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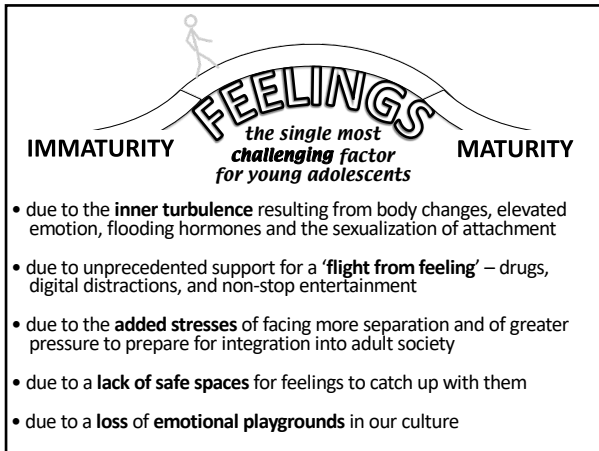
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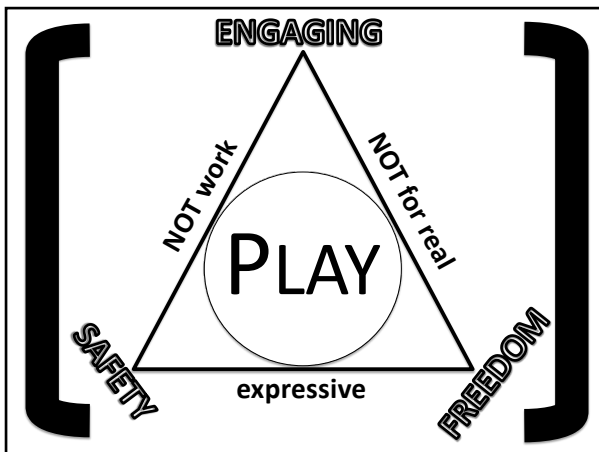
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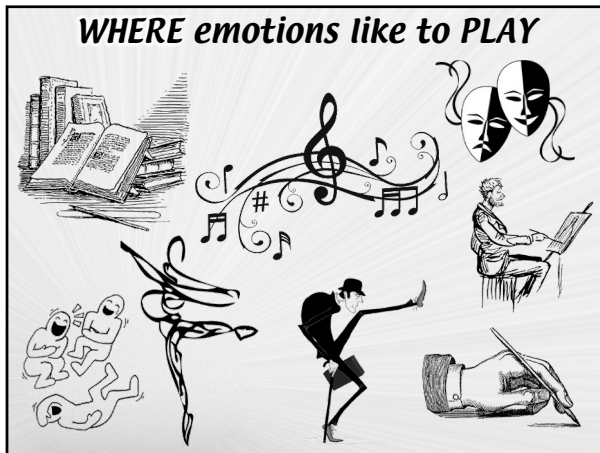
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**about EMOTIONAL PLAYGROUNDS**

- any activity – social or solitary – in which emotions are at play or can be played out safely, without repercussion for relationships
- where play is expressive instead of stimulating in nature. Most screen play is emotionally evocative, not emotionally expressive.
- where play is freely entered and thus does not evoke any resistance or counterwill. One can never be forced to play.
- where one is free of the concept of performance or working towards an outcome
- emotional playgrounds can be anything in the imagination or in real life where emotions are at play and so can be felt

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### KEY INSIGHTS REGARDING PLAY

- one of the three basic **DRIVES** in the brain, the others being attachment and work
- appears to be the birthplace of **EMPATHY** and the alpha caring response
- has important **WORK** to do even though it seems as if it is up to nothing (*ie, Nature Incognito*)
- is found to be **MISSING** in the early lives of troubled kids and adults
- likely the active ingredient in healing, recovery and **THERAPY**
- was the natural school of **LEARNING** in ancient cultures and for all other mammals
- provides ideal conditions for **DEVELOPMENT** and so acts as its natural womb
- is a state of activated **REST** where all true growth, repair and recovery take place

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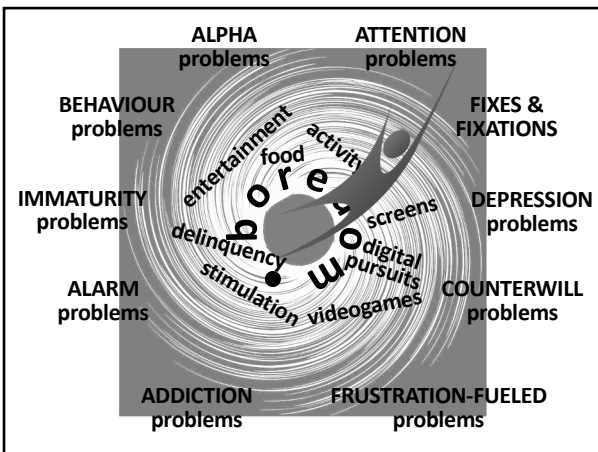
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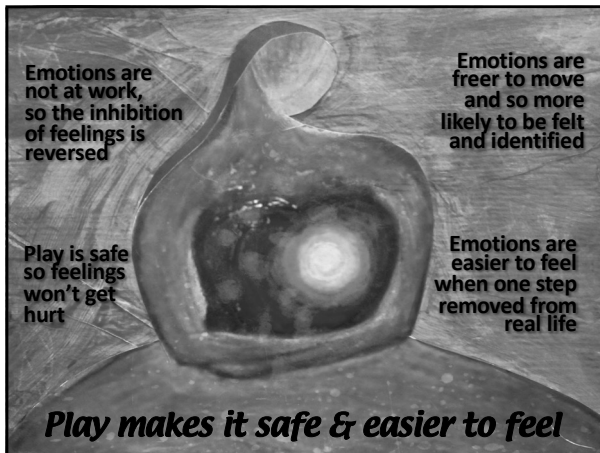
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**Sadness is easier to access when emotions are at play**

- the engagement of play is usually greater than the aversion to sadness, setting the stage for what needs to happen
- gives us something to 'cry' about that is one step removed and thus not too much to bear
- shifts the locus from the 'head' to the 'heart'
- suffering is contained and so much easier to bear in the play mode, and sadness feels 'sweeter'
- removes the impediments to 'tears', including shame and self-consciousness
- finds & releases stuck or orphaned sadness, making it easier to access wordless tears

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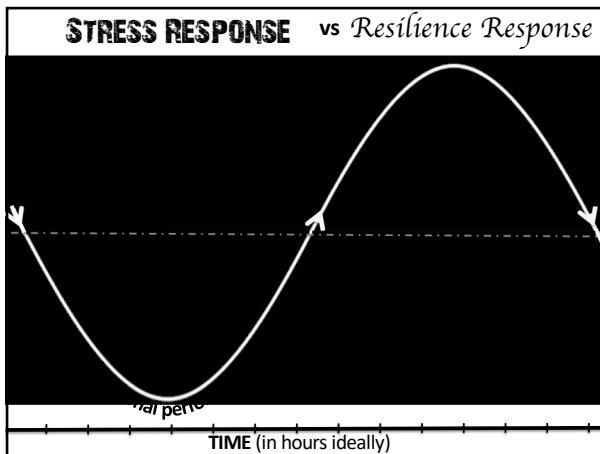
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**Create timely spaces for feelings to bounce back**

- **AFTER** times of stress including separation, school, strained interactions, discipline, special performances, wounding, loss, etc
- ideally **BEFORE** sleep or the passing of time interferes with the ability of the thinking brain to interpret emotional feedback and link to the situations that stirred one up
- **FREE** of digital pursuit (social or videogames) and other competing activities
- **FREE** of problem solving, judgment, correction or teaching
- through **RITUALS** involving safe relationships and/or emotional playgrounds

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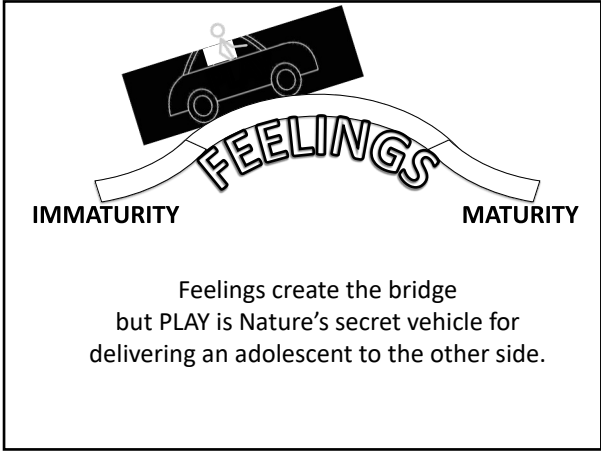
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**Play and Attachment**

- because adolescents become so sensitive to coercion, it is helpful to inject some play into the activities where your will concerning them may be too exposed
- because frustration can become quite elevated and threatening to relationships, invite into emotional playgrounds where frustration, even foul frustration, can be safely expressed
- use play to matchmake with the younger children they are responsible to take care of (siblings, nephews and nieces) or look to them as an answer
- use play to matchmake with the extended family and grandparents they still need in their life
- use play to preserve and strengthen your relationship and to compensate for the stresses and strains that come with the territory of being an adult in charge of an adolescent

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