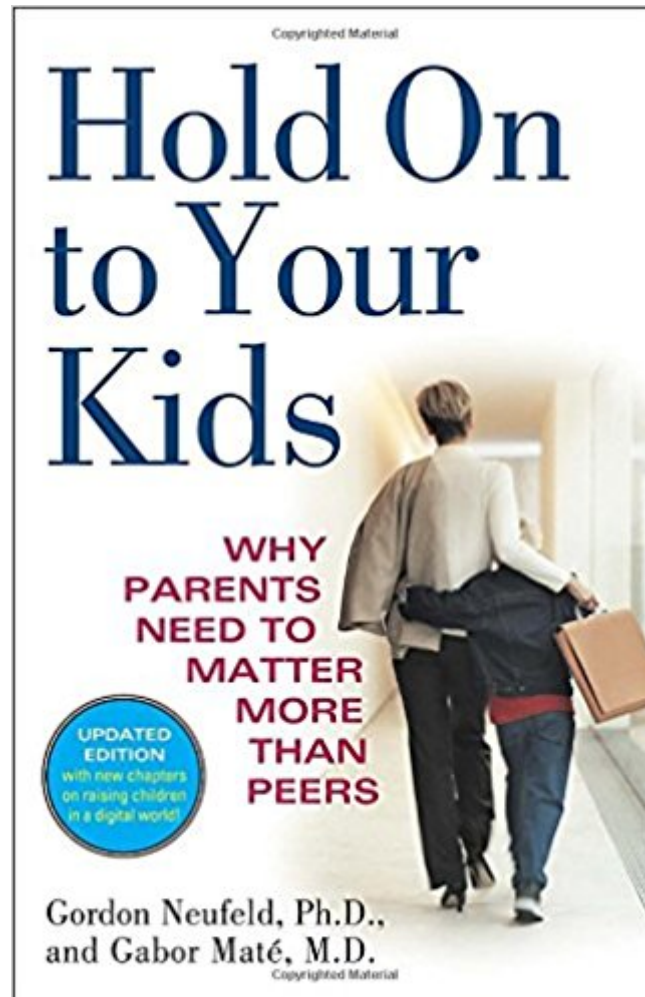


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Hold On To Your Kids: Why Parents Need To Matter More Than Peers



Synopsis

International authority on child development Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D., joins forces with bestselling author Gabor Maté, M.D., to tackle one of the most disturbing trends of our time: Children today looking to their peers for direction—their values, identity, and codes of behavior. This “peer orientation” undermines family cohesion, interferes with healthy development, and fosters a hostile and sexualized youth culture. Children end up becoming overly conformist, desensitized, and alienated, and being “cool” matters more to them than anything else. *Hold On to Your Kids* explains the causes of this crucial breakdown of parental influence—and demonstrates ways to “reattach” to sons and daughters, establish the proper hierarchy in the home, make kids feel safe and understood, and earn back your children’s loyalty and love. This updated edition also specifically addresses the unprecedented parenting challenges posed by the rise of digital devices and social media. By helping to reawaken instincts innate to us all, Neufeld and Maté will empower parents to be what nature intended: a true source of contact, security, and warmth for their children.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've never seen this book's ideas put quite this way before, nor explained so thoroughly. Its time has definitely come. Neufeld and his wife Joy have at least five children (he sprinkles their names through the book - he never adds them up for us) and he's had what sounds like a distinguished career first treating juvenile offenders, and then moving into family counseling. The overarching theme of the book is ATTACHMENT. To whom are your children more attached? Are they attached to you, their parents, and other adults? Or are they attached to their peers? To whom do they look

for guidance? Whose star have they hitched their little wagons to? If children look to adults for guidance, in Neufeld's terminology they are "parent-oriented". If they reject adults in favor of their peers, they are "peer-oriented". This book explained to me how the relationship between parents (all adults, really) and children has changed in the larger culture. This cultural change has made it difficult to talk to my parents and in-laws about our decision to homeschool. (Neufeld isn't necessarily pro-homeschool - he's pro-adult attachments as opposed to peer attachments.) There have been times when I've been reduced to vague, indistinct clichés like, "Times have changed, so we're homeschooling." They've been too polite to say so, but I just know they're thinking, maybe times have changed, but children haven't, and so you're saying your children don't need regular school? Well, yes, that is what I'm saying, and this book explains why better than I can.

I just finished reading this book. It makes a compelling case against the peer-oriented culture which has grown to dominate over the past few decades, especially as it pertains to parents losing their hold on kids as the primary nurturing and guiding force until they reach maturity. It goes as far as to claim that true maturity isn't actually occurring among those who are taking their cues solely from their fellow immature peers. It's the blind leading the blind, with disastrous results. In today's culture which places a high value on peer interaction along with less time available for families to spend together, it's more difficult for parents to remain the primary orienting force in their children's lives. Children are encouraged to socialize with other children early and often. High student: teacher ratios in daycares and schools encourage attachment to peers instead of teachers. The extended family of loving adults that used to be the norm in children's lives is now the exception, and our mobile society creates isolation instead of community. Add to this mix the effects of media which perpetuates the culture of cool, and the result is that it's simply much, much harder to parent today than it was a few decades ago, and it's far easier for children to turn to each other to meet their attachment needs. So ... what does all this mean to me, the mother of a three-year-old sensitive child? Actually, the implications are pretty direct. As a sensitive child, Lucas absorbs everyone's energy. He mimics everything and everyone. It already appears that he's very susceptible to influence by his peers, coming home from preschool with new behaviors and mannerisms all the time, to my enormous frustration.

I must say this book does stand out in that it presents a radically different view of parenting than most books I've read. It holds that the most important thing for kids is a very strong relationship with their parents, and that almost all of the woes of today's kids are caused by them being peer oriented

instead of parent oriented. The authors make a very strong case for this being so. I was convinced by the time this part of the book was over. However, as with many books of this type, the section where we are told what to do about this problem is weaker. Most of the ideas would work best with a very young child that has not yet become peer oriented. If you already have a child who is rebellious and addicted to being with peers, I don't think that speaking to them kindly and looking them in the eyes is going to do much. The author gave an example with his own children of taking them away on a week's vacation with just the child and the parent. That sounds good, but I don't think his children had the severe problems of the other examples we are given. The book also has the perspective of parents that are caring, kind, loving and have their children's best interests at heart. I know parents who read parenting books are more likely to fit this perspective, but I kept thinking that not all parents are that completely wonderful. I think many a child has been saved from a childhood that would otherwise be hellish BY their friends. The author also feels children's friendships are not really true friendships, that they are not mature enough to have true friendships. I respect their courage to say that peer relationships are not as important as we are always led to believe. But I do think that childhood friendships can be true ones.

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