**Crazy by Design Notes:**

**Babies**

- Babies need the actual human face/voice to wire the neurons in the brain. Babies shown a human face

on the TV reading the same book and a puppet reading the book did not have the same effect)

- You can’t “fool” a baby. They know if the mother doesn’t like them (look of distain) They can’t be

tricked and it affect them “The Gaze”

- The brain does not develop due to neglect, even if they have food, clothing, shelter.

**Infantile Puberty**

- Connecting neurons by repeating verbal (why?) or physical movements (opening & closing doors)

- Language is recognized and learned (we only hear 1 “d” but in other languages there are 4 “d” sounds)

**Juvenile Pause**

– 10-13 years – everything is calm, children want to be with parents, able to identify facial expressions

**Puberty / Adolescence**

- Hormones turned back “ON”!

- The Polysided Adolescent - moments of mayhem / greatest brain change / appearance anxiety

- The “Wild” brain – when thoughts outrace judgement so that action is taken before the thought of

consequence occurs. This is why you do NOT ask – “Why did you do that?” – They don’t know why!

- Time of “Rebirth” – social justice, racism, and social issues are very important

- Even though adolescents are very verbally competent; they are not “adult thinking”

- In puberty the teen will misread and over-react to facial expression (they are now judging the face)

- A child that is surrounded with interactions (good/bad) is constantly getting “drugs” because the

interactions release endorphins /adrenaline/opiates depending on whether it is a positive or negative

interaction. Therefore their body may not react as dramatically when they try alcohol/drugs because it

is used to the “drugs”

- Sleep importance – this age group is the most sleep deprived. School should not start before 10:30.

Melatonin flows in the brain for 2 hours after using the screen and should not be used before bed.

- Internet Insanity- the worst effects is a profound lack of sleep. Linked to isolation, depression, suicidal

risk, cyber relationships

- Puberty is a time of anxiety – academic/performance/appearance – the “imaginary audience” is always

watching and parent/peer pressure to “do the right thing” while wanting to “experiment” and “belong”

- During puberty boys don’t like the “smell” of their mothers (testosterone vs estrogen)

- The Pre-frontal Cortex is developing: helps plan ahead / resists impulses / reasoning / motivation and

until it is developed they are not “grown up”

- Being able to hold two conflicting ideas at the same time increases maturation (I don’t like the teacher

but continue to go to class)

- Being able to tolerate bad feeling – another sign of maturity

**Parents – What can we do?**

- Adolescent parenting changes from: “Parenting to Protect” to “Parenting to Prepare”

- You can’t force them to be you. Your teen is a version of you – but don’t own it!

- Memory (pre-verbal) responses will occur when you are tested even though you don’t remember why

you are responding that way. (Your own parenting responses under stress may be similar to the

parenting you experienced before you can really remember it. It has been “programmed” into your

subconscious)

- Talking through emotional issues is beneficial because it uses both sides of the brain – emotional and

logical and it jumps between the two as the issue is discussed.

- Pay attention to “First Love” – there are HUGE emotions here!!

- After sex there are huge amounts of hormones released and this creates the “love” feeling which

causes attachment. If your teen is having sex, these attachment feelings are especially strong since it

is the first time these “drugs” are being felt.

- Everything you “do” has an emotional attachment and is bookmarked so that not only do you

remember the event but you also have an emotion related to it. (grudges are held this way)

- Social nuances are also an important aspect of maturation.

- Don’t always listen to your brain – think both from your brain and your gut!

- Relationships established and nurtured when there is no stress makes a big difference in times of stress

- A hug and “I love you and we will get through this together” is more effective than what you really feel

like doing to them!!

- For a teen to be open for influence they need relationships

- Kids are looking from you: Trust / Caring / Acceptance / Respect

- Remember - frontal lobes are wide open to copying behaviours – our kids confront us with ourselves.

- Work harder on Connection than Correction

- Work harder on Investment than Investigation

**Respect: What increases your kids respect for you:**

- Honesty

- Admit your mistakes

- Help-her

- Consistency

- Show-up

- Offer affection

- Don’t take yourself too seriously

- Set aside your own needs for them

- Hold it together

- Apologize for yelling

- Tell them when you are sad or scared

- Say nothing – work hard

- Show how you handle the tough stuff

- Never raise a hand in anger

- Be a long distance runner in relationships

- Be powerful and distinctive in your own right

- Don’t tell her what to do

- Teach by living your own life

- Never take cheap verbal shots

- Act as the grown-up

- You listen about drugs and drinking – and do neither

**How to Destroy Respect:**

- Finding hidden stashes

- Having sexual affairs

- Irresponsibility - How small you look after your 6th beer

- Demanding or begging for affection

- When you retaliate in kind for his hurtful words to you

- When you act as small minded as they are acting

- Showing weakness of character (when a father punches his own son – even if the son deserved it)

- Using sarcasm – you shrink in size every time you use sarcasm

- When you resort to anger to get things done

- When you become a child yourself

**How to Communicate with your Teen:**

- Use fewer words in shorter sentence

- Do not repeat yourself

- Lower your voice

- Do not be domineering, judgemental or negative

- Keep your hands down

- Use “I” statements

- But never say” I told you so”

- Organize your thoughts before you start to talk

- Gauge your kid’s mood before starting the tough questions

- Don’t cram too much into one conversation

- Allow your child the pressure relief valve of walking out at times

- Don’t go to ultimatums unless absolutely necessary

- Don’t get personally involved

- Separate a trust infraction from other rule infractions

- Your initial response should be one of delay

- Ask them what they think should happen when there is a betrayal of trust

- Keep the focus on the betrayal of trust and not on the nature of the punishment

- If they speak honestly and from the heart, you are finished

- Use probation – avoid life sentences

- Stay calm when they go nuts

**Books Referenced:**

The Female Brain by Louann Brizendine

The Male Brain by Louann Brizendine

Spark, The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain by J. Ratey

“Babies” by Patricia Kuhns – video