

Harnessing The Power of Fairness to Foster Pro-Social and Emotional Skills in the Classroom

Practical Ideas and Workable Solutions

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Disclosures

Sam Goldstein, PhD

My expenses for this conference are supported by Learning and the Brain. I have developed tests marketed by Multi-Health Systems, Pro-Ed and Western Psychological Services. I have authored books marketed by Springer, Wiley, Guilford, Double Day, McGraw Hill, Brookes, Kluwer and Specialty Press. I am Editor in Chief of the Journal of Attention Disorders (Sage) and Co-Editor of the Encyclopedia of Child Development (Springer).

Paula Prentis, LMSW

My expenses for this conference are supported by Learning and the Brain. I am the co-founder and co-author of www.YourSelfSeries.com, and the co-author of *Reach Before You Teach: Ignite Passion and Purpose in Your Classroom* (Corwin Press, 2014).

Our presentation today is about a critical trait we and our ancestors evolved over millions of years:



Goals

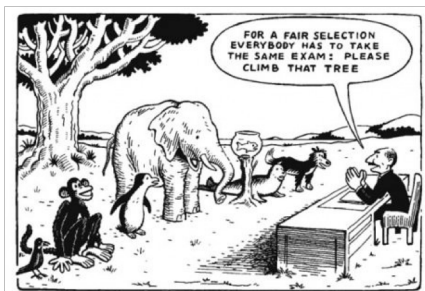
- To understand the forces that shape a fairness mindset, including genetics, brain functioning, and past and present experience.
- To know why fairness is a critical component of an effective, safe classroom and how to honor and promote its value in learning and in life.
- To develop techniques to help students strengthen their social and emotional skills and to build connections with peers, family and other adults in their lives.



By honoring the power of a fair mindset we can help students achieve in the classroom and in life.

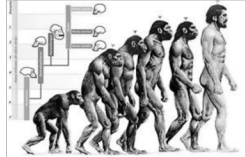


What is Fairness?



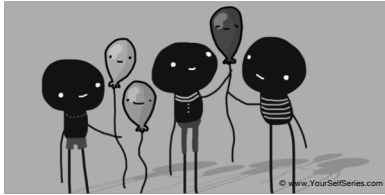
Us

- Who are we?
- Where did we come from?
- How did we get here?
- Where are we going?



“Species that cooperate with each other are more likely to survive than those who work on their own.”

~ Bruce D. Perry, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*



But It's Not So Simple!

“We analyze coevolution of strategies and payoffs and find that, as individuals maximize the benefits of cooperation, they often pave the way for its collapse.”

Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2014 Dec 9; 111(49): 17558–17563.
Published online 2014 Nov 24. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1408618111
PMCID: PMC4267341
PMID: 25422421

Evolution, Social Sciences
Collapse of cooperation in evolving games
Alexander J. Stewart and Joshua B. Plotkin¹

Game Theory Calls Cooperation Into Question

Both cooperators and defectors are often found at appreciable frequencies in nature. The predicted prevalence of these behaviors depends critically on the payoffs resulting from social interactions. Understanding the feedback between strategy evolution and payoff evolution is therefore critical for understanding social interactions in natural populations.

Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2014 Dec 9; 111(49): 17558–17563.
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Our Evolution: The Great Leap Forward



The Evolution of Fairness

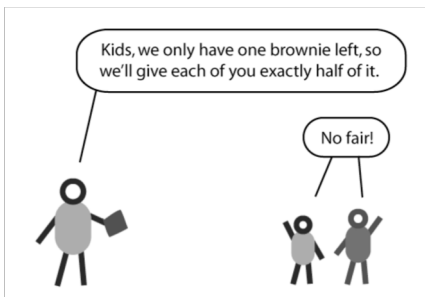
- Our brains were large one million years ago but we were not very smart.
- We lived in larger and larger family group.
- The group became greater than the sum of its parts.
- Survival was enhanced when members treated each other fairly.
- Than about 40,000 years ago a fortunate mutation in our brains gave us the capacity to think one thing and say something else! Fairness became a matter of convenience.
- Than specialization grew and fair treatment became forever intertwined with the differing value assigned to group members.



Why Do We Care So Much?



Why is fairness so important to us?



Why is fairness so important to us?

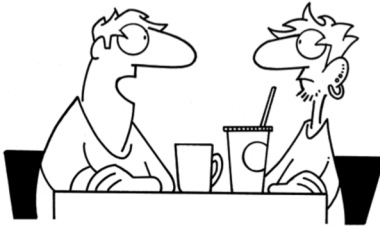


Why is fairness so important to us?



Why is fairness so important to us?

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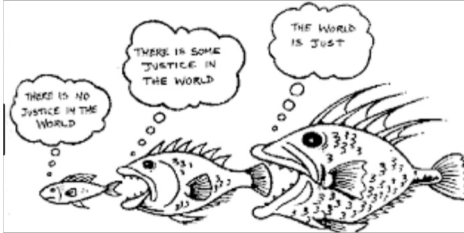
"You're right, son, it is unfair that some people earn more money than others. To make it fair, take over my job and support me while I go back to college!"

Fair Versus Unfair



"Talk about unfair! I spent all day going store to store looking for paternity clothes, and guess what..."

Fairness is Personal



Why is fairness so important to all species?



Fairness Matters to Monkeys



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KSryJXDpZo>




Name Tags Fair Stories

Please write your name on a name tag.


Introduce yourself to someone near you and share a story of fairness in your world. Add one or two words to your name tag to represent that story.

Fairness Discussion: The Babysitter

Now that you have seen the monkey respond to the cucumber, would you hire that monkey to babysit your baby monkey this weekend?
Why or why not?



Reina and Her Mother: Trust Begins

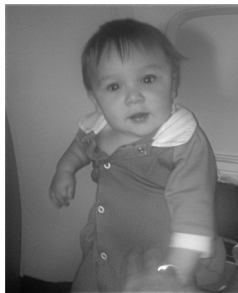


**The Mother Infant Dance:
Predictability Develops**



©2010

**Sam's Seatmate Adrian on a Recent Flight:
My World is Safe**



**Sam's Seatmate Adrian on a Recent
Flight: My World is Safe**



Sam's Seatmate Adrian on a Recent Flight: My World is Safe



**Look at That!
We Share Experiences**



**So That's How You Do It: Cooperation
Builds a Foundation of Fairness**



Fairness Discussion: What does fairness look like to your students?

What are some of the comments from students around fairness?

What are your responses to those comments?

What are some of the behaviors you see as a result?



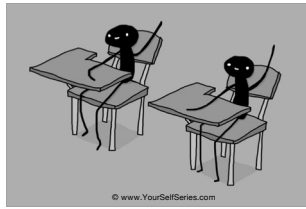
Questions to Consider

- What might be perceived as unfair to a student?
- If a student feels that you have been unfair, that is in grading, or in positive or negative reinforcement, what will the emotional response look like?
- When a teacher favors one or more students over others who try to win the teacher's affection or live up to the teacher's expectation but still never get called on, what do they feel like?
- Might issues of fairness lead to a student becoming hostile and resisting the teacher's requests? Will the student then be labeled?



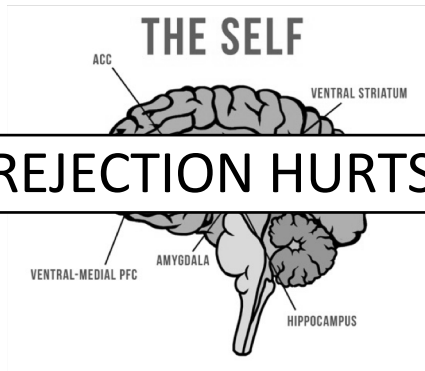
- A school board member's child is treated with preference in private schools.
- Super aggressive parents' children are treated with deference and preference.
- Girls and boys are disciplined differently.
- One child always called on. Another never called on.
- Teachers are meant to keep their religious backgrounds hidden but are allowed to share political leanings.
- Students get in trouble for swearing but not bullying.
- More girls than boys receive higher conduct scores.

Two brave volunteers, please?



We promise it's not dangerous!

But it may hurt a little.

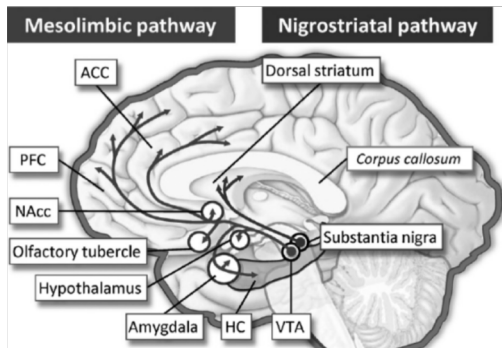


REJECTION HURTS!!

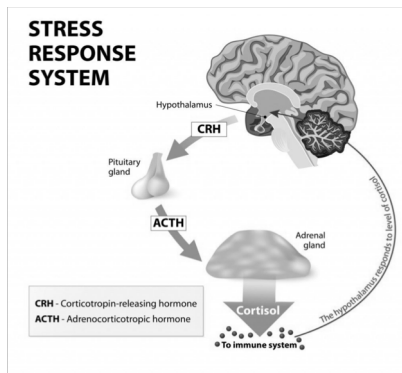
Rejection Hurts the Mind and the Brain



Fair Treatment on The Brain



Unfair Treatment on The Brain and Body



Neurological development is not a simple process of gradual growth from simple to complex.

Compared with the brain of the child, representation of function in the adult brain is likely to be more focal, to make greater use of inhibitory processes, and to implicate non-cortical regions associated with the automatization of skills.

Children are genetically endowed with certain patterns/traits of thought and behavior.

What Are These Traits?

The drive to help.
 The drive to mastery.
 Instinctual optimism.
 Intrinsic motivation.
 Altruism.
 Problem solving.
 Social connection.
 The drive to acquire knowledge and develop intelligence.
Fairness.

Caregivers are the architects of the way in which experience influences genetically preprogrammed but experience dependent brain development.

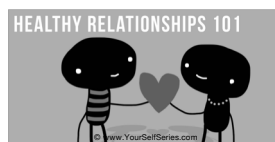
Daniel Siegel
The Developing Mind

Or, to put it in simple terms:

Caregivers create an environment in which instinctual optimism, resilience and self-discipline can flourish.

“Brain development requires social relationships, emotional experiences and cognitive opportunities.”

~ Immordino-Yang, et al. The Aspen Institute, 2018



Fairness Discussion: Lucinda's Story

Paula is going to tell you a story....

Then we'll discuss:

How did Lucinda feel?

Did the social worker do the right thing?
What do you think happened as a result?





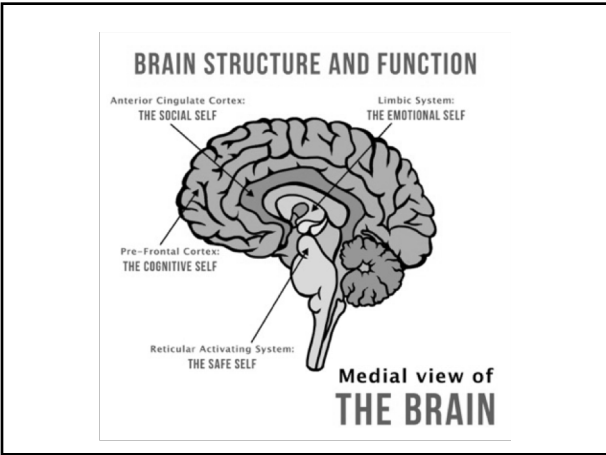
Name Tags Unfair Stories

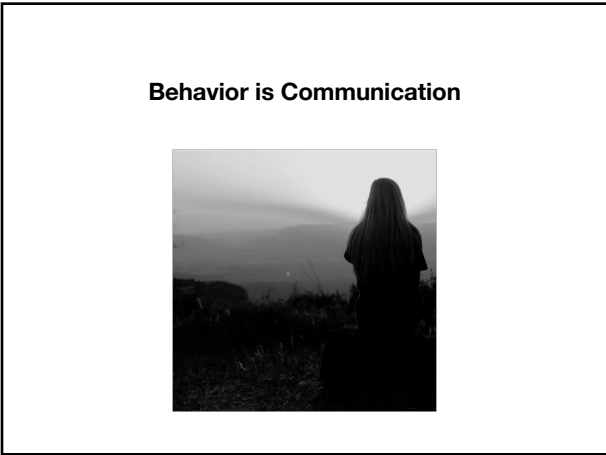
Introduce yourself to someone
you have not met yet.

Share a story of unfairness.
Add one or two words to a new name tag
that represents that story.

We are Pro-social from Birth











Behavior can also represent how we react to being treated unfairly.



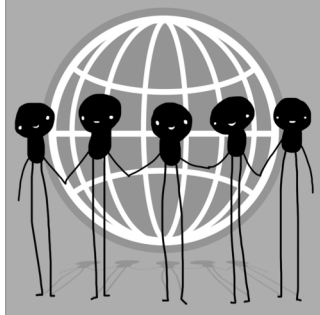
And we often punish behavior that is actually communication.

And the cycle is reinforced.

In normal children, perceptual, affective and neuro-regulatory mechanisms predispose young infants to engage in social interaction from very early on in their lives. To seek out the company of others to help and be helped.

We're hard wired to socialize.

What Benefits Do We Derive From Socialization?



- Support
- Survival
- Affiliation
- Pleasure
- Procreation
- Knowledge
- Friendship
- Fairness

friend

Noun

A person whom one knows and with whom one has a bond of mutual affection, typically exclusive of sexual or family relations.

Verb

Add (someone) to a list of contacts associated with a social networking Web site.

Synonyms

pal - mate - chum - buddy - comrade - fellow - companion

friendship

noun

1. the state of being a friend; association as friends: to value a person's friendship.

2. a friendly relation or intimacy.

3. friendly feeling or disposition.

Go through your phone book, call people and ask them to drive you to the airport. The ones who will drive you are your true friends. The rest aren't bad people; they're just acquaintances.

Jay Leno (1950 -)

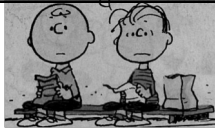
The Power of Connections and Care





Social Engagement

- What goes through a child's mind when he/she thinks about other children?
- Does he/she understand their social relations?
- Does he/she search for rules that would allow classification of relationships?
- What does he/she attribute as far as motives and behaviors as a result?



Social Engagement

- Does he/she impute motives and beliefs to them in order to better predict their behavior?
- Does he/she impute motives to the self when planning a course of social engagement?
- In what ways are her/his social thoughts similar to others?

Social competence is an ability to take another's perspective concerning a situation and to learn from past experience and to apply that learning to the ever changing social landscape.

~ Margaret Semrud-Clikeman

Fairness Discussion: Kyla's Story

Paula will tell a story...

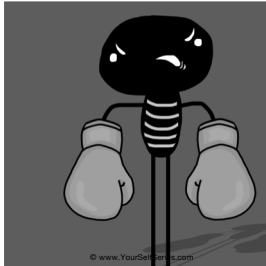
Then discuss:

What would you have done if Kyla had come to you?



“Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves.”

~Confucius



The first step is creating a safe space....



**Ask Yourself:
How do I create a safe space?**

- What would my students say about my classroom?
- Who decides the rules and the consequences?
- What ways do I try to connect with my students, from their point of view?






Name Tags A Safe Space

Introduce yourself to someone new.

Share 3 ways to create a safe space in the classroom or entire school. Include at least one way that you connect with students.


Add 3 words to a new name tag.

Provide Feedback That Feels Fair

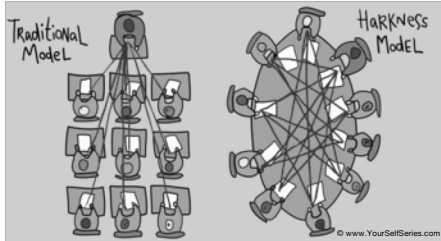


“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

~Theodore Roosevelt

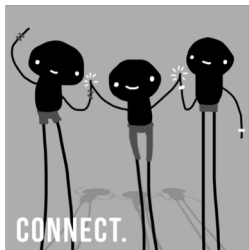


Harkness Learning Method

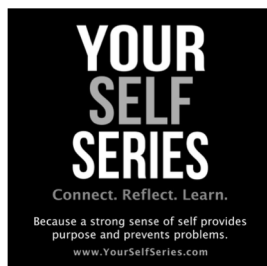


Elementary Level Options

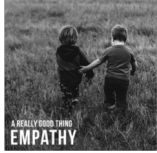
Jesse Lewis Choose Love Foundation
JesseLewisChooseLove.org
 Kimochi's
Kimochis.com



Middle and High School Level Options



Choose Three Topics in General...



www.YourSelfSeries.com

Or, Choose Specific Topics



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Absent a Fair Mindset...

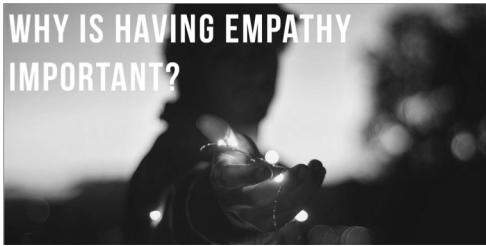


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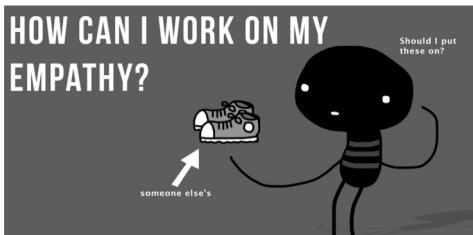
You can't teach math if you don't know math.



WHY IS HAVING EMPATHY IMPORTANT?



HOW CAN I WORK ON MY EMPATHY?



The Fairness Discussion: Everyone Gets Punished

Listen to a story and the discuss:

Why do we punish everyone as a group when not everyone was part of the initial transgression?





Name Tags How do you teach in a way that feels fair?

Is it possible to meet a new person?

Share an example.
Add a word or two to a name tag.

When we hear, "That's not fair!"



Responding with, "Life isn't fair," lets down humanity.

The Fairness Formula

**Feelings
Awareness
Involvement
Recover**



Feelings

Help Students Recognize and Label Them

- Use hand puppets, emojis, to help familiarize and label.
- Mirror the feelings you see them having.
- Validate the feelings so they recognize we all have them.
- Discuss the feelings that others have—in a book, in the news, locally.
- Play the Pyramid Game.
- Model a new emotion each day and talk about it.

Awareness

Help Students Develop Awareness

- How do people act when they feel happy?
- How do people act when they feel hurt, sad, anxious?
- How do those behaviors impact you?
- How might your behaviors impact others?
- Are moods contagious?

Involvement

Help Students Realize Their Innate Motivations to Be Social

- How can we help people to feel valued?
- How can we help people to feel included?
- Incorporate project-based learning and service learning.
- Discuss the differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations—grade level

Recover

Help Students Recover from Unfairness

- Teach students the power of fairness and therefore, the impact an unfair event can cause. It's painful and destructive to our social and emotional selves.
- But we can recover!
- We can teach others who are unfair that their unfairness has a greater impact than they think.
- We can rise above injustice and be better people ourselves.
- We can recognize that sometimes when other people are hurting, they lash out in unfair ways and one way to help them is to connect with them through compassion, communication, empathy and forgiveness.

Forgiveness



Seven Steps To Create a Fair Classroom

1. Know yourself and when you are having a bad day. Correct it right away, or let the students know what is happening, if appropriate.
2. Promote gender (and racial) equality in all subjects. Give equal praise and expectations in math and science for girls and reading and writing for boys.
3. Apologize when you make a mistake or have a misunderstanding. You will be a great role model.
4. Create well-developed lesson plans, an organized classroom and clear expectations for all students. Be prepared every day. Make sure that all of your materials are gathered ahead of time.

Seven Steps To Create a Fair Classroom

5. Collaborate with students on projects and let them help to make classroom decisions.
6. When selecting students to either participate in question and answer or to help out in the classroom, always do it by random draw, and keep track of whom you have called upon. Help a struggling student individually.
7. Keep accurate assessment records. In addition to telling parents, let students know their grades and where they need improvement.

Celebrate a Fair Mindset in Your Classroom Community

Create "Random Acts of Fairness" at school.
 Let a person with 3 items go before you in your community.
 Support your co-workers' ideas during team meetings.
 Teach coaches about the relevance of fairness on the playing field.



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Equity Sticks



Equity sticks are a cheap and powerful way to check your biases at the door. Simply buy a box of popsicle sticks (or index cards, or bookmarks, or anything compact, really), use a Sharpie to write one student's name per stick, and toss them all into a cup or jar next to a second, empty cup for the "used" sticks. Each time you facilitate a class discussion, pull out an equity stick at random and ask that student to share. Once they have participated, toss their stick in the other cup, and keep on doing this until you've cycled through the class.

Shane Safir

Experiment With Discussion Structures

Think-Pair-Share

Each student silently thinks (and maybe also reads and/or writes) about a prompt, text, or question. Students then pair up and share their ideas.

Quote Mixer

Each student is given a different quote or other form of text (this could be an image or graph, for example). Students move around the room, pair up, share their text and response to it, switch cards, find a new partner, and repeat for 1-2 additional rounds.

Talking Pennies

In groups of 3-5, students are given a question or set of questions to discuss. Each student receives an equal number of pennies. Each time someone participates, they must first put one of their pennies into the middle of the table. A student who has used up his or her pennies must wait for all the other students' pennies to be in the middle before speaking again.

Shane Safir

Track Participation Data

It's also really powerful to gather data on student participation. To do this, create a simple "equity tracker" with students' names on the left side and a column for each day of the week. Carry it around religiously on a clipboard, and each time you call on a student or someone volunteers to speak, jot down a tally mark. At the end of the week, add up your marks and analyze the data:

Who is participating the most?

Who is participating the least?

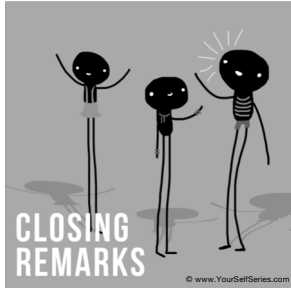
What patterns of participation do I see with respect to race, gender, language of origin, learning ability, location in the room, etc.?

Use this data to set a small participation goal for the following week. For example: "Next week, I aim to invite the students with special needs in my classroom to share at least once per day."

Shane Safir

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

Neil Postman



May our philosophies keep pace with our technologies. May our compassion keep pace with our powers. And may love, not fear, be the engine of change.

Dan Brown



Questions?

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