

Recommended Reading

The Moral Intelligence of Children by Robert Coles, Penguin Ballantine 1997 (Plume edition 1998)
A Tribe Apart by Patricia Hersch, Ballantine Publishing 1998 (Fawcett Columbine Book)
Lost Boys by James Garbarino, Simon & Schuster 1999 (Free Press edition)

Required Reading

WHY CHILDREN TURN VIOLENT
by Geoffrey Cowley

(Newsweek, April 6, 1998 - p25)

Small-town shooting sprees attract a lot of attention, but individual hits in the inner city are the most routine kid-on-kid murders. Urban poverty fosters powerlessness, and the rage that goes with it. The juvenile murder rate among blacks, who are more likely to be poor, is typically nine times higher than the rate among whites. Urban black males make up slightly more than 1 percent of the population, yet they commit 30 percent of all homicides. Princeton criminologist John DiIulio Jr. believes the real curse of life in the inner city is "growing up without loving, capable, responsible adults who teach you right from wrong" or, worse yet, 'growing up surrounded by delinquent and criminal adults...[in settings] where self-respecting young men literally aspire to get away with murder.' In a 1991 survey of inner-city kids under the age of 19, researchers at the University of Alabama found that four in 10 had actually witnessed a homicide.

'Moral poverty' isn't confined to urban ghettos. A lack of parental involvement places any child at risk-especially if the television is running all day. No one pretends that kids are doomed to re-enact or simulate every atrocity they see on TV or in video games. But experts agree that a constant diet of mass entertainment can warp children's sense of the world. When violent action is all they see, says University of Michigan psychologist Leonard Eron, 'the lesson they learn is that everybody does it and this is the way to behave.' When 14 year-old Michael Carneal coolly shot down eight of his classmates in Paducah, Ky., last December, he'd been watching actor Leonardo DiCaprio enact the same fantasy in 'The Basketball Diaries.'

It's possible, of course, that young boys have always nurtured bizarre revenge fantasies but lacked the means to carry them out. 'Without access to guns, these kids might break a couple of windows,' says Geoffrey Canada, president of the Rheedlen Centers for Children and Families, in Harlem. 'It would be a pain, but it wouldn't be mass murder.' Unfortunately, kids do have access to guns. Americans own nearly 200 million of them, according to the National Institute of Justice. More than half of these guns are stored unlocked; 16 percent are both unlocked and loaded. And though school yard shootings don't happen every day, a 1995 federal survey found that nearly 8 percent of high school students had carried a gun during the past 30 days. Andrew Golden, the 11 year-old implicated in last week's assault, had long boasted to friends that he could get to his family's weapons any time he wanted. He wasn't kidding.

Shot of banishing guns, can we hope to prevent such tragedies in the future? Experts say many kids could be diverted from killing if parents and teachers simply paid more attention to what children say. 'Many kids give clear indications,' says University of Virginia psychologist Dewey Cornell, 'but they aren't taken seriously. We need to take violence threats as seriously as we take threats of suicide.' Caretakers and peers should intervene when they see a child withdrawing, or exploding in rage over everyday frustrations. Most important, experts say, we can teach children how to resolve conflicts peacefully. 'When I ask kids how their dispute started, they tell me somebody dissed them,' says Kathleen Heide, a University of South Florida criminologist who has worked with 100 young murderers. 'I

get them to see the disrespect as being less about them and more about the guy showing it. And I stress communicating feelings directly, with words like 'don't like' and 'don't want'-as in 'I don't like it when you diss my girlfriend'. Straight talk-a simple step toward solving a complex problem."

INSIDE THE TEEN BRAIN
by Shannon Brownlee

(U. S. News & World Report - August 9, 1999, p.45-54)

"The shootings in Littleton, Colorado focused the nation's attention on aberrant adolescent behavior, but most teens never come close to committing violent acts. Still, even the most easygoing teenagers often confound their elders with behavior that seems odd by adult standards.

For most of this century, the assumption has been that teenage *sturm und drang*, the insolence and the rages, are all directed at parents. Teens turn against authority figures, went the conventional wisdom, in an effort to define who they are and to assert their independence-a view that spawned the teenage rebel, that quintessential American icon. The alternative explanation was that the hormones, those glandular bringers of sexual stirrings and pimples, were to blame.

The true source of teenage behavior lines north of the gonads. It's that 3-pound blob of gray and white matter known as the brain.

Yes, teenagers do have brains, but theirs don't yet function like an adults. With the advent of technologies such as magnetic resonance imaging, neuroscientists have discovered that the adolescent brain is far from mature. 'The teenage brain is a work in progress,' says Sandra Witelson, a neuroscientist at McMaster University in Ontario, and it's a work that develops in fits and starts.

Until the past decade, neuroscientists believed that the brain was fully developed by the time a child reached puberty and that the 100 billion neurons or nerves, inside an adult's skull-the hardware of the brain-were already in place by the time pimples began to sprout. The supposition was that a teenager could think like an adult if only he or she would cram in the necessary software-a little algebra here, some Civil War history there, capped by proficiency in balancing a checkbook. But the neural circuitry, or hardware, it turns out, isn't completely installed in most people until their early 20s.

And just as a teenager is all legs one day and all nose and ears the next, different regions of his brain are developing o different timetables. For instance, one of the last parts to mature is in charge of making sound judgments and calming unruly emotions. And the emotional centers in the teenage brain have already been revving up, probably under the influence of sex hormones.

This imbalance may explain why your intelligent 16-year-old doesn't think twice about getting into a car driven by a friend who is drunk, or why you formerly equable 13-year-old can be hugging you one minute and then flying off the handle the next.

Indeed, the brain inside a teenager's skull is in some ways closer to a child's brain than to an adult's. Still being forged are the connections between neurons that affect not only emotional skills but also physical and mental abilities. That means that it might be unreasonable to expect young teenagers to organize multiple tasks or grasp abstract ideas. And these still-developing neural links leave a teenager vulnerable: Depression in adolescence may set up circuits in the brain that will make it much harder to treat the illness later in life

But these changes aren't all for the worse. The brain's capacity for growth through adolescence may also indicate that even troubled teenagers can still learn restraint, judgment, and empathy. "Adolescence is a time of tumultuous change in the brain," says Jay Giedd, a child psychiatrist at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland. "Teenagers are choosing what their brains are going to be good at—learning right from wrong, responsibility or impulsiveness, thinking or video games."

If there's one thing that drives parents nuts about their teenagers, it's moodiness. "It's hot and cold, nasty and nice," says Vicki Sassom 34, the mother of 13-year-old Angelo a ninth grader from Staten Island, N.Y. "One minutes loving me, one minute hating me." Don't blame Angelo; blame the parts of his brain that process emotions and make decisions. His prefrontal cortex, where judgments are formed, is practically asleep at the wheel. At the same time, his limbic system, where raw emotions such as anger are generated, is entering a stage of development in which it goes into hyperdrive.

Brain police. The limbic system, located deep in the brain's interior, is associated with gut reactions, sparking instant waves of fear at the sight of a large snake or elation at a high SAT score. In adults, such emotional responses are modulated by the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that lines just behind the forehead and that acts as a sort of mental traffic cop, keeping tabs on many other parts of the brain, including the limbic system.

Indeed, the brain works something like a loosely organized team, with various parts carrying out different tasks and more or less cooperating with one another. The prefrontal cortex, says Karl Pribram, director of the Center for Brain Research and Informational Sciences at Radford University in Virginia, is in charge of 'executive functions.'"

These include the brain's ability to handle ambiguous information and make decisions to coordinate signals in different regions of the brain, and to tamp down or prolong emotions generated in the limbic system. In an adult, for instance, an overheard insult might arouse a murderous rage, until the prefrontal cortex figures out that the comment was meant for somebody else and tells the limbic system to pipe down. As Pribram puts it, 'The prefrontal cortex is the seat of civilization.'"

Something very different happens in teenagers, according to Deborah Yurgelun-Todd, a neuropsychologist at McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts. In recent experiments, Yurgelun-Todd and graduate student Abigail Baird showed adults and teenagers photographs of people's faces contorted in fear. When the researcher asked her subjects to identify the emotion being expressed, all of the adults got it right. Many of the teens, however, were unable to correctly identify the expression.

Then the researchers used functional magnetic resonance imaging, a technology that takes a picture of brain activity every three seconds or so in order to see which parts are being used during processing. Adult brains, the scientists discovered, light up in both the limbic areas and the prefrontal cortex when looking at expressions of fright. In teenagers, however, the prefrontal cortex was almost dark while the limbic system lit up.

These results suggest to Yurgelun-Todd that kids may not be as good as we think they are at interpreting facial expressions, in part because the prefrontal cortex is not yet lending the limbic system a hand. Teenagers are not adept readers of social signals, such as facial expressions even if they seem to do nothing but socialize. 'You have to actually learn how to read emotions,' says Yurgelun-Todd. 'We may think anger is pretty obvious to our kids, but they may not.'

Yurgelun-Todd's research reinforces other new findings suggesting the average teenager's prefrontal cortex isn't ready to take on the role of brain CEO. At NIMH, Giedd and colleagues are using another type of MRI, which captures brain structure rather than activity, to chart for the first time normal brain development from childhood through adolescence

Since 1991, Giedd and his colleagues have mapped the brains of nearly 1,000 healthy children and adolescents ranging in age from 3 to

18. Each child must lie inside a claustrophobically narrow tube surrounded by the giant, humming machine, holding perfectly still for 10 minutes at a stretch while a computerized brain image is built.

The researchers expected to find that after puberty, the brain looks like an adult's. Instead, they found that the prefrontal cortex undergoes a growth spurt at around age 9 or 10, when neurons begin sprouting new connections, or synapses. Most of these connections subsequently die off, starting at about age 12, in a process called 'pruning'-a sort of use-it-or-lose-it system for ensuring that the brain nourishes only the neurons and synapses that are useful. Pruning, which occurs in different parts of the brain at different times, also appears to allow the brain to think more efficiently.

Until the prefrontal cortex has been pruned, most young teenagers don't yet have all the brain power they need to make good judgments. Researchers suspect that the excess of synapses means the young adolescent mind can't easily keep track of multiple thoughts, and it can't gain instant access to critical memories and emotions that allow grownups to make judicious decisions.

'Good judgment is learned, but you can't learn it if you don't have the necessary hardware,' says Yurgelun-Todd. An unfinished prefrontal cortex also means that young teenagers may also have trouble organizing several tasks, deciding, for example, which to do first: call a friend, wash the dishes, or read the book for a report that's due in the morning.

The teenage tendency to leap before looking is compounded by the fact that adolescence is a time for seeking out new experiences, including some that are dangerous. 'I think all people do stupid things sometimes. It just seems like teenagers do it more often,' says Racnael Fisher, an 18-year-old senior from Lakewood, Colorado. That's an understatement. Driving without a seat belt, getting tattooed, smoking cigarettes, shoplifting-the list of foolish things kids do is longer than most parents really want to know.

Parents can relax a little, says Lyn Ponton, a child psychiatrist at the University of California-San Francisco and author of *The Romance of Risk*. 'Risk taking is normal.' But not all of it, she adds, is safe. Other research suggests that about 60 percent of a teenager's tendency to act impulsively and misjudge potential danger is genetic, a trait that is shared with other family members and is probably the result of differences in brain chemicals among individuals.

Mental mosh pit. Researchers also think that new experiences tap into a teenager's so-called reward system, a set of neurons that link emotional centers to many other parts of the brain and that can produce feelings of intense pleasure. This is the same set of neurons affected by certain illicit drugs, such as cocaine, that release dopamine, one of the brain chemicals, or neurotransmitters, that are responsible for arousal and motivation.

Marvin Zuckerman, a professor of psychology at the University of Delaware, and others suspect that thrills-like sneaking out at night or jumping into the mosh pit at a heavy-metal concert-stimulate the teenage brain's dopamine system, for reasons that are not yet fully understood. The result, however, is clear: Teenagers are far more interested in novelty than children or adults are, probably because it makes them feel good. Other research has shown that at the same time, levels of another neurotransmitter, serotonin, appear to decline temporarily in most adolescents, making them more likely to act impulsively.

Added to this brew of neurotransmitters are the sex hormones, which not only turn on an interest in sex but also change the brain's architecture. Giedd and his colleagues recently reported for the first time that, in both sexes, surges of testosterone at puberty swell the amygdala, an almond-shaped part of the limbic system that generates feelings of fear and anger. (Girls' bodies make testosterone by breaking down estrogen, while boys' bodies transform testosterone into an estrogen-like hormone called 'estradiol.')

This blossoming of the amygdala is especially pronounced in boys, but it may account for the rise in aggressiveness and irritability seen in both sexes at adolescence. Increased levels of estrogen at puberty are responsible for the sudden growth of the hippocampus, the part of the brain that processes memory. The larger the hippocampus, the better the memory, at least in animals. The hippocampus in girls grows

proportionally larger than it does. In boys, a finding that may help explain why women are better than men are at remembering complex social relationships and are likely to suffer less from the memory loss that accompanies Alzheimer's.

Estrogen and testosterone may not alter the brain at puberty so much as flip neurological switches, which were set by hormonal levels while a child was still in his mother's womb. Once flipped, these switches have a profound effect on a teenager's sex drive and moodiness.

Shifts in prenatal hormones also affect mental skills in ways that may not become apparent until later in life. Testosterone, for example, appears to shape centers in the brain that process spatial information. Evidence for this comes from a study of girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia, or CAH, a condition that causes their adrenal glands to pump out excess androgen, a testosterone-like hormone, during prenatal development. Once the girls are born, they are given cortisone, to keep the body from producing too much androgen.

Their brains, however, have already been molded. Sheri Berenbaum, a psychologist at Southern Illinois University medical school, and others have found that as teenagers, girls with CAH report they are more aggressive than their sisters, and they have better spatial skills the ability to rotate an object in their minds, for instance, or to imagine how pieces of a shape fit together. They are also more interested than their sisters in becoming engineers and pilots, traditionally masculine professions. But researchers don't yet know precisely how testosterone molds the brain's ability to imagine all the facets of an object, or why it would make girls (or boys, for that matter) want to become engineers.

One of the last steps in making an adult brain is the coating of nerves in white matter, fatty cells that spiral around the shaft of nerves like vines around a tree. The white matter, also known as myelin, acts like the insulation on an electric cord, allowing electrical impulses to travel down a nerve faster and more efficiently. This is one reason a toddler is less coordinated than a 10-year-old. It now appears that many of the nerves connecting different processing centers in the brain don't finish myelinating until the early 20s.

Some of the nerves that become sheathed during adolescence connect areas of the brain that regulate emotion, judgment, and impulse control. Francine Benes, a neuroscientist at McLean Hospital, says that these nerves myelinate in girls earlier than in boys, which may help explain why teenage girls seem more emotionally mature than boys, whose myelin levels may not equal girls' until age 30.

The myelination process also has been implicated in schizophrenia, which often becomes apparent in late adolescence. Benes believes the faster transmissions overload defective nerves in schizophrenics. 'If the circuit starts to have too much information coming in too rapidly, it may become overwhelmed.'

Laying foundations. Researchers feel they have only begun to probe the workings of the adolescent brain, but their findings already offer some new ways for parents to deal with teenagers. During adolescence, many higher mental skills will become automatic, just the way playing tennis and driving do. Kids who exercise their brains, in effect, by learning to marshal their thoughts, to measure their impulses, and to understand abstract concepts, are laying the neural foundations that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

'This argues for doing a lot of things as a teenager,' says the NIMH's Giedd. 'You are hard-wiring your brain in adolescence. Do you want to hard-wire it for sports and playing music and doing mathematics or for lying on the couch in front of the television?' This hard-wiring also provides yet another reason for teens not to take drugs or alcohol, because they may permanently alter the balance of chemicals in their brains.

Parents can take comfort in knowing that searching for new experiences is a normal part of growing up. The trick, say experts, is helping kids find healthy sources of stimulation. For one child, being in the school play or volunteering in the community may provide plenty of excitement. For another, it could take hang-gliding lessons. The problem, of course, is that safe risks are not always available to the kids

who need them. 'Middle-class kids can go skiing and scuba diving,' says the University of Delaware's Zuckerman. 'But for many kids, there's just crime, sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll.'

The best news for parents is that the vast majority of kids will make it through adolescence with few permanent scars, except perhaps the occasional hole through a belly-button. New research shows that most children emerge from adolescence physically and emotionally intact-although their parents will probably never be the same. Mary Scott, 48, of Port Jefferson, N. Y., is a veteran of teenage wars: She's the mother of two adolescents and a 22-year-old. 'Occasionally they do things that are so incredibly selfish, it's unbelievable,' she says. On the other hand, Scott adds, 'If they didn't drive you crazy, they'd never leave [the nest].' Maybe adolescence is nature's way of forcing children to grow up."

THE MORAL INTELLIGENCE OF CHILDREN
by Robert Coles

(Penguin Putnam, Inc. Copyright 1997)

[A 6-year old boy who loved looking through his telescope] page 103

"Those stars, he told me, are moving fast, even if it looks like they're not moving one inch.' I nodded. Then he decided that I needed to know more: 'A friend of mine said that God is keeping them from bumping into each other, but I told him no, God isn't like that. He lets things happen-he doesn't keep interfering! He made everything, and then everything is on its own, and people, too. In Sunday school, they say it's up to you, whether you'll be good or bad, and it's like that with the stars: they keep moving, and if they go off track, that's because something has gone wrong-it's an accident, it's not God falling asleep, or getting made, something like that!'

He stopped to see whether I was following him. Yes, I was-and I nodded to indicate as much. He decided to complete his presentation: 'Here it's different-there are people here. We're the star with people! That's why we could mess things up. The stars could hit each other-one star gets in the way of the other. That would be bad luck for the both of them! But we could do something bad to this place, this star-and it would be as bad as if another star hit it, worse even!'

Now I was looking at him more intently, as he noticed. I was wondering why he was bringing us close to such an apocalyptic moment-what had prompted this direction of fantasy, of speculation, of narrative exposition? He knew I wanted to hear more from him. He looked up at the sky for a moment, then returned earthward with his eyes, which cam to rest on the television set in the kitchen. I immediately wondered what he had recently seen on that screen, what program may have stimulated this direction of our conversation. He told me without any prompting on my part: 'I heard the man on the news say that there was a lot of bad stuff that got into the air.' The nuclear accident at Chernobyl had taken place a week earlier. 'If people don't learn the right thing to do they could get everyone in trouble, and that would ruin the earth. God might be upset, but I don't think He'd interfere. It's up to us to learn how to do things right-you can pray to Him, but you're the one who has got to find the best way, the right way to behave.'

We had gravitated, as it were, downward from those other planets, made more accessible to sight by the telescope, to this earth, so troubled by forces and impulses sometimes even harder to be here than those at work on, say, far-distant Mars or Jupiter. Still, this boy was by no means blind to all of that, to the relationship, actually, between God and man and the planetary bodies, no small world to encompass intellectually and morally. In his own unpretentious, unassuming way he had let me know that no matter the "deep down" reasons for looking so intently at what is so far away (and no matter my reasons for looking so intently at his reasons), there was another line of inquiry for us both to pursue, one to which he, artful teacher that he was, eventually initially brought booth of us: the matter of right and wrong, good and bad, as it arises anywhere, everywhere in our lives. A boy seemingly detoured by intellectual

inclination (and, I was speculating, by emotional inclination as well) from this planet's problems in favor of an abiding interest in other planets was quite interested in addressing the biggest questions confronting all of us human beings who live on this earth: how our behavior might influence the very nature of existence of life as it exists here.

For me, that time of reflection with an elementary school child became more instructive than I imagined would be the case. He had taken me, courtesy of his telescope, on one kind of long voyage, but he had also enabled me to travel further into his mind his life, and thereafter, into the thinking of other children than I had thought possible or desirable. I had been told by a boy then in the second grade that the abstract worlds of astronomy, theology, social ethics, and psychology were no unapproachable mysteries for him; that he was very much able to ponder the question of God's will, the matter of man's destructive possibilities, and to do so concretely, searchingly, suggestively, even if some adults might call his effort (sometimes dismissively) a passing interest or a season's whim or regard his concerns as evidence of 'sublimation.' In point of fact, this encounter taught me to be more generous to a particular child, and with his help, to other children with whom I was talking-to allow for their capacity to be ethically introspective citizens, at six or seven even, of this country, of the whole world.

The conscience is the voice within us that has really heard the voice of others (starting with our parents, of course and so whispers and sometimes shouts oughts and naughts to us, guides us in our thinking and our doing. The conscience constantly presses its moral weight on our feeling lives, our imaginative life. Without doubt, most elementary school children are not only capable of discerning between right and wrong, they are vastly interested in how to do so-it's a real passion for them. At three or four, after all, a child has learned to oblige the world in important ways: has learned to care for himself, control herself, eat on his or her own, and with reasonable care and consideration for what others call manners; has learned to speak intelligibly and with proper respect for others without which a two-way conversation won't long take place. All of the above, years in the making, has to do with an unselfconscious kind of character development, resulting in a child who has learned to go by the rules of the house, to 'behave' himself or herself, mostly-a 'good' child, at home and in the neighborhood."

[A U. S. history lesson in a 4th grade classroom] page 117

"I was wondering if the Pilgrims, once they were aboard the ships, and once they were out to sea, if they thought to themselves: we did the bet thing, we made the right decision.'

Now the class caught fire-they had all been as stymied by that word 'happy' as I had been! One girl said yes, emphatically, and then explained: 'When you do something you know is right to do, you feel glad that you made the right choice, and you're going to be happy, even if the result is a lot of pain and trouble. My mom says, the worst thing, it's when you do something, and you know it's wrong, but you go ahead anyway.' A boy across the aisle agrees by nodding as she talks, then picks up after she's stopped, as if he were her alter ego: 'You feel worse, even though you've probably made your decision thinking it would make you feel better! You know what my dad says? He says, 'The easiest way out can end up being the hardest, and vice versa'-you can make a tough choice and then you're so glad, real glad you did it!'

Across the room, another voice offered another angle of vision. 'The way I look at it, those people were probably scared, real scared. I don't see them sitting there and bring happy that they did the right thing. I see them being afraid that they made a mistake, and look what happened: they were going 'nowhere,' you could say! They left this life they had, and they didn't know what to expect, and they were out there on the ocean, and the trip would take forever-we forget how long it took-but even so, they'd made the decision, and they weren't going to turn back: no way. So, they worried, but they knew what they did, and why they did it, and they were 'happy' that way: they'd *decided*.'

More silence, and I think we've exhausted this subject. I prepare to be the formal teacher and get into details of seventeenth-century American history-but another boy's hand has gone up and I nod to him, and he speaks: 'I don't think they thought one way or the other

about the rough trip, or the troubles they could have when the ship pulled into some harbor. I think they'd done what they knew they had to do-they were courageous. In Europe, no one complimented them-people criticized them for what they believed. But they knew what they should do; they had this idea of how to worship God, and they weren't going to surrender to other people, their idea of how you should [worship God].' He stops, and I decide to speak, though as I do I realize he may well have more to say, that I may be interrupting a train of thought: 'That's your definition of courage-doing what you have to do?' He is quick to reply: "Courage is when you believe in something, you really do, so you go ahead and try to do what your beliefs tell you [to do], and if you're in danger, that way-well, you're not thinking 'I'm in danger.' You're thinking, this is right, this is important, and I'm going to go ahead and that is that.'

Now there is a flurry of hands raised, not to get permission to speculate on the emotions or beliefs of the Pilgrims and Puritans but to talk about courage, how one behaves in response to one's beliefs or values. These nine-year-old boys and girls are all fired up, ready to declaim, really, about what matters and how a person ought to prove a loyalty to what for him or her does matter. 'If you believe something,' another boy says 'but you won't risk anything-nothing!-for what you believe, then do you really believe in what you're saying [you do]? I don't think so! I think it's a lot of talk, then; but it's not believing-the person isn't believing.' A girl in front of him shakes her head as she talks, and she waves her hand urgently: 'It's not fair to say you have to cross the ocean and you could die in the boat, or when you get there-to prove you're really believing something! I mean, you could believe in something, but that doesn't mean you have to jump over some rope to prove you do. The proof: it's for you to decide, what you'll do to show your believe is-is true. Maybe you don't have to do anything, or show anyone anything. Why should you have to prove yourself by *doing* something? Why not just have your belief, and it's your business, and no one else's?'

Much more discussion as the children attempt to clarify their sense of what a belief is, and how or whether it has truly taken hold in a given life. Another girl defends the boy who spoke of courage as connected to action and brings us back to the Pilgrims by saying this: 'Look, it's not whether you do something. It's that those Pilgrims said it meant the whole world to them that they practice their religion the way they wanted to-and if they'd given up on that, wouldn't it mean that they weren't so into their faith? Wouldn't it? With us, here, you can have your ideas. But those Pilgrims had to prove themselves to God! I'm not saying you have to go *do* something, if you're going to have beliefs. I guess it depends on what the beliefs are. If the beliefs are-if you have to do something because of the beliefs, and you don't do it, because you're scared, so you don't practice your religion the way you believe you should, then I think you are not really living up to your beliefs. If you do live up to them, and you have to face a lot of trouble, then you're courageous, that's how you are. I don't think you believe in courage; I think you become courageous, you act courageous, because you really do believe something, and its not just a lot of talk; you're not pretending, fooling yourself and other people too.'

I am enormously impressed. I glance at my tape recorder to see if the telltale light is on, a sign that I really want what I've just heard to be on the record; a sign, too, that I am so in awe of what I've heard that without that voice on tape I wonder whether I'll be scratching my head in incredulity! An elementary school child shows a capacity for probing moral analysis that encompasses the very nature of a belief, a value as it connects to a lived life. In this case, the value is courage, the capacity to put oneself on the line willingly, with apparent carelessness (no matter what takes place deep within oneself) on behalf of what one believes, what one wants to protect or ensure as possible for oneself and for others. The point, we have been told, is not the establishment of a kind of means test for courage, a rating system; the point is to understand what the issue is for each person-what sets of beliefs or values are at stake, and thus, how a person's courage might be manifested. The Pilgrims, we all agreed, had made their particular daily, weekly, religious practice the heart and soul of their lives, so to cross the ocean in pursuit of such a possibility took courage, that is, a full commitment to a set of ideals, of desired practices as an expression of those ideals. Courage, we were learning, may be defined as a determination, no matter the obstacles or dangers, to live up to one's values rather than a capacity *per se* to face danger with apparent self-assurance. In other words, that girl, and with her the entire class, was intent on going beyond-beneath-the demonstration of a kind of behavior to approach the sources of its inspiration at least *some* sources.

We had not yet gotten into a realm of psychology that would entail discussion of behavior connected to, say, foolhardiness or vengefulness prompted by outrage or loss, states of mind that can prompt what can certainly come across as courageous behavior.

When I did ask the class, in a good-bye to the discussion (the clock was running out) what other beliefs or values might prompt courage such as we'd been discussing, a chorus of suggestions, interestingly, descended on us-children speaking out directly, rather than raising their hands, politely waiting their turn: love of parents for children and children for parents came up in various forms of expression as did love of country, loyalty to friends. These children had in effect declared their conviction that ties to family, friends, and country matter; that such bonds can or ought to or do command enough loyalty to enable the appearance of courage under various sets of circumstances. Put differently, courage became for this class a virtue that is prompted by other virtues-quite a contemplative exercise for all of us to have experienced!

I mention the above to indicate what young school-age children are able to muster collectively and individually in the way of moral reflection-not that we puffed ourselves up by attaching such a phrase to an informal and unexpectedly vigorous, and rewarding free-for-all. In that regard, we did well to stumble along, to let the casual, unpredictable rhythm of a classroom discussion rule the day. My hunch is that if I had asked more formally for an examination of courage, its antecedents, its sources in life, in the lives of one or another group of people, the children might have appeased my didacticism, but might also have been far less forthcoming in their approach to this historical moment, one to which they managed to find such a personal connection. So many younger schoolchildren are eager to embrace the imaginary-indeed, their minds are often afire with it. Given a choice, they will leap into one or another scenario, be it historical or contemporary, factual or fictional, and bring to it their very own moral or intellectual assumptions. Teachers have to control and regulate that tendency-help the children distinguish between themselves (as readers, as discussants) and the topic at hand. But such distinction too strongly emphasized or enforced can stifle the willingness of boys and girls in a class to immerse themselves in, say, the life of seventeenth-century London from which the Pilgrims were embarking, and their willingness as well to think personally, confessionally-to level with themselves and others with respect to their own experiences as they give shape to a particular sense of what others once did, and why.

All the time, during these first school years, one hopes children are learning what is requested of them, how they must behave, what they must do, and one hopes, accordingly, that they come to school having already learned at home what is desirable, what is impermissible, what is utterly beyond the pale, and why. Under such circumstances, they are more interested in matters of right and wrong, virtue and vice, than we sometimes might acknowledge, either as parents or as teachers. They ache sometimes for a chance to sort out all of that, the mandates and warnings, the applause and the chastisement they have at various moments received. Moreover, that they have heard read to them, what they have learned to read, both at home and at school, has only encouraged them to wonder even more about ethical issues. Cinderella, Robin Hood, David and Goliath, Jack (of the Beanstalk), Goldilocks, the Pied Piper of Hamelin, Little Red Riding Hood and those dogs and bunny rabbits, cats and chickens and frogs whom, anthropomorphically, various storytellers have handed over to young listeners and readers-all of them struggle for the good, contend with the bad, amid their adventures, the times of danger and peril that confront them. Moreover, parents, especially, make up their own stories to tell children, usually as they put them to bed, and in so doing commonly draw on family traditions and anecdotes, with no small resort to a cautionary lesson here, a sage of moral triumph there.

All of those times, in a bedroom or dining room or living room or kitchen, in a classroom, out in the playground, are often moral moments, however, unacknowledged: opportunities for us adults to make yet again this or that point about how things go in the world, how they might go, how they should go. It is similar with history's moments, as demonstrated above. To offer another example from my classroom teaching-I still remember how the simple fact that Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy were assassinated got to my class, to my own children. Both of these American leaders stand for so very much, the former as the one who took on the institution of slavery, the latter as a very young and explicitly hopeful idealistic president who initiated the Peace Corps and gave national voice yet again to the pain of this nation's more vulnerable people. *Why*, so many children ask, were those two men cut down at the height of their power and influence? What is one to make of such tragedies? For that matter, what is on to think of the assassins, John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald, who almost exactly a century apart did similar deeds: a gun aimed, fired at a president? Here historical fatefulness can become a highly charged drama that deeply engaged a child's developing moral sensibility. Here, a parent or a teacher, calling upon his or her own moral interest and, yes, sense of the dramatic can help a child or a group of children think about their own

moral situation as they try to understand that of another, a president, an assassin."

[A Film as a Moral Moment: *A Bronx Tale*] page 18

"The film takes the viewer to the streets of a working-class Italian neighborhood in the Bronx, where a bus driver, Lorenzo Anello, lives with his wife and his son, Calogero, known as C. The father is a hardworking, honorable, humble man who has no intention of succumbing to the authority of a local mobster, whose iron hand strikes fear into just about everyone. The boy, C, witnesses a murder committed by the mobster, but won't tell the police anything, and so earns the murderer's gratitude. A complex friendship now develops, so that C soon enough has two fathers: his honest, ethically demanding biological one, and the man whose work, whose business, is obviously outside the law. The mobster can be kind, generous, even wise, hence the moral power of the film: we link arms in our hearts, or guts, with this youth, who is torn by various attachments, loyalties, desires, and yearnings, and who lives in a world where good and evil can't be utterly, neatly, conveniently distinguished, in individuals and in social situations. Race enters the narrative, too the youth is attracted to a black schoolmate even as it is so much a presence in the lives of those who live in similar working-class communities of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and across the nation..."

[Comments of a 16-year-old boy] "'You can feel the pull you can agree with the father, that once you give in and get connected by those people, the Mafia, you're through. I mean, you may make more money than you'd ever made otherwise, but you've given up something that's more important: you're not free. You're a prisoner they own you. The bus driver, he owns himself. That's the difference. You let people buy you off, and you lose all respect for yourself. You stand up for what you believe that way, you can look yourself in the mirror, and you don't need to run and hide.

'That Mafia guy, though the picture was great, because you begin to realize how lonely he is. He didn't have a family. C became his son. You go back and forth, you agree with his father, but you think this Mafia guy, he's got a lot of good things to say to the kid. It's not black and white, all good and all bad and the same with the black and white people, there's plenty of fear to go around, and hate. I was going back and forth, back and forth, all during the movie. When it was over, I kept thinking of the father and what he said, and the gang-guy, the Mafia guy, and how he had a good side to him but he was no good."

The boy went on to say, 'I thought there was a whole lot in that movie to ask yourself. What do you believe? Could someone 'buy' you? Why do people get mean and nasty, and the result is they're in trouble they don't have anyone they can trust? Why can't people 'live and let live,' like our priest says we should, and not be looking for fights, the black people and us, like in the flick? You see what can happen you leave a show like that, a movie, and your head is all turned on!'

I *could* see, that he had been prompted by a film to become a moral witness of sorts, quite stirred to contemplate this life's rights and wrongs, not always so distinctly, conveniently, categorically differentiated, the one from the other. While watching the movie he had begun to look inward and, thereafter, to pay close attention to the world around him. The film and the contemplation it prompted became for him a moral moment in his life. In his own philosophical words, 'You get to wondering, about how you're going to live, how you should[live].' I suppose it can be argued that a boy of sixteen who can use a film such as *A Bronx Tale* that way become wholeheartedly engaged with its moral energy, so that it becomes his own is already well on his way to becoming a good person. Still, as that same boy was savvy enough (and, yes, modest enough) to remind me, 'You can lose your balance sometimes, and you say something or do something, and you know you're making a mistake, and you feel bad so, you have to keep reminding yourself, keep telling yourself what's the right thing to do, and what's wrong, or you'll make more and more of those mistakes, and pretty soon, you're in deep, deep water, you're over you head.'

This boy had let me know that he, a moral witness to his own growing struggle to learn how to live a reasonably good life, had figured out how continually we are challenged morally. We don't conquer this world's mischief and wrongdoing and malice once and for all, and then forever after enjoy the moral harvest of that victory. Rather, we struggle along, even stumble along, from day to day, in need of

taking stock yet again, with the help of a story, a movie, not to mention the experiences that, inevitably and not so rarely, come into our daily lives. The good person is the alert witness not only of others, but to his or her own ethical tensions as they flash their various signals, warn of conflicts ahead or of ambiguities not so easy to resolve, or of mixed feelings and temptations and the rationalizations that justify them. This is the stuff of *A Bronx Tale*, the stuff of your life and mine."

[Suggestions for Teachers] p22

"A fourth-grade teacher says, 'I tell my children [on the first day of class] that we've got our lessons to learn, and our behaving to learn.' This bright, alert, middle-aged woman makes a frank distinction: 'I prepare each day's lesson very carefully, even though I've been teaching here for fifteen years. If the kids give me trouble that's when I'm sometimes unprepared! The other day a boy started talking with another boy. That's happened a million times, but each time is different for me. This boy was pushing his gift of gab on the kid sitting across the aisle, and the other kid clearly did not want to reciprocate. He knew it was wrong, and I saw him nervously looking my way. I felt a surge of anger rise in me! Then I wondered what that [first] boy wanted, and I saw that he was looking at the other boy's paper on his desk they were all writing an 'in-class' composition for me. I knew he wasn't actually cheating, but in a way, he was: he was distracting his neighbor, probably because he himself was having a hard time writing. What to do? What should I have done? What was the best thing to do?'

This fourth-grade teacher is one of seven teachers with whom I'm sitting in a school conference room. We are discussing the kinds of questions this book is meant to address: How does one do a good job of helping children become good and how does one stop them from becoming bad? As this teacher said, 'That boy was actually very smart. He's too smart for his own good. He loves distracting other people, getting them to slow down, getting them in trouble then he can slip away, and come up roses. He can write wonderful papers. He's the brightest boy in the class, and there he is, not a very nice person. I appreciate his mind and I can't stand his heart or his soul! My husband says they're a dime a dozen like that in the fancy universities [where he teaches], so that's how it all begins, and if only we could nip it in the bud [this early tendency of some students to be insensitive, manipulative, all too self-regarding, self-serving], but I don't know how you do it[how you] intervene in a class as a moral agent, I guess you could call me, in a way that really makes a difference. I mean, I can shout, I can punish, I can say this is wrong or bad but my words sure go in one ear and out the other, I sometimes think.'

She stops, then continues, 'I could have told the class that we had to put aside everything, because nothing mattered more than how we behave, how we act toward one another. I could have challenged the whole class: How do we do better, how do we avoid the trap? I could have put it to them: What should a teacher do when she sees one of her students trying to get someone else into trouble, or trying to cheat, or whispering, and in that way bothering others? Let's talk about it! Let's write a composition about it! Let's read some of those compositions aloud! Let's let me, or better, let that boy who got us into all this, let him write on the blackboard: 'Misery likes company.' A psychological lesson! A moral lesson! A warning to us all!'

We had all been moved by her; she got us going with further suggestions, meant to highlight a particular moment, turn it into a very hard-to-forget (maybe unforgettable) moment, a moral experience for the entire class that had a substantial life and import. Nor need the class have been diverted from its intellectual activity, its valuable and scheduled task: the writing of an impromptu composition. Those children would have written their essays, all right and, maybe, remembered long and hard the messages they contained, or so we dared hope. To be sure, 'There are no guarantees,' as another teacher, putting a break on our collective enthusiasm, reminded us. Still, we had come up with our 'curriculum plan' one way of turning a morally connected episode into an experience for everybody in that class: write an essay about it.

The teacher told us that she had this final afterthought: 'Maybe I should have shared something of myself with the class, told them of a time, an event, in my life, an incident that resembled this one we'd been discussing. It can really 'get to the kids,' I've noticed, when you stop being 'holier than thou' and join in with them. Oh, you've got to be very careful. You have, and you need to have, your moral authority. They don't need you, and they don't want you (even if for a minute they think they do) to 'sink,' to be a constantly confessing

wrongdoer! They should look up to you. But there comes a time, every once in a while, when you can let them know that what they're struggling with well, it's their humanity. When you remember your own mistakes, and let them know that you have thought about them, and you understand what you did and why it was wrong, and you regret it, you're sorry, and you've tried not to let something like that happen again: that's what you want them to do, so you're teaching them by using yourself as a 'case study,' and you're really putting yourself on the line!

In a little over a half hour we had covered much territory, had begun to consider the question of questions: how to move from knowledge or awareness to action, how to connect one's moral concerns, and objectives to one's obligation as a parent and teacher, how to impart values to the young in such a way that those values mean something to them, mean enough so that they help shape children's daily lives. We continued this discussion for another hour and a half, each of us, interestingly, talking about our personal experiences. I held back in that regard, because the others wanted so very much to connect moments in their classroom life to what we had all heard from the first teacher to speak that evening. Toward the end, though, we took up the matter of empathy, and the lack of it: the way some children really try to figure out how others are feeling and respond to them, whereas other children do not.

Again and again, the Golden Rule, the biblical ideal, came up: empathy as practiced in each day's encounters with those 'others' whose role is to help us define our own moral life, our values as they are put to the test of another's needs and vulnerabilities. So, what about a child who seems to have little or no understanding of that rule, a child who has, by deed, adopted another kind of rule, a penny-ante rule whose essence is "Think of yourself all the time, and let others worry about themselves."

[Tolstoy's Story, What Makes A Good Person] page 10

[Here is] a brief but powerful story by Leo Tolstoy, one that can be read together or taught to anyone at almost any level, from elementary school through high school and college to the various postgraduate schools. The story is called

The Old Grandfather and the Grandson

The grandfather had become very old. His legs wouldn't go, his eyes didn't see, his ears didn't hear, he had no teeth. And when he ate, the food dripped from his mouth.

The son and daughter-in-law stopped setting a place for him at the table and gave him supper in back of the stove. Once they brought dinner down to him in a cup. The old man wanted to move the cup and dropped and broke it. The daughter-in-law began to grumble at the old man for spoiling everything in the house and breaking the cups and said that she would now give him dinner in a dishpan. The old man only sighed and said nothing.

Once the husband and wife were staying at home and watching their small son playing on the floor with some wooden planks: he was building something. The father asked: "What is that you are doing, Misha?" And Misha said: "Dear Father, I am making a dishpan. So that when you and dear Mother become old, you may be fed from this dishpan."

The husband and wife looked at one another and began to weep. They became ashamed of so offending the old man, and from then on seated him at the table and waited on him.

[The author's conversation with a young boy regarding teachers.] page 126

"A teacher is supposed to say yes or no, not maybe!' 'Oh?' I say. 'Yes,' he says. 'All teachers?' I say. 'Yup,' he says. 'Well, I've met some teachers,' I say, 'who subscribe to 'maybe' every once in a while.' Then a most startling answer: 'I don't always like this yes, no, people give you.' 'People?' I ask. 'When I'm home, they say, 'It's either right or wrong, and there's no in-between.' The same [goes] at school. I get in trouble with them if I don't agree.'

The important gist of our talks was that this boy had been taught at home and at school to think only one way, in a clear-cut decisive manner: either/or, yes/no, without resort to qualification, emendation, supposition, speculation. Tim's 'rebelliousness' had to do, significantly, with a failure on his part to learn by example, to take in without protest what he'd seen and heard and make it his own. Most children do exactly that, watch how their elders behave, hear what they say, and follow suit. This boy was having trouble doing so [He became] quite difficult the next school day with a teacher who, by his own description, kept telling the class that she wanted 'law and order' at all costs, and anyone who denied her that blissful state would be severely punished. 'All I did was raise my hand,' Tim remembered, 'and she went ballistic!' After some conversation between us, he also remembered that the teacher had been discussing grammar, the rights and wrongs of it, had told the class she wanted 'no ifs, ands, or buts,' simply compliance with the rules she was about to promulgate. But he had a 'but' in his mind a big one: he was hoping to ask 'who made those rules,' and so started waving his hand all too resolutely in the air, even as the teacher began her disquisition. The two had already had several showdowns resulting from a pupil's reluctance to accept certain matters on faith, and this time the teacher lost all her patience. 'When she banged that book she was holding down on the desk,' the boy recalled, 'I thought she was going to explode and she did: she came and got me and pulled me out of my seat and then out of the room, and she told me I had to stand there for ten minutes. When I told her I didn't have a watch, so how could I know, she got all red, she just went inside the room and slammed the door so hard, you would have thought that someone fired a gun!'"

[Excerpts from a conversation between the author and a Harvard student.] page 180

"Marian had taken a course on the Holocaust, its origins, its ultimate nature: mass murder of unparalleled historical proportion in a nation hitherto known as one of the most civilized in the world, with a citizenry as well educated as that of any country. Drawing on her education, Marian put before me names such as Martin Heidegger, Carl Jung, Paul de Man, Ezra Poundmen who were brilliant and accomplished (a philosopher, a psychoanalyst, a literary critic, a poet), and who had consorted with the hate that was Nazism, fascism, during the 1930s. She reminded me of the willingness of the universities to do likewise in Germany and Italy, of the countless doctors and lawyers and judges and journalists and schoolteachers and, yes, even the clergy, all of them able to accommodate themselves to murderous thugs because the thugs had political power: morality bowing to that power all too readily, and no doubt with clever rationalizations. She pointedly made mention, too, of the Soviet gulag, that expanse of prisons to which millions of honorable people were sent by Stalin and his brutish accomplices staffed, commonly, by psychiatrists who were quite eager to call these victims of a vicious totalitarian state an assortment of psychiatric names, then shoot them up with drugs meant to reduce them to zombies. She put this tough, pointed, unnerving question to me: 'I've been taking all these philosophy courses, and we talk about what's true, what's important, what's good. Well, how do you teach people to *be* good?' Then her amplification: 'What's the point of knowing good, if you don't keep trying to become a good person?'

[T]he study of philosophy, say, even moral philosophy or moral reasoning, doesn't by any means necessarily prompt in either the teacher or the student a daily enacted goodness; and the further irony that a discussion of that very irony can prove equally sterile, in the sense that yet again one is being clever with no apparent consequences, so far as one's everyday actions go.

How to address the matter of how we teachers might encourage our students (encourage *ourselves*) to take that big step from thought to action, from moral analysis to fulfilled moral commitments? Rather obviously, community service offers us all a chance to put our money where our mouths are, and of course such service can be connected to reflection, can even liven it up: a reading of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (literature) or Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner* (sociology and anthropology) or Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society* (psychology and psychoanalysis) takes on new meaning after some time spent in a ghetto school or a clinic. By the same token, such books can prompt a reader who is a volunteer in one or another service program to stop and think, by which I mean think not only in the abstract, but concretely: How might Ralph Ellison's wisdom, say, worked into his fiction, help shape the way I get along with the children I'm tutoring affect, that is, my attitude toward them, my understanding of them, the things I say to them, do with them? I might ask him to become a mentor, might try hard to call upon his earthy common sense and humorous canniness in my teaching life.

Classroom discussion, then , can be of help in this matter, the skepticism of that student of mine notwithstanding. Marian pushed me hard, to the point that her story, the ironies she noted while cleaning those dormitory rooms ad attending particular college courses, really hit home. In my college classes I started making reference again and again to what she had observed and learned and my students more than got the message. Her moral righteousness, her shrewd eye and ear for hypocrisy, hovered over us, made us uneasy, goaded us. When all of us in a seminar devoted to moral introspection (courtesy of St. Augustine and Pascal, Tolstoy and Bonhoeffer, and, yes, Emerson) took ourselves to a nearby elementary school to work as tutors with certain boys and girls, we had Marian as well as the writers and thinkers to thank, a final irony: her intellect, energized by that "work-study" experience in those dormitory rooms, became an encouraging, goading instrument for us, an intellectual provocation that became a spur to activity. I suppose that we had at last figured out (the intellect at work!) that such activity was the only 'correct answer' to the moral problem being posed."

[The famous psychologist, Erik Erikson, speaking to the author] page 194

"It's a long haul, bringing up our children to be good; you have to keep doing that, *bring them up*, and that means *bringing things up* with them: asking; telling; sounding them out; sounding off yourself; teaching them how to go beyond *why*. You have to learn where you stand, and by God, you won't budge from there. You have to make sure your kids learn that [where you stand] understand why and soon, you hope, they'll be standing there beside you, with you, and it'll be patience that gets them there, day-by-day work, the patience to do it: *moral work*, based upon speaking those moral sentences that you hope your kids will learn from you, for themselves their own version, though!"

A Tribe Apart
by Patricia Hersch

(Balantine Publishing Group, 1998)

[What kids need] page 135

"In the effort to save kids from negative behaviors, the spirit of middle schoolers is often crushed. Just when creative outlets for their robust appetites are so necessary, their avenues for expression become more limited. 'Through early adolescence, up to and including ninth grade, there really needs to be more of an emphasis on exploration,' says psychologist Peter Scales of the Search Institute. 'Young people need to have the chance to sample a lot of content, a lot of different subjects and topics and themes and activities to find out, 'What in the world am I good at? What do I like to do? What talents do I have, what interests do I have?' And along the way finding out, 'What values do I have?' Instead, the invitation to explore is more often drowned out by the demands to behave. The integrity of early adolescence as a developmental pathway is ruptured for this generation. The kids, at a fragile stage of development, have before them wildly contrasting definitions of what it means to be an adolescent. These seventh graders face a revolution in their bodies, their minds, and their environment. In their classes, their self-concept is tossed around by highly divergent ways of relating: in one class they are treated like babies, with rote learning, mindless projects, spoon-feeding; another class is a sarcastic free-for-all where kids chew gum, jump around, sass each other and the teacher. Some teachers treat them with respect and creative challenges, others with distrust and rigid discipline. Most of the kids want to please and do well. But who they are and what is expected is a mystery."

[A favorite teacher] page 241

"Steve Lundy's secret is that he likes young adolescents. He not only finds them fun and interesting to be around, but also believes in their ability to learn. 'People keep saying these kids are on a plateau intellectually and they don't learn anything in seventh and eighth grade, they are all into emotions. That is a bunch of garbage. They may be putting it into a somewhat different context because of their interest in social behavior, **but if you include socializing in what you are doing, you will get them to learn a ton.** If you push them along into things, they just might get engaged.' His approach works."

[values and goals] page 247

"Boys and girls want to be together at this age, but society fails to create enough safe developmental social opportunities that catch on. The unit in health class that catches Chris's attention is on values, and only because his teacher, William Bryant, engages them in the process. 'When he asked us to define our own personal values and goals, it made me think,' remembers Chris. 'I never saw them front of me like that.' It takes days. With great ceremony they are typed out for signature by parents and teacher, then placed in individual picture frames. Values resonate with Chris because they confirm his instincts about what matters."

Lost Boys

by James Garbarino,

(Simon & Schuster 1999 -Free Press edition)

Preface

"I have seen and heard a lot about violence in my work in the last 25 years. as a representative of UNICEF, I interviewed Kuwaiti children in the wake of the Gulf War in 1991 and heard about the Iraqi atrocities they witnessed. In the Middle East during the late 1980s, I listened to Palestinian kids talk about how the street soldiers in the Intifada threw rocks at Israeli soldiers and how they all had to deal with the rubber bullets and tear gas that came back at them. But the litany of violent experiences I hear from some boys in America still staggers me. They have participated in drug-related kidnappings, both as victim and as perpetrator; they have been the target of drive-by shootings, and they have retaliated with drive-by shootings of their own. Some of them have committed numerous armed robberies. Many of them have scars on their bodies from beatings administered by mothers, fathers, uncles, stepfathers, drug bosses and neighborhood rivals. Some of them have been beaten up by the police

In this book I introduce some of the boys I came to know. I rely upon my knowledge of child and adolescent development as a psychologist to provide a context for their first-person accounts, which come from face-to-face interviews conducted from fall 1996 to fall 1998. I have changed the boys' names and enough details of their stories to protect their identities without altering the meaning and significance of their accounts.

As a father and stepfather of boys myself, I was able to recognize both the everydayness of the interviewed boys' self-doubts and concerns (e.g. about popularity and image) and the differentness of the challenges they faced: handling humiliation and rejection at home and at school, earning respect as a drug dealer, encountering lethal violence on every corner, making do without sufficient adult monitoring."

[Dr. Garbarino believes there is an acute need to change the basic materialistic values of troubled boys. The Harry Singer Foundation is especially interested in this proposal because it has a program to encourage people to discover non-materialistic values. Exchange proposals require people to think long and hard about what they value besides money. They are asked what, besides money would be an incentive for them to do certain things in their community. The whole idea behind leaving money out of the Dream Machine project is to provide an *oasis from* materialism. The Foundation recognized what your work has proven, that young people need something to counter the materialism that is rampant in our society. The Foundation project recognizes the need for human beings, especially young people, to develop and recognize other values in their lives.]

[recivism] page 211

"Many boys are re-arrested within six months of their release. That was the case for Jose (a boy whose seventeenth birthday wish was

that he live to see twenty-five). As sweet as he was in the interviews and as sincerely as he insisted that he had learned his lesson, he was back in jail four months after his release, on a drug charge that sent him to adult corrections. Although Jose completed the program offered by the juvenile detention center where he was housed, he went right back to the world he had come from and soon was back with the same group of drug dealers he associated with before his initial arrest. It is important for understanding the needs of incarcerated boys and the challenges of reclaiming them to know that in the interviews completed just before he was released, Jose's love of material things had not changed. He went on at length to describe all the equipment he would need to adjust to being back in the world: expensive shoes and boots, new clothes, jewelry, and a car. It was clear that his mother would not be able to meet these needs. 'Who will pay for all this?' he was asked. 'My friends,' he replied. They did. But the deal was that in return they expected him to rejoin the business of drug dealing. He did. To me, Jose's story indicates the importance of changing the basic materialistic values held by violent and troubled boys as the basis for detaching them from the call of the materialistic wild. It is certainly a tall order but one that is not out of reach if we know how to go about the process of deep personal transformation."

[paraphrase of pages 217 to 232 regarding ten facts of life for violent boys; principles for successful rehabilitation programs]

#1-Child maltreatment leads to survival strategies that are often antisocial and/or self-destructive.

#2- The experience of early trauma leads boys to become hypersensitive to arousal in the face of threat and to respond to such threats by disconnecting emotionally or acting out aggressively.

#3- Traumatized kids require a calming and soothing environment to increase the level at which they are functioning.

#4- Traumatized youth are likely to evidence an absence of future orientation i.e. have no motivation to invest time preparing for a future--like no reason to go to school, learn new skills or delay gratification. Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die attitude.

#5- Youth exposed to violence at home and in the community are likely to develop a distrust of an adult's capacity and motivation to ensure safety, and as a result believe they must take matters into their own hands.

#6- Youth who have participated in violent drug economy or chronic theft are likely to have distorted materialistic values.

#7- Traumatized youth who have experienced abandonment are likely to feel life is meaningless.

#8- Issues of shame are paramount among violent youth. These boys are ashamed of who they are inside, and their efforts to compensate for that shame drive their violence. It may be buried under layer after layer of protective bravado or it may be worn like a badge on their sleeves. It may take hours of listening to a brash, tough inner-city kid to finally hear him admit, "I'm afraid of God's judgment" or "Nobody really cares about me" or "I want to be somebody."

#9- Youth violence is a boy's attempt to achieve justice as he perceives it.

#10- Violent boys often seem to feel they cannot afford empathy. They depersonalize others.

[paraphrasing page 229; being "dis-respected"]

"Kids often retaliate by killing those who dis-respect them or their friends or family members.

Dr. G: These boys find ways to compensate for the shame of being nobodies and the scorn of their peers. Because shame plays such a central role in instigating and sustaining violence, it is up to us to communicate respect in our dealing with them and to provide

opportunities for them to respect themselves. Kids have real ideas, often good ideas, about how to manage things, and they should play a role, with guidance and supervision. It means providing them with academic, vocational and social opportunities to succeed. One of the finest experiences I've had in my work in youth prisons was attending an awards ceremony where boys who had completed their high school equivalency requirements were honored and the leaders in every academic subject taught in the prison school were acknowledged. There was genuine pride there - both in the voices of staff members who delivered the awards and in the faces of boys who received them. The goal is always to convey acceptance as an antidote for shame and to build a justifiable sense of pride and responsible and appropriate self-esteem among boys who have been looking for love and acceptance in all the wrong places."

[boot-camps for delinquents] page 232

"These programs usually mimic military basic training: a lot of shouting, a lot of threats, powerful leaders who dominate new recruits through the force of their personality, and implicit (and sometimes explicit) violence....I think it is most *unsuited* to violent boys, given where they come from psychologically and who they are developmentally and spiritually. The boot camp model typically violates many, if not most, of the ten principles I have just presented. It violates much of what we know about the developmental histories of violent boys. Psychiatrist Bruce Perry was one of the first to point this out. For starters, he directed our attention to the fact that the very last thing a boy with a traumatic psychological history needs is someone getting in his face and screaming at him. This may sound crazy, but I would substitute monastery for boot-camp. A monastery emphasizes contemplation, reflection, service, cooperation, meditation, and peace instead of confrontation, dominance and power assertion. Troubled youth need the safety of a secure setting within a caring community with the therapeutic support of cognitive-behavioral programs to teach them new social skills. They need the deeply spiritual practice that a monastery-like setting can provide[the monastery concept comes] Partly from interviews with the boys and observing that peace proceeds when adults practice peace with kids instead of declaring war on them. It comes from my own spiritual development and my efforts to make sense of myself and my relationships with the world. It also comes from a passage from Peace Is Every Step by world-renowned Zen Buddhist master and Nobel Peace Prize nominee .Tich-Not-Han The following passage is entitled Blaming Never Helps:

When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look into the reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or our family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and arguments. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change.

In many ways it is as simple and as hard as that. 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' 'Judge not lest ye be judged.' 'The unexamined life is not worth living.' 'If you begin a journey of revenge, start by digging two graves, one for your enemy and one for yourself.' Like all the great wisdom of the ages, the simplicity of Tich -Not Han's words is as awesome as the challenge of living by them in our efforts to reclaim violent and troubled boys. Knowing what we know about the lives of these lost boys, I think we can find ways to embrace the wisdom and translate it into day-to-day reality in the institutions we support to reclaim them. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke often of the power of 'soul force' in meeting the challenge of dealing with violence. We need to harness that soul force in the transformation of violent and troubled boys, and there are efforts to do so. I am part of one such effort.