



5 August 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In the last letter, I shared about the issue of motivation and self-determination theory (SDT). SDT posits how motivation becomes increasingly intrinsic when participation in the activities meet the three psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy. I found the article “Leading adolescents through the paradox of their teenage years”¹, written by Tim Elmore, insightful in terms of how parents can tap into SDT to increase intrinsic motivation especially in academic matters. The truth is that teenagers are not generally unmotivated. They are just not motivated about the things that we would like them to be motivated about. Just trying watching your son learn to play the latest online game and you know what I mean.

Leading adolescents through the paradox of their teenage years

Teenagers experience a strange paradox.

During adolescence kids feel two chemical tugs on their heart that can seem contradictory. On the one hand, they feel pulled toward independence and autonomy as their brains are being pruned and they seek to find their unique place in society. It’s during this period of life their neuropathways are being laid that may cause them to dislike items they once liked and vice versa. This biological development enables them to carve out their own path. This is not only normal, it is necessary. Adolescence is the bridge from childhood to adulthood. It is natural for a teen to want to spread their wings to become their own person, independent of the norms their family has set in place. They often test limits and seek out an alternative lifestyle, if for no other reason than to be different than the people around them. This can show up in unique hair colors and styles; piercings and tattoos, clothes and shoes.

At the same time, adolescence is also a time for seeking connectedness to others. There is usually a distinct need for acceptance from people; the need to fit in and be part of something larger than themselves. Humans are social creatures, and this is never more visible than during the teenage years, where kids long for a link to others. Social media is a vivid example of this: they become brilliant at posting content and seeking views, likes and shares. Two big desires for millions of teens are described by: “like” and “subscribe.” Young teens in our focus groups told us this is a primary source of their identity. They experience a tug toward association with peers they identify with and want to be like. So deep is this emotional pull, that kids often find a community of friends they fit right into the middle of

¹ https://growingleaders.com/blog/leading-adolescents-through-the-paradox-of-their-teenage-years/?mc_cid=cbc6a74f57&mc_eid=4e2c1cd82e

60 Barker Road Singapore 309919 Tel: 6256 1633 Fax: 6256 1366

socially. Some are just ahead of them and some are just behind them. It's like a wolf in a pack and it is natural.

The paradox is—they are pulled toward both individualism and interdependence.

How to Lead Teenagers During this Paradoxical Season

Because they both “push back” and “pull toward” themselves, adult leaders need a game plan as they guide adolescents. For many of us, teens can be frustrating. At times, those teens cannot even explain their own behavior. Some are actually aware of this paradox. Let me offer some simple ideas to launch you into a thoughtful response to your teens:

1. Acknowledge their desire for uniqueness and give them boundaries.

Because these kids are somewhere between childhood and adulthood, they may need a leader to give them guardrails as they seek creative expression. Teachers, coaches, employers and parents can all furnish these boundaries that communicate to them you are open to their creativity, yet desire to prevent them from getting derailed by a decision that could be perceived to be anti-social. You can see what actions can lead to harm more clearly than they can. Let them stretch and learn in a safe and supportive environment.

2. Create space for them to find their “people” and experience community.

As their brain experiences the greatest period of growth since their early childhood, they'll be seeking out peers with whom they can identify. Curiously, finding that peer group can change rapidly. Adult leaders can help them by creating spaces for teens to invest time face-to-face with others to find “their people.” Depending on their level of emotional security, they may need help in selecting healthy people, not just intriguing people to hang out with. This is where you come in. Acceptance is key. Allow them to migrate within various peer groups, then debrief their selections afterward discussing the influence of those peers.

3. Play the role of a guide, not a god.

When my two kids journeyed through their teenage years, I recognized that I needed to pursue “connection” not “control.” I believe I'll never be able to control a teenager's attitude or preferences, but I can seek to connect with them at the heart level and find some level of relationship with which I can communicate with them. In fact, I believe the only way to genuinely influence them is through relationship. When we connect with teens, we build trust, which makes any kind of conflict resolution measurably easier.

And we must pursue this—building bridges of relationship that can bear the weight of truth.

We owe it to them to offer wise guidance through these paradoxical years, where their minds change often and they find it difficult to even explain themselves. It's part of the confusing maturation process. I love the way Dr. Aaron Sterns put it:

Adolescence is a time of maximum resistance to further growth. It is a time characterized by the teenager's ingenious efforts to maintain the privileges of childhood, while at the same

time demanding the rights of adulthood. It's a point beyond which most humans don't pass emotionally. The more we do for our children, the less they can do for themselves. The dependent child of today is destined to become the dependent parent of tomorrow.

I love the metaphor of teaching a child to ride a bike. Most young kids don't start with a bike, but with a trike. The three-wheeled tricycle enables them to get used to peddling without much risk of falling down. Later, however, this gets boring. They want to upgrade to a bicycle, which has only two wheels. But because this requires balance, we launch them with a bike that has training wheels. They then get used to peddling and balancing themselves. Eventually, however, they want the wheels to come off. At this point, our leadership is a tender balance of support and letting go. This is precisely what's required of us to lead teens. Support and letting go.

In all matters, it will be important for us to balance the need to give them guidance and advice and letting them learn through experience. This is especially so with academic matters since the need for independence and self-regulation of their learning is not just important for post-secondary learning but a vital part of what it means to be a lifelong learner in this VUCA world.

CCA Achievements

The National Schools Games C Division Championships are in full swing and we are proud to announce the following achievements of our sports CCAs.

CCA	Achievement	Acknowledgement
Handball	B Division – National Cup Champions C Division – 2 nd Runner Up	Having lost to Damai Secondary School in their first game, the B Division team couldn't afford to lose another game. They met Damai once again in the Finals and this time beat their biggest rivals with a score of 15-9. It is a great testimony and reward for the hard work put in by the boys.
Ten-Pin Bowling	C Division – 4 th Overall	Besides clinching the 4 th position in the team championships, ACSBR bowlers distinguished themselves by clinching individual prizes as well. Joshua Yeo and Audy Sayuqi distinguished themselves by winning the doubles event. Joshua did the school proud by coming in 3 rd in the Singles Event and 2 nd in the All Events categories.
Waterpolo	C Division – Runner-up	In a hard-fought final with ACS Independent, our boys gave their best effort cheered on by schoolmates and parents. The school is proud of the boys in spite of their 6-4 loss.

In addition to the good news received regarding our boys' performance at the National Schools Games, we are proud that two of our boys represented Singapore at the recent 11th ASEAN Schools Games in Semarang, Indonesia from 17-25 July 2019. Jaren Lam Tze Cong represented Singapore schools in Swimming while Sameel Kai Sinnathuray represented

Singapore schools in Tennis. We are proud of the contributions of our boys to the good performance of Singapore schools at the ASEAN Schools Games this year.

On 3 July, Marat Lleyton Veloso, received the prestigious Singapore Olympic Foundation - Peter Lim Scholarship from Guest of Honour, Mr Heng Swee Keat. We are proud of his achievements in the arena of shooting and the scholarship will go a long way in supporting him in his pursuit of excellence. Indeed, the Best in Yet to Be for Marat!

Student Achievements

On 13 July, 2 of our gentlemen participated in the Malay Finesse Infographic Competition. Through the creation of infographics, students gained new knowledge on digital design, sharpened their critical thinking skills and showed their finesse in the Malay Language. Our team comprising of Muhammad Naufal Bin Nasser and Ibrahim Bin Mohammed Nurizhamshah from 2 Abraham, also had to present their infographics to the audience. Out of the 52 participating teams, our school came in 3rd!

The National Schools Literature Festival (NSLF) is an annual event where students from schools across Singapore congregate on a Saturday morning to celebrate the joy of learning Literature. Our gentlemen took part in the choral reading, debates, drama and book parade segments. They walked away 1st for the Book Trailer and 2nd for the Book Parade.

M1 Peer Pleasure Youth Theatre Festival

Our Drama gentlemen performed at this year's M1 Peer Pleasure Youth Theatre Festival between 24 - 27 July. The event was held at the Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay. This year's theme revolves around poverty and the impoverished, and our gentlemen worked hard to understand the hardships that some Singaporeans face. It has been a real eye opener for them. It was a wonderful transformative learning process that lasted well over a year. The boys learnt about poverty in Singapore and how they can honour the stories they heard through a self-devised play, which had images of their personal reflections after conducting interviews, and community walks.

National Day Celebrations 2019

This year's National Day Celebrations will take place on 8 August and we have invited Colonel Jack Lau (ACS90, ACJC92) as Guest-Of-Honour for the event. Col Lau is Chief of Staff 2nd People's Defence Force Division and was former Commander of Commando Training Institute. A morning parade segment in collaboration with ACS Primary will be followed by individual school celebrations of our nation's birthday.

Communication with parents and stakeholders

The school has established a social media presence for parents and stakeholders to keep in touch with the school (**Instagram – acsbr_official; Facebook – ACSBR**). We encourage parents to like and follow the pages so that you can receive news and achievements of staff and students through these pages.



With the launch of **Parent Gateway** app by MOE, the school will begin the process of transiting to the app for notifications and consent forms and hope to be able to move more of the communication to that platform. At the current moment, Parent Gateway does not all forms of communication including academic calendar notifications. With time, we are hoping to move attendance notifications and viewing including CCA attendance to Parent Gateway. As Parent Gateway is a common platform for all Singapore schools, parents are encouraged to download the app from Google Play or Apple Store.

Yours sincerely,

Loo Ming Yaw
Principal