


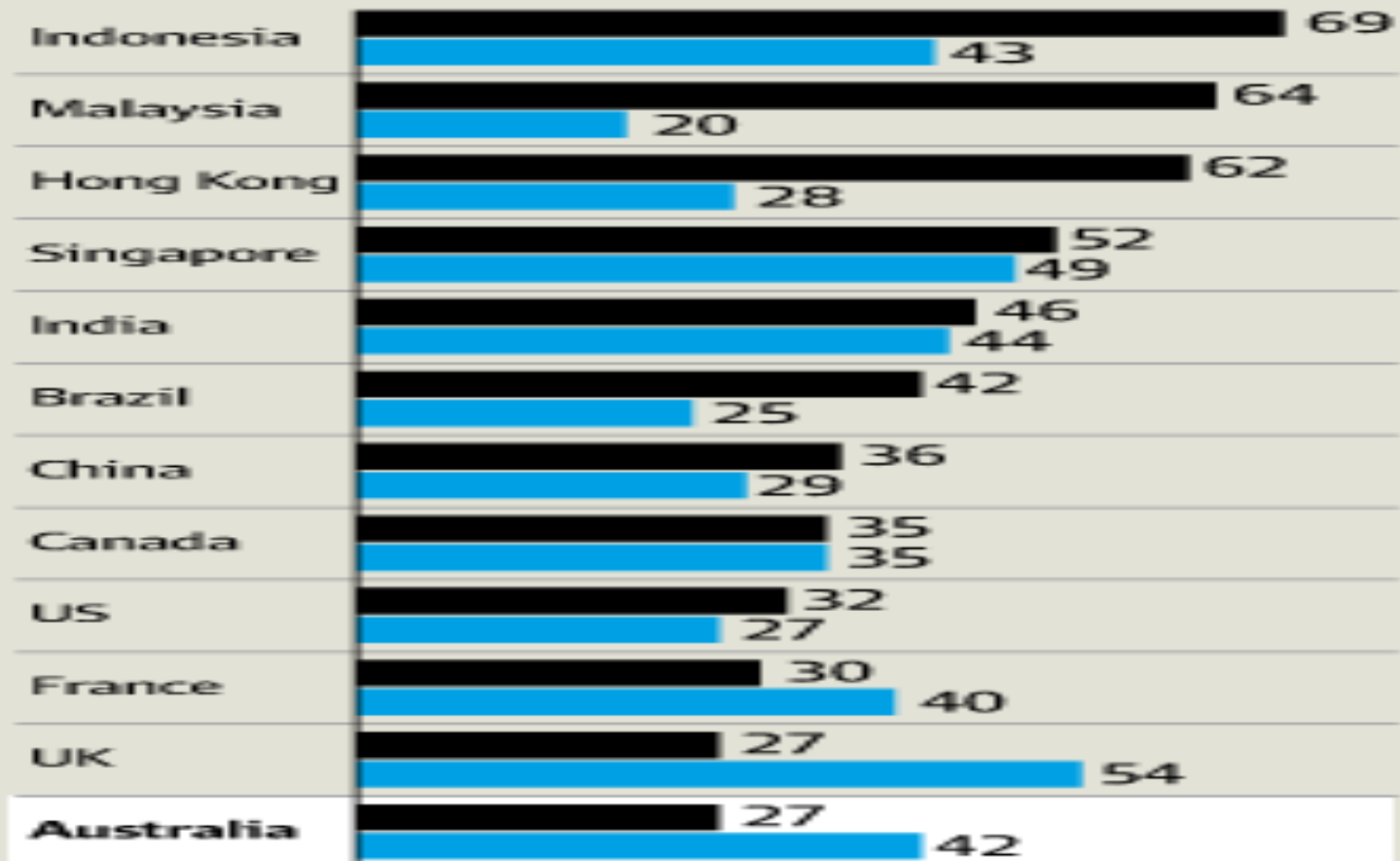
Dr Steve Zolezzi



Australian parents are among the least likely to believe it is important to instill self-discipline in their primary school children. But they are among the most likely to think it is important their -children be happy at school. An [international survey](#) of attitudes to education by banking group HSBC found only 27 per cent of Australian parents think self-discipline is -important compared to over half in south-east Asian countries. But 42 per cent of Australian parents believe it is important their children be happy at primary school.

Importance of happiness v self-discipline at primary school (%)

■ Self-discipline ■ Happiness



SOURCE: HSBC

STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH TO PARENTING

We change the world by tiny individual acts of honesty, courage, kindness and integrity, by celebrating our own strengths, just a little more each day, and helping others to do the same .

Jenny Fox-Eades

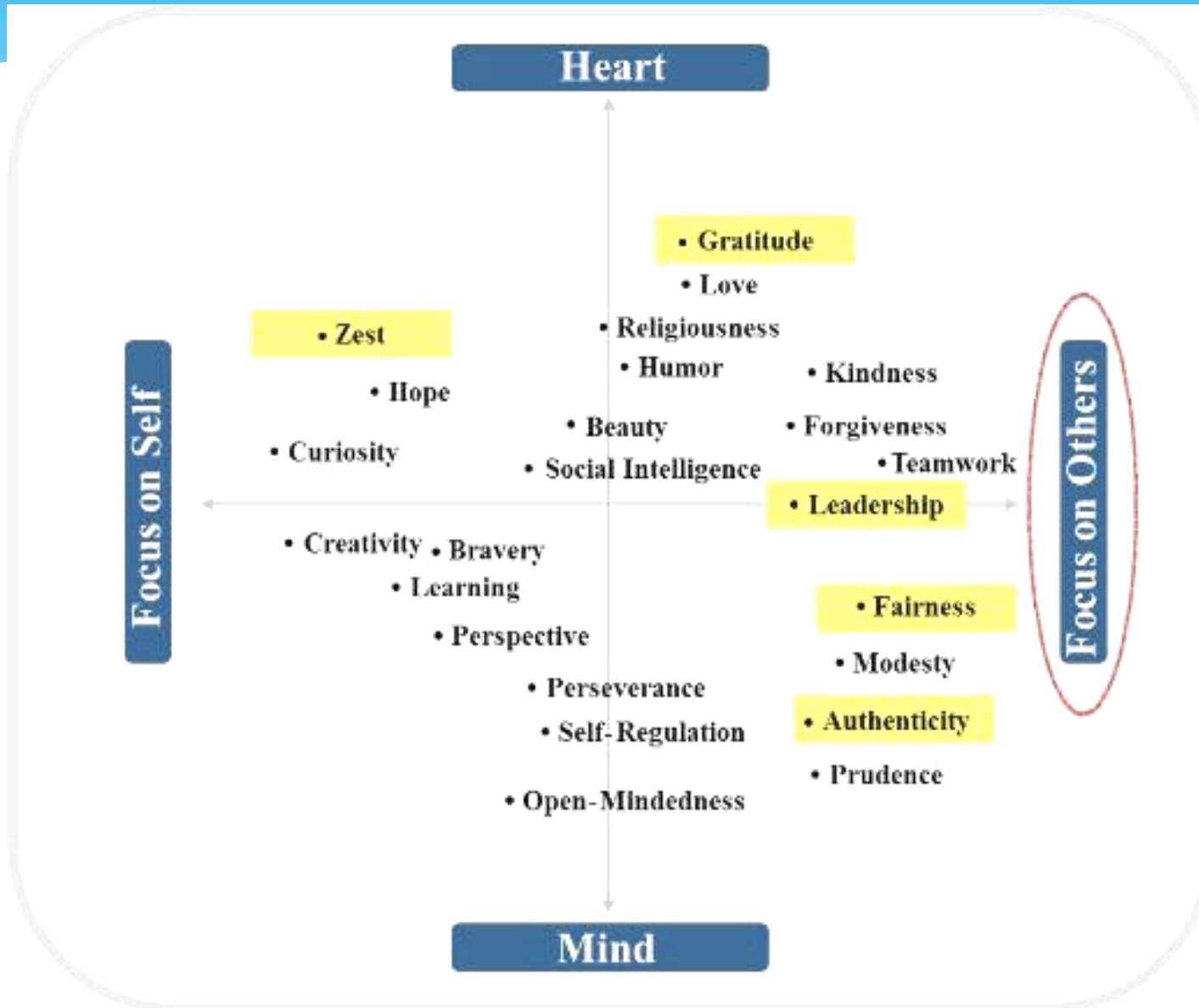
Celebrating Strengths emphasizes connection, sustainability, and imbuing actions with meaning.

Connection: When children learn to spot strengths in stories, they naturally move on to noticing strengths in the teller and in each other.

Sustainability: link concepts to the concrete, making them tangible. For example, by linking strengths to symbols and colors, Habits , rituals, and traditions regularly call strengths to mind.

Imbuing activities with Meaning: Celebrating Strengths uses intentions (rather than specific goals) and dedications to imbue experience with meaning.

THE STRENGTHS CROSS



"What did I do well today?"

- * For example, just before going to sleep or when you're washing the dishes after tea, gently remind yourself of the good things in your day, big and small:
 - * I got that project finished
 - * I made that necessary phone call
 - * I made time to listen to my friend
 - * I made time to go out for a walk in the fresh air
 - * the dog made me laugh
 - * my children are healthy
 - * the sun felt good on my face

How to help children develop their strengths

- * Focus on children's strengths instead of their weaknesses
- * Notice children's strengths and talk about them. It can be frustrating or difficult to work only on weaknesses or problems. Young people may become defensive and lacking in motivation. For example, a child may be seen as hyperactive or disruptive, but what are their strengths? Perhaps they are enthusiastic, creative or curious.
- * Focus on character strengths instead of achievement. This will have a more positive effect on a child's confidence. For example, not every young person can get A grades or get A grades all the time. But every child has the potential to develop their character strengths, for example, to use their sense of humour, to be braver, to be kinder or to be more grateful.

Make a point of noticing strengths in children and compliment them on their strengths

- * Thank a child for their honesty in admitting to a mistake.
- * Congratulate a young person on their perseverance in getting a task finished.
- * Say how much you enjoy their humour when a child makes you laugh.
- * Point out their fairness when they treat their friends equally.
- * Tell them how kind they are being when they do a favour without being asked.
- * Tell them they have good self-control when they are able to wait for a treat.
- * Show them you are proud of them when they forgive their sister, brother or classmate for having upset them.
- * Celebrate good teamwork in class or groups or between siblings.
- * Tell a child they are showing great courage when you see them coping with a difficult situation,

Help children to think about new ways of using their top strengths on a regular basis

- * For example:
 - * If a child is particularly brave, help them to find challenges they can overcome.
 - * If a child is particularly creative, help them find problems they can solve or new things they can make.
 - * If a child is particularly sociable, help them think of ways to be even more friendly to the people they meet or to spend more time with their friends.
 - * If a child is particularly kind, help them think of ways to do favours for friends and family.
 - * If a child is a particularly good leader, help them think of things they can organise

You at your best

Ask children to describe themselves at their best. Say, for example, "Think of a time when you did something or acted in a way that made you feel you were a good person – I don't mean an academic or athletic achievement, but something like being really brave when facing a difficult situation, or being really kind to someone in distress. Tell us the story of what happened and how you felt about it."

This encourages young people to think about who they are as a person in terms of their strengths. It also helps them get to know others on a deeper level.

STRENGTHS SITES

* <http://www.letitripple.org/love>

* <http://www.strengthsgym.co.uk/teachers.php>

References

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Self-Determination Deci and Ryan

Celebrating Strengths Fox-Eades

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