

Session 4

TAKING A WRONG TURN

when peers replace adults

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Topics covered in Session Four

- the problem and legacy of peer orientation
- what wounds our adolescents and how to keep them safe
- why peer-oriented teens are in a flight from vulnerability
- the tribalization problem in adolescence
- how to tell when we are losing our teens to their peers
- how we mistake peer orientation for healthy individuation
- why we have less natural power over our adolescents and what to do about this problem

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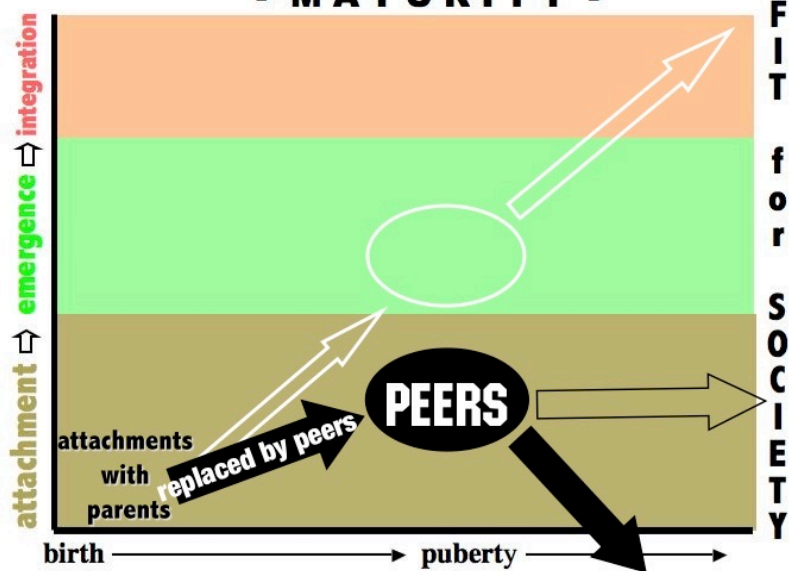
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Diminished Proximity to Parents

Rite of passage	Teen temptation	Impact on parenting & teaching	Challenge for adults
<p><i>SENSE of SEPARATE-NESS and ALARM</i></p> <p><i>SENSE of LOSS and SADNESS</i></p>	<p>defend against the vulnerability involved</p> <p>replace parents with peers</p>		

- MATURITY -



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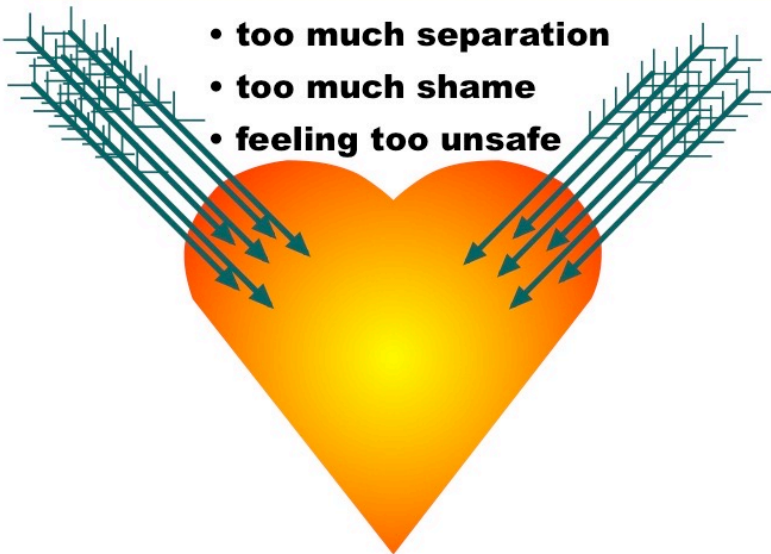
The legacy of peer orientation:

1. a flight from vulnerability

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Peer interaction is a major source of wounding.

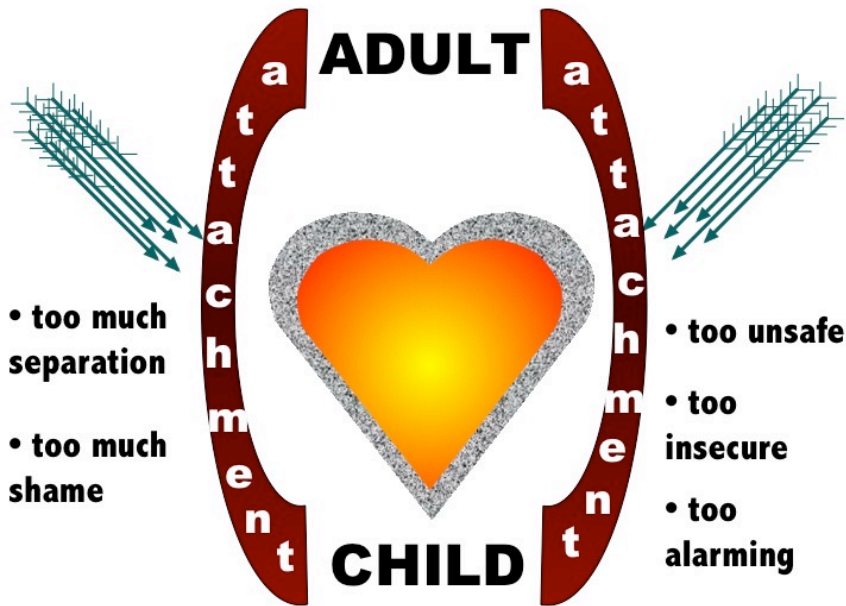
- **too much separation**
- **too much shame**
- **feeling too unsafe**



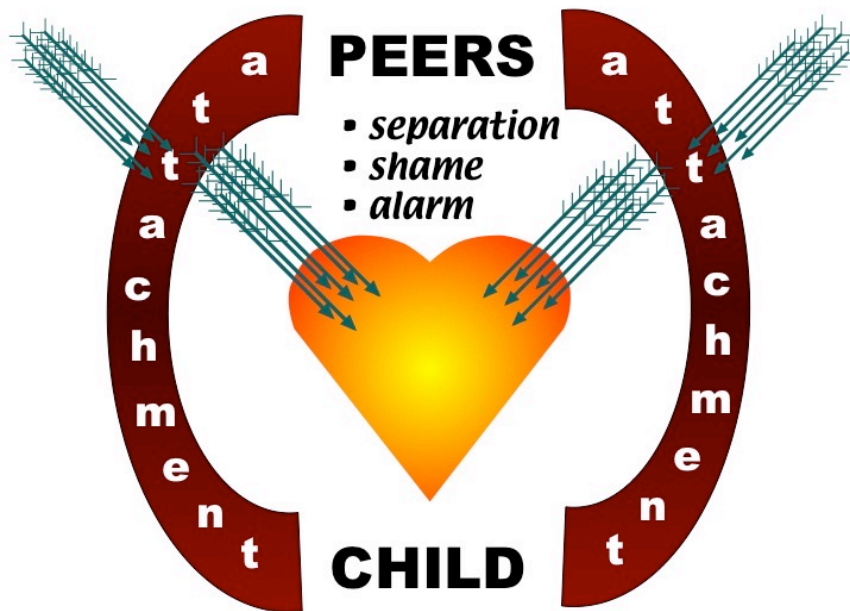
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Peer-oriented kids become defended against the vulnerability of their experience:

- **they become sensitized to the insensitive relating of their peers**
- **they lose the most effective shield against external stress - a safe attachment with adults**
- **signs of vulnerability are often shamed or exploited by peers**
- **invulnerability is venerated in the peer culture**

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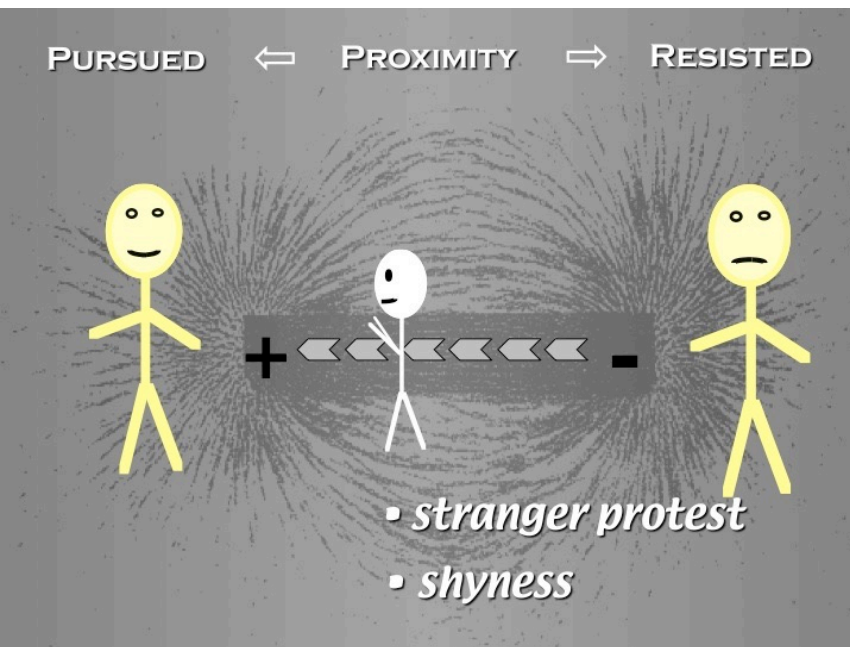
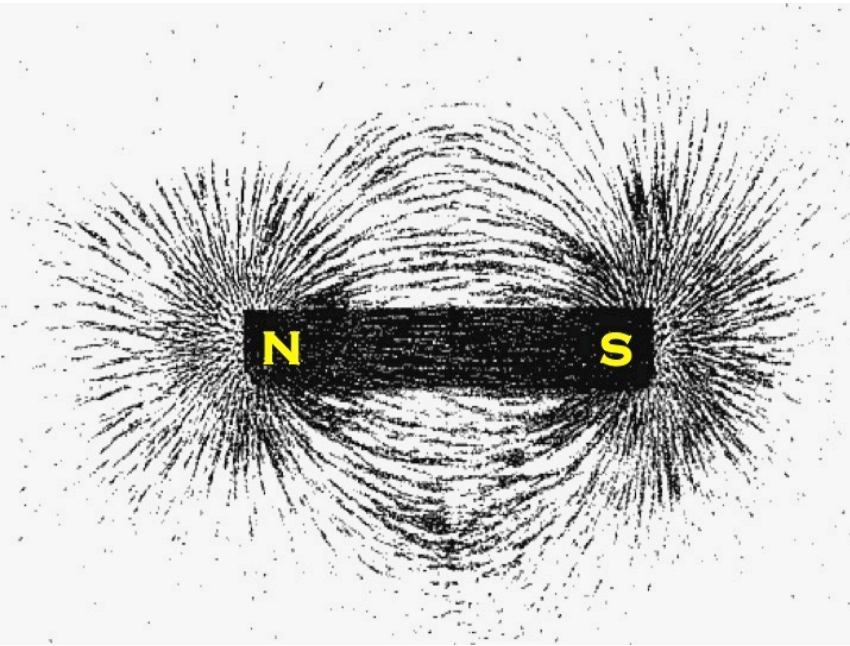
The legacy of peer orientation:

- 1. a flight from vulnerability**
- 2. developmental arrest**
- 3. the loss of teachability**
- 4. the polarization of attachment**

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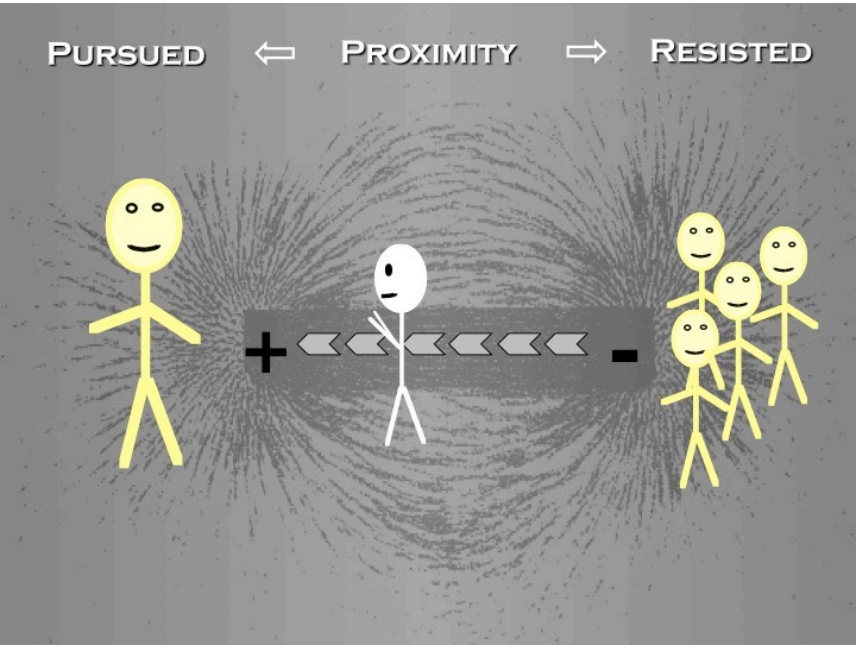
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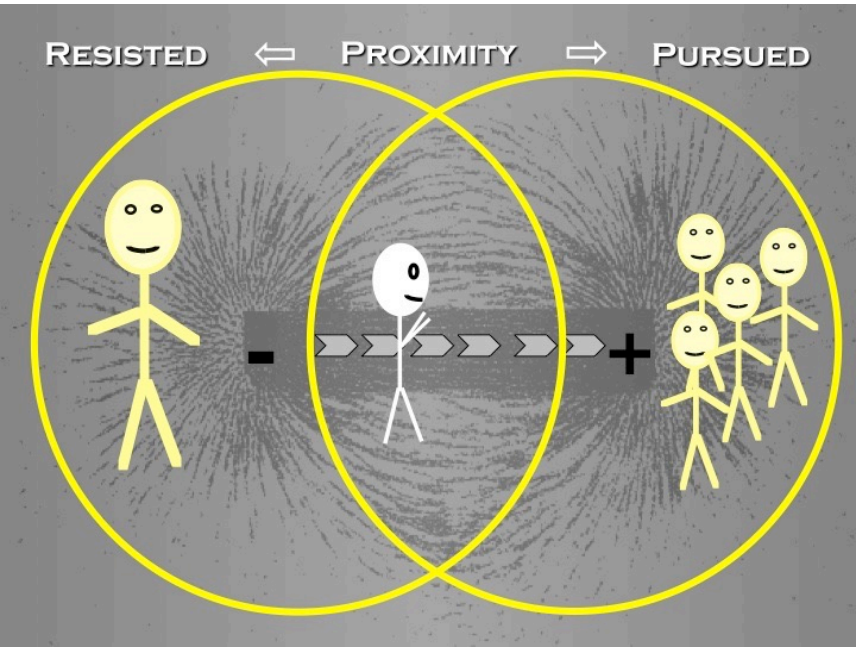


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positive polarity	negative polarity
seeks to be with	shies away from
makes contact	resists contact
endears	alienates
looks up to	looks down upon
attends & listens to	ignores & disregards
imitates & emulates	mocks & mimics
possesses	disowns
is loyal to	opposes & betrays
holds dear	holds in contempt
attempts to find favour	ridicules and derides
makes things work for	spoils things for
seeks to matter to	discounts as not mattering
seeks to please	annoys and irritates
befriends	eschews
loves	loathes
shares secrets with or keeps the secrets of	keeps secrets from or creates secrets about

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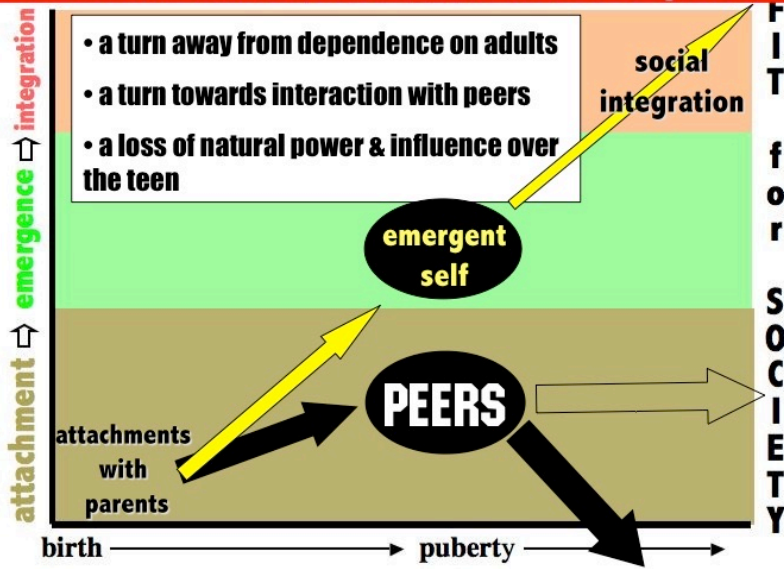
The legacy of peer orientation:

- 1. a flight from vulnerability**
- 2. developmental arrest**
- 3. the loss of teachability**
- 4. the polarization of attachment**
- 5. the sexualization of attachment**

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Peer orientation mimics ideal development



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THE CAMOUFLAGE

• ITS SIGNS ARE MISTAKEN FOR THAT OF HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

• ITS ENORMITY IS MASKED BY ITS NORMALITY

• OUR RESEARCH STUDIES WHAT IS AND ASSUMES THAT THIS IS WHAT SHOULD BE

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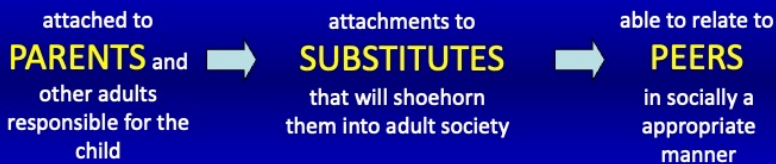
MASTER BLUEPRINT



ATTACHMENT OR FUSION → DIFFERENTIATION OR INDIVIDUATION → INTEGRATION

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BACKUP PLAN



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Diminished Proximity to Parents

Rite of passage	Teen temptation	Impact on parenting & teaching	Challenge for adults
<p>SENSE of SEPARATE-NESS and ALARM</p> <p>SENSE of LOSS and SADNESS</p>	<p>defend against the vulnerability involved</p> <p>replace parents with peers</p>	<p>loss of natural power, authority and influence</p>	

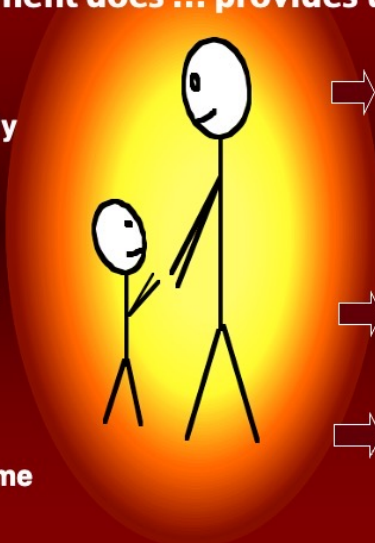
Attachment Facilitates Dependence

What attachment does ... provides the power to...

1) Arranges hierarchically

2) Renders endearing & tolerant

3) Creates a sense of home



Take charge of them, take care of them and act with natural authority

Like them and endure them

Provide comfort, rest and a place of retreat

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Attachment Facilitates Dependence**What attachment does ... provides the power to...****4. Creates a compass point****5. Activates proximity instincts****6. Evokes the desire to be good for those attached to****Command their attention, guide & direct them and transmit our culture****Keep them close and command their loyalty****Act with natural power & authority*****The IMPOTENCE that stems from a lack of natural attachment power can lead to:***

- a preoccupation with HOW TOs
- the assumption that something is wrong with the adolescent
- permissive or laissez-faire parenting
- premature retirement
- quest for leverage

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Diminished Proximity to Parents

Rite of passage	Teen temptation	Impact on parenting & teaching	Challenge for adults
<i>SENSE of SEPARATE-NESS and ALARM</i>	defend against the vulnerability involved	loss of natural power, authority and influence	<i>shift to a consulting style</i>
<i>SENSE of LOSS and SADNESS</i>	replace parents with peers		<i>HOLD ON to their hearts</i> <i>reclaim the lost</i>

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Diminished Proximity to Parents

Rite of passage	Teen temptation	Impact on parenting & teaching	Challenge for adults
<i>SENSE of SEPARATE-NESS and ALARM</i>	defend against the vulnerability involved	loss of natural power, authority and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>benign neglect</i> • <i>adult mentors</i> • <i>soft hearts</i> • <i>a consulting style</i> • <i>hold on</i> • <i>reclaim the peer-oriented</i>
<i>SENSE of LOSS and SADNESS</i>	replace parents with peers		

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PARENTHOOD - CHILDHOOD

**... is a function
of ATTACHMENT
which is being
eroded by
competing
attachments**

**... is a function
of DEPENDENCY
which increases
as society
becomes more
complex**

***As a result, parenthood is no longer
lasting as long as childhood.***

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Insights

Questions to prime personal processing

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE APPROACH

Quotes & highlights from course material

HOW THIS NEW KNOWLEDGE MIGHT CHANGE WHAT I DO

INSIGHTS INTO MYSELF

Observations from own childhood & relationships

INSIGHTS INTO CHILD/CHILDREN:

What do I see differently now?

CHANGES OBSERVED IN CHILD/CHILDREN

PRIMERS: Questions to prime review and integration

1. Why does peer orientation get confused with individuation?

2. What happens to the process of individuation if parents/adults are replaced by peers too early?

3. How can peer orientation lead to wounding in the adolescent ... and a vulnerability too much to bear?

4. How does the polarization of attachment impact parenting and teaching when a child is attached to their peers?

5. How do we keep an adolescent safe?

6. Questions arising out of this session.

GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

1. General discussion – review of INSIGHTS and PRIMERS.

2. How does this perspective fit or conflict with your own experiences, understanding and values?

3. What are some changes you have made to your practice that you would be willing to share?

4. Additional questions and concerns arising out of the group discussion.