

THE PARENTING RELATIONSHIP



First, we reviewed what our kids need us to do for them, as their parents

Trust and respect them

Provide them with emotional security

Provide them with physical security, including their physical health

Give them our time

Give them our encouragement and support

Offer them physical and verbal affection

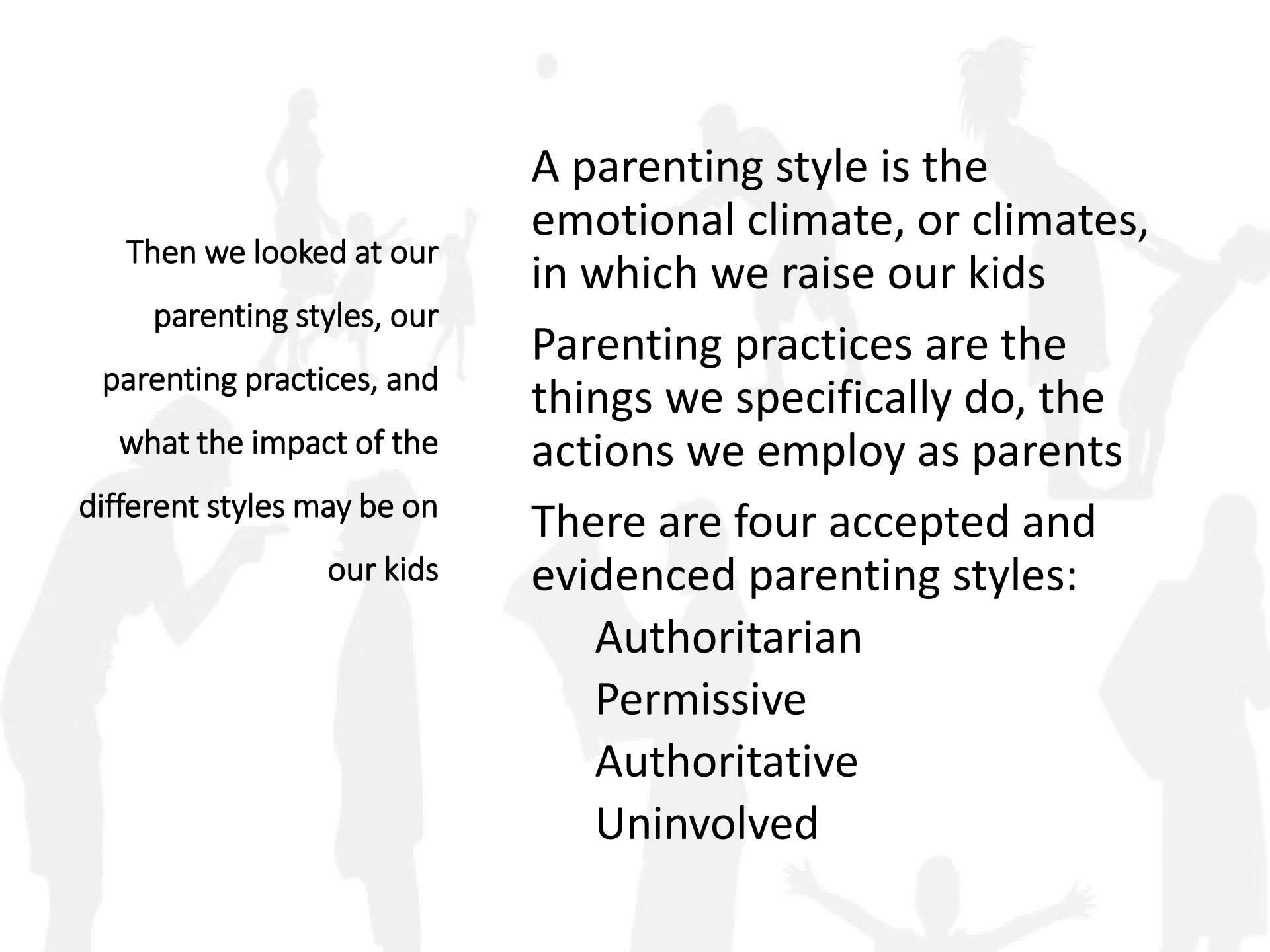
Provide discipline to instruct rather than punish

Practice the power of saying No to our kids

Be consistently consistent

Take care of ourselves, too

To date we have looked at what we do as parents

The background of the slide features several light gray silhouettes of people in various poses, including a woman standing, a person with arms raised, and a person sitting, creating a subtle, artistic backdrop for the text.

Then we looked at our
parenting styles, our
parenting practices, and
what the impact of the
different styles may be on
our kids

A parenting style is the
emotional climate, or climates,
in which we raise our kids

Parenting practices are the
things we specifically do, the
actions we employ as parents

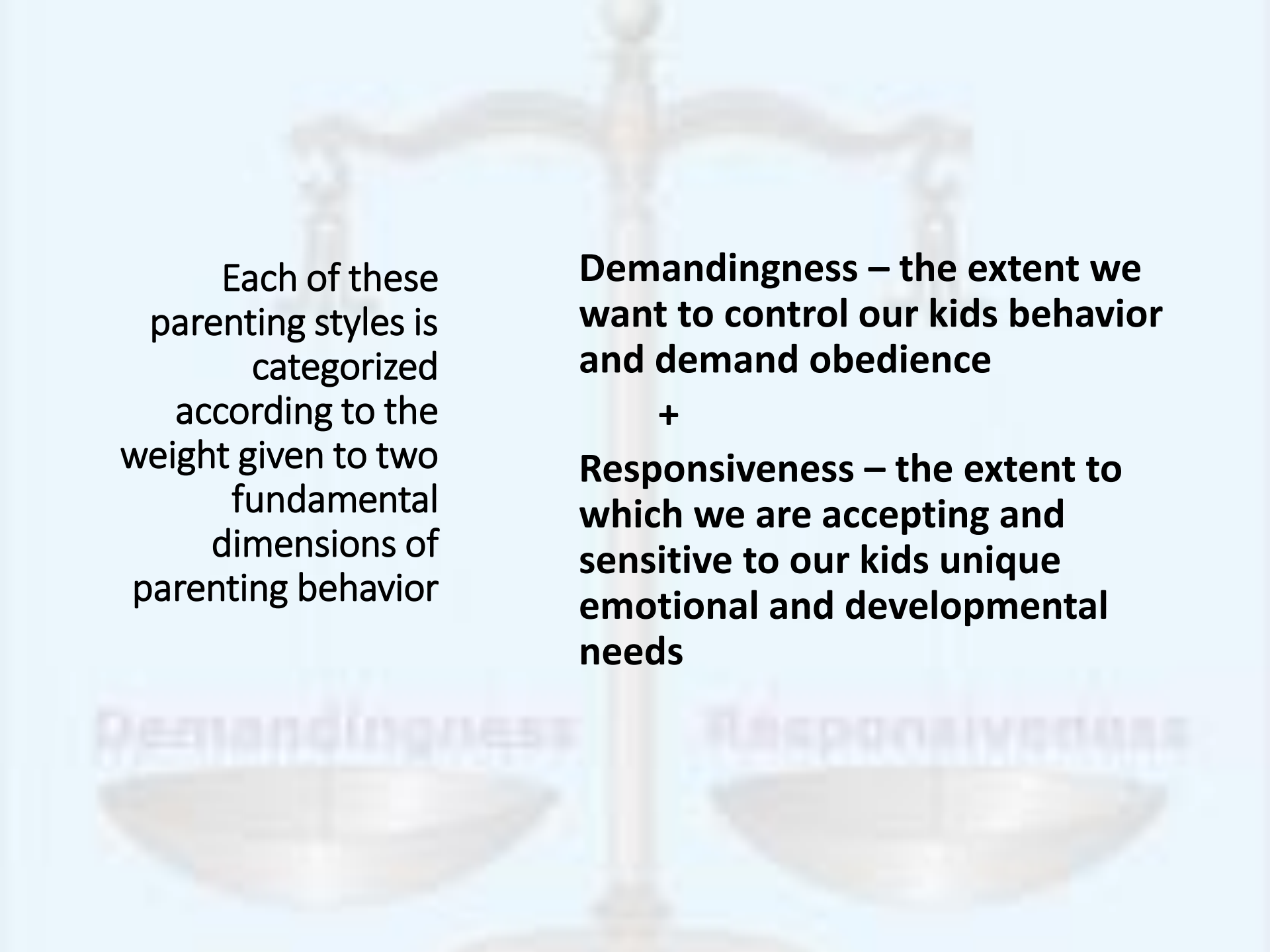
There are four accepted and
evidenced parenting styles:

Authoritarian

Permissive

Authoritative

Uninvolved

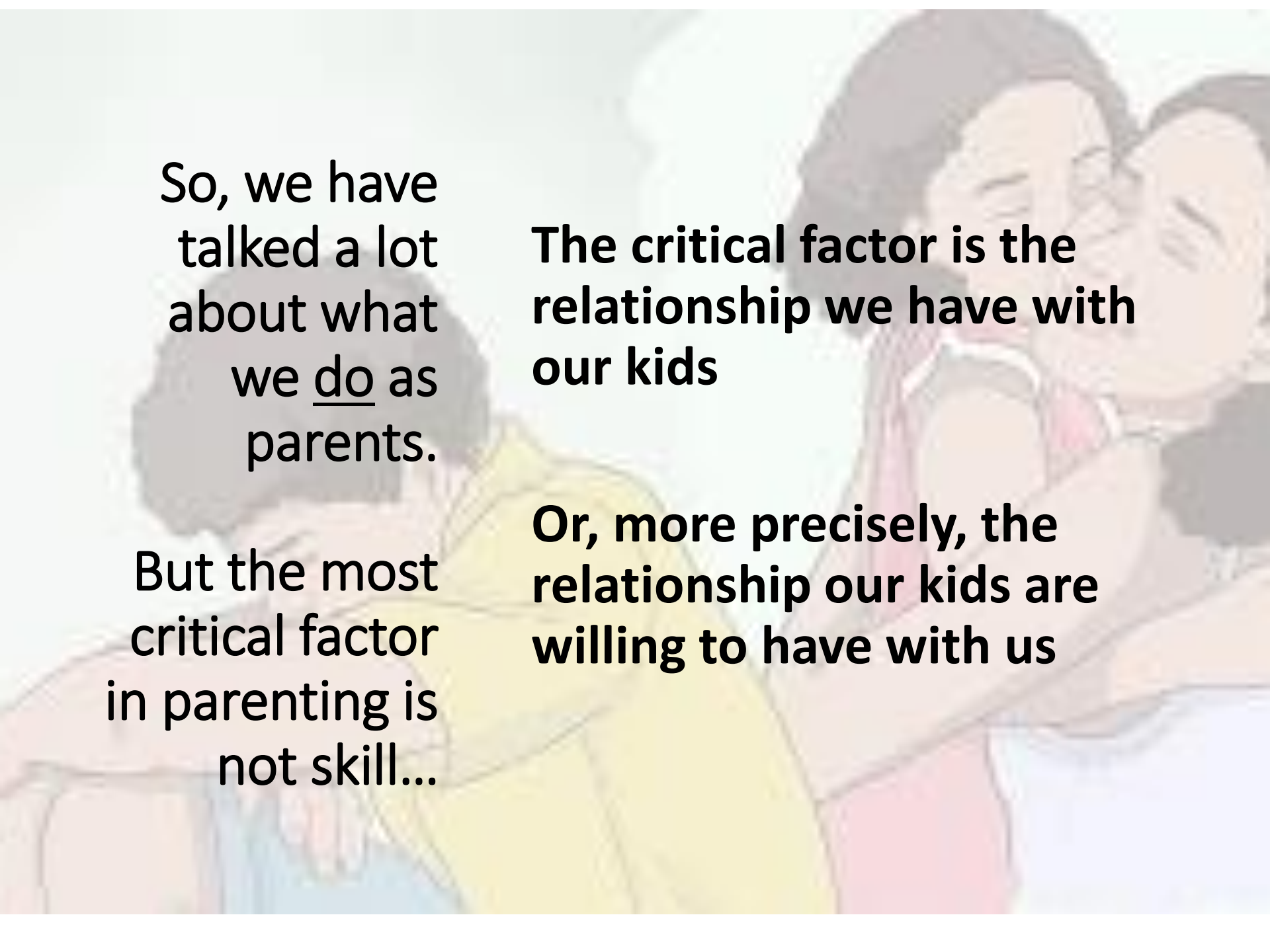


Each of these parenting styles is categorized according to the weight given to two fundamental dimensions of parenting behavior

Demandingness – the extent we want to control our kids behavior and demand obedience

+

Responsiveness – the extent to which we are accepting and sensitive to our kids unique emotional and developmental needs



So, we have talked a lot about what we do as parents.

But the most critical factor in parenting is not skill...

The critical factor is the relationship we have with our kids

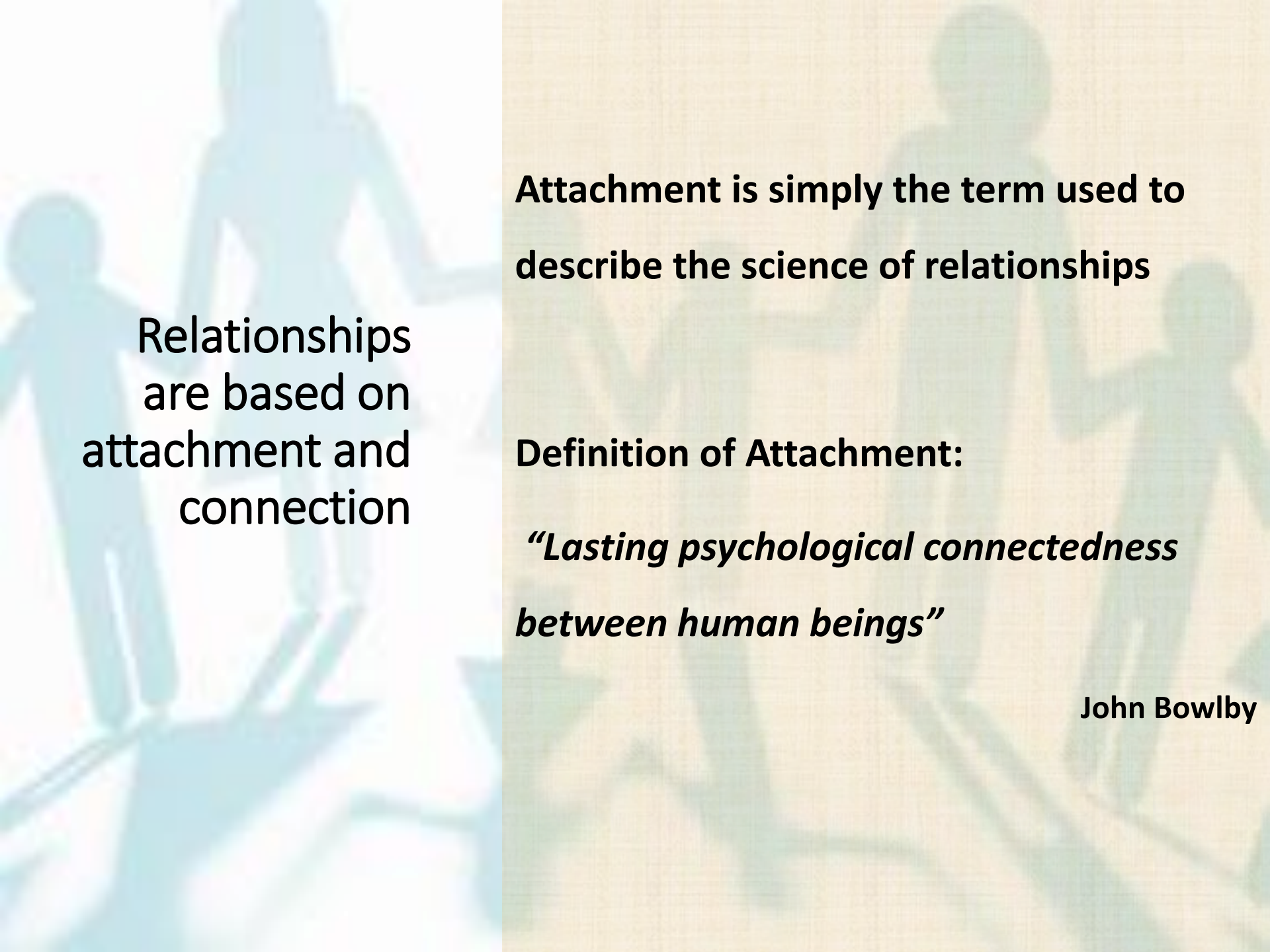
Or, more precisely, the relationship our kids are willing to have with us



“It is not the parent/child relationship that has the greatest impact on the child.

It is what is missing in that relationship that leaves the greatest scar.”

Carl Jung



Relationships
are based on
attachment and
connection

Attachment is simply the term used to describe the science of relationships

Definition of Attachment:

“Lasting psychological connectedness between human beings”

John Bowlby

Baby has
a need

**...It is the need of
the vulnerable
infant to seek the
responsiveness of
someone more able
to care for them**

Attachment is the primary
human need It is the biological
imperative for survival

But the determinant is not
primarily food...

**Over time, the
infant feels
emotionally safe
and secure enough
to begin bonding**

Baby
cries



Need met
by caregiver

Trust
develops



From physical/emotional closeness to psychological intimacy

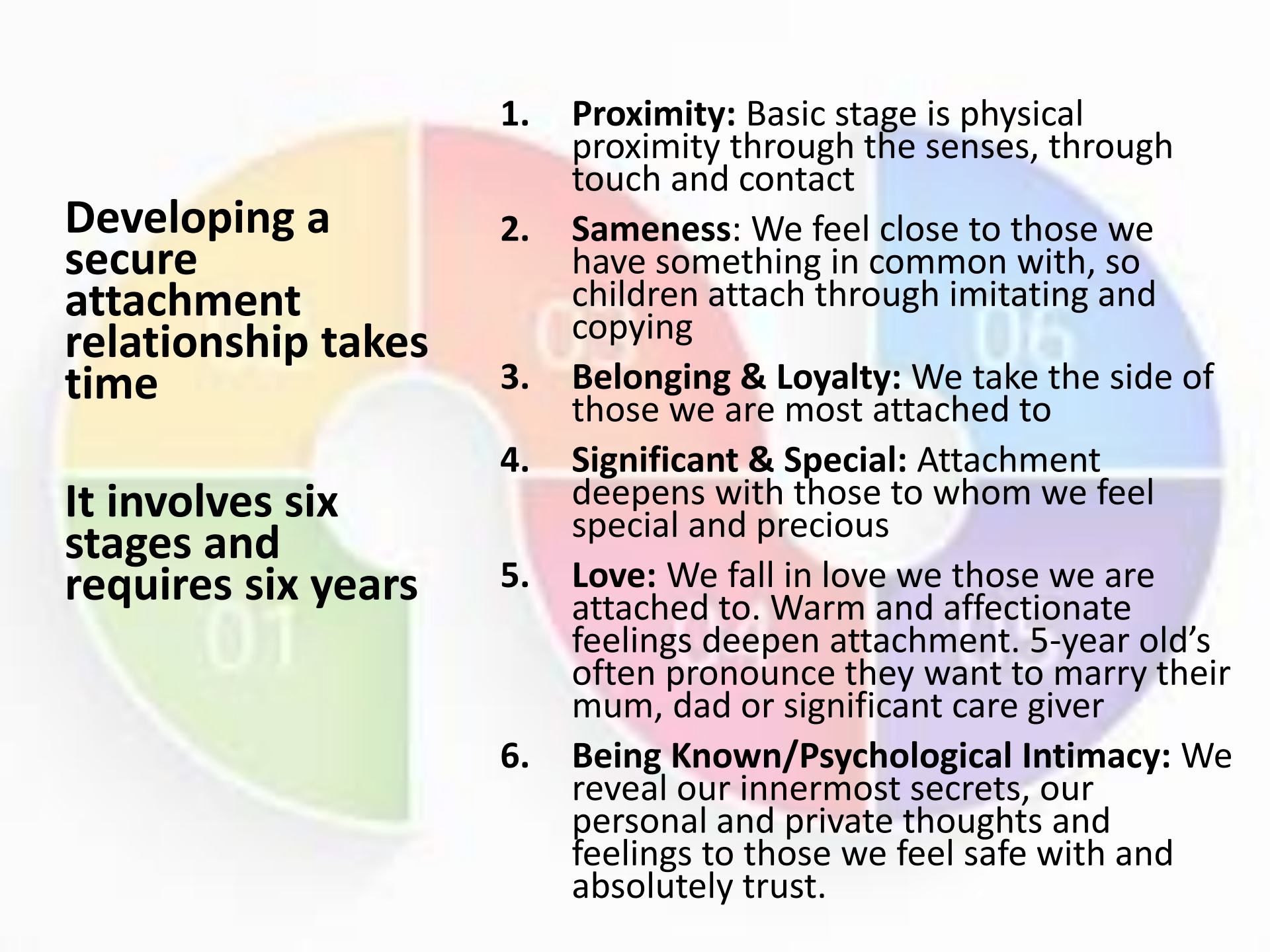
Bowlby rooted attachment in the “*drive for proximity*” – the desire to be close to the person you are attached to

In babies and toddlers this means wanting physical contact, physical proximity to their caregivers as physical closeness precedes emotional closeness

But as our kids grow this drive for closeness does not necessarily involve being held or touched



It is this psychological intimacy that takes time



Developing a secure attachment relationship takes time

It involves six stages and requires six years

1. **Proximity:** Basic stage is physical proximity through the senses, through touch and contact
2. **Sameness:** We feel close to those we have something in common with, so children attach through imitating and copying
3. **Belonging & Loyalty:** We take the side of those we are most attached to
4. **Significant & Special:** Attachment deepens with those to whom we feel special and precious
5. **Love:** We fall in love with those we are attached to. Warm and affectionate feelings deepen attachment. 5-year olds often pronounce they want to marry their mum, dad or significant care giver
6. **Being Known/Psychological Intimacy:** We reveal our innermost secrets, our personal and private thoughts and feelings to those we feel safe with and absolutely trust.

Some questions worth thinking about

Key phases of attachment-relationship

1. Proximity
2. Emulate/copy
3. Belonging and loyalty
4. Feel significant
5. Love
6. Psychological intimacy

How are we doing as parents?

Do they want to be physically close to you and around you?

Who are they emulating? Whose values are they adopting?

Do they feel accepted and celebrated for who they are?

Do they feel heard and that what they think and feel matters?

Who has their heart?

Who are they revealing their feelings and secrets to?

What kind of parent are you?

1. hot headed?
2. wimpy?
3. whatever
4. absent?

How might our parenting styles effect the relationship we have with our kids?

hot headed?

this is not a cat (those are tears)

Spine-LESS?

helllooo

AUTHORITARIAN Techniques

High demandingness



Low responsiveness

- *“Because I say so, that’s why”*
- Expectations of obedience without explanation
- Offer occasional praise
- Frequently issue commands, criticism, and threats
- Apply guilt/shame tactics

Potential impact of authoritarian parent on relationship with child

Key phases of attachment-relationship

1. Proximity
2. Emulate/copy
3. Belonging and loyalty
4. Feel significant
5. Love
6. Psychological intimacy

Response of child of authoritarian parent

Create conflict within child - desperate need to be close to their distant, shaming parent

May emulate threatening behavior, or internalize shame and become withdrawn. Likely to limit emotional development and result in emotionally formal/distant adults

Unlikely because they feel everything they do is criticized resulting in constant, underlying anxiety

Potentially feel insignificant because they feel they are constantly wrong, and harbor expectation that any feelings of significance will be short-lived

Feelings of conflict and confusing emotions towards parent

Unlikely to reveal themselves to their parent for fear of being shamed, or indeed to anyone else due to internal, hidden shame



PERMISSIVE

**Low
demandingness**

+

**High
responsiveness**

Techniques

“Yes, of course sweetheart!”

Warm, indulgent, and very loving

**Prefer not to say no or disappoint
child**

**Set few boundaries/struggle with
discipline**

Bribe ‘bad for good’

**Shy away from conflict and
difficulties**

Potential impact of permissive parent on relationship with child

Key phases of attachment-relationship

- 1. Proximity**
- 2. Emulate/copy**
- 3. Belonging and loyalty**
- 4. Feel significant**
- 5. Love**
- 6. Psychological intimacy**

Response of child of permissive parent

- Perhaps in clingy, needy, emotionally manipulative way in order to have their wants constantly met
- Learn that manipulation and demandingness gets their wants met – no one says NO to them
- Leadership delegated to child giving them a greater sense of self-importance as they are on a pedestal
- To the extent they are self-important with little regard for others
- Anyone who will give them what they want so their love becomes conditional/transactional
- Very difficult as child likely to have hidden motive/agenda as they have been given no boundaries

AUTHORITATIVE

Techniques

“Hey kiddo, maybe you do as I say this time, OK?”

**High
demandingness**

+

**High
responsiveness**

Love unconditionally and accept child for who they are

Keep a close eye, provide lots of support, and set firm boundaries

Grant freedom within boundaries but enforce when necessary

Balances their parental demands with responsiveness to child’s need for autonomy

Potential impact of authoritative parent on relationship with child

Key phases of attachment-relationship

1. Proximity

2. Emulate/copy

3. Belonging and loyalty

4. Feel significant

5. Love

6. Psychological intimacy

Response of child to authoritative parent

They want to be around parent but are secure when parent is not around, they understand boundaries

Adhere to and respect family rules, values, rituals e.g. politeness, manners, sitting at table, food on plate

To the family unit

Yes they feel listened to, trusted and cared for and understand when No is No

Their parent

Feel safe and secure revealing themselves, even their shame, to their parent. They trust their parent.

UNINVOLVED

Low
demandingness

+

Low
responsiveness

Techniques

*“I don’t know, ask your
mum/dad/teacher/sister/etc.”*

‘There’ in person but not present
or available emotionally or
physically

Indifferent and gives little of
themselves

Sets few clear boundaries

Delegates responsibility to others

Potential impact of uninvolved parent on relationship with child

Key phases of attachment-relationship

1. Proximity

2. Emulate/copy

3. Belonging and loyalty

4. Feel significant

5. Love

6. Psychological intimacy

Response of child of uninvolved parent

Desperately want to be around the parent who is not 'there'

May adopt a 'don't care' attitude as defense against internal pain, and/or construct various masks to hide behind

Likely to feel invisible because they feel they are not seen or heard

Likely to feel insignificant because they are not noticed

Believe no one will love them because they feel unlovable

Possibly no one because they feel painful hidden shame about who they are – that they are unlovable and not good enough

Have we got our kids hearts?

Even though attachment is
the primary human need

and it is a biological

imperative for survival, it

does not naturally follow

that kids will attach to their

parents and want to have a

relationship with them

We cannot force our children to have a
secure-attachment relationship with us,
their parents.

Our kids must want to have a relationship
of secure-attachment with us so we can
be a parent to them

If they don't have it with us, they will look
elsewhere

Remember the duckling experiment?

Our kids need us to be the grown-up's

A soft, pastel-colored illustration of a woman with brown hair hugging a young child from behind. The woman is wearing a grey sweater and the child is wearing a green sweater. The background is a light, textured wash of yellow and green.

“Adults, or at least an adult, able to respond to the child in a way the child feels seen, heard, understood, accepted, celebrated and received”

Dr. Gabor Mate

Our children need at least one grown-up in their life to provide leadership and guidance

The Sanctity of Attachment

Attachment provides children with bearings so they do not get lost

It provides a sense of who they are

It is where they get their bearings and recalibrate

It is their compass point, their True North

