

Key Slides

# Parenting & Cherishing the Challenging Child

Chesapeake Bay Academy & CHKD Annual ADHD Conference

April 13, 2024

Peter M Dozier, MD

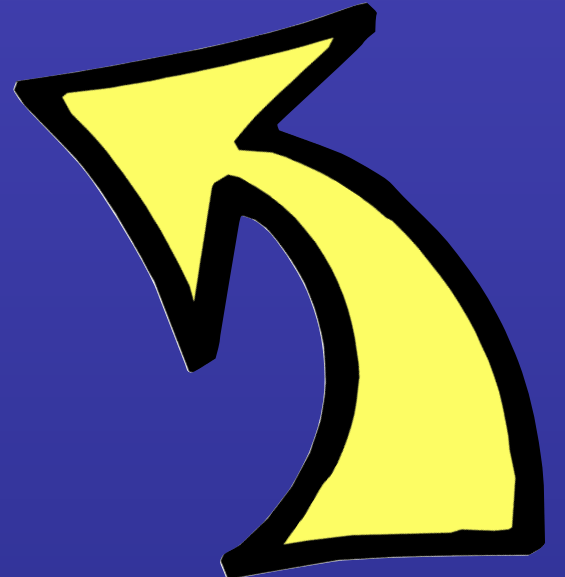
Parenting & Cherishing  
the  
Challenging Child



Positive Behavior  
Management



Promotes Positive  
Attitude



Increases Self  
Competence



Lowers Stress



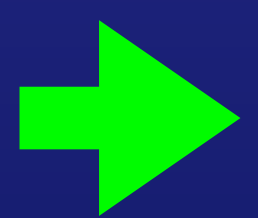
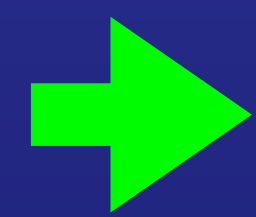
Really challenging to  
Change parenting behavior  
Change parenting perspective

shaped by our experience being parented  
parenting experience so far  
culture  
beliefs  
friends & family

Accomplish  
Conceptual Change #1

↑ To Opportunity

Parenting



Accomplish  
Conceptual Change #2

# JUST BEHAVIORS

Argues about everything

Says no to any request

Deliberately disobeys

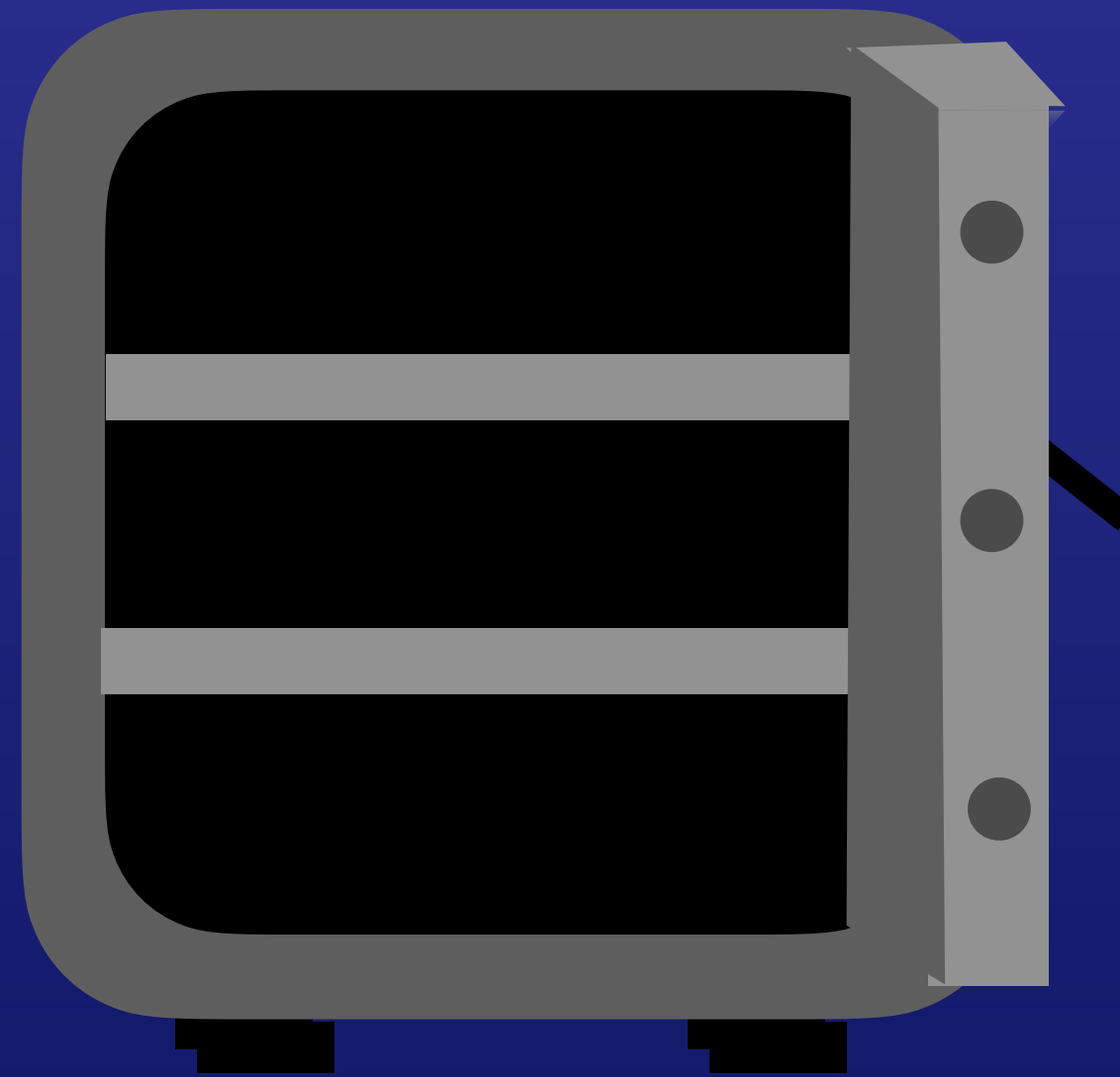
Thinks he/she's in charge

Huge meltdowns

Destroys stuff

Threatens us

(Hits sister / brother / me)



# Parents understandably want answers

## Child is thinking

- ✓ they are in charge
- ✓ they are the parent

## is feeling

- ✓ anxious
- ✓ sad
- ✓ angry

## is not

- ✓ live to potential
- ✓ a productive citizen

## Parents are thinking

- ✓ failure to launch
- ✓ spoiled rotten

## feel

- ✓ overwhelmed
- ✓ incompetent

## are resigned

- ✓ apple doesn't fall far...
- ✓ just like her/his ...

It's Just Behavior!



Stop  
What Doesn't Work

Consequence

Punishment Works



Short Term Change

Incentive

Reward Works



Opportunity for  
Negotiation

Teaching

May Work



Difficult to Identify  
Teaching Moment

Stop  
What Doesn't Work

Consequence

Incentive

Teach

Punishment Works

Reward Works

May Work



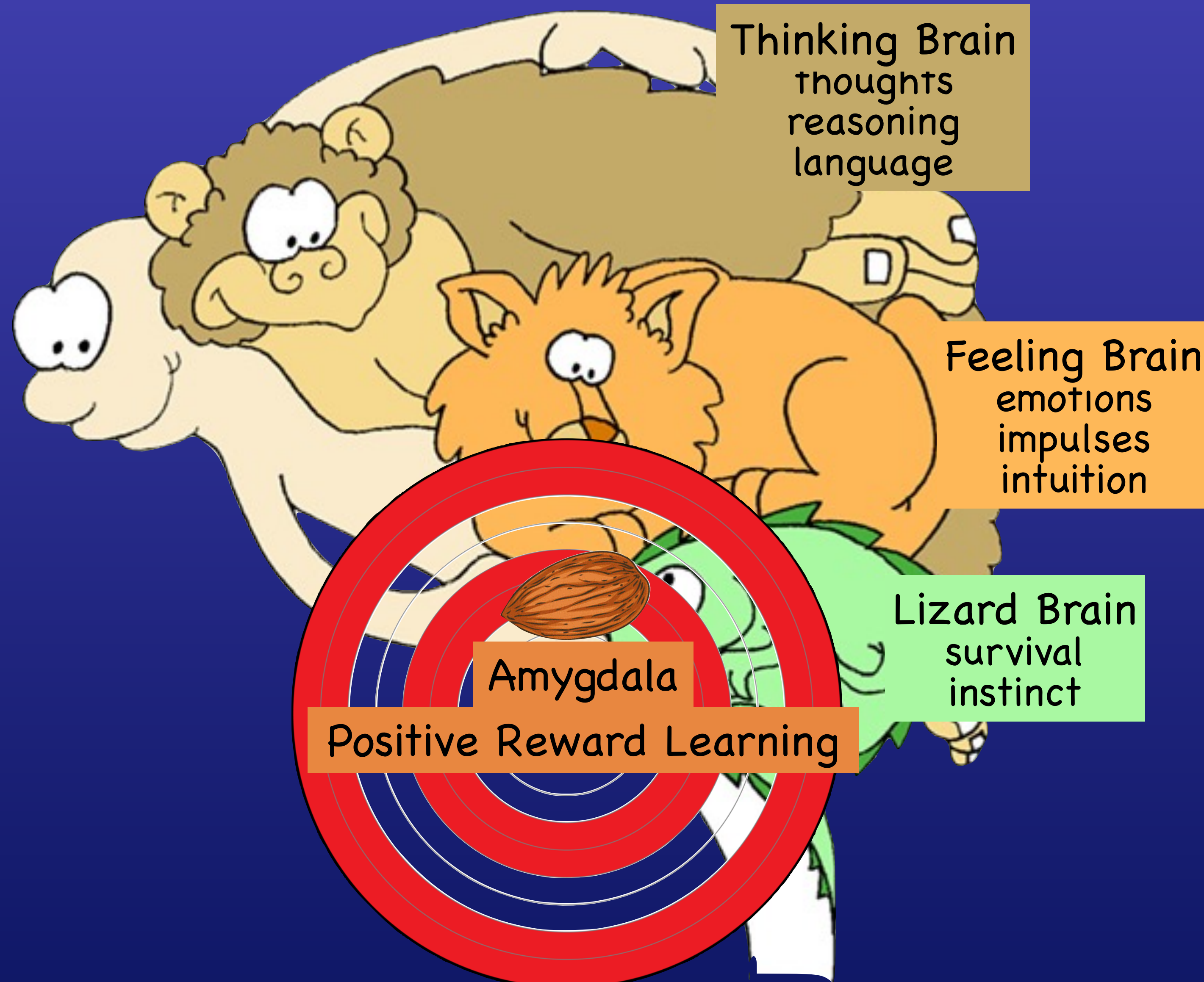
Short Term Change



Difficult to Identify  
Teaching Moment

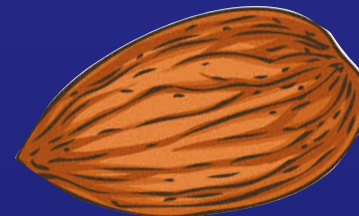


# Changing Behavior Without Words ? HOW?



# Changing Behavior Without Words ?

Child's brain  
primed for learning  
by **reinforcement**



Amygdala

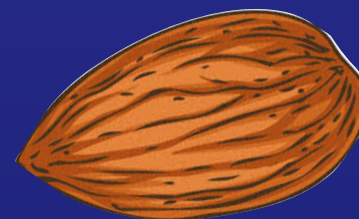
Positive Reward Learning

# How does **reinforcement** work?

Language of attention

Any **behavior** receiving ATTN is **reinforced**

Any **behavior** denied ATTN **fades away**



Amygdala

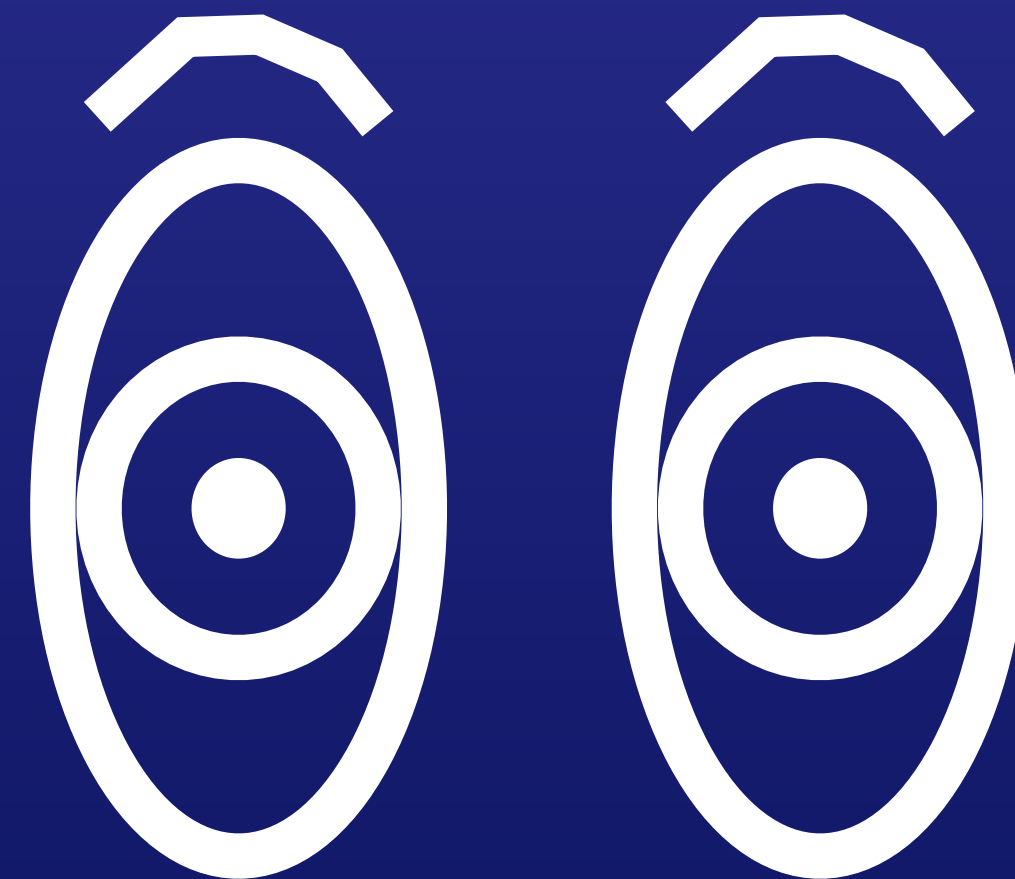
Positive Reward Learning

## Controllable by Child

- Punishment
- Incentive

## Controllable by Parent

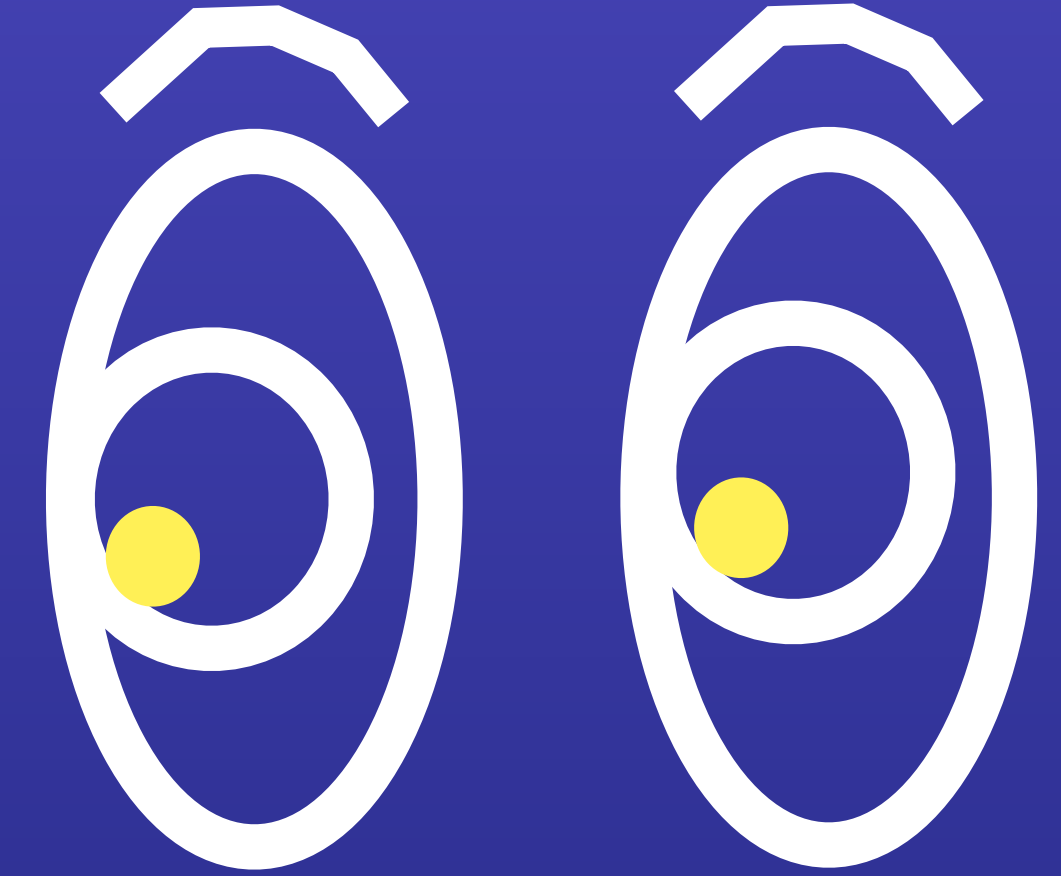
- Parent's ATTN  
A Superpower!  
- How to use?



# Understand Power of

Inappropriate  
Behavior

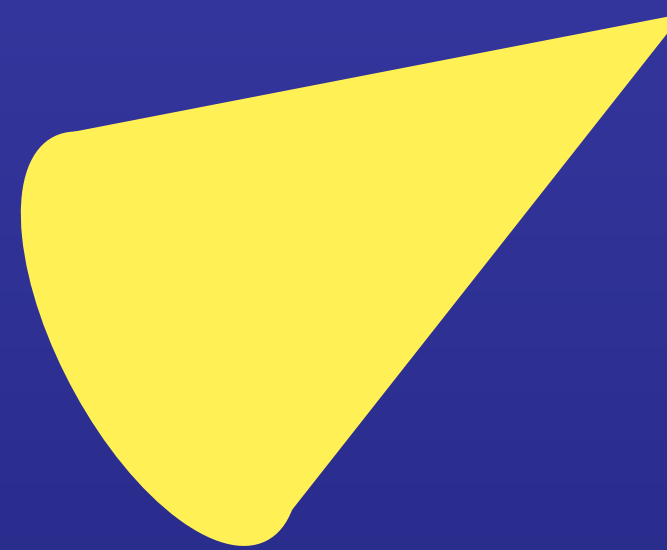
Inappropriate  
Behavior



Inappropriate  
Behavior

Inappropriate  
Behavior

Inappropriate  
Behavior



ATTN

Inappropriate  
Behavior

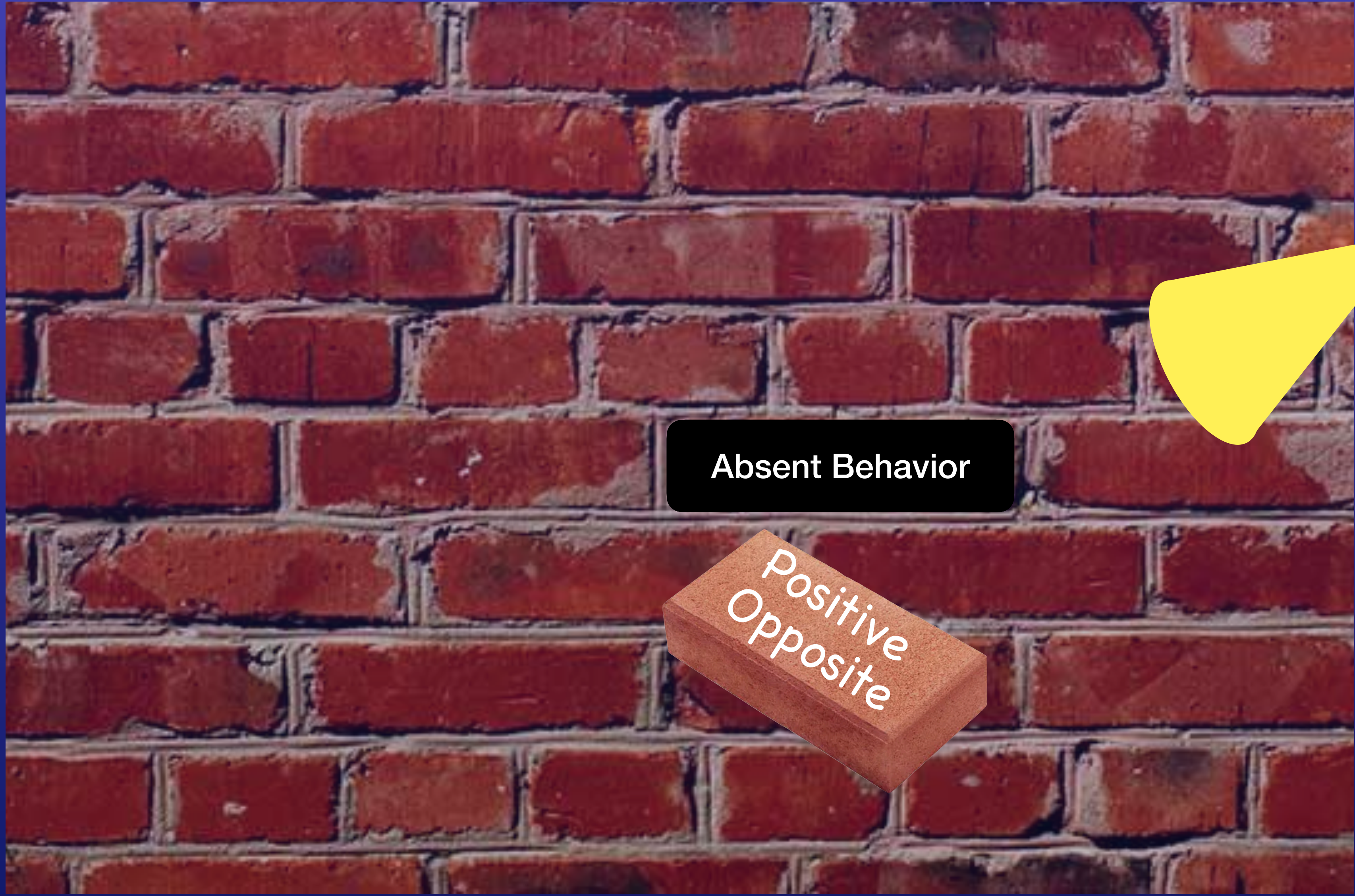
Inappropriate  
Behavior

Any **behavior** receiving ATTN is reinforced

# Understand Power of



Any **behavior** receiving ATTN is reinforced



ATTN

Finding



Is Hard!

We attend to **negative** behaviors  
more than **positive** behaviors

Our brain's attention system  
built to notice  
the **negative** in our environment



Finding



Hard!

## Be positive-intentional

1. Create positive behavior
2. Catch positive behavior
3. Stop & stoop to praise specific behavior
4. Talk short & sweet (not lesson time)

# Manipulate / Allow Natural & Neutral Consequence



Connection



Matter of fact  
Without conflict

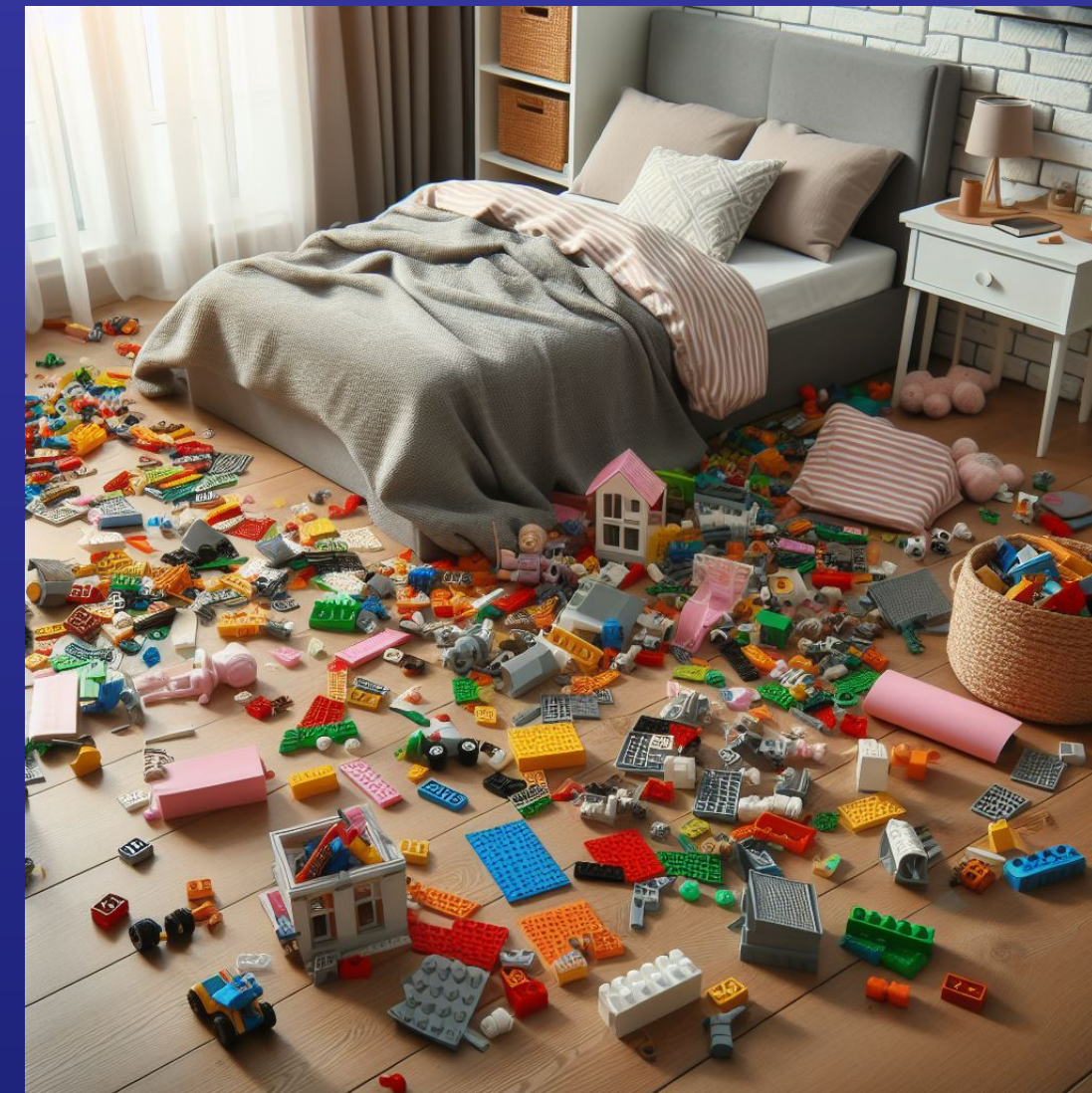
# Manipulate / Allow Natural & Neutral Consequence

Can't find clean clothes



Connection  
Matter of fact  
Without conflict

Not putting toys away



Connection  
Matter of fact  
Without conflict

# Consider developmental stage & temperament



The reactive child

Start

What Works #4

# Treatment of aggression

Prevention!

# 1. Observation

- ? **Conditions** where aggression has occurred
- ? Average **time** before aggression occurs

# 2. Prevention!

- Either a. avoid that **condition** until child matures
- Or b. limit **time** spent there to 1/2 of usual

# Observation

***Verbal Aggression:* Verbal hostility, statements that seek to inflict psychological harm on another through devaluation/degradation, and threats of physical attack.**

- 0 No verbal aggression
- = 1 Shouts angrily, curses mildly, or makes personal insults
- = 2 Curses viciously, is severely insulting, has temper outbursts
- = 3 Impulsively threatens violence toward others or self
- = 4 Threatens violence toward others or self repeatedly or deliberately

***Physical Aggression:* Violent action intended to inflict pain, bodily harm, or death upon another.**

- ×4 — 0 No physical aggression
- = 4 Makes menacing gestures, swings at people, grabs at clothing
- = 8 Strikes, pushes, scratches, pulls hair of others
- =12 Attacks others, causing mild injury
- =16 Attacks others, causing serious injury

After the aggression has already started?



Duty To Keep  
Children Safe



# Duty To Keep Children Safe



Remove

The dog?

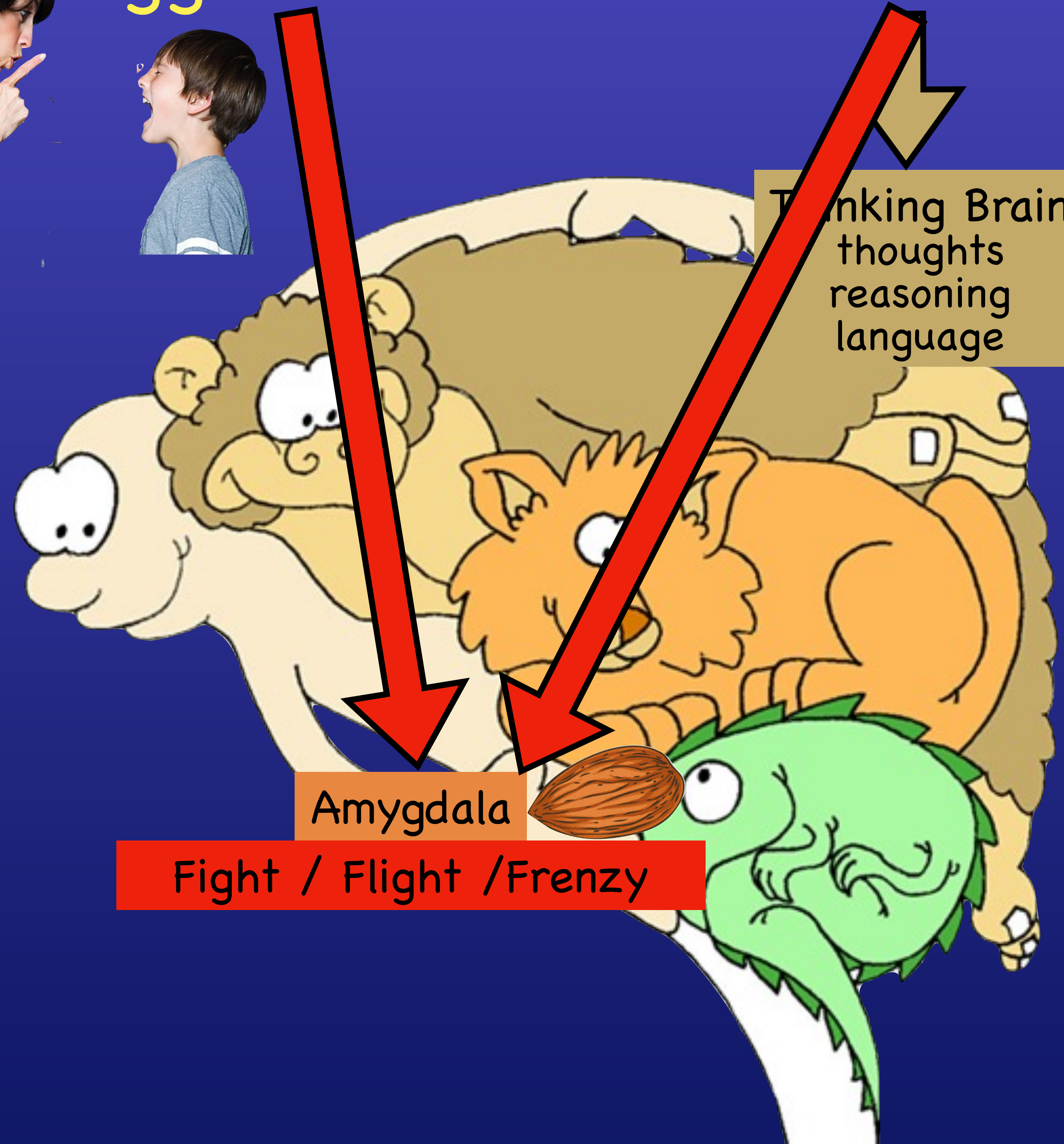
The victim?

What if the parent is the victim?

The dog?

The victim?

# Aggression Time Is Not Talk Time

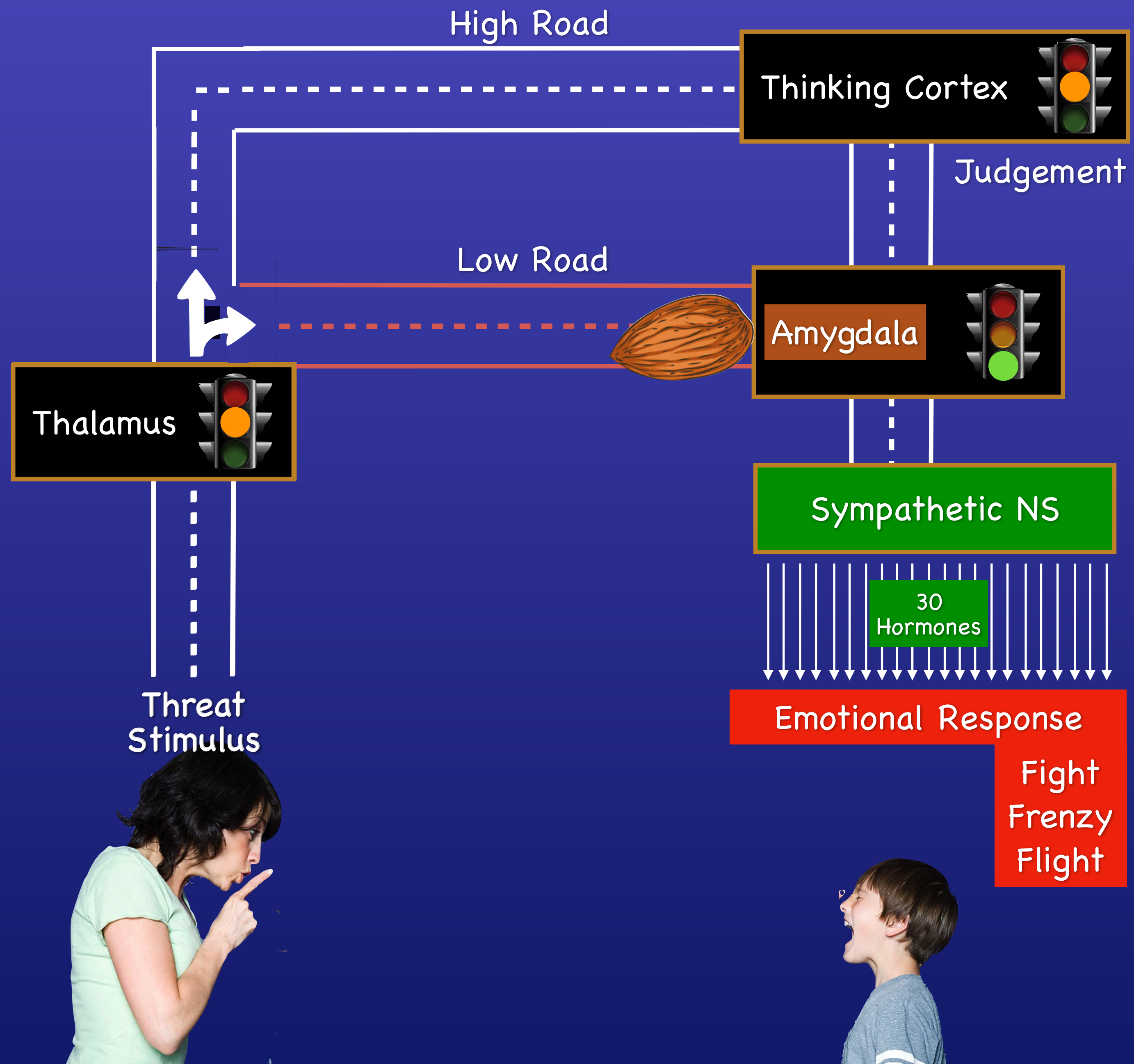


Amygdala

Fight / Flight / Frenzy

Thinking Brain  
thoughts  
reasoning  
language

Start  
What Works #5  
Amygdala



# Why does the aggressive child not listen to reason?



Any aggression storm will pass!



# Later After Destructive Behavior

Create opportunity for  
collaborative repair



How to  
cherish a  
challenging  
child  
?

Cherish

Compassion

Choose

challenging  
child

Champion

Change

Cheer



# Cherish

verb: protect and care for (someone) lovingly

Practice this behavioral method

Why: @ love & respect

# Choose

to love

when child unlovable

to respect

when child disrespectful

to trust

when child can't be trusted

to be the adult

when child is childish

To change inappropriate behavior  
**Change** parent's behavior first

# Cheer

verb: shout for joy or in praise or encouragement



(parent)

shout joy & praise  
give encouragement

(child)

when losing  
when not doing well

# Be Compassionate

**Kids** are doing the best they  
can with what they have

**Parents** are doing the best they  
can with what they have

# Be Compassionate

Do the **best you can** until you know better  
Then when you know better, **do better**

Maya Angelou

Cherish  
Respect  
Love

the  
challenging child

