

Keating Professional Book Club

“Under Pressure: Rescuing our children from the culture of hyper-parenting” By Carl Honore

Members of the book club: Nayda Thomasson, Erin Barber (regrets), Stacey Miller, Lisa Gartrell-Yeo, Stephanie Lord, Rosemary Addison (regrets), Douglas Fraser, Sarah Windle, Mary Lynn Heron, Anita Ko (regrets).

Notes from book club meeting on January 27th, 2016

What members liked about the book:

- Confirmed a lot of what we already believe/know
- Good parenting book (would suggest it to some parents)
- The “studies” in the book were good “evidence to support our beliefs and would be worth sharing in with the large parent population

What members did not like about the book:

- Was at times “obvious” and didn’t have much new insight or inspiration
- Was more for parents and less for educators.

Some thoughts and reflections to highlight parts of our discussion:

Steph *“It is interesting that considering how we know about the importance of not overscheduling but we do this to ourselves. So many of us (educators and parents) struggle with finding a work/life balance and are unable to make ourselves and our well being a priority.”*

Douglas *“I found a real connection between the book and a NFB film that I sometimes use with the students called “Overdose” (https://www.nfb.ca/film/overdose_en) where the boy is so overscheduled that eventually he burns out from lack of rest and leisure time.”*

Connection: (Page 142) *“...there are some basic principles that seem to hold true across the board: too much testing, toil, and competition eventually backfires; children learn best when given time and freedom to explore topics that interest them in ways that stretch the imagination; project work that embraces multiple subjects at the same time can deliver richer learning; play and pleasure are an integral part of education; teachers need to be well trained and then trusted to do their job without having to explain and quantify their every move...”*

Stacey and Steph spoke about the Wayne Gretzky quote related to the importance of playing a variety of sports for fun instead of focusing on one sport and thinking if they worked hard and long enough they would go pro. **Stacey** *“Isn’t it a sad statement of society that we want our kids to be famous? What about doing things for the joy of doing them? Being famous has its own pitfalls, why would we want that for our kids?”*

Sarah *“I think this speaks to the importance of children (and parents) understanding the reality and probability of their situation. What are the odds of the child becoming an NHL player? I made a connection to a great children’s novel that is a current Red Cedar nominee that has a child that dreams of the NHL and then comes to realize that there is more to life than hockey.”*

The discussion turned to talking about the pressures that parents and children are under related to “pre” school - (page 59) *“While many believe that knowing letters, numbers, shapes, and colours is the best preparation for school, teachers take a very different view. They say that the child who arrives at Year 1 socially adept, who knows how to share, empathize, and follow instructions, will stand a better chance of mastering the three Rs later on.”*

Nayda *“I think this just serves as a reminder that if a child is not developmentally ready to learn they might be able to mirror or appear to learn it at the time, but the retention will not be there. When they are ready to learn it they will.”*

Professional Book Club Meeting
Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking
by Susan Cain

Meeting date: April 4, 2016

In Attendance: Lisa Gartrell-Yeo, Douglas Fraser, Daniel Parent, Chris Bocking, Sarah Windle, Mary Lynn Heron

Regrets: Stacey Miller, Stephanie Lord, Julie Lobb, Anne Turner

Our group met to discuss the book "Quiet" and everyone agreed that it provided great insight into their personal lives as well as their professional lives.

Some quotes and ideas from our meeting:

Lisa said *"This book was a life changer for me. I had an extrovert mother and was shy but was pushed to do things. I finally understood that this is who I am and this has helped me to understand my students."*

Daniel said *"I too felt the comfort of recognizing that I need my down time and that I am an introvert but I push myself to do things."*

Chris said *"I wonder how many teachers will think of themselves as high-functioning introverts? I made a connection with thinking about what recharges us and about how that is reflected in our students."*

Mary Lynn said *"There is an old saying - We were given 2 ears and 1 mouth."*

Douglas said *"I am the same way. In my personal life I go dancing a lot and I enjoy the function of dancing but the conversation can be challenging for me."*

Mary Lynn said *"We need to make sure that we fram the "shy" comments in a positive way (report cards, etc.) and that we work to create an environment where introverts can be successful."*

P. 253 *"We tend to forget that there's nothing sacrosanct about learning in large group classrooms, and that we organize students this way not because it's the best way to learn but because it's cost-efficient, and what else would we do with our children while the grown-ups are at work?"*

Sarah said *"One of the things I try and think about in my classroom is provideing my students with a chance to decompress and have some quiet or alone time to re-charge if they need it. For our morning nutrition break we go outside so the kids that want to be social can but the kids that need some alone time can just wander about eating their snack."*

p. 85 *"Scientists now know that the brain is incapable of paying attention to two things at the same time. What looks like multi-tasking is really switching back and forth between multiple tasks, which reduces productivity and increase mistake by up to 50 percent."*

Lisa said *“Eastern cultures are more respectful of introverts, they are a more collective culture.”*

Mary Lynn said *“The beauty of this book and this discussion is that we are more aware so we can watch for needs in our students and help them identify what is going on for them and provide them with coping strategies.”*