on the road to the PACE Place. From the car ride up to our week-long stay in the “green house” it was a time of exploration and discovery for all of us. What did we find? Well, for starters, driving up to Portland from Sacramento with three little boys, a few bikes and loads of other stuff isn’t as bad as it sounded at first. And you don’t really need a TV when you have Eric to throw the kids around upstairs into the “trashcan” every morning, and Steve to show us how to ice skate and bowl, and Kathi to teach us how to get the kids to follow us in group situations. Plus, it’s amazing how cohesive of a family unit we can really be when the adults put away their work, put their best feet forward and concentrate on clever techniques to manage emotional regulation. The biggest gift we received from the week was knowing that we can really be a family, enjoying group activities together, sharing and taking turns, and talking about our adventures. The second best thing was meeting Kathi, Eric and Steve. They are amazingly skilled and our week at the PACE Place will forever be a landmark in our childrearing journey.

- Written by Karen (name changed), Mom of three boys

Heart of Sailing

Heart of Sailing teaches sailing to special needs children as a form of recreational therapy. The charity was founded in 2004 by George Saidah, a successful software entrepreneur who was motivated by his personal experience with a loved one with a cognitive disorder. A sailor for more than 35 years, Saidah dreamed of combining his love of the ocean with service to the community. Since retiring in 2005, Saidah devotes his time to developing Heart of Sailing to create a fun, educational and therapeutic opportunity for children with developmental disabilities.

PACE Place hosted a Sail-A-Thon this July in Portland, Oregon. It was the best attended Sail-A-Thon the Heart of Sailing organization had ever promoted. Over three sunny days, 68 families with 245 people delighted in sailing on the Willamette River. Through the Heart of Sailing, there is never a fee to families. However, donations are gratefully accepted. While families waited their turn on one of three sailboats, members of Arin’s House, A Teen Center (www.arinshouse.org) organized carnival games and lunch for the sailors-to-be. The families enjoyed the experience and appreciated the volunteer services of the captains.

There will be another Sail-A-Thon in Portland on September 5, 2009. Please see the Heart of Sailing website for more information about the Portland event and other sailing excursions in your area (www.heartofsailing.org).

Thank you Karen for sharing your story.

If you have a story you would like to share in our next newsletter, please contact:

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