



## GROWING GREATNESS



Welcome to Growing Greatness — a space dedicated to uplifting the work of parents, caregivers, educators, and youth advocates who are committed to building strong, resilient children. This blog is rooted in the belief that every young person has greatness within them, and with the right approach, support, and connection, that greatness can flourish. In our very first post, we explore the foundation of the Nurtured Heart Approach®, a transformative way to build meaningful relationships and empower children through the Three Stands: Absolutely No, Absolutely Yes, and Absolutely Clear. It is a therapeutic method developed by Howard Glasser in 1992 to help children and adults with challenging behaviors.

### **The Three Stands of NHA: Absolutely No, Absolutely Yes, and Absolutely Clear Explained**

In the world of caregiving, teaching, and mentoring, especially with youth who face behavioral, developmental, or emotional challenges, clear and compassionate structure is vital. The Nurtured Heart Approach® (NHA) offers a powerful lens through which adults can build stronger relationships, foster inner wealth, and guide young people toward success.

At the core of this approach lie three foundational principles known as the Three Stands: Absolutely No, Absolutely Yes, and Absolutely Clear. These are not just techniques. They are commitments we make to ourselves and to the children in our care. Understanding and embracing these stands can transform not only the way we respond to challenging behaviors but also how we celebrate growth and progress.

#### **1. Absolutely No: Refusing to Energize Negativity**

The Stand of Absolutely No is the commitment to stop feeding negative behavior with intense reactions. In many traditional settings, children often receive more energy and attention for misbehaving than for doing the right thing. NHA flips that script.

With this stand, we intentionally avoid giving power to disruptive or unsafe behaviors. That does not mean we ignore problems or avoid setting boundaries. Quite the opposite. We maintain rules and consequences, but we do so with calmness and consistency, not emotional drama. By refusing to energize negativity, we remove the payoff that often fuels it.

**Challenge:** Become aware of the energy and intensity around you. Work on being intentional about refusing to give energy to negativity

**Example:** Instead of raising your voice when a child breaks a rule, calmly follow through with a pre-established consequence and reflect on the behavior later when everyone is regulated.

## **2. Absolutely Yes: Creating a Culture of Success**

Absolutely Yes is about purposefully and consistently recognizing the positive. It challenges adults to shift their focus toward what is going right, even in small moments. Every time a child is respectful, responsible, honest, or shows effort, even in the tiniest way, we acknowledge it with specific and sincere recognition.

This stand helps build a child's inner wealth, the deep belief that they are good, capable, and valuable. When a young person hears consistent messages affirming their strengths, they begin to see themselves differently. They internalize those strengths and are more likely to repeat and build upon them.

Challenge: Continue to become aware of the energy and intensity around you. Be consciously more positive and speak from the heart when you recognize positive behavior in others.

Example: I see you took a deep breath instead of yelling just now. That shows amazing self-control.

## **3. Absolutely Clear: Clear Rules, Clear Consequences, Clear Recognition**

Absolutely Clear is the structure that supports the other two stands. It is about being transparent and consistent with expectations, consequences, and recognition. Children thrive when they know what is expected, what will happen when boundaries are crossed, and what behaviors will be celebrated.

Clarity does not mean perfection or rigidity. It means communicating openly and following through consistently. It also means offering clear and descriptive recognition when positive behaviors show up so that children understand exactly what they did well.

Challenge: Watch where people are being clear around you and what the result is.

Example: You turned in your homework today without a reminder. That shows responsibility and planning. Well done.

## **Why These Three Stands Matter**

Together, Absolutely No, Absolutely Yes, and Absolutely Clear form a powerful triad. They help create a relational environment where children feel seen for their strengths, understand the rules, and aren't defined by their missteps. These stands aren't about control. They're about connection, respect, and empowerment. Whether you're a parent, teacher, or youth worker, adopting the Three Stands of NHA can make a lasting difference in how you relate to the children in your life and how they come to see themselves.

## **Stay Connected**

This is just the beginning of our Growing Greatness blog series. In future posts, we will continue to explore the Nurtured Heart Approach, share stories, highlight practical strategies, and offer tools to help nurture the greatness within every child. We invite you to grow with us as we build stronger relationships, support emotional well-being, and create positive change one moment at a time.

In the meantime, here are some helpful resources to explore:

- [The Nurtured Heart Institute](#)
- [NHA Solutions- Nurtured Heart Institute YouTube Channel](#)
- [Transforming the Difficult Child: The Nurtured Heart Approach](#)