

**Changing the focus from
behaviour to engagement, a
strengths-based approach**



A little bit about myself

- Pepeha
- 2004-2018
- 2018-present



2018

Focussed on behaviour, setting firm boundaries, aiming for adherence to set roles and routines

This happened





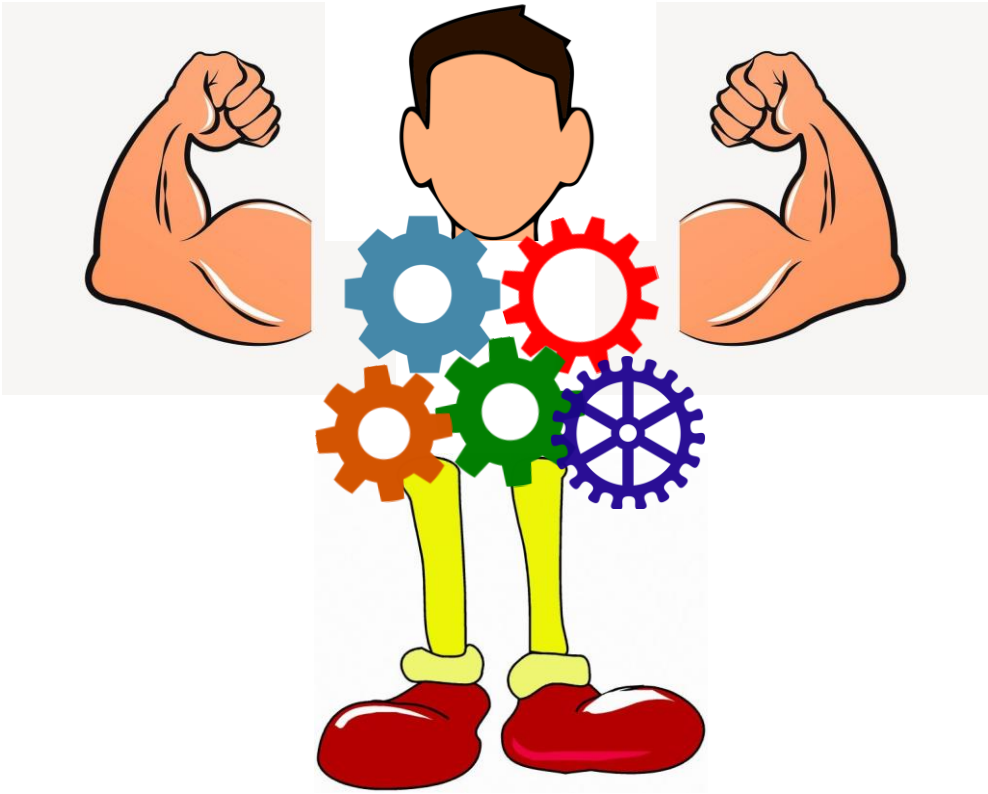
Towards the end of 2018 we gained a new student who really shaped the way we thought about things. Let me tell you about “Dean”

Metaphorical choice



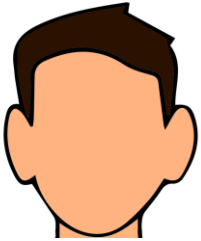


**Let's look at what can help a student engage or
cause distress**





The Student



Their circumstances

- Changes at home
- Injury/Pain
- Trauma
- Roles and Routines



Communication



- What is the student trying to communicate?
- What are we hearing?
- Are we using their “voice”



Autonomy



- Are we giving the student choice in the matter?
- Are we acknowledging their point of view?
- Does the student understand the situation they are in?



Environment



- What in the environment is impacting on engagement?
- Can the environment give clear boundaries and expectations
- Use of visuals (consistent, choice board)
- Contingency maps



Sensory Processing



- Could there be something sensory going on for a student ?
- [Free resource](#) as a basic screen to help and give guidance

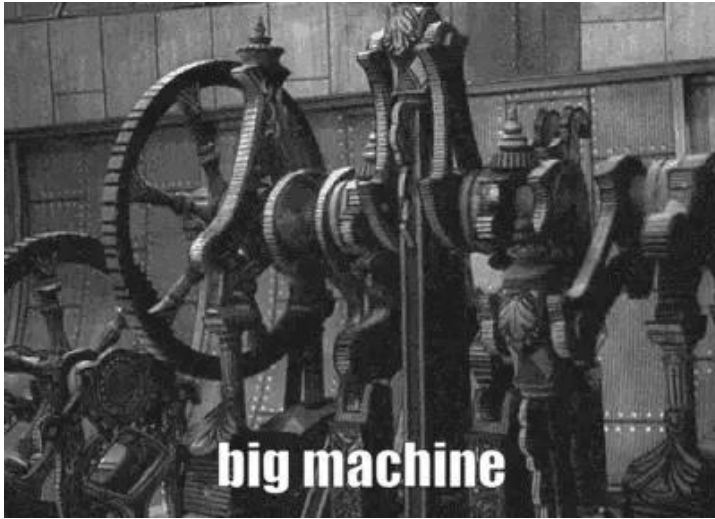


Staff/your response



- Rational Detachment
- Be a bot

If this system is working well we get



Engagement

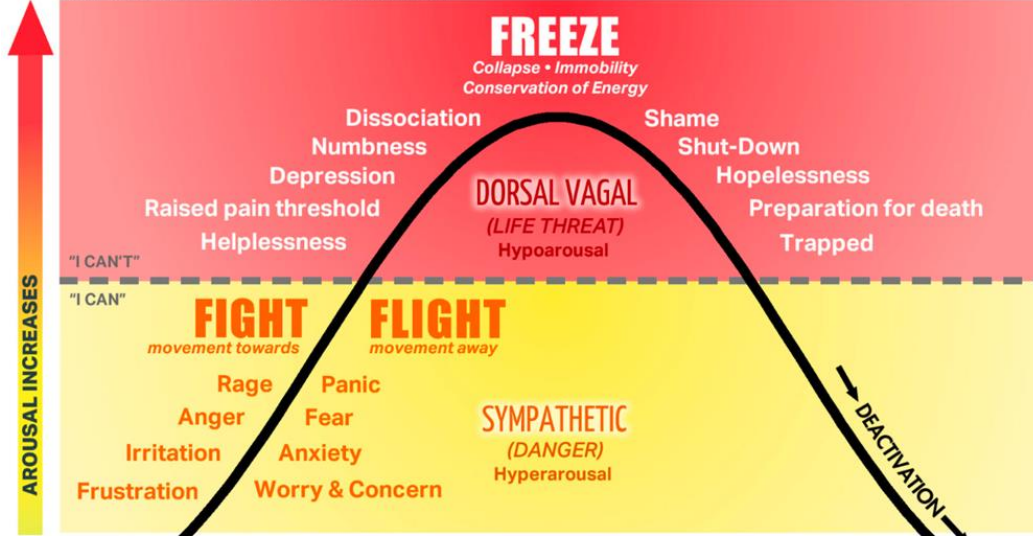
If something in this system isn't working we get



Distress/Dysregulation

POLYVAGAL CHART

The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:



PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

DORSAL VAGAL COMPLEX

Increases

Fuel storage & insulin activity • Immobilization behavior (with fear)
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold
Conservation of metabolic resources

Decreases

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure • Temperature • Muscle Tone
Facial Expressions & Eye Contact • Depth of Breath • Social Behavior
Attunement to Human Voice • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Increases

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate • Fuel Availability • Adrenaline
Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs • Blood Clotting • Pupil Size
Dilation of Bronchi • Defensive Responses

Decreases

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity • Digestion • Salivation
Relational Ability • Immune Response

The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:



PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

VENTRAL VAGAL COMPLEX

Increases

Digestion • Intestinal Motility • Resistance to Infection
Immune Response • Rest and Recuperation • Health & Vitality
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear) • Ability to Relate and Connect
Movement in eyes and head turning • Prosody in voice • Breath

Decreases

Defensive Responses

VVC is the beginning and end of stress response.
When VVC is dominant, SNS and DVC are in transient blends which promote healthy physiological functioning.

Some food for thought



what's next



What we won't walk past

- Language
- Use of punishment
- Inappropriate use of physical prompting
- Letting things slip



Language

The Language of us and them - Mayer Shevin

We like things - They fixate on objects

We try to make friends - They display attention seeking behavior

We take breaks -They display off task behavior

We stand up for ourselves -They are non-compliant

We have hobbies - They self-stim

We choose our friends wisely - They display poor peer socialization

We persevere - They perseverate

We like people - They have dependencies on people

We go for a walk -They run away

We insist -They tantrum

We change our minds -They are disoriented and have short attention spans

We have talents -They have splinter skills

We are human - They are . . . ?

Kimi Ora School



What we are not going to do

- Create Myths for our students to live up to
- Use language that is overly emotive
- Use language that makes us and us and them a them



Why do we use this approach at Kimi Or School

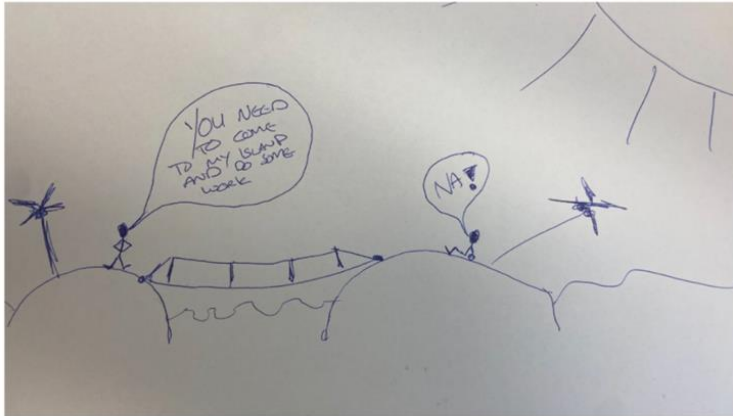
A strengths based approach to engagement and behaviour

At Kimi Ora School we have the privilege of being able to offer a highly individualised curriculum for our students. A part of this is looking at what students need to be able to stay engaged in their learning and meeting needs if a student becomes unsettled or more escalated. The focus of our approach is to meet the students needs rather than the student meeting our expectations in these times.

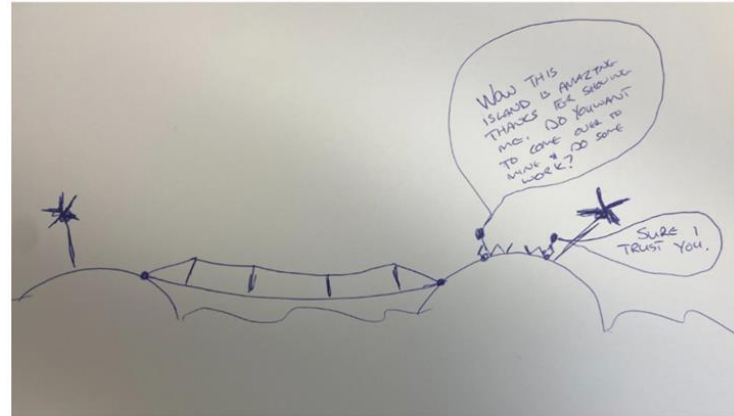
Another Metaphor

Crossing the bridge

When thinking about student engagement it is sometimes handy to think about two islands joined by a bridge. We are on one island and the student is on another and we are wanting the student to come to our island to engage in learning. It is important we go to their island to help guide them back to ours.



Often our students experience the world in this way. That the world is demanding them to do something and it is too hard, causes anxiety and/or the bridge is too much to cross at the minute.

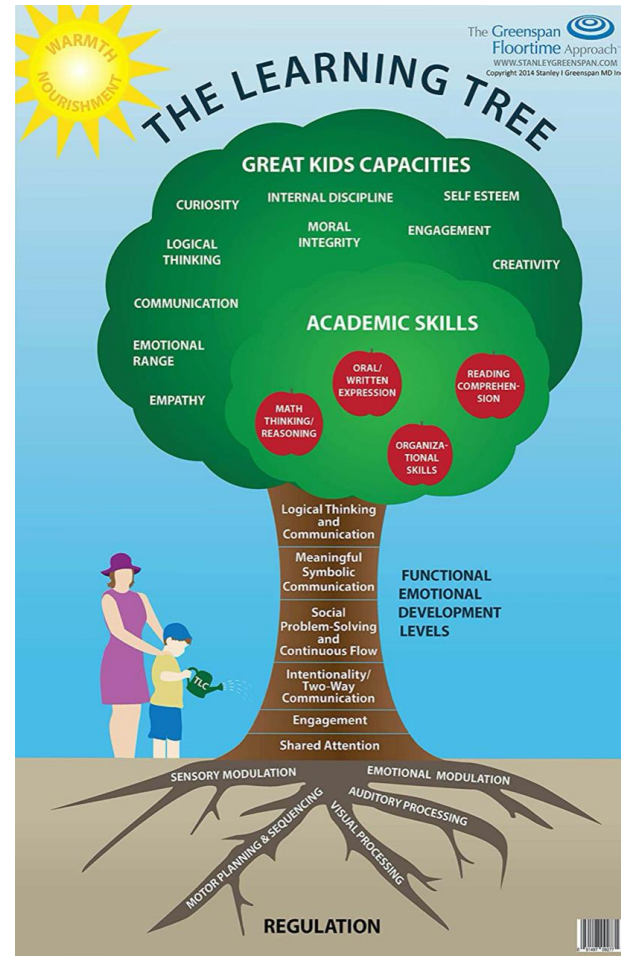


This is how we should be as a staff. Going to the student, building a relationship and helping them cross the bridge to engage in learning.



Some ways to present this

Social Learning Tree



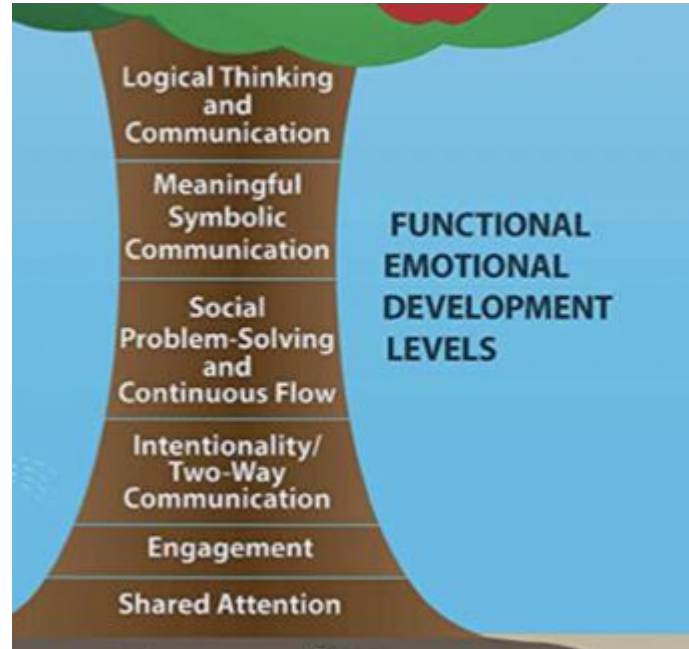


Roots

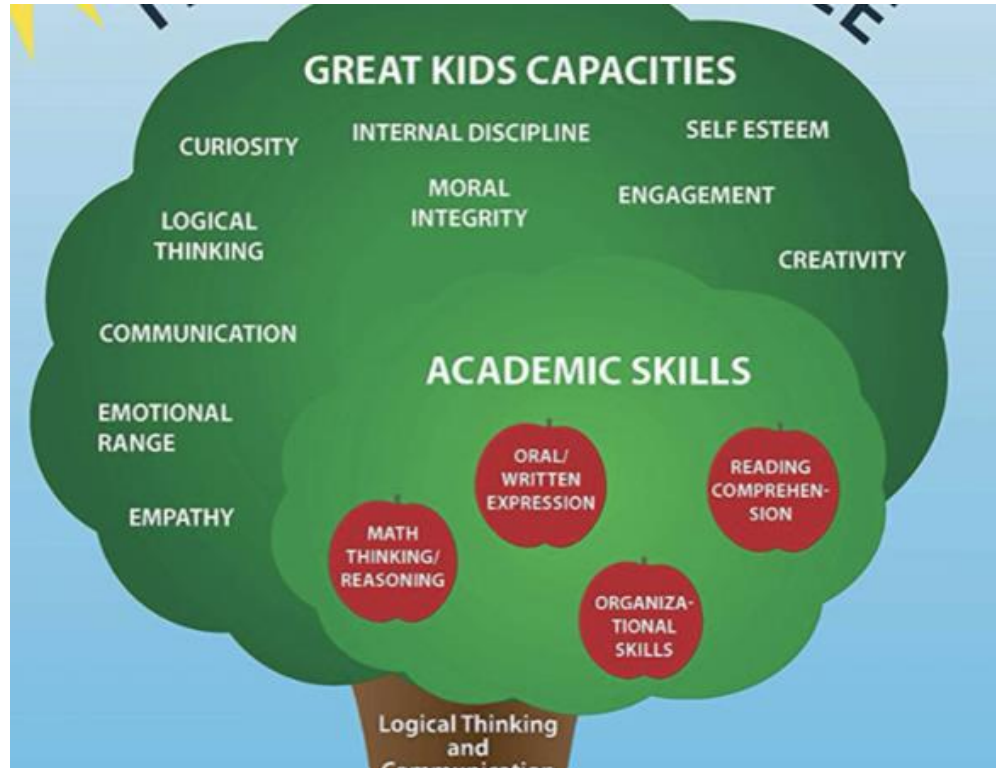




Trunk



Branches





Us





Green, Orange, Red



Green, Orange, Red

In this zone the student is calm and engaged. On the whole we are working to being seen as a trusted adult in students lives and guide their learning

We can work on behaviour shaping in here. For example introducing visuals, social stories, contingency maps, sensory diets.

In this zone we are working on returning a student to a engaged state.

In this zone we can use strategies to guide a student back that they are familiar with. For example highlighting the social story, first/then, timers, one more etc.

In this zone we are mainly managing safety. We are not placing demands on a student but attempting to help resolve distress and return to a orange or green state.





Leading others in this approach

- Needs guidance, reflection and affirmation
- Need to stay focussed on empowering others
- Need to stay objective
- Role Model - all teams follow their leaders



Investing in your people



Rational Detachment

“the ability to manage your own behavior and attitude
and not take the behavior of others personally”



To stay empathetic and engaged it takes resilience



The myth of resilience

Resilience is something we do or don't have.



Dimensions of resilience

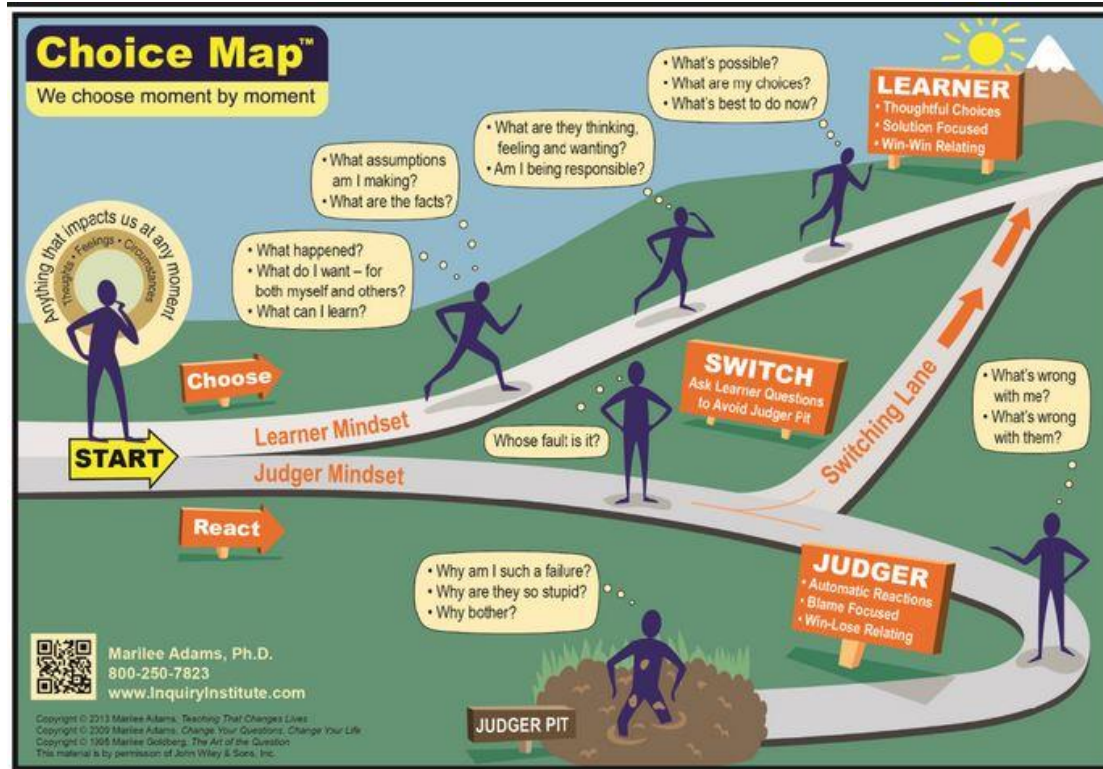
- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental



Physical

What does physical activity help with?

Emotional Resilience



Mental aspects





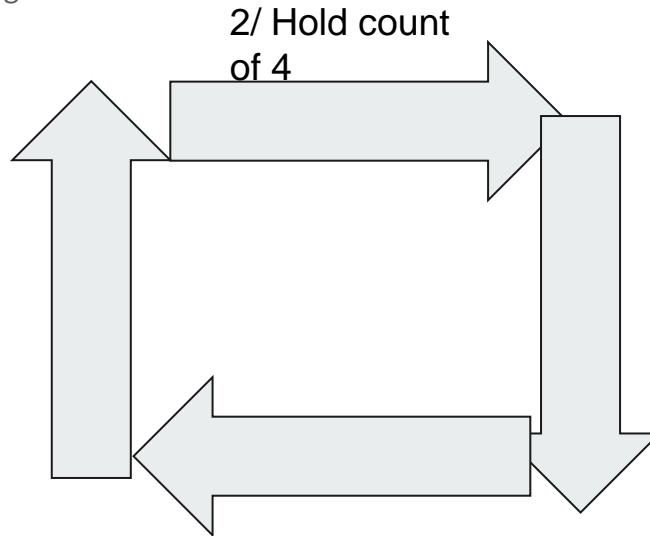
Mental resilience

Getting stuck in patterns - becoming a trigger

Physiological response

Battling against flight or fight

1/ Breath in
Count of 4



2/ Hold count
of 4

3/ Breathe out
count of 4

4/ Hold count
of 4

Triggering a relaxation response





Getting back to “Dean” 2019

Focus on engagement, empathy, creating roles and routines



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