**“What to do First”**

Before I begin, I would like to restate my central point, that some have questioned;

*“we are* ***all*** *autistic, the differences between us are just a matter of* ***degree****”*

When you see your young Child being so clearly-different in behaviour to other Children, how can I say that “Your Loved One is basically like them”?

The answer is - early on in your Child’s life the differences are more extreme.

Your Child is much **more withdrawn** **now** than he.she will be **at a later age** (assuming that you Train him.her in effective “Own-World Leaving” techniques)

It is harder for you to see similarities right now, and all too easy to spot differences.

That is one of my advantages over you at this point, I have seen what changes have occurred in a Child’s orientation, after the right Training and encouragement.

My young fellow’s differences are far diminished, and his confidence and competence increase daily. And so can **your** Child’s differences diminish.

So, now back to the path you are now treading – “**what do I do first?”**

Have you ever Googled “Golf-swing instruction books”? There are over 750,000 Google entries as to how to swing your club: “eyes on the ball, gently back, rotate this, advance that…” you get the idea. If you **try to remember it** **all** as you swing, you’ll probably miss the ball altogether..! **You** risk getting tied in knots likewise!

Obviously I can’t say exactly what you should do every minute, because you need to supply different responses for different situations. But as I remark later in the Training Modules, “with practice you will more easily adapt to each situation, like a pro”.

**I recommend you use the “quick-answer” Sequences that you see below,**

**when wondering “What do I do first?”**

Curiously all Sequence-words start with “C” - so perhaps that will help you, when you are groping for solutions, to remember the words quickly:

**(1) “Companionship** + **Comforting & Calming”** (sequence) … then later

**(2) “Copying** + boosting sense of **Control = to create more Confidence”** sequence.

The above tips are set out roughly in order of importance, so **Companionship** is first.

I don’t think *any* of us does enough of just sitting with our Loved Ones, just being a Companion to them.

I certainly didn’t. (You might instead be in another room, busy Googling “autism answers”, instead of *using the answers you have* ***right here in front of you****!*)

Joking aside, there is always “something more important” we need to do,

and “does my Child really need me that much”? “He.she seems to be basically involved in self-activities much of the time, and usually seems self-sufficient.”

Here is where my experience is going to be valuable for you:

**- you can’t see it, but your Child desperately needs your Companionship**,

far more than he.she *seems* to need it / or can demonstrate that need /

/ or even understands the need him.herself.

And when you **are** with your Youngster, what do you do automatically?

You try to engage, guide, push, involve. This is understandable: we generally feel the need for stimulation more than Our Child, and since we unconsciously feel he.she is like us, we are forever putting toys, games, videos, in front of him.her, thinking this is the best way to get engagement from him.her, when mostly what he.she really wants is just a comforting presence.

It may not appear to be the case, but often your Child is experiencing a maelstrom of sensations and inputs, maybe feeling confused and trying to reconcile things. So *just being there* is going to be more valuable for him.her than anything else you can do.

And it can be hard for you to do, just sitting there doing nothing much. But – *do it!*

If I were to do a home-visit-consult for you, the first thing you would think was “why am I paying this guy, when all he is doing is *just sitting there* with my Child?”

Because firstly I am being a  **(1) Companion.**  I am also engendering a sense of **(1)**

**Comforting & Calming** by my relaxed demeanor and by not demanding anything. When our Kids feel correspondingly better-relaxed, then they are more likely to start initiating actions of their own, and this is what we want.

The more deliberate part of **Comforting and Calming** is to remove noises, smells, clutter, from the environment you are in. You will see in the Short Course how distracting these things can be for your Child. When in doubt, take it out.

In later Modules, for example “Instant Tips” Module (1) and “Relaxing” Module (5), we will go on to examine **further** **Comforting and Calming** **techniques**, like offering head-massage, squeezing and pressure.

“*All this calming stuff isn’t my Child at all!* ” some of you might say, “*my Child reaches for stimuli whenever possible, and then gets overexcited by it* ”

Maybe so, but you can still help him.her become calm. And I believe this is what he.she really wants. I believe this excitable behaviour comes from a background of constant over-stimulus that he.she is experiencing. If you are feeling jangled by

over-stimulus, your response might be to reach for **more** of it. Why? because its high excitement resonates with your state, it is in harmony with your overexcited feelings.

So how can you help calm such a person down?

If your Young Person is jumping up and down, oddly if you **Copy** that action you are likely to slow him.her down, because you are in harmony with his.her agitated state. You are being a **Companion** to his.her excited state. You are being **Comforting** too.

So you see the concepts of **Companionship**, **Calming** and **Copying** are intertwined.

If I did a home-visit-consult for you, after being a **Companion** and **Calming** him.her,

I would then **Copy** your Child’s actions and sounds, as described below.

(Note, if your Child is constantly agitated I would recommend you look at my comments regarding Medication: <http://mild-autism.com/supplementary/>)

**(2) Copying = to create more Confidence”**

Why do I **Copy**? Because I make your Child’s feel “this person is on my side”.

Your Child will be thinking subconsciously is “if Mum /Dad /Other is doing the same as me, then **I can’t be doing something wrong, I must be doing right**”.

Thus by Copying you are endorsing your Child’s actions. You are encouraging lots more **Confidence in your Child**. You will see more techniques and examples of how to Copy your Child’s actions in later Modules, notably in Games Module (4).

(Later you can further extend Copying what your Child is doing, into *Channeling* your ‘parallel-play’ actions towards stronger interaction. Modules (3) and (4) have lots more on the subject of playing Interactive Games, at the core of the Training). Copying further *Cements* the *Connection* that you are making - lots more “C’s” ! )

**(2) Creating ‘a greater sense of Control’ = to create more Confidence**

**Confidence**, like Companionship, **is a hugely under-rated feeling.** Confidence is a feeling our Children need to have more of , far more than we generally realise,

for them to go forward.

When you are highly **Confident**, you feel that nothing is beyond your capabilities, you are charged with energy and optimism. And the opposite applies with **lack of Confidence**: you don’t want to try or do anything new, you want to lie low.

So how do we boost our Kids’ Confidence?

All the tips I described earlier contribute to our Kids’ feelings of Confidence:

Companionship, Calming, Copying, Connecting. But here we will examine how ‘Creating a better sense of **Control’** contributes to their Confidence:

You will see in the Short Course Modules that the Confusion our Children feel (for various reasons), means they are **not very able to Control their surroundings**.

Their feelings of Confusion and lack of Control eat into their **Confidence**.

So they don’t want to try things, but instead are in “defence” mode.

How to break out of that cycle?

What can your Child do **right now**? Make a list if it helps. You can boost your Youngster’s Confidence by simply celebrating his.her **current** **Control** over things:

In whatever small way your Child can manipulate the world around him.her, be it just lining up blocks, he.she is exercising some Control over his.her environment.

It may not be consciously realized by Your Child or you as such, up until now, but now you realise small achievements are ‘control-successes’, they can be celebrated.

**That celebration will boost Confidence, and Connection with you.**

Then plan future activities based on those small successes, but now stretch those actions just a bit, but still within his.her grasp. A small ‘new’ success is even more reason to celebrate, so when your Child succeeds in doing it, to be as vocally and actionally happy in your praise and excitement as you can be, while making sure that level of that excitement doesn’t overly-alarm your Child.

(The ‘Son Rise’ Trainers would no doubt celebrate noisily, and while I have reservations about this working for all Children, this may be an area where a **bit** more volume and jumping about could be tried, to jolt our Kids out of self-absorption and help them realise **they *are* *a* *bit* in Control**! – but **not** if it scares them into Own World). It has been suggested to me that a mirror for the Child to see him.herself in, when making small achievements will also act as a wake-up and reinforcer. Try it?

The “Connection Games for very young people” Section in the “Games” Module (4) offers you ideas that are based on making basic worldly-connections as described above, rather than interactive Games. But you can add increasing complexity for those Children who develop, extending into the interactive Games of Module (4).

NOTES

(1) Regarding contacting and extending our Children, you will see in the Short Course, and everywhere else in the Junior Real World Training, the strong advice to **first ensure our Kids are “in a receptive state” before attempting interaction**. Module (3) sets this out in the greatest detail. Don’t push! Wait for the right moments!

(2) There is one “C” to avoid (when you can), and that is “Correction”. More often than you may realise, the only thing your young Child will retain is that he.she is doing something wrong. It is diametrically opposed to creating Trust and Confidence.

(3) To finish on a positive “C” - is the word “Continue” – **Continue what is working**.

Whatever you have noticed your Child doing that is desirable, perhaps it is a positive response to a certain question you asked, or activity you have done together by chance that has potential for more interaction, **don’t let it go by**, instead **make a definite mental note of what is working**, or even write it down, and **Continue** to do more of it, and then later extend it, to make it even more effective.

I have a worksheet for you below, to help you be clearer on:

• what kinds developmental-progress you want for your Loved One, and

• describing the outcomes you want clearly to yourself, to know when you have reached your goals

The worksheet will help you track your progress.

**Best Wishes from me,**

**Parent-Power Pete**

**as you delve into this Real World Training Course!**

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If you are that Parent/Guardian/Carer or similar person, always rely on yourself to make the final decision as to undertaking any course of action on behalf of those entrusted to your care, not the Module-content. Base your decisions on your personal assessment of health and safety risks.