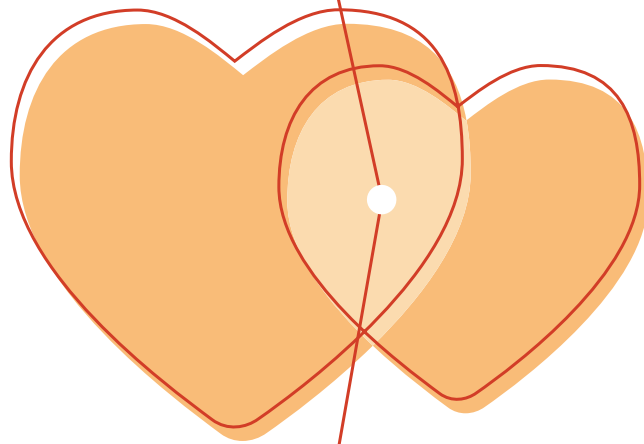


*The*

# CONNECTION

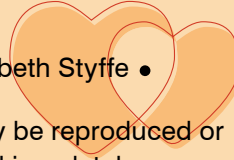


*WHERE HEARTS MEET*

**KARYN PURVIS, PhD with ELIZABETH STYFFE**

## THE CONNECTION: *WHERE HEARTS MEET*

Workbook Edition 1.0



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# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to you. If you are reading this workbook you are probably the parent or caretaker of an at-risk and vulnerable child. Everything we have put into this book is for you. Raising a child that has experienced early-life trauma and abandonment is the most challenging and important task you will ever take on. We understand the joy and sorrow you have welcomed into your life and thank you for opening your heart, soul and home to God's precious, hurt children. We are with you on this life journey.

*A father to the fatherless . . . is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families.*

Psalm 68:5–6 (NIV)

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Romans 12:2 (NIV)



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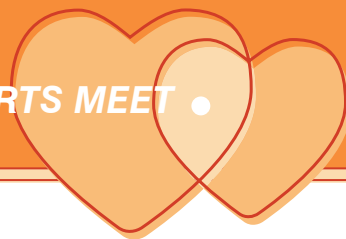
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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### **KARYN PURVIS, PhD**

Director of the Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University (TCU)

During the past decade, **Karyn Purvis** and her colleagues at the Institute have invested their efforts towards developing research-based interventions for at-risk children. Throughout her life, Karyn's personal and professional calling has been to

create a welcoming, loving environment for children who come from “hard places.” Foster and adoption issues have always been at the heart of her work, and when her own children were small, she served as a foster mother to many children. She received her masters and doctorate degrees in Developmental Psychology from TCU. Dr. Purvis developed and directs the **Hope Connection®**, a research and intervention summer day camp for adopted children. She also coauthored *The Connected Child* (2007). Within six months of publication, *The Connected Child* earned the rank as a best-seller in adoption books.<sup>1</sup>

[www.child.tcu.edu](http://www.child.tcu.edu)



<sup>1</sup> Edited excerpt from Dr. Karyn Purvis bibliography on [www.child.tcu.edu/facultystaff.asp](http://www.child.tcu.edu/facultystaff.asp).



### **ELIZABETH STYFFE, RN PHN MN**

Director of Global Orphan Care, The PEACE Plan at Saddleback Church

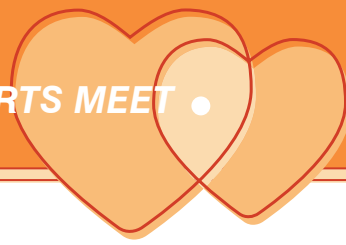
**Elizabeth Styffe** is the Director of **Global Orphan Care Initiatives of the PEACE Plan** at Saddleback Church. Elizabeth founded this initiative and is a recognized leader in developing innovative, sustainable, scalable solutions to the global orphan crisis with an emphasis on permanency for every child. She specializes in coordinating efforts between government, private

and public partnerships, helping churches launch effective responses which eliminate the need for institutionalized care. She promotes best practices for children, which are church-initiated, focused on ending the orphan crisis through reunification or adoption. A pediatric nurse, Elizabeth graduated from Biola University and earned a Master's degree in Nursing Administration from UCLA. Prior to joining the PEACE Plan, she cofounded the HIV Initiative, was an executive in health care, a nursing professor and has authored and coauthored multiple articles, including a text on Quality Management.

Married for 29 years, Elizabeth and her husband Glenn have seven children, three of whom were adopted from Rwanda.

**[www.OrphansandtheChurch.com](http://www.OrphansandtheChurch.com)**.





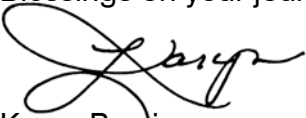
## A NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

*THE CONNECTION: Where Hearts Meet* is the fulfillment of a shared dream to empower the Church to become a healing force in the lives of at-risk children. Two years ago, Elizabeth Styffe, of Saddleback Church shared her vision for a

series of DVDs that would become practical tools for families who foster and adopt. Under her leadership, that vision has become a cherished reality. Our hope for this DVD series is to provide parents a safe place in which to explore their needs and the needs of their children. Each session is designed to provide insight for the parenting journey. In addition, each session in this workbook contains an element of self-reflection to empower parents in their own healing. The information presented here corresponds with Dr. Purvis' book *The Connected Child*. We suggest you read this book as you go through this study. Although it is not necessary, it will help you understand the material in a deeper way. We believe that the Church is uniquely capable of offering hope and healing for even the highest-risk children and their families and it is our prayer that these materials will become a springboard for that healing journey.

All families at times face struggles and difficulties, but for families who adopt or foster children who have come from the "hard places" those struggles and difficulties are often greatly increased in intensity and complexity. From the foundations of our faith, from our own personal experiences, and from our research, we have come to the conviction that there is no child who cannot come to profound levels of healing despite their early hardships. However, this journey is often difficult and arduous, and we believe that it is the heart of God's love and the very nature of discipleship for the Church to provide practical training, loving support and ongoing encouragement to both children and parents. Our calling, our passion, our greatest hope is that within the context of *THE CONNECTION: Where Hearts Meet* that families will find peace, empowerment and joy in their journey.

Blessings on your journey,



Karyn Purvis



Elizabeth Styffe



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR WORKBOOK

a journey-mate—possibly a spouse, close friend, or ministry partner—is helpful in processing the training materials. As you actively engage in this journey for your own life, you will bring fresh insights to the members of your group. You will also find it beneficial to read the corresponding book *The Connected Child*.<sup>2</sup>

**The Connection** is designed to be utilized in a small group setting with other foster/adoptive parents. Although some participants may prefer to do the assignments alone, we find that having



## SESSION SECTIONS

**GOALS:** Learning objectives for each session.

**OPENING GROUP QUESTIONS:** Questions to get your group talking about various topics.

**DVD INTRODUCTION:** A brief explanation of that week's DVD teaching.

**TEACHING NOTES:** Use these as you follow along with the DVD teaching.

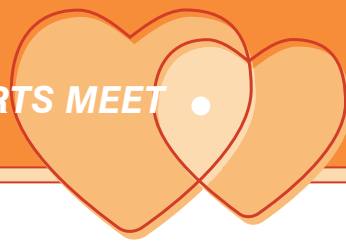
**GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Everyone may or may not want to answer specific questions. Use these as a guide for conversation. Don't feel like everyone has to answer each question or that the group as a whole needs to get to every question.

**PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME:** Reflective reading and activities to help you with practical application of the session's teaching.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** Various books, websites or the source of articles mentioned in that week's teaching session.

---

<sup>2</sup> Purvis, Cross & Sunshine, 2007



## THINGS YOU WILL NEED FOR THIS STUDY

DVD, Workbook, The Bible, *The Connected Child* (optional)

For those using *The Connected Child* as support material, please note that there are three sessions corresponding to Chapter 6 of the book. Because behavioral problems are often among parents' greatest challenges, we have elaborated on specific skills and tools that can enhance parent-child interactions and return joy to these relationships.

## *Session One*

# INTRODUCTION TO HOPE AND HEALING



*Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; You will  
cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

Isaiah 58:9 (NIV)

***The Connection Child: Chapter 1***

## *Session One*

# INTRODUCTION TO HOPE AND HEALING

### GOALS

- To create a safe place for you to share you and your child's story. To "give you voice" in the same way we hope to teach you how to "give voice" to your children.
- To begin to develop insight about the needs of the whole child.

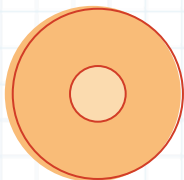
### OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Take a moment to go around the group and introduce yourself. Be sure to include your children and if you have adopted/fostered or plan to.
2. What are you expecting from this study? How does meeting with a group give you some hope for change?

3. What are you not looking forward to in this study? What would it take for this to be a support for you?

### DVD INTRODUCTION

Dr. Karyn Purvis is the director of the Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas. Her primary research is with children who are fostered or adopted. Over a decade of research and work has led to the development of an intervention called Trust Based Relational Intervention™ (TBRI™). TBRI™ is a family-based intervention designed for children who have experienced early childhood trauma such as institutionalization or foster placement. The following principles (Empowering, Connecting and Correcting) will help us, as a parents, better understand the physical, neurochemical and developmental impact these early life traumas have had on our children and give us tools to help them reach their full potential as precious, children of God.



**Turn on the DVD.**

## TEACHING NOTES

### THE WHOLE CHILD

The child who is harmed disconnects in important ways.

They are at risk for emotional, behavioral, and spiritual meltdowns.

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (NIV)

God calls us to bring all that we are to Him (heart, soul, and strength). This is the way we need to love our children in order for them to come to us.

### THREE PARENTING PRINCIPLES

Body = _____	Principles
Spirit = _____	Principles
Soul = _____	Principles

By Empowering and Connecting we reduce the need for \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Examples of Empowering Principles

- Food every \_\_\_\_\_

↓ Low blood sugar = ↑ High stress chemicals = Misbehavior

- Water every \_\_\_\_\_

*Dehydration = ↑ High glutamate levels = Misbehavior*

- \_\_\_\_\_ needs

Children that experienced prenatal, birth or early neglect or harm will, \_\_\_\_\_ of the time, have deficits in their ability to process the senses.

## Examples of Connecting Principles

- \_\_\_\_\_ into my child's eyes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ with prosody (gentle rhythm) in my voice.
- Give safe \_\_\_\_\_ to my child.
- Tell them they are \_\_\_\_\_.

## Correcting Principles

- "Goofy" behavior is your child's \_\_\_\_\_ harsh, early circumstances.
- Correction comes with little effort out of a \_\_\_\_\_ with our children.

## SIX RISK FACTORS FOR CHALLENGES IN ATTACHMENT

1. Difficult pregnancy
2. Difficult birth
3. Early hospitalization
4. Abuse
5. Neglect
6. Trauma

We need to meet the needs of our child—body, soul, and spirit.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

The set of parenting principles called Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting, align with the whole child: Body, Spirit, and Soul.

- **EMPOWERING** — Principles to insure your child's **body** has the energy and strength to function at the highest possible level.
- **CONNECTING** — Principles to look deeply into the eyes of your child, the eternal part of your child, made in God's image. The **spirit** of the child you long to connect with.
- **CORRECTING** — For the **soul**, principles to help them learn to prosper, self-regulate, get needs met in appropriate ways, and ask for help from safe adults.

Think of these sets of principles and your journey with your child as you answer these questions with someone you trust. Sharing with someone who is on the same journey, will empower you to heal and grow, so you can provide a healing environment for your child.

1. In your journey with your child so far:

- What has been going really well?
- What is the really challenging part right now?



- What is your greatest need?

Reflect on the three principles of Trust-Based Relational Intervention™ (TBRI™) as they relate to body, spirit, and soul.

Empowering	Connecting	Correcting
<i>For the body</i>	<i>For the spirit</i>	<i>For the soul</i>
This includes physical needs for food, water, physical activity, rest, and other physical needs.	We are created for connection with God and with each other. Humans are designed to connect through touch, eye contact, being close, etc.	This includes mind, will, and emotions which are continually being conformed to the image of our God as we remain in connection with Him.
Jesus often met physical needs and they became a bridge to touching the spirit and soul of those He ministered to. Meeting physical needs becomes the foundation for meeting emotional and spiritual needs.	Recent research proves that the newborn child is “hard wired to connect” from the moment of birth. This is consistent with God’s creation of us. Because we are made in His image, this is the deepest need of our spirit—to be connected with Him and with others.	Scripture teaches us that we are continually being transformed into God’s image and that this occurs primarily as we are in relationship to Him and others, some instruction and correction are part of the process.

2. Reflect on the **Empowering Principles** and consider ways that you can help your child overcome the early risk factors. What nourishing snacks could you offer during the day, so that your child has something to eat on average, about every two hours? What are some creative ways you can add water for hydration?
  
3. Reflect on the **Connecting Principles** and consider ways that you can help your child connect more deeply to you. Explore ways to be playful. Create opportunities for shared laughter. Be mindful of the need for gentle touch, valuing eye contact and prosody in your voice when you talk to your child. What are some of the ways you can build bridges of trust and deepening connection?
  
4. Reflect on the **Correcting Principles**. Think about your last few corrections of your child's behavior. Was your goal to simply change the behavior or was your goal to maintain connection with your child while you helped them learn new behaviors? What ways might you consider modifying your approach to discipline that honors your child's ability to trust and connect with you?

5. *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength (Deuteronomy 6:4–5 NIV).* After learning how the above parenting principles (empowering, connecting and correcting) correspond to your child's body, soul and spirit, what new insights do you gain from this verse?
6. *Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; You will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. Isaiah 58:9 (NIV)* How does this verse encourage you personally? How does this verse encourage you to respond to your child's needs?

## PREPARATION FOR NEXT TIME

- Read Chapter 1 and 2 in *The Connected Child*.
- Optional: Watch the **Six Risk Factors** video clip on the DVD.
- During the week, take time to reflect on the following insights and encouragement:

*Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; You will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.*

Isaiah 58:9 (NIV)

## WORDS FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

During our years in this ministry we've had the privilege of walking with many families as they discovered or rediscovered the joy of parenting. One of the most pow-

erful insights gained by these parents was a new awareness of meeting the needs of the "whole child."

In the days of the Old Testament, devout Hebrew fathers would stand facing Jerusalem several times each day and pray aloud the Shema: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength"* (Deuteronomy 6:4–5 NIV).

This Scripture teaches us something very important about how we have been created to relate and be related to. When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus quoted this passage, and made it clear that we are to love God and others with our whole being. Similarly, we ask parents to cultivate an awareness of the "whole being" of their child. This requires that they be mindful of their children's "heart, mind, soul, and strength" even as they learn to fully embrace their past, present and future. By loving and nurturing our children in this holistic way, we can give our children the gift of "real hope"—an opportunity to heal and become whole, even as we teach them about, and point them toward, the source of our everlasting hope in Jesus.

### **COMPASSION AS YOUR TOUCHSTONE**

For the past ten years, we at the TCU Institute of Child Development laboratory have been conducting research primarily with foster and adopted children. During that time, we have developed Trust-Based Relational Intervention™ (TBRI™) which we believe, reflects the heart of God. A child who has been harmed disconnects in different ways and loses the ability to understand what they feel, need, think or want. In addition, they lose the ability to understand what others feel, need, think or want. In this disconnected state, our children are at risk for emotional, behavioral and spiritual meltdown.

A primary goal of our work is to teach parents how to connect with their children who have come from these “hard places.” Our model is the way God designed all of us to connect through support, nurture, compassion, communion and loving guidance.

The TBRI™ developed by the TCU Institute of Child Development, has three sets of principles that have respect for the needs of the body, soul, and spirit—the principles are rooted in the Shema. There is one set of principles that are for the physical body; we call them Empowering Principles. There is another set of principles that are for the spirit of the child; we call them Connecting Principles. The third set of principles are designed for teaching and correcting behaviors; we call them Correcting Principles. Correcting principles are those that correlate most with the soul, which include the mind, will, and emotion. We find in our work that when parents are aware of the needs of their child’s body to be empowered and their child’s spirit to be connected, there is a tremendous reduction in the need to correct the child. As children are more deeply connected and empowered, their old behaviors give way to new behaviors that are rooted in trust and connection. The Psalmist recognized this need for loving relationship as the foundation of behavioral guidance and correction when he recorded the words, *“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee”* (Psalm 32:8–9 KJV). We embrace this same compassionate concept—it is relationship that is our goal—and behavioral corrections will come without struggle when our children are deeply connected to us.

## **SUPPORT HEALTHY BRAIN CHEMISTRY**

An example of an Empowering Principle that we need to keep in mind is that children need food every two hours. Most children who come from hard places have deficits in their ability to process blood sugars. Consequently, if they get hungry they are more likely to meltdown. Unfortunately for our children, when the blood sugar goes down and the cortisol levels (stress hormone which provides energy to find food) increase, we tend to see significant misbehavior. Furthermore, children need water every two hours or on a regular basis as well. This is really important because we know one of the chemicals in the brain that fires too often in children who are dehydrated is called glutamate. Glutamate is an excitatory neurotransmitter that is associated with seizures, aggression, violence, etc. Giving your child simple hydration will significantly lower their aggressive outbursts.

## **A BRIDGE TO THE WORD**

Everything we do with a child—body, soul, and spirit—is going to be rooted in what you would have done as a parent, had that child been in your protective care from birth. Much harm was done to our children both prenatally and postnatally. Parents of these children need to be attuned, alert and insightful about body, soul and spirit. The brain is designed to develop in the presence of tender, nurturing care. We're going to have to be aware that their brain is housed in their body and the brain can only function to connect to us to the extent that their body is supported. Our primary goal is to support the body (empowering principles) and meet the needs of the spirit (connecting principles).

## **OBSERVE CLOSELY**

Another unmet need for many of our children is called the sensory motor need. The sensory/motor development period is widely thought to develop in the first two years of life. This is very profound because information that goes to the higher parts of the brain goes through the brain stem and through the sensory sub-systems before it is processed and can be acted upon. Consequently, children who came from a difficult pregnancy, difficult birth, early neglect, abuse, or trauma, will typically have deficits in their ability to process the senses (called Sensory Processing Disorder). If your child didn't get mentoring and nurturing for their brain in those fundamental days/years of their life, they're going to need you to be insightful about how to support and empower them by providing what they need for sensory process. (See Carol Kranowitz, *The Out of Sync Child* for further reference.)

## **ENGAGE, PLAY, AND PRAISE**

If you think about the Empowering Principles and Connecting Principles, these are things that are born out of our relationship with God. These are the things that we are made for. When a baby is in utero and when they are born, the right part of their brain is online to connect. Scientists now document the fact that we are "hard-wired for connection."

Simply put, we are designed for connection. Parents of older children must creatively find ways to reproduce the missed experiences of nurturance. What we learn to do is create a connecting environment for them right now. We're going to look into the eyes of the child, like we would have early on, we're going to talk with prosody in our voice ("I love to be with you. You're such a great kid!") just like we would have done had we been there with them from day one on ("Wow, what an amazing baby!"). We're going to provide the kind of touch

on their cheek or shoulder as we would have, had we been cradling them in our arms. We're going to provide the kind of affect that says "you are precious!" We're going to begin to empower our child's body, they need connecting for the spirit and they need correcting for the soul. The more our children are empowered, connected, and are lovingly corrected, the more attached and secure they will feel toward us.

### **A LIFESTYLE COMMITMENT**

Most of our children have learned aberrant behaviors to protect themselves. It's vitally important for our families to remember that if a child has inappropriate behaviors, they learned those behaviors as tiny ones trying to survive harsh early circumstance. Aberrant behaviors are simply their early survival mechanisms. Our goal is to use connecting and correcting principles to guide our families to interact with their children in ways that are holistic, that are healing, and that are nurturing. Most families who come to us are worried about their children's behaviors and are seeking information about how to correct behavior. They are often surprised to discover that our corrections are successful, and come with very little effort because our primary goal with the child is relationship—and new behaviors emerge out of those safe, loving relationships.

There are six important risk factors associated with children from hard places: difficult pregnancy, difficult birth, early hospitalization, abuse, neglect and trauma. We would highly speculate that your child had at least one or more of those risk factors. To the extent that they suffered risks, we will need to be insightful about how to empower, connect and gently correct behaviors they learned in order to survive the early harm.

### **A WORD OF HOPE**

During the past decade we have worked with many, many families and their children and many of them were very high risk children. When parents learn insightful ways to empower, connect and correct, healing always begins. We have never seen a child who didn't come to dramatic levels of healing in this holistic, nurturing environment. In the course of the coming sessions, we will discuss more specific ways to create this healing environment, but for now, take hope that there are answers to the most difficult and challenging issues we may face.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

### ***SENSORY / MOTOR DEFICITS***

*The Out of Sync Child* by Carol Kranoitz

If your child has been fostered or adopted you need to understand sensory processing in children. Many children have sensory processing issues. If your child has experienced early childhood trauma this number dramatically increases the likelihood of sensory processing issues.