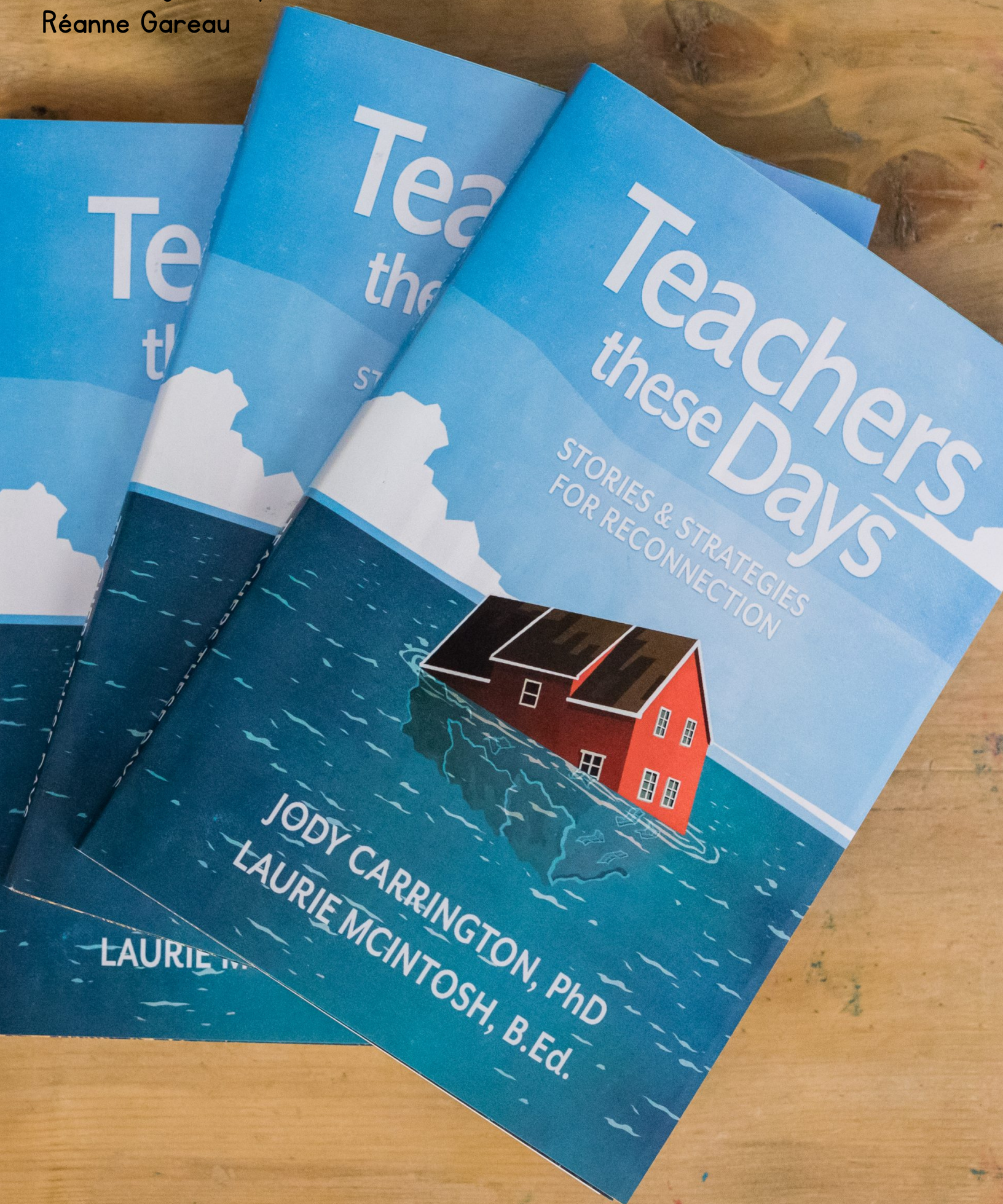


EADM 826.3

Executive Briefing Summary

Réanne Gareau



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Teachers
these Days

STORIES & STRATEGIES
FOR RECONNECTION

JODY CARRINGTON, PhD
LAURIE MCINTOSH, B.Ed.

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Teacher These Days

Jody Carrington & Laurie McIntosh

About Jody Carrington

Jody Carrington attended a K-12 small-town school in Viking, Alberta, Canada. She completed her twelve years of postsecondary education and continues on to publish her first book entitled *Kids These Days*. It is written for parents, leaders, clinicians and all those who love kids. She hopes the stories in this book will allow educators to feel passion and wisdom.

About Laurie McIntosh

After rejection from the Faculty of Education, Laurie McIntosh moves back to her hometown and works for five years as an educational assistant. She then completes her education degree and describes a great sense of gratitude for being an educator. McIntosh receives a call to attend the Ellen Degeneres show and eventually meets Dr. Jody Carrington at a professional development session. She hopes this book gives readers a sense of inspiration

About the book

This book offers encouragement through relationship-focused, and trauma-informed inspiration for teachers. This book guides educators through theory, and stories, and includes practical strategies to be utilized by readers.

Each chapter begins with a psychological perspective of why educators should focus on relationships first. The book is infused with recent research to ensure its validity.

At the end of every chapter, there are three things to try, two quotes to consider, and one question to be answered. This is a resource for teachers to understand that all students regardless of their age, are seeking one common thing: connection.



Inside the Issue

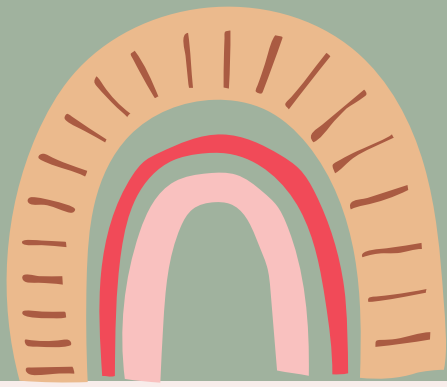
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Jody Carrington and Laurie McIntosh with their published book entitled *Teachers These Days*.

"Turns out, you end up where you need to be" (p. 8).





A Reconnection Revolution

PASSION

Passion goes hand in hand with purpose. Passion is a common trait that is often found in happy people (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 10). Many people often wonder how they can find passion, and that is why this topic is so important. When you are running down the road to happiness, you will eventually run into your passion. There are two types of passion, harmonious and obsessive passion. Someone using harmonious passion as a guide will engage in activities that give them joy. Carrington and McIntosh (2021) describe obsessive passion as being intrusive, debilitating, confining, and also connected to negative emotions. For the sake of this literature, the authors choose to focus on the connections between transformative educators and harmonious passion. Those who understand passion must understand these four rules as being: individual's lives involve serving others, passion can change or morph, passion will find you and not the other way around, and passion is not an endgame (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 12). Although passion can change or morph, the purpose will stay the same. Every educator should be clear on their purpose and passion because this will be their guide. Teachers should be encouraged to share and show their purpose and passion with others. Teachers need to know how great they are and should set themselves up for realistic goals every day. Educators need to give their best selves to the students.

"If teachers aren't OK, their students don't stand a chance" (p. 14).

RECONNECTION

The first step toward a reconnection revolution is purpose and passion. With both values, educators and staff can get through any school year, even those filled with the stresses of a pandemic. Reconnection is where the magic happens or as Carrington and McIntosh (2021) mention "...where the magic (and work) lies throughout the journey-which is why so many people struggle" (p. 15). The basis of kindness, compassion, and empathy is creativity, energy, imagination and of course purpose and passion. Educators need to be confident, and willing to make connections with the students to relieve some of the emotional dysregulations.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Emotional regulation is a combination of purpose and passion and all of its connected values mentioned above. One of the most important things educators can teach students is how to control their emotions. In simple terms, it is described as a means of remaining calm, especially in stressful situations. As mentioned in Carrington and McIntosh's (2021) book "Emotional regulation, essentially, means how not to lose your friggin' mind" (p. 16). It is important for students to achieve this state of calmness, because, without it, they are unable to learn what educators want them to know.

NOW WHAT (P. 26)



Three Things to try:

- Connect with other teachers or colleagues,
- Remember what it feels like when you are making a difference, and
- Think of the students whose lives you've changed and keep a visual reminder of them, nearby.



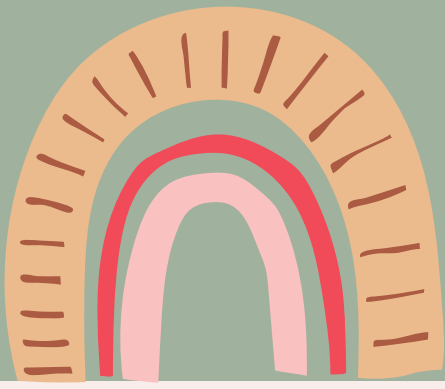
Two Quotes:

Carrington and McIntosh (2021) share two quotes one written by Carrington and the other by Nelson Mandela. Both focus on connection.



One Question:

What or who inspired you to become a teacher or inspires you to stay in this position?



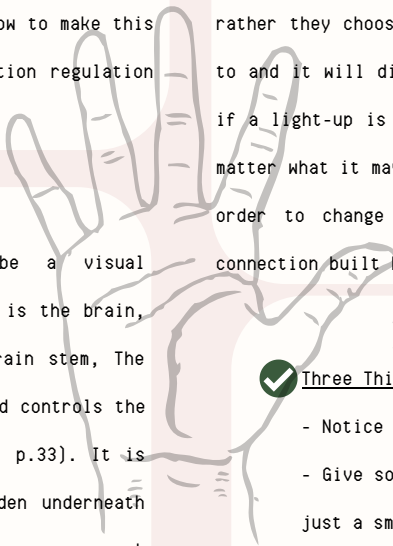
Taming the Crazy by Getting Crazy

BEHAVIOURISM

Strict behaviourism is understood through reinforcement of the good and punishment of the bad things. Face-to-face interaction is critical for emotional regulation. Physical connection is what all humans require, and the loss of this connection has had a negative impact on teaching emotional regulation and worthiness. This profound impact leads educators or community members to believe that the children are disrespectful, or not as motivated as they used to be (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021). The main argument in this section of the chapter is that there are no bad kids, but instead, kids that are unable to control their own emotions in times of stress (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 30). Something that needs to change is the shift of the ideas of behaviourism to the idea of relationships. Carrington and McIntosh (2021) suggest two basic strategies on how to make this change, first understanding the mechanics behind emotion regulation and second, how to get there (p. 33).

THE LID-FLIP

To understand the lid-flip, there needs to be a visual representation. Make a fist with your hand, the fist is the brain, the arm is the spinal cord, and the wrist is the brain stem, The brain stem is the most important part of the brain and controls the heartbeat and breathing (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p.33). It is connected to the thumb (limbic system) which is hidden underneath the four fingers (prefrontal cortex) and includes the responses such as fight, flight, and freeze. All parts of the brain can be accessed when the lid is open, however, when the limbic system acts alone, there is no learning that can occur (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 34). This is the lid-flip. A lid-flip is never a mistake but rather a learning opportunity. Through lid-flips and chaos, there comes calm, and a light-up. Educators need to understand personal triggers, and need to see students as learners of the entire school and not just learners in their own individual classrooms.



THE LIGHT-UP

Educators need to remember that the main focus is to walk along with their students through all of their stressors. The light-up is the opposite of the lid-flip, it is when joy and happiness surround connection to another human being. Anyone can see a light-up occurring when laughter and joy are seen (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 37). Everyone's light-up is different, and no two people show it the same way. The light-up is seen as a superpower for teachers to utilize. Carrington & McIntosh (2021) remind the readers of the importance of remembering that it is never too late for a light-up to occur, even if it has been years (p. 39). A strategy for lid-flips to change into light-ups can be to shift the language being used and to let go of self-ego. You do not choose the students but rather they choose you, they are going to choose someone to look up to and it will differ from child to child. One thing to remember is if a light-up is done with authenticity, is going to be powerful no matter what it may look like (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 49). In order to change a lid-flip to a light-up, there needs to be a connection built between both individuals.

NOW WHAT (P. 54-55)

✓ Three Things to try:

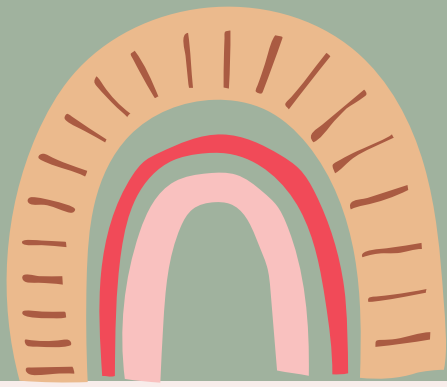
- Notice what happens when someone else lights-up,
- Give some positivity to others (cards, compliments, or even just a smile), and realize how influential you can be.
- When someone is having a lid-flip moment, offer them a snack before even engaging in conversation, what happens?

✓ Two Quotes:

Two quotes, one written by Carrington and the other by Nelson Mandela, are shared. Both focus on acknowledgement and self-value.

✓ One Question:

When were you most influential and how was the interaction between you and students successful?



How Do We See Them

INTRODUCTION

Some children will act differently in various settings. Often educators wonder how this is even possible. One thing Carrington & McIntosh (2021) mention is a child will often look very different than the diagnostic profile or even differ from the information on their educational file (p. 56). There is no concrete way of assessing or preparing a child for consultation, and all educators and staff in a school need to know and understand the students.

CONSULTATION

Carrington & McIntosh (2021) say that most often, the students' file includes specific evaluations such as psychoeducational assessments, occupational therapy consult, speech-language consult, codes, and behavioural plans (p. 57). All of this loaded information is often correlated with staff not knowing the child. When staff know the children, the files seem to shrink and the information shifts. Educators need to treat the students with empathy and shift their perspectives prior to considering consultation.

BORN WITH AND ACQUIRED

Before delving into behaviourism, educators need to keep in mind the neurological perspectives that each child faced upon birth and what diagnoses did the child acquire over time. Just as emotional regulation needs to be taught so does modelling how to overcome difficult or stressful situations, how to reduce anxiety, and how to increase confidence. Educators need to understand why some students acquire specific coping strategies, and how to address them.

ATTENTION=CONNECTION

When people get emotionally dysregulated, they are often attempting to seek attention (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 61). Educators often use the phrase to define some students as "attention seeking" however, the language needs to shift to the term "connection seeking" and this will change all perspectives on said behaviour. Connection is viewed as an essential job for growth and survival, especially in children. No one on Earth is meant to survive alone with no connection to any other human. That is why this matter is incredibly important for students, and for educators to understand. For educators to further understand students, there needs to be an understanding of culture and bias as well. The most critical step to this understanding is listening, learning and speaking (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 63).

SHOWING UP

In this section, one of the authors, (McIntosh, describes stories, behaviours, biases from teachers and how they will sometimes appear. It is important for educators to acknowledge the biases they may have, and this will allow for adaptability in the classroom environment (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 63-64). It is important for educators to start every year fresh and without a preconceived negative view of a student. All students need to be given chances and to do so, educators need to make a split-second decision to acknowledge hurt, and feelings and to give a second chance to the student (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 66). Educators need to show up for students by building relationships that allow for flourishing and growth. It is important for educators to reflect on difficult questions, celebrate students' strengths and give a million chances to the students (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 74).

✓ Three Things to try:

- Make a list of the top three things that students are excited about,
- What do you really know about the first three students that come to mind
- Get a fart machine and be prepared to take the blame for the farters in your class.

NOW WHAT (P. 75)

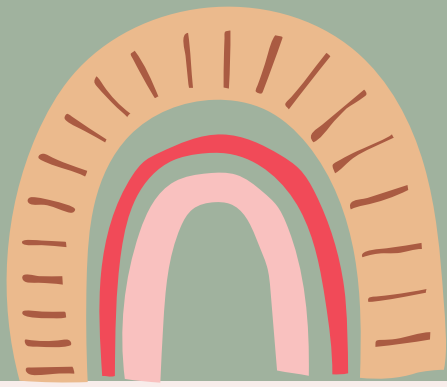
✓ Two Quotes:

Both quotes in this chapter discuss acknowledgement and how important it is to never judge a book by its cover.

✓ One Question:

What impressed you the most when a student caught you by surprise and exceeded your expectations of them?

"Objects in the mirror are not as they appear-at first glance anyway" (p.56).



Trauma in the Classroom

TRAUMA

This chapter contains plenty of information regarding the idea of trauma and systemic oppression and racism. These understandings are important for becoming trauma-informed. Traumatic experiences can have a significant impact on educators. This section of Carrington and McIntosh's (2021) book focuses on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) scale that focuses on abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction (p. 77). Anyone can calculate their ACEs score by answering the questions on p. 78 and this will assist in understanding how some have been traumatized and understanding who has been traumatized. This chapter also discusses the complexities of trauma and the relationship between white privilege and trauma. To move forward, educators need to fight racism wherever it is found (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 84). Just as emotional regulation is taught, so do strategies on coping with difficult conversations regarding marginalization and systemic oppression. Carrington and McIntosh (2021) mention that although there is no quick fix for trauma, educators are given tools (with this book) to be enlightened on how "...trauma can affect the ways we show up in the world" (p. 86). All of this trauma affect teachers and students and after reading this book, educators should have the understanding that everyone has a story to tell.

"I appreciate that I might come a little heavy on this belief, but without a doubt in my mind, emotional wellness is the foundation of any healthy school division" (p. 76).

STORY

Trauma is something that everyone experiences and everyone experiences it in a different matter. Some may choose to share their stories with others when they are comfortable, however not all will feel comfortable with this storytelling. Those who choose to keep their story a secret, will most likely not have a strong relationship. The most important thing for students to feel comfortable sharing their trauma is trust, grace, and humility. Carrington and McIntosh (2021) state "What matters is what we do with the information and the stories we are honored to hold. If it matters to them, it matters" (p. 94). Educators should strive for keeping things safe and predictable for learners and it is said that for a situation to be stressful, it must contain one or more of the following characteristics:

- N** novelty; something new
- U** unpredictability; no way of knowing it could occur
- T** threat to the ego; feeling your competence is questioned
- S** sense of control; feeling you have little or no control in a situation (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 98)

The more NUTS are present, the higher the stress (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 98).

JOY

Carrington & McIntosh (2021) offer three ways of bringing joy to the classroom:

- Being silly with the pure intention of getting our kids to laugh and actually getting that laugh;
- Letting our kids or students take the lead; and
- Ripping up plans (like actually ripping them up) when things go to hell and refocusing on what our students need, which usually leads to the three Fs: food, fun, and fresh air. Telling a whole lecture hall, "Take a walk with me," can shake up any "lack of learning." (p. 101)

To show students that they are valued, educators need to empower them.

NOW WHAT (P. 104-105)



Three Things to try:

- Have students write "I wish my teacher knew..." statements
- Do something this week that may bring your coworkers joy.
- Pass out a small treat at the beginning of class and observe productivity.



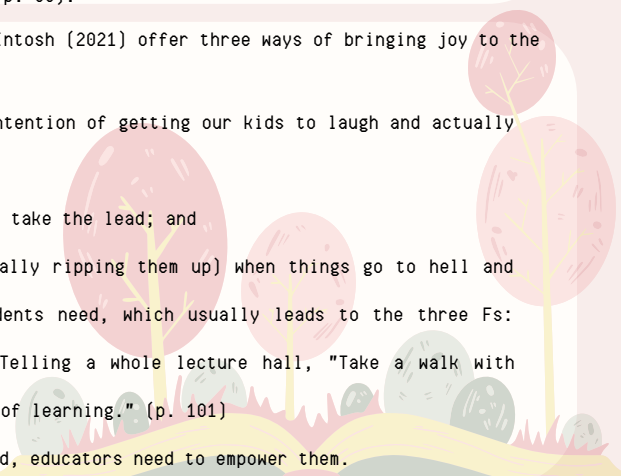
Two Quotes:

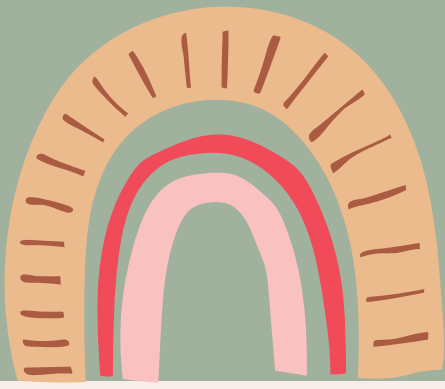
The quotes discuss ideas of compassion and a sense of safety.



One Question:

How does your institution measure up to the ideas of becoming trauma-informed? **View p. 91.





Braving the Waves of Grief

INTRODUCTION

Grief is an important topic for educators, and it is valuable for them to understand the different words surrounding grief and their meaning. This knowledge will allow educators to be prepared for how to deal with difficult situations. This chapter begins with the definitions of what is called grief words.

GRIEF WORDS

Loss:

Losing someone or something you love is a uniquely individual process (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 108).

Grief:

Grief is a universal response to loss (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 109).

Mourning:

Mourning is how we heal (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 109).

Death:

Death is when a life ends, however, educators need to remember that just because life ends, does not mean the connection does too.

Other Losses:

This chapter also discusses the loss of students, death by suicide, and other subject matters such as divorce and moves.

✓ Three Things to try:

- Acknowledge the stories that you have been a part of, through a reflection of losses you've had as an educator,
- Ask about a loss that has recently happened, do not fear saying the name,
- Think about someone you have lost and think of ways of celebrating or honouring them.

RELATIONSHIPS

The important step in dealing with any loss is the idea of relationship-building. Without a solid relationship, there will be no healing. It is important for the readers to understand that everyone grieves and everyone chooses to accomplish this in a different way. There are a variety of stages of grief and it is important to understand all of them. To deal with the difficult situations, educators need to be aware of these steps and need to ensure that they understand the idea of coping.

"This is tough, but you are tougher" (p. 119).

STRATEGIES

This chapter offers strategies on how to deal with difficult situations. The first step is to "check it at the door" which helps people to cope and find their way. (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 119). They offer a list of questions to answer on p. 119 and this list is to be completed prior to entering the classroom. The second strategy is titled "Who needs to know" and it describes the fact that all need some sort of connection, to at least one other person, and that no one is meant to do this journey alone (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 120). The other strategies mentioned at the end of this chapter are to prepare for the grief (by practice), saying the name (talking about whom you have lost), celebrating (their life) together, and of course always asking instead of assuming (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021).

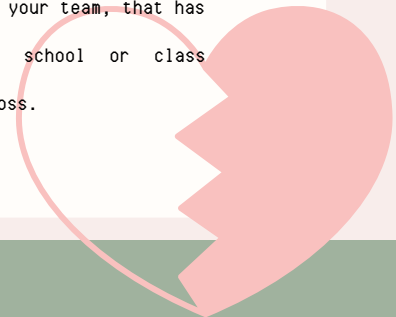
NOW WHAT (P. 124)

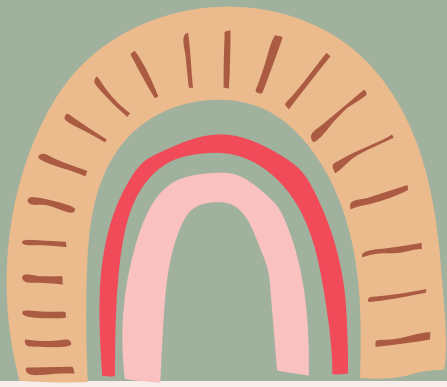
✓ Two Quotes:

Both quotes mentioned at the end of this chapter discuss the ideas of loss, life, and what makes saying goodbye so hard.

✓ One Question:

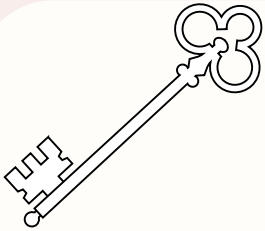
What is the most valuable experience or thing you've been a part of in your team, that has helped your school or class navigate a loss.



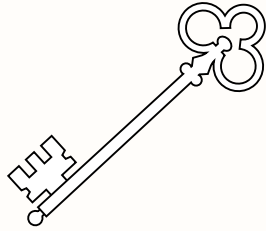


What Works and What Doesn't

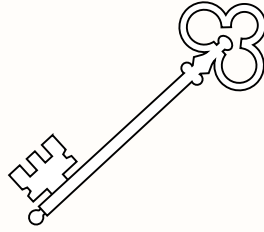
5 KEYS TO RECONNECTING



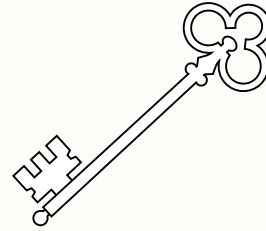
Key 1: showing genuine interest in the things others care about. This key holds empathy and practice and is a way to connect with students and other colleagues.



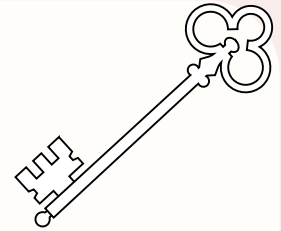
Key 2: getting attention by their eyes and by saying their names. This is important for recognizing others and making them feel valued.



Key 3: getting down on their level when it comes to conversation. This will encourage engagement and connection in a meaningful, thoughtful, and purposeful way.



Key 4: "feed them and they will come" (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 133). Keep in mind the importance of food and how it nourishes the body and mind.



Key 5: Never leave them times of connection. Always make sure to intentionally lean on the people you love the most, daily (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 135).

WHAT ARE THE KEYS AND HOW DO THEY APPLY TO THE CLASSROOM?

Connection and reconnection are vital for teachers to depend on. Educators need to understand their students by seeking connection and by using these 5 key strategies (mentioned above) to serve you, as an educator, and the culture as well. The first key is useful to educators in the classroom by first understanding what your students/colleagues need or what their interests are. Educators can apply the second key to their classroom by trying their best to connect with all of their colleagues in one way or another, and not just their "teacher besties". Getting on the same level as the students and colleagues is so important (yes that means sitting on the ground level, with students). With colleagues, there needs to be more frequent conversations and connections. Of course, the last two keys are important as well in the classroom. Teachers can feed students and colleagues and should value the presence of others, and being there for others always.

NOW WHAT (P. 146)

✓ Three Things to try:

- Connect or reconnect with three colleagues. Notice what happens,
- Create a Google Doc for coffee/tea orders for others, this will be meaningful and allow for connections,
- Video chat with someone that you have not seen in a very long time.

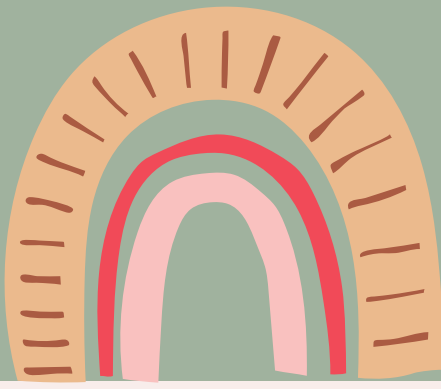
✓ Two Quotes:

These quotes define connection, and strength of relationships, and discuss the importance of actions and how they define human beings.

✓ One Question:

How did you know that you had changed the trajectory of another?

"There are so many times when connecting, lighting up, and just having a snack is the way home" (p. 145).



Repairing the Ruptured Relationships

REPAIR

Everyone will flip their lid at least once in their life. People will say things at the moment and will think they are justifiable, however, sometimes a repair needs to be completed. To complete a successful repair there first needs to be an apology.

People need to understand the importance of not just an apology, but one that is meaningful. A good apology will lead to the melting of anger and resentment (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 148). Carrington and McIntosh (2021) define a good apology as one that is accompanied by "corrective action" (p. 149). Repairing by apology is what promotes growth.

Burnout is something that needs to be acknowledged to make a difference. Everyone wants to feel acknowledged, valued, and loved. The authors of this book give strategies to the reader to assist in repair.

STRATEGIES

This chapter offers strategies for educators and all readers. The first strategy on how to navigate through "emotional quicksand" is reconnecting (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021). The second is rest, when things begin to slow down and they begin to question or doubt every little thing, teachers need to find a moment to recharge. Joy and happiness are the next most important strategy for teachers. Joy is a special kind of happiness, one that is always there and waiting for you to be ready for it. Finally, the last bit of advice for the readers is gratitude. Educators and readers should practice listing meaningful things they are grateful for.

"You cannot do hard heart-work and not get tired" (p. 151).

APOLOGY

Healing is an important topic to achieve, and educators need to know how to apologize and need to normalize this action. Just as healing is vital, so is the action of forgiveness. Educators need to reflect on how to self-forgive about mistakes they've made, to move on. Reconnection, a topic discussed a lot throughout this book, speaks about the idea of attachment, reflection, rest, boundaries, the four Ws, joy, and gratitude.

Teachers need to follow all of these steps to ensure that they are doing what is best for students and for the overall success of the school.

In Carrington and McIntosh's (2021) research, they discovered lots of stories surrounding trauma and relationships however not very many were told about the repair (p. 154). There will always be conflict, and the trick is to know how to repair the break.

NOW WHAT (P. 162)

✓ Three Things to try:

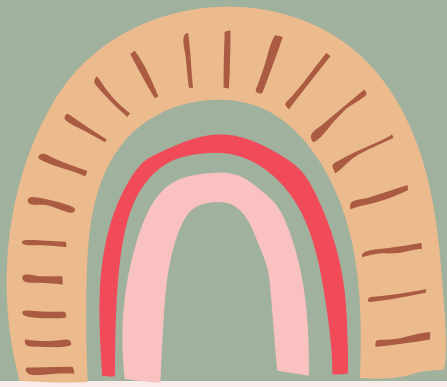
- Think about your students' reaction to an apology and repair, how do they respond?
- Breathe slowly and deeply in a timely matter, by using a timer,
- Notice something new about someone in your house, yourself, neighbour, pet, friend

✓ Two Quotes:

These quotes speak on the value of relationships and letting go of your ego, burnout, and apology.

✓ One Question:

Why are others lucky to have you? Ask yourself and the rest of your team.



The End ✨

BRAVERY

This book ends with a profound conclusion that discusses the idea of bravery. Carrington and McIntosh (2021) describe a feeling of not wanting to leave, and how they feel connected and indebted to the readers for reading their words, shaping and developing minds, and holding tender hearts (p. 163). Many teachers came together, along with the authors, to create this book and to share stories of real-life superheroes. This book contains many stories of a variety of teachers and that in itself would be enough for a 10-page book summary! It would be great if all educators would give this book a read and acknowledge how great it is to be brave. Bravery is described for educators as being one that steps in full-heartedly and walks alongside others' most precious commodity - children. Educators are brave because they never know what kind of emotions, hormones, joys and pains will be present (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021, p. 163). Leadership is vital for education and all good educators are brave.

CONNECTION

The biggest component of this book is connection. Connection is being able to invest in fears and feelings and acknowledging your importance as a teacher. Carrington and McIntosh (2021) define connection perfectly through this:

As you step back into classrooms, lecture halls, bus lanes, or noisy hallways in the days, weeks, and years that lie ahead, our biggest hope is that you will remember this: You are being written into so many chapters at this very moment. What people will remember most about you, your legacy, will have so much more to do with a felt sense than it ever will with words or numbers. (p. 164)

Teachers need to remember what made them into who they are, what are their passions, interests and what light will they let shine?

*"Bravery is part
of being a hero"
(p. 163).*

Big Themes & Conclusion

Big Themes

This book has many big themes from passion to connection to emotional regulation. Educators and all staff members of a school should consider reading this book as it contains important information to allow for student success. It is really great that at the end of every chapter, there are three things for the reader to consider, two quotes to think about, and one question to reflect and answer. Other themes of this book include:

- The lid-flip
- The light-up
- Behaviourism
- Trauma
- Joy
- Relationships

This book offers strategies for all readers and it is a beneficial resource for educators, leaders, and as mentioned at the very beginning, anyone who loves kids.

Conclusion

Educators, leaders, parents, and all who love children, should consider giving this book a read. It is a useful tool for leaders to ensure that teachers are giving their best selves. The many themes in this book are present in today's world and they all should be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

The biggest component of this book was the one of connection. Connection is something that all need to strive for. This book offers a variety of understandings and strategies to make this connection happen. Teachers need to build better relationships with students, colleagues, and everyone.

Teachers are real-life superheroes that need to be cared for just as they care for others.

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"And when it gets dim or the path gets too rough, we hope you will land back here, in these pages, or in the platforms where we will be waiting to remind you of your power, your promise, and your contribution to this planet-all because you are a teacher. xo" (p.164).

