

Chat with Neuroscientist Nicole Tetraeault, PhD

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler, Nicole Tetraeault

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Seth Perler 00:01

Hey, what's up parents and teachers? Guess what? It's Dr. Nicole Tetraeault. Say hi.

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Nicole Tetraeault 00:07

Hi.

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Seth Perler 00:10

And I recently got your early copy of your book here and started into it, I'm about at the chapter two, "You're Gifted." So, "Insight Into A Bright Mind," super stoked. Awesome. "A Neuroscientist Personal Stories of Unique Thinking." Thank you so much for writing this to parents and teachers. The reason that I wanted to make this video today is I'm loving the book and Nicole is also going to be on TEFOS, which is coming up this August, the executive function online summit for parents. Teachers, you're welcome to attend the summit. And I'm just loving this. I wanted to ask you something timely about what's going on right now with finishing this crazy school year. From your perspective, with your experience with the brain and kids, and ADHD and executive function, when parents and teachers are ending the school year, what do they do that in the school year? How can we deal with the summer? And how can we deal with the fall? Because it's been so chaotic. So

anyhow, Good morning. Hi.

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Nicole Tetreault 01:17

Good morning. Yeah.

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Seth Perler 01:20

So I like to say what we're doing, like right at the beginning, just so that people know what's happening here on the video. But yeah, I really wanted to dive into that with you. So just real quick, like, your background in the book, what's your experience that parents and teachers can be like, "Oh, yeah. I want to hear what she's got to say about this stuff."

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Nicole Tetreault 01:43

Yeah. So I mean, I think we know in the time that we're dealing with transitioning out of COVID, and kind of the process of sort of doing a lot of healing, you know, I mean, from the trauma of the experience itself, I think for a person with ADHD, we know in general, for example, executive functioning, develops a little later in life. It develops asynchronously. The challenge is when you've gone through trauma in a stressful situation, that really hits executive functioning networks even harder. We know in standard thinking, for example, in processing to do you know, that quick, rapid thinking there are 28 brain regions involved. Yeah, 28 of these connected together, you know, allowing an executive functioning decision to happen.

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Seth Perler 02:45

Can I ask you this? So in terms of..., can you share that brain again? In terms of executive function, I always say, we generally believe that executive function takes place in the prefrontal cortex, or the frontal lobe of the brain right here. Are there 20 regions there that are working?

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Nicole Tetreault 03:01

They're interconnected here, and then all throughout the parietal lobe, and also how you take in visual information and auditory information, and how that all plays into your memory and emotional memory. Then you have, it's called your parietal frontal cortex. The saliency of decision-making happens here in the frontal cortex that we're looking at. And for that to happen, a lot of networks need to be in place. And so we do know that, for example, in individuals with ADHD, that their frontal cortex really takes a little bit longer

to develop. It develops later in life, asynchronously. And then we know that the motor areas in the brain develop much more rapidly. And so you know, that's why they can have, you know, hidden enhanced motor capabilities and things like that, that can be asynchronous if this frontal cortex doesn't know how to manage it yet.

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Seth Perler 04:07

For those who haven't heard of asynchrony, that means that people's brains don't all develop synchronously, meaning that the different parts of the brain develop the same. So you take, let's say, 100 kids that are in fifth grade, we might think that their brains are developmentally developing at similar rates, and they might be similar, but they are outliers. So there are parts of brains that develop differently for different kids. So that's called asynchrony. For kids who are 2e or twice-exceptional or gifted and have learning disabilities, they can be very, very asynchronous. Where you have a kid, let's say their ability to write an essay again, let's just say fifth grade, is super hard. You know, they struggle, they hate writing. But they can read a book that's maybe high school level, not necessarily maturity wise, but like content wise. And so these discrepancies create a lot of problems for these kids. So I just wanted to define asynchrony real quick before we go on. So and then before we go on to like what to do for this spring, and I'm sorry that I cut you off, but I think it's really important for people watching, you use the word trauma, and I think it's a very misunderstood word. People often think, well, that, you know, somebody went through a true giant, traumatic experience, like they were in, let's say, in a big house fire that they escaped from or something. But you're suggesting, and I definitely agree with you, but that this whole entire past year has been traumatic. Can you just help us understand that?

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Nicole Tetreault 05:49

Yeah, so the way we describe, you know, the way trauma is described is exactly how you said. It could be an experience that is acute, where somebody has a car accident, or there can be chronic trauma going on, you know, where somebody basically is suffering, going into the classroom and everyday with bullying, you know, let's just put it on that school level. And so when we're looking at COVID, globally, the entire world has suffered a trauma, due to the social restrictions, due to obviously health and underlying restrictions where people have passed away, people have been very ill very sick. There's been a lot of flux, in jobs, tons of social justice situations that are in our growth that are happening right now, an awakening. And then on top of it, you have kids, where their entire systems for school have been torn away from them. And then when you get into Zoom burnout, we're not even talking about trauma anymore, we're just talking about total cognitive overload of being on camera all day, which is an unnatural way to interact. You're getting a one-

dimensional view of somebody where you're not in presence of getting natural social cues. You're looking at yourself at times, and you never would be, you'd be just talking to people and reflecting their experience back. So, I think even it's kind of messing with our mirror neuron system where we're not in the mirror neurons, we know, elicit when you're in a social connection, where you mirror one another. And so I think that's not even looking at the aspects of trauma, but for a child, for children in particular, we know that there's been increases in depression and anxiety related to the pandemic, and there's been in adults as well. And we know that is going to affect the nervous system. And then on top of it, if you're gifted, twice exceptional, and have ADHD, that could kind of impact you even more because your standard processing can be elevated, you can have hyper arousal and so it can change a lot of things within your nervous system and your daily activities. When we were kind of talking earlier, you really pointed out like, this summer is going to be kind of a big recovery, a big time for these kids to really integrate and be kids again.

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Seth Perler 08:54

Let's talk about that in a second because I want to. Yeah, so with this sort of setup, I want to get to really the meat of this in just a somewhat linear way in terms of okay now, with what how you set us up. It's spring, it's almost summer. So right now parents are in the final stretch, kids are in the final stretch, everybody's in the final stretch. It's spring fever. Everybody's sick of school anyway, in a typical year. This year, it's spring fever. Everybody's sick of school. Teachers are sick of it. They're ready for summer break. Parents are sick of it. Kids are definitely sick of it. Everybody has been through this traumatic experience. This happens anyway every year, the spring fever, but this year during the final stretch and spring fever, it is worse than I've ever seen it. More kids are failing, more kids are struggling, more kids are quote 'checked out.' Everybody gets checked out during the spring anyway, but now it's like so bad. And what we don't want is we don't want the kids to fail their classes, have to retake them, bla bla bla. What are your thoughts sort of in terms of, I guess, retaining as much executive function and helping kids to, quote, 'pass or finish the school year,' on the best foot possible. Do you have any thoughts? First of all with that, this end of the year, this next two months.

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Nicole Tetreault 10:07

Yeah. So for the end of the year, these next few months that we're looking at when it comes to spring fever, as Seth just said it, it's so obvious that kids really check out. Teachers check out, kids naturally check out right around after the holidays, the spring break, and they're ready. And I think what's made it even more challenging that these kids could be struggling with engagement. Engagement can be really altered or different right now, because they're Zooming, because they're not dealing with in-person

interactions, because they're having to turn things in, in unconventional ways online. They may get the assignments done, but boy, oh, boy, there may be challenges getting them in. And one thing that I think is really important, is that we don't want these kids to flunk out, especially when they have acquired and learned the knowledge. So one thing that parents can really do, I think, is really nurture the child. And I think this isn't a time for getting your executive functioning skills on your own. I don't think it's the time actually. I think it's a time that even there may be resistance, but actually parental involvement, and gentle guidance, and even offering support to check and make sure that the assignments are uploaded correctly, having to put the extra push in a Spanish class and maybe do the note cards and kind of encourage and sit with them. And, you know, and at the same time, I do think it's really important to allow a child to recover in this exact moment, to not override and put that crazy amount of pressure that everything in the world rides on their academic success in their grade. Because, as we all know, kids come into very unconventional paths. And more often than not, I really feel the ADHD kids, standard educational systems and quantifications of their success, really do underserve how gifted and how truly remarkable their brains and minds are. Because a lot of what you're tested for in school is executive functioning, it's not testing the standard ADHD child who tends to be more creative, more in their mind, more excited by their environment, and in what things you know, kind of bring to their environment. And so for a parent, I think it's really, and for teachers, is to really allow the child the space to build the strength of even their imagination that work, which tends to be in quiet opposition with executive functioning. The way that I want to explain that to you is that often when you're in your imagination network, that's called your 'default mode' network, it's the brain network that's really responsible for your daydreaming, your imagination, is on while you're meditating, you're sleeping, when you're deep, creative, hyper flow. I really want to encourage parents to embrace that type of way of being for these kids. So often they get pushed out of that natural state of being in that default mode that work and push, push into executive functioning and get X, Y and Z done. And not to say that it is not important to teach kids deadlines and getting things in on time or, you know, studying on a final, but I also think that there needs to be extra communication with teachers to allow flexibility, and to allow a child say for example, they kind of blew it. Spring hit, they're doing a little more, they want to be outside more, they want to do other things and maybe they're behind five assignments, and the school has a policy of no turning in late work. I would really advocate that parents talk and communicate and say, "Look, my kids struggling, we need to add in some support here. They're going to get the work done. Can we look at different schedules and different ways we could turn in assignments?" And so I think that's something that's really important. The other thing too is a child could flame out by missing five assignments, let's say, and that's not going to be any reflection that they didn't obtain the information. So I think, let's really see how they obtain the information and let them turn it in. And at the same time, I also think homework needs to kind of

lighten up a bit because these kids are spending so much time on their screen that they do need time to recover from that. And they need time, they need time to be in the optimal way their system responds and experiences the world.

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Seth Perler 16:03

Those are awesome. Thank you so much. And just to recap, I think what I heard you say is, first of all parents can do some of the executive function things for their kids and that's not cheating. You can if you have the time, and you understand the tech, and you can just turn it in for them in two seconds, and it would take them 10 minutes, or they'd forget it and they'd have zero or whatever. There is nothing wrong with that. And same with organizing things. I have kids that are now getting into hybrid. Now they're going back to school, right now in April. Well, now they have to deal with actual physical papers now and they haven't been practicing that skill. So for parents to organize the stuff for them, and things like that, to email the teachers for them. This is not cheating, there's nothing wrong with that, for those of you who might think there is. That support can really, and this is what you got to next Nicole, can really allow them to focus on the learning, which is why they're there not to prove that they can do all these things. And then another thing that you mentioned, this is a true story from yesterday, one of my teenage girls that I coach, she was telling me how she was so stressed because she had just turned something in, it was late, the teacher gave her half off, 50% credit. And then she has a final giant project that's, that's due and she's already late on it. So she just doesn't have the motivation to do it and she's so worried that she's not going to get into, and she's a sophomore, and is so worried she's not going to get into the college she wants and that her grades are going to be bad. My response to her was, who cares? Who cares about your grade? Who cares if you even fail it, or get a C or a bunch, that's not going to keep you out of college. I failed out of college, I dropped out of a second college before I failed out, I still ended up getting back into college. You know, it's like, what if you don't get in? She said about her college of choice and stuff. We have these stories about these things. And it's like, who cares? I care about your mental health. That's what I'm worried about here. She was so anxious. And it's like, that's what matters right now is what you need right now. For the teachers watching, if you like knock off 50% of a grade for being late, I'm telling you just rethink where you got these messages in your training or your upbringing, and is it accurate? And is it necessary right now? It really infuriates me just to see a kid like this who's struggling, and then they've worked really hard on it and they finally got in late, and then they're punished with 50% off. Does that mean that they learned 50% less? No, they probably worked harder than a lot of people to get that thing in. And then how daunting it is to like finish the final project and know that you're only going to get 50%? It's just, it's, it's like what are we doing? I'm not a fan of grades anyway, I think they're morally wrong. But so I just wanted to recap that. If I missed anything, let me know. But then this is awesome, and

then you also said really focus on your...

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Nicole Tetreault 19:02

Can I just jump off of what you said?

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Seth Perler 19:04

Please, yes.

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Nicole Tetreault 19:05

I think it's so valuable, the story you shared. Because the other thing that's really, really critical is that having a child come into the classroom, or a young adult, you know, adolescent age, when you're telling somebody that you get 50% of work, and they're already activating stress circuitry. Learning is directly inhibited. So you're basically causing that child, that well adolescent now, to not learn, first of all. Second of all, it also really interferes with their motivation and their self-esteem. You know, that when we talked about trauma early on, getting a grade that you're barely passing, I mean that's 50%, you're getting an F still point wise. Basically, it's just saying it didn't matter, you did this. And the self-esteem, the recovering from that self-esteem can take years. So I think it's really important what Seth pointed out, that this is mental health that we're looking at. When you have a child who has literally different wiring for their executive functioning, and their ability to finish projects in a different type of manner, you're punishing them for a way that really is innate in their being. It's not in their ability to be any different. I really, really would like to push teachers with your message as well, to really reevaluate and to think about when somebody turns in something late. I understand, it may not be fair to the other kids who turned it in on time. But maybe instead of 50% off, looking at maybe 10 points, and really grading the student on their ability of the work that was produced rather than their ability to turn work in under a arbitrary deadline.

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Seth Perler 21:20

I think that's a great point too If you really insist on making it have the story about fairness, again, I'm going from a premise that grades are archaic anyway. So I'm different in how I would approach that, but yeah, five points, two points, one point. It's got to feel like it can be a win for them.

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Nicole Tetreault 21:42

Yes.

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Seth Perler 21:43

You know, or a point today, not 25% a day, but you know, like, rethink it. I love how you said 'rethink it,' like make it and make it a success experience. So this is awesome and I love the way you articulate things. Now we're getting into summer, and a lot of times during the summer, parents are worried about summer reading lists, summer homework, keeping up with things, camps, blah, blah, blah. What I had mentioned to you before earlier was like executive function over summer, but not that it feels like it. I think it's so important that oh my gosh, talk about the word decompression or pressure cooker and taking off the pressure valve on a pressure cooker. This summer, what are your thoughts to parents and teachers as they're planning for the upcoming fall? And then we'll talk about fall in a moment. But this summer, teachers will be planning for their fall, even though we don't know what that's going to look like. The teachers spend a lot of time during the summer working towards their falls. And then parents and their kids this summer, what kind of thoughts pop into your head that we need to take note of?

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Nicole Tetreault 22:47

Yeah, um, well, one, I mean, a lot of thoughts pop into my head. But to break them down, first and foremost I think for teachers and for students is finding your resources. Find the things that you love doing, and do them, and do them a lot. That's going to really kind of rebalance and recenter your nervous system that has been so hurled into shock over the past year. And I think when I say with teachers, you know, a lot of the people we talked about self-care and and things like that. And really offering yourself the space to not be a teacher, author yourself the space to think about caring for what your day-to-day needs are, and how can you kind of create and help your mental physical and emotional and intellectual health? What are things that stimulate you? And and where do you see yourself wanting to grow as a human being and grow as an educator, and to really help expanding the minds of the next generation. Really giving yourself a gift of a pause, to really, put down the textbooks put down the teaching hat and give yourself the gift to be in your surroundings and do what you love. If it's hiking, taking long walks, reading different types of books, whatever it is, playing the guitar, you know, I see you have all those beautiful guitars behind you, whatever it is. We're getting to kind of gather again and go to concerts. So really things that kind of uplift you. Then for families, it's going to be really a different summer than last summer because I feel like we're like breaking out of our chrysalis, you know, and moving into the butterfly state where we've been cocooning.

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Seth Perler 25:02

And you had mentioned the word transitions way earlier before the interview. Yeah, so this might be a good time also. I think that's what you're talking about, but I just wanted to bring that back.

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Nicole Tetreault 25:12

Yeah. Exactly, like we're, we're in a state of transition, half of the population, maybe a little less, I don't know, the stats right now, in this moment, but we're getting vaccinated. We're able to go back out again and gather as a society. For example, in California, the hope is everybody's going to be vaccinated who wants to be at the end of the May, early June. And so that takes a transition to just, what was life like, when we went to the grocery store and it was much more crowded? What was going to the park like, and, you know, playing with a kid on the playground? What was that like? We've been so recluse and so I think there's going to be a little bit of transitioning and growing in terms of social. I talked about it in my book, social attention, what is social and emotional connection? And how do we kind of move in that direction? The other thing with transitioning out of school for these kids and into summer, is really allowing them moments of rest. What I love that you put is, executive functioning doesn't have to be, you know, something that is a muscle you're kind of pushing on every day, but it could be just sort of lifting light weights like helping mom and dad organize the refrigerator, helping clean out the garage, helping organize your room. But not so much to where there's this end goal, but it's just kind of gently practicing and building these muscles in your mind and body connection. And I think the other thing that I think is so critically important is, again, for kids to give them activities that they love, that focus on that strength based model that Dr. Susan Baum has developed with her colleagues at Bridges, Bridges Academy. I think it's just so important that when kids are building that muscle strength, things that they naturally love, there is nothing you're doing wrong. You're doing everything right because you're building the natural neural networks that they have that are unique to them, and they're able to kind of flourish in their natural ways of being. I think the other thing is to also get them in those activities that they love with kids that like the same types of things. Naturally, those social connections will kind of flow based on the enrichment and the engagement of the activity they're doing. And then, you know, finally, to give them a break. Not unlimited, not, I mean, give them a lot of time to explore those imaginations. Give them a lot of time to process things in the way that they would. And I know you mentioned these summer reading lists and getting through the summer reading list. And, you know, if you have a kid who doesn't like to sit there for hours, try audiobooks, try something different. Give them ways to learn that information where it doesn't feel like a challenge, but it feels enjoying, enjoy and engaging.

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Seth Perler 28:58

Thank you. And I definitely want to mention to what you mentioned earlier about advocacy. If you have a kiddo and you're like, "We really don't want to be doing the summer reading list, the summer this homework, or this." Feel free to email the school and whatever and speak your truth. Like if you're like, my kid needs to not even think about this for weeks. For parents that are highly driven, and highly driven by task lists and checking things off, and your kid struggles with executive function, their brain isn't yours. And they really do need healing decompression time. Like they need really, I think kids really, I really hope they get like a month where they don't even think about any of this stuff, just really need spaciousness. Okay. Awesome. And then let's wrap up.

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Nicole Tetreault 29:52

I think you're totally right. And can I just, I want to add to that because I think it's so important.

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Seth Perler 29:57

We could probably talk for hours, right?

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Nicole Tetreault 29:59

Yeah. But I also think the advocacy piece that you said too is so important, because you could also turn it into, "My kid wants to do this, you know, my kid wants to build a Lego village." Right, um, let them bring that in as their summer project, let them share something that is meaningful to them, that'll change. I think, yeah, I know, maybe the summer reading, we throw that out this summer. And kids come back and say, "This is what I did with my free time," and you learn about all their natural strengths and things, and then that will better inform the teacher how to teach them in the fall.

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Seth Perler 30:43

That is an awesome point. And then that brings me to the, yeah, that was that page that I was looking at here with the common strengths, and you list all these things. But when you were just talking, I was thinking, even building forts in the woods is like, amazing. And people wouldn't look at that and say, "Oh, my gosh, so much learning and brain work." But yes, it did. And I love that you have like, this is on page 67. But you're talking about these common strengths. And you're saying eloquent verbal expression, highly imaginative, distinctly creative, innovative problem solver, thinking outside the box, internally

motivated, blah, blah, blah, highly empathetic. So there are things even with something like that, where they could be having interactions with people. And if you think about, like, multiple intelligence theory, and they're having all these interpersonal connections, and nobody would think, "Oh, my gosh, that's a summer project," or there were, but yes, they're developing incredible skills that may make them really good at what they do, and in the future. So there's just ways to really and I think that that's an awesome idea, because teachers can. Yes, look at that, what's your own choice, quote, project that, that you did, but it's we so go through the filter of math, science, social studies, language, arts, blah, blah, that in terms of if we were to look at, like a list of what their strengths are, that's where a mind would initially go. Now, when it's the things I think when you're like bragging about your kid, and like, my kid, is so good at this thing or that thing. And it's not like one of those, you know, math, science, social studies type things you're like, you're just really authentically talking about what you love about your kid. Like, that's a lot of their strengths to develop.

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Nicole Tetreault 32:20

Yes. And when you see your kid, when you're like, you're so different than me, and you're so amazing for it, I think that's what we forget. They are not. Your kid is not a clone of you, your kid never will be. And they are here to teach you lessons on how to be better and how to think differently.

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Seth Perler 32:42

Cool. And then as fall starts, and we start this new, brand new school year, kids are going to be in their next grade and all this stuff. They've just been through this trauma, some healing, certainly not done healing. And and there's going to be, I think, a big inclination for a lot of people, because we're so patterned, well intended people, but excuse my phone, but to it's going to be an inclination to get back to whatever normal and get things back how they were. And what do you think we should sort of get back to things as quick as we can? Or should we enter this fall a little bit differently?

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Nicole Tetreault 33:22

Yeah, I mean, well, we were talking about summer transitions, I think fall transitions apply as well. And I think, first of all, we've hit a level of a new normal, and the summer is going to be another new normal, and the fall is going to be another new normal. And I think that with our past information, and everything we learned is that we need to pace it, you know, and allow, allow time for transition. Because I think if we, you know, some kids, I mean, we hope kids are all going to be back in school in the fall. You know, that I think that's the

hope. But I think, you know, with the way this pandemic has been, there are still so many different things up in the air. You know, we're getting vaccinated, we're hoping it's effective and and we're feeling it is, but also be open to things taking time for transitions. Taking that time that we still don't know. We're all doing our best with the model. And I think, yeah, I think when we start the school year, you know, I really advocate lessening the homework load. Really, really allowing the kids to kind of transition to the new learning style of being in the classroom and being in presence. I think it's really important that we let the kids, you know, I think we need to ask the kids. I think that so often we want to have it solved. I think we need to ask our kids, what do you need during this transition? And maybe even schools doing giant questionnaires for their family populations. What do we need to do better? What are your kids needs this coming school year? And how can we make this new transition even better? I don't think it's going to be normal. I mean, I think we're just kind of in gradations of different types of normal. And the word normal is just so weird to me, because nothing's normal.

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Seth Perler 35:48

Yeah, and I have, like, three fears that come up around this. One is that we still have these things called standards and common core and standardized tests and all these things. The system, so to speak, still tells the story. And the, the fear is that the teachers are still going to feel the top-down pressure to cover material, to cover the curriculum, and to cover the standards, rather than focusing on what you said. What do the kids need? What does their mental health need? What do we need during this time? So there's top-down pressure on teachers to cover. So that's a concern of mine, hopefully, and I know, there's amazing teachers and principals out there and amazing leaders and a lot of the principals who are going to really empower their staff, but there's also principals out there that are very, we gotta keep, you know, whatever our data looking like, whatever. So that's one thing. Another fear is kind of what you alluded to, is we don't know what's going to happen. Well, there could be bizarre variants, there could be a, God forbid, a new pandemic, bla bla, but we just don't know. And one thing I do know, is, I think we will be thrown curveballs because I would be shocked if we weren't thrown a curveball as a world or as a country and this fall. And the third thing is, I forget this. So yeah, so anyhow, I just want to point those out to people just to keep, if those are concerns of yours, just keep it in the back of your mind so that we're not shocked if things change this fall. And so that if we do feel all of this pressure that our kids have to now cover their own work, and it feels like it's trying to get back to normal and it's not working, advocate, advocate, advocate, advocate. Speak up. You're not the only one.

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Nicole Tetreault 37:53

— Yeah, beautifully said.

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Seth Perler 37:56

So cool. All right. Any final thoughts? Oh, I did want to ask, do you have a favorite part? Personally, that you enjoyed writing the most or was just so close to your art in there?

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Nicole Tetreault 38:15

Um, you know, there's pieces, different chapters, that I really like, I loved the interview I did with Ken in the ADHD chapter. He didn't find out he had until later in life, he was an adult with ADHD. I really enjoy the interviews with the O'Kelley family, talking about autism spectrum. And I really hope that we start looking at neurodiversity with a more inclusive lens. Yeah, and I enjoyed some of the stuff about mirror neurons and emotional intelligence. Chapter nine was fun, you know, trying to pull out the positives. So yeah, it was fun.

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Seth Perler 39:04

When I was talking to the student that I mentioned earlier, I was talking to her about the bell curve, and how the bell is being smashed and more and more people are outliers. And I think that that's really important and looking at how we are trying to push all these kids through systems, school systems, that are pretty outdated in a lot of ways. With amazing teachers and well intentioned people, but nonetheless, the bones of the system are outdated and needed 2.0 or 3.0. And, and it's not happening. And so, but the outliers are becoming more, the neurodiverse people. I don't know if there are more of them, or if they're just more evident now, but either way, about what percentage of, and this is a data question. I think it's relevant because there are so many outliers and we still are teaching to this. So I just think it's notable to say what percentage of kids do you think really are a neurodiverse?

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Nicole Tetreault 40:13

Yeah, so that's a really great question. And one thing I love, when we talk about the bell curve, I also like to point out, like, we're looking at a standard bell curve, and we're looking at the ends here. What was really important when you have gifted and 2e kids, they're kind of all over that bell curve.

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Seth Perler 40:30

Or there are many bells. So yeah.

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Nicole Tetraeault 40:37

And I think the thing is, is that a couple of things are coming to light. Intelligence is much more expansive than what we put into the model that really centers highly on executive functioning. And so we look at that about, I would say at least 20% of the population falls into that, which includes giftedness, ADHD, autism spectrum, dyslexia, dysgraphia. And, you know, along all those lines, that is not including emotional and mental challenges, such as anxiety and depression, which I do think fit into the realm of neurodiversity as well. And so when I did the estimate in my book, putting it all together, it was more like 40%. But I do think there's overlaps. And by a conservative measure, a lot of experts say about 20%. So, when you're thinking about that, that's about one in five kids in the classroom, but I think it could be a little bit more than that. Because it's really the way an individual perceives and receives and responds to the world. And so it's definitely, we got it, we have an army of people that are living it with really different brain wiring that provides for different behaviors and responses the world.

S

Seth Perler 42:24

Awesome, thanks so much. And I think the relevance in that question and this stuff is that, yeah, they are different, they have different needs. It's not cookie-cutter. And I'm just so... and I think this is why you and I do what we do. So sick and tired of seeing people suffer when they're trying to conform to these paradigms, rather than those things conforming more to their needs.

N

Nicole Tetraeault 42:51

And also, I think the other thing is they get missed. Their natural, natural true gifts of what they offer the world get missed.

S

Seth Perler 43:03

Yes.

N

Nicole Tetraeault 43:03

I think that that in itself does such a disservice where you can, a lot of these kids suffer

from low self-evaluation, feeling low self-efficacy. And so the more that we can see their strengths and build their strengths, and bring in supports where they need help, the better the world is because they feel good about themselves. And they help us with things that we haven't thought of. They think about things in such a different way and communicate. And I think it's so important to see these perspectives because it helps all of the world.

S

Seth Perler 43:53

Yeah, then they can really shine, shine their light rather than spend years trying to figure out who they are and unlearn things. And well, cool. Well, thank you so much, Nicole, I really appreciate you any final words before we go or?

N

Nicole Tetreault 44:08

Final words is so much gratitude for you and to be here with you today. It's been awesome. And I'm really proud of all the work you're doing to help these people. It's just it's so incredible the work you do in the lives that you're making such a difference.

S

Seth Perler 44:28

Thank you. And likewise, thank you. Thank you. Alright, everybody, have a good day. Oh, I don't even know if I introduce myself. I'm Seth, SethPerler.com. You can get freebies and stuff on the blog and you like this, hey, put your thoughts in the comments. What do you think? Give it a thumbs up because of the algorithm and all that stuff. I'm a bit cynical about it. But seriously, have a great day. Go connect with your child. Take care.