An expert clinician brings attachment theory into the realm of parenting skills. Attachment security and affect regulation have long been buzzwords in therapy circles, but many of these ideas—so integral to successful therapeutic work with kids and adolescents—have yet to be effectively translated to parenting practice itself. Moreover, as neuroscience reveals how the human brain is designed to work in good relationships, and how such relationships are central to healthy human development, the practical implications for the parent-child attachment relationship become even more apparent. Here, a leading attachment specialist with over 30 years of clinical experience brings the rich and comprehensive field of attachment theory and research from inside the therapy room to the outside, equipping therapists and caregivers with practical parenting skills and techniques rooted in proven therapeutic principles. A guide for all parents and a resource for all mental health clinicians and parent-educators who are searching for ways to effectively love, discipline, and communicate with children, this book presents the techniques and practices that are fundamental to optimal child development and family functioning—how to set limits, provide guidance, and manage the responsibilities and difficulties of daily life, while at the same time communicating safety, fun, joy, and love. Filled with valuable clinical vignettes and sample dialogues, Hughes shows how attachment-focused research can guide all those who care for children in their efforts to better raise them.

My Personal Review:
Psychologist Daniel Hughes has done it again with his newest book, Attachment-Focused Parenting. In his highly-skilled and talented manner, Hughes has managed to take the complex terms and concepts of attachment theory and make it accessible for the reader. Hughes helps us to better appreciate that the parent-child relationship is a two-way interaction, with each being greatly influenced and affected by the other. Of equal importance, he helps the reader to see that parenting goes way beyond guidance and discipline; rather, both parent and child require a
context for understanding what happens between them, and each is influenced by their own history.

Hughes relies extensively upon examples and real-life scenarios as he makes his points. In doing so, he appeals to a wide spectrum of parents. That is, he cites the example of a four-year-old who screams with frustration, while later addressing the parent-child struggles of a 16-year-old. Independent of age, however, the concepts Hughes lays out are universal for all children, regardless of age.

Get ready, though, as Hughes reminds us that the parent's own attachment history greatly affects the parent-child relationship. This certainly isn't new, as how often have we caught ourselves saying, "I never thought I would say/do what my father/mother did..." Without writing a self-help book for parents, Hughes proposes some questions and concepts parents should ask themselves about their own history, given the part it plays in raising their kids.

As a child psychologist who primarily works with foster and adopted children and their families, I continually deal with kids who have their own attachment issues to work through. While a professional can assist a child in this regard, much of the work to be done centers on the child's relationship with her parent, be it foster, adoptive, or birth. Because of this, Hughes' book will be at the top of my reference list for the parents I work with, but also for other professionals.

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