

Christine  
**GK**utzner M.Ed.,RCC  
Counseling services

TEL: 604.339.5774

EMAIL: christine@ckcounsellingservices.com

WEBSITE: www.ckcounsellingservices.com

## ***PARENTING MATTERS***

Volume 7

Newsletter

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The Fall has been absolutely gorgeous and I hope you and your family have been able to take advantage of the balmy weather! As a soccer Mom I can only say that I haven't had to take out the old wool socks and toque just yet!  
Enjoy Halloween!

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I would like to write about the evening seminar I went to given by Dr. Gordon Neufeld in April 2008 called Relationship Matters. Dr. Neufeld bases his work on attachment theory, and highlights the importance of the parent being the SECURE HOME BASE for their child. In essence, the parent is the child's primary attachment figure. What can interfere with the attachment relationship are powerful friends! When friends become your child's home base, you may notice your child's level of insecurity rising as this relationship does not offer the level of security and guidance necessary for emotional safety. Your child may then be scrambling to keep in touch by phone or MSN as a way of staying connected to this tenuous relationship.

So much of parenting is giving your child a direction or a request, not being connected enough to your child can lead to them following the bidding of their friends and resisting their parents requests. When a child is not strongly attached to a parent or a teacher, you will often hear threats from the adult as they attempt to impose their will over the child's resistance.

Dr. Neufeld believes that children need to be attached in the DEPENDENT MODE, a position where the child looks up to the care taker. The ALPHA MODE is where a person assumes the responsibility to take care of and to be in charge of dependents. The Alpha instinct is to lead and not to follow. Children who are "Alpha" parent their parents and boss their parents around. These are children who don't respect their parent as being the care-taker in charge and must have the last word. Parents need to be in the Alpha position, and need to be the designated compass point for their children.

One way to strengthen the attachment relationship is to remember the 3 R's of raising children.

1. Relationship: Highlight and give focus to your parent/child relationship. Paint a picture with your words describing your relationship with your child or give them a metaphor that exists between the two of you. (Do this for each one of your children).
2. Rest. All growth comes from rest. Children need to rest in our love with the confidence and feeling "nothing can separate you from my love." If your child says "I need a hug," always give more than what they are asking for. This is a sign that they haven't been getting "enough" of what they need. Once they are "filled," they can rest in this comfort.
3. Room. There needs to be room for love, acceptance and differences. The more ways we have to "hang on" to our child, the deeper they will attach to their parent. The answer is in providing more attachment opportunities, and not less. My ideas for this involve creating "specialness" by:
  - Bedtime rituals (massaging head, tickling, prayer)
  - Singing a song that is just for the two of you
  - Going shopping for a special small item for birthday or Valentine every year
  - Making their favourite meal to honour them for that day
  - Making time to listen to what is going on at school or with friends without giving advice

I will continue to write more on Dr. Neufeld's presentation in next month's ezine

## **CHRISTINE KUTZNER COUNSELLING SERVICES 604-339-5774**

Christine Kutzner, M.Ed. is a Registered Clinical Counsellor providing services to children, parents and families in Vancouver, North and West Vancouver. To inquire contact Christine at [www.ckcounsellingservices.com](http://www.ckcounsellingservices.com).

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