



# Rifka Schonfeld **STRATEGIES**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

## COMMON NEEDS

Dear Readers,

This week's newsletter will discuss the topic of common needs within our relationships.

Rifka Schonfeld  
**STRATEGIES**

### QUESTION:

My son is acting like a bully. How can I understand him and guide him to improve his behavior?



STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS  
*Rifka Schonfeld*

PRESENTS



Continuing Educational  
Credits: 6 CE

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DOES YOUR CHILD FEEL UNACCEPTED?  
**THAT LIFE IS UNFAIR?** THAT HE  
MAKES LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD? THAT  
HE LACKS THE ABILITY TO LAUGH AT HIS  
MISTAKES? THAT HE'S  
**CONSTANTLY OUT OF  
CONTROL?**

THE  
**POWER**  
OF  
**MINDSETS**  
NURTURING MOTIVATION, HOPE & RESILIENCE



**DR. ROBERT BROOKS**

Dr. Robert Brooks is a psychologist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School. He has lectured nationally and internationally and written extensively about the themes of resilience, parenting, family relationships, school climate, and balancing our personal and professional lives. He is the author or co-author of 17 books including *Raising Resilient Children* and *Seven Steps to Improve Your Child's Social Skills*.

TUESDAY

**NOV. 13. 2018**

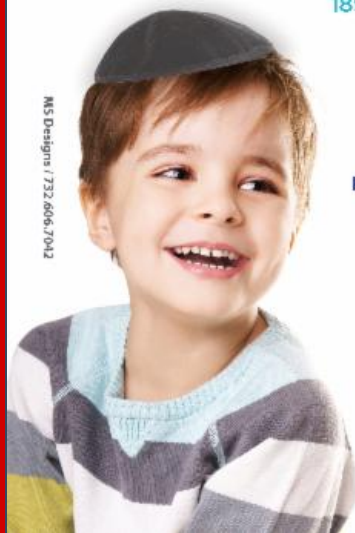
8:30AM-4:30PM

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EARLY-BIRD SPECIAL BEFORE MARCH 2, 2018

**YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:**

- > A **mindset theory** that incorporates social, emotional well-being as well as academic achievement.
- > **Negative mindset** that burdens many students with ADHD.
- > The most essential factors and strategies to **nurture resilience in students with ADHD**.
- > Reflecting upon the **theory of motivation** that guides your work
- > **Creating a motivating environment** that promotes learning, responsibility and hope.
- > A **strength-based approach** in which each student's "**islands of competence**" are identified and reinforced.

*Rifka Schonfeld*  
**STRATEGIES**

**ANSWER:**

Poem for a Bully  
By Eileen Spinelli

Somewhere deep inside you  
there's a softer, kinder place.  
I know this will surprise you –  
but I've seen it in your face.  
Your eyes are often sad, although

you wear a surly grin.  
Sometimes when you stand all alone  
your 'mean' seems worn and thin.  
I wish that you would take a step –  
a small, but brave one too –  
and look inside yourself to find  
the good I see in you.

In her poem, "Poem for a Bully" Eileen Spinelli tries to speak to a bully to tell him or her to find the good inside of him. Spinelli seems to be saying that she can understand the bully in a way that the bully cannot even understand him or herself. But, can we truly understand other people on this level? Larry C. Rosen, a lawyer and mediator for couples going through divisive divorces, asks the same question, "Is it possible to understand everyone at a deep and meaningful level?"

How, he wonders, is it possible to understand both the eighteen-year-old girl who sleeps next to her cell phone and the eighty-year-old man who cannot remember his grandchildren's names? A bully and his victim? What about two very different eighteen-year-olds? One for instance, an accomplished American teen who has been accepted to Harvard University and plans on studying medicine and another Afghani teen who has joined the Taliban. Human psychology seems extremely complex. Is it possible to understand both of those boys on a deep level?

Meeting with evolutionary biologists and neuroscientists (and many of his own clients), Rosen has come up with a theory based on founding psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers' pyramid of needs. These psychologists argued that all people have similar needs in order to succeed (basic needs, psychological needs, and self-fulfillment needs). Rosen also builds on contemporary American psychologist Marshall Rosenberg's needs inventory. But Rosen takes these theories several steps further.

Rosen explains that there is a key to understanding everyone on a deep level. In fact, he argues that humans have "common needs" and that there are somewhere around thirty common needs that we all have. That means that anytime we exhibit a behavior, it is because we are trying to fulfill a basic need.

So, how does this connect to those two eighteen-year-old boys – the one going to Harvard and the one joining the Taliban? In reality, those two boys are pursuing the same needs. Both boys are looking for respect. One will get respect by attending Harvard University while the other will get respect by joining the Taliban. They are both looking for community and belonging. One will get a community at Harvard and the other in the Taliban. They are both interested in making a difference in their worlds. One will study medicine and heal people, the other learn to kill and will fight for the cause he is joining.

While incredibly disturbing in the above example, what Rosen points out to us is that our motivations are identical to others. We all have physical needs, we all have relational needs, and we all have aspirational or spiritual needs. When we understand that about each other, we can easily understand each other. What makes someone act in the way they act? That person is trying to fulfill a common need (one that you and I have too). Once we discover which common need they are fulfilling, we can easily work with them to ensure that we both benefit.

Let's return to the bully and victim. Rosen argues that there are around thirty common needs, and that all we need to do in order to understand complex human psychology is recognize that other people's actions are a result of them trying to fill a common need. In order to understand the motivation of the bully (and the victim), we need to look at what common needs the bully is fulfilling by picking on other people. Is he trying to get respect? Is he trying to create a sense of belonging?

Understanding the motivations of the bully in no way excuses the behavior or changes the consequences. It does, however, help parents and educators teach the child other ways to cope and fulfill those needs. If we understand that a bully is acting aggressive because he wants respect and feels like no one treats him with respect, we can change the dynamic and thus change his behavior.



Will you always be able to understand which common need someone is fulfilling? Absolutely not. But, what you can do is step into their shoes. Ask yourself, why would I do something like that? What is it giving me? In the end, you just might have a window into other people's motivations and minds.



STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

*Rifka Schonfeld*

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