

HOW NOT TO RAISE A DELINQUENT



By William Wilkie MB BS DPM

How Not to Raise a Delinquent

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INTRODUCTION

When I was growing up, I knew that if a cat gave birth to kittens in our backyard wood heap, it was necessary to get to those kittens early. Kittens need to be touched and handled and fed by human beings or else they will become feral cats, wild animals. And our little country town didn't need any extra feral cats.

The problem with wild animals is that they don't obey the same rules we do. Given the opportunity, wild animals will kill and eat our household pets and hurt our children. And wild animals don't do what we tell them to do.

What people often fail to realise is that human beings are potential wild animals just as much as kittens are, and that if we don't touch and handle them and feed them properly, they too can grow up to be wild animals. Wild human beings are called criminals. Human children need to be tamed or else they could grow up to become criminals.

Consider what is required in taming a wild animal. We need to confine the animal in a secure space where one specific person, the handler, can visit it frequently. We would leave the feeding of this animal to the handler. While the animal is being fed and is well disposed toward the handler, the handler

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would begin to touch the animal so that it progressively becomes less afraid of being handled by a human being.

Once the handler is confident of the developing mutual trust in the relationship between animal and handler, the handler can begin giving the animal more freedom and begins teaching the animal the basic rules that apply in its relationship with human beings. These basic rules include where one may defecate and urinate, and to show respect for other creatures.

The taming process is identical with the child-raising practices of civilised human beings. However, because of the powerful emotions of women towards their babies, this child-taming process seems to happen without most of us being aware that it can go wrong and result in children growing up to become wild animals.

It seems that human beings who live in family groups and communities have built-in rules of behaviour similar to other mammals that live in family groups and communities, such as packs of wolves and troops of baboons. When human beings become feral, they tend to observe the same rules of conduct as do packs of wild dogs. These rules include the following:

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- The boss is the one who has the greatest capacity for inflicting the most damage on anyone opposing him.
- The weak are despised and rejected, and often subjected to violence.
- Other animals are there to be feared and avoided or to be used for food.
- Whatever exists in the marketplace or hunting-ground is there to be taken by those bold enough to do so.
- When preying on other animals, the weakest and youngest are the preferred prey, because they are easiest to catch and overpower.
- Deception is a good strategy to get close to victims in order to make use of them for food.

When infants are neglected, there is a risk that they could grow up to become feral, that is, to become criminals. Criminals observe the same rules as do packs of wild dogs.

Mostly, however, we see the ill effects of a partial failure of the taming process causing problems in children's behaviour. Some time ago there was a TV program called "Brat Camp", dealing with

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badly-behaved children, and on another channel there was "The Dog Whisperer".

A dog that has been behaving badly is taken off to a dog obedience school where the dog learns to his surprise that he is actually not the top dog. The human master is the top dog, and the dog is second on the authority chain. Once the dog realises he's not the top dog, he begins to do as he's told, and peace returns to the household.

The most difficult part of this transformation is to convince the dog's owner that he or she is the top dog, and has to behave like a top dog.

It is a similar situation with spoilt children who do not actually realise they are not supposed to be in control of the household. The major difficulty here is to convince the parents to begin to act like parents and actually discipline their children.

Let us now consider the impact on families where there are spoilt, semi-tamed children making life miserable for parents who have failed to let their children know that the children are not the top dogs. And these parents have sought help from orthodox psychiatry that functions by assigning labels to people and prescribing medication.

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These naughty boys and girls may be given a label of "Oppositional Defiant Disorder", and drugs are prescribed that the parents buy but the unruly children refuse to take.

Or another psychiatrist may claim the child has "Attention Deficit Disorder" and prescribe potentially addicting stimulant drugs such as Dexamphetamine.

The current trend in psychiatry towards labelling people and prescribing drugs has succeeded in diminishing the authority of parents. Now unruly children are viewed not as badly behaved kids, but as patients suffering from some sort of mental or emotional illness. The psychiatrist is the boss now, not the parent, and the misbehaving child has become confirmed as top dog misfit at home.

Sadly, however, along with the diagnosis of Oppositional Defiant Disorder that may appear to absolve the child from responsibility for his behaviour and absolve the parents for failing to discipline him, the misbehaving child has now been labelled as a second-class citizen with a personality disorder, and this label may have long term negative effects on this child's future.

Our community must take action to stop these toxic trends in psychiatry. It is not difficult to

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understand the criminal mind when it is seen as the mind of an untamed human being.

When instead psychiatry refers to these people as “psychopaths” or “sociopaths” and infers that some inherent defect in brain function or some genetic inheritance is the cause, we simply get further away from programs offering early intervention in child neglect cases, intervention that is crucial in providing children with a decent future.

William Wilkie
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CHAPTER ONE

Whose job is it to tame the children?

It's Dad's job. But indirectly, through Mum, when the children are small. Up to the age of 12 years, a child's relationship with Mum is crucial in teaching children how to love and take care of themselves.

Mum teaches you how to clean your teeth and put your shoes on, but much more than these self-care skills, she teaches you how to love other people and yourself. The way a computer loads an operating system, and then follows this program to accomplish its tasks, children internalise mother-love as the way they will take good care of their bodies and be friendly to other children.

The way Mum loves Dad, confidently expecting his support, is important in teaching the child how to respect Dad and gladly accept Dad's encouragement and protection.

Primary school children internalise Dad's way of doing things, Dad's good manners and Dad's way of coping with difficulties. Where a mother is raising a son without a Dad, she may have to discipline her boy using words that she either experienced with her own father, or if that experience was not good, using her own concept of what a theoretical good Dad would say.

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I shudder inwardly to have to write this, but just consider what a child, particularly a daughter, will learn about herself if her mother is too busy with her own career to love her baby enough. And what if that training how to love, falls to the responsibility of a female high school dropout working in a child-minding centre?

Know who your child is

While human babies are born in a physically helpless state, they come equipped with an ability to communicate with their mothers in several ways:

- They respond to touch and being cuddled
- They cry loudly when they need anything whatsoever
- They smile at faces
- They respond to songs and certain tones in human speech

Each of these communications requires the presence of a mother ready to respond to the baby and to provide everything the baby needs.

A baby is physically helpless, but is a consummate communicator with a brain that learns and remembers at an astonishing rate.

The asymmetrical tonic neck reflex

Watch a baby in a crib, with an adoring adult trying to interest the baby in a rattle. The adult moves the object into the baby's field of vision, and the baby

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visually fixes on the object. As the object moves towards the lateral limit of the baby's visual field, the tracking of the baby's eyes initiates a reflex that turns the head in that direction.

As the baby's head nears the limit of its range of movement to right or left, the asymmetrical tonic neck reflex is triggered.

This causes the arm on that side to extend, while the arm on the other side is flexed. It looks a little like a fencer making a lunge with one arm while the other is flexed upwards in an arc.

What is happening is simply the triggering of reflex movements by firstly the movement of the eyes and then by the movement of the head. But it looks like the baby is trying to reach for the object.

The adoring adult will then promptly respond by placing the object in the hand of the baby and calling it a name and providing a description of it. "He wants it! That's a rattle! See, if you shake it, it makes a noise!"

When this is repeated over and over, the baby begins to realise he has a marvellous tool at his disposal. Point to something, or make a move towards it, and someone will either give it to you or give it a name and tell you about it.

This pointing activity that never was a purposeful act at the beginning, is what a baby will use to learn

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language and to understand what is going on in the world.

But it always requires another person to be there. As we grow and mature, we will still need affirmation by another person before we can be sure of our own perception of reality.

Stages of child development

We can consistently identify several stages in human development.

Up to the age of two years, the infant is totally enmeshed with the mother, who is the provider of everything the infant needs, the source of the infant's self-concept, self-confidence and happiness.

At about age two, the child discovers the words "No!" and "I won't!" as a means of differentiating himself from his mother, and becoming a separate being. This is the stage of the "Terrible Twos".

If the mother doesn't over-react or feel her authority is being threatened by her two-year old seemingly becoming a mindless rebel, the child succeeds in establishing that he is a separate person.

Having satisfied himself of this new status, having established that he has the right to poo when and where he wants, he may choose to retreat a little and becomes intent on forming an alliance with Mum.

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Making friends with Mum identifies the stage of the “Trusting Threes”. The child discovers what it is like to have one’s own opinions while keeping close to the person you trust to give you whatever you need.

Then it is time to find out how much power you have as you enter the stage of the “Frightful Fours”. Maybe if you scream and roll on the floor near the lolly counter at the supermarket long enough, Mum will give in finally and give you what you want.

At this stage, the four-year old becomes preoccupied with power and ownership, and begins to learn about the use of aggression in getting what you want. The four year old begins to behave like a wild animal that needs to be tamed.

At age five, most children are busily learning skills towards becoming independent, learning how to tie up shoe laces, adjust the taps in the bath, tidy up etc.

If you visit a kindergarten and observe the behaviour of pre-school children, you will notice that mostly they are all behaving as miniature Mums and Dads.

By watching these children, one can often gain a good impression of how their mothers and fathers behave at home. These children seem to have internalised as their own, the behaviour of their parents.

At age 6, when Australian children start primary school, we tend to see a transition between children being miniature adults, and children being kids.

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But at age 7, when most children are in Grade 2 at primary school, they are definitely kids, and this is the beginning of an identification with the peer group that will last for many years.

Primary school children have games at school that bear little or no relationship to current reality in the world of adults. They sing songs and play games like “Oranges and lemons, the bells of St Clements, you owe me three farthings say the bells of St Martins...” This is a rhyme about the churches in London, ending with “here comes the chopper to chop off your head!” Referring to the Tower of London.

Another favourite, still going strong is “Ring a ring a rosy, a pocketful of posies....a tishoo a tishoo, we all fall down!” This is about the Great Plague.

Another one: “Constantinople is a very big word, how do you spell it?” The answer is “I-t”. But there is no Constantinople on the map. It lives only in history.

The peer group has faithfully preserved these rhymes and games in spite of the passage of hundreds of years.

While significant trauma affecting a pre-school child may have a lasting effect on their relationships with significant authority figures, trauma affecting a child of seven or more may show up more in relationships with peers.

If a child enjoys good relationships with other children at school, this may tend to soften the effects

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of emotional trauma arising from the home. And the opposite is true- a child being bullied and humiliated by other children may survive relatively unscathed if the child has good supportive relationships at home.

Children who have bad experiences both at home and at school are very likely to be permanently emotionally damaged, unless they are rescued through psychotherapy.

Internalisations and judgments

Preschool children internalise the behaviour and the attitudes of their parents or those parenting them, to become the basic internal structure of their own self-control mechanisms. In a happy loving family a child will develop an internal Dad and an internal Mum.

This internal structure within their personality will have three parts to it. There is the way Dad does things, gets his own way and negotiates with people. There is the way Mum does things, gets her own way, and negotiates with people. And there is a third element in this self-control mechanism, the way that Dad and Mum settle their differences. This will become the way the developing child will deal with the differences between the internal Dad and the internal Mum.

Let's take for example, a Dad who is a relatively aggressive man who states clearly what he wants and who expects others to cooperate; and Mum is a soft, forgiving person who fits in with agendas set by

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others. But Dad and Mum get along well by respecting each other's roles in the family.

Dad insists on having his own way in choosing the family car, working in the garden and doing odd jobs around the house. Mum has the say on the furniture and the electrical appliances in the house and all the soft furnishings.

When Dad and Mum disagree, Dad might get angry but only briefly, then he apologises and does what Mum wants.

This is a loving and effective family. The child will grow up with an assertiveness internalised from Dad's behaviour, but when this doesn't work with the school teacher, the child can easily switch to diplomacy as Mum does.

When confronted with the fact that the child has switched from a confronting to a cooperating strategy, there is no anxiety about it. It feels natural for the child, because it was natural for the parents.

The child grows into adult life with an inbuilt super-ego derived from internalising both parents and the way the parents settled their differences.

Judgments

Let us now look at the situation in a dysfunctional family, where Dad is aggressive and abusive and Mum is submissive and intimidated by Dad threatening violence if he doesn't get his way.

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Eventually Mum gets up enough courage to leave Dad.

The son will have internalised an aggressive Dad, and has learned to be able to switch to a timid approach like Mum uses. But there is no Dad-Mum integration package.

As the boy gets to age 7 or so, he rejects Dad's behaviour. "Don't tell me I'm like my father!" Likewise he rejects Mum's behaviour- "My mother's a wimp!" He decides he is not like either, but in fact he really is like both. He can readily switch from being timid and scared to being nasty and threatening.

But because of his judgments on both parents this boy is not aware of being like them. He can even grow up with the self-concept that he is totally unlike either parent. But then he doesn't know who he really is.

In my psychiatry practice, in taking life histories I always asked my patients to describe their father and mother and their siblings, long before I would ever ask these clients to describe their own personality.

Patients will usually provide a fairly accurate description of others in their family, but when they describe themselves, they are more likely to offer the therapist what the client wants to believe about himself, or sometimes what the client thinks the therapist wants to hear.

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I found that having provided an honest appraisal of their relatives, patients are more likely to provide an honest description of those personal characteristics that run in the family and that they themselves share.

The “Law of Judgment”

Therapists who work in this area, identifying patterns of internalisations (introjects) and judgments, soon learn that a person making strong judgments against some family trait, will be highly likely to repeat the same mistakes that they have judged harshly.

Alice, the daughter of an alcoholic father and a co-dependent mother makes a vow “I vow and declare that I will never ever marry an alcoholic!” Of the boyfriends Alice has, she marries Henry because he is the one who will do whatever Alice wants, whenever she wants.

She doesn't want Henry to drink, and he wouldn't dare touch alcohol. But at the work Christmas party someone spikes the punch, and Henry gets a good dose of vodka. Suddenly, he's not scared any more of anything. When he gets home, he loudly criticises Alice for the kids leaving their toys in the lounge room.

Years later at an Al-Anon meeting, Alice tells the group she had inadvertently chosen for a husband a man who had all the pre-conditions for alcoholism. She says she would have done better to marry a man

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who could stand up to her without the need of alcohol.

The “law of judgment” states that we are very likely to repeat a pattern of behaviour that we have made strong judgments against.

The early teen years

Puberty unleashes powerful sexual drives in people who are still children. Many parents describe the care of teenage children in terms of a daily holding operation, protecting them from their own urges until their emotional development can catch up with their physical development.

In the transition from child to adult, many occasions arise where teenagers demand to be given the privileges of adulthood while still enjoying a lifestyle free of adult responsibility.

This transition has some elements in common with the period of life from age two to four, where a similar transition has occurred from dependency to autonomy. Therefore it is not totally unexpected when 13 year olds begin behaving like two year olds again.

Just as in the “terrible two” stage, it is important for parents to allow 13 year olds some freedom to experiment with negative statements.

Thirteen year olds can suddenly become slovenly in their speech, think it’s funny to insult their friends

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and relatives and use bad language. They will expect their parents to attempt to discipline and control this teenage rebelliousness, and will be prepared to play the victim.

However, intelligent parents who want to get this phase over as soon as possible, respond to their 13 year olds the same way they did when the children were aged two, by encouraging them to be independent. When the parents' response is to encourage them to assume responsibility for their own pocket money, homework and bedtime, these teenage rebels may not need to persist with their experiments in non-cooperation and bad language.

CHAPTER TWO

Discipline must be caring and careful

The most important part of being an effective parent is to know clearly what you expect from your child and what you are prepared to do to encourage your child.

It is useful to know in advance that no matter what social, racial or ethnic group a child grows up in, the stages of child development are always exactly the same. I've seen African terrible twos, frightful Chinese fours and trusting Irish threes.

It is unexpected and a little hard to believe, but a child's environment seems to play very little part in child development. It seems to be all written into the child's DNA, along with their physical development.

By being educated in the stages of child development, parents can gain a clear idea of what to expect from their child, and what their child expects from them.

Unless mother and father have clear and loving expectations of their toddler, they will inevitably begin parenting their child the way they were themselves parented. When you smack a child, that

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child will grow up to smack children. When you frighten a child, that person will grow up to frighten children.

Training involves rewarding the behaviour you like, and ignoring bad behaviour. This works much better than punishing bad behaviour, because punishment reduces motivation. Children will stop trying to learn a skill if they expect they might be punished for getting it wrong.

“If I can’t be the best I’m not going to try.” This may happen in a family that demands high standards and a flawless performance.

In everyday experience, trying to bring up a child to become a Professor like Dad, or a teacher like Mum, can become a difficult “knife-edge” challenge. On the one hand, we know to set a good example for a child to follow. On the other hand, if the example seems too hard to achieve, a child may choose to drop out because the fear of failure makes the child too anxious.

It is much more important that the child learns how to have fun while trying to master various skills. Playing sports and games is useful in teaching kids to have fun while learning.

Good parents will encourage and reward a child’s attempts at learning various skills. This starts with

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encouraging the two year old child's use of various versions of "No, I won't". "I'll poo where I want, Mummy".

I had a patient whose unwed daughter gave birth to a boy and this little boy was frequently being looked after by Grandma. I was unable to talk this dangerously misguided woman out of smacking this innocent infant whenever he said anything that she thought was naughty, such as "No".

By the time this little boy was five years old he was totally uncontrollable.

There are people who gave up learning to play the piano when they had a piano teacher who cracked them over the knuckles when they hit the wrong note. Meanwhile a child whose family like to sing along with them may continue to play an instrument for many years.

It is important for parents to be reliable and honest. If you make a threat or a promise, you have to stick with it. So therefore the most sensible thing is not to make a threat. It is never worth it.

Learning must be in the instant. Parents should never punish retrospectively. "You haven't made your bed twice this week so you don't get any pocket

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money today.” This is as upsetting to children as it is adults - retrospective punishment.

And we must be sensitive to the actual learning process taking place. Ruth is a woman who taught her children to tell lies. But she would be the last person to acknowledge that she had done such a thing.

Ruth had two fixed ideas. The first was that children must always be smacked if they broke anything. (It is probable that baby Ruth was smacked for breaking things.)

The second was that it is a terrible crime to ever punish an innocent child in the mistaken belief the child had done something wrong.

Ruth is in the kitchen. On the veranda where the children are playing, there is the sound of something being broken. Ruth arrives on the scene to notice a broken object directly in front of one of the children. But Ruth can't administer the smack until she is absolutely sure that the child is responsible for the breakage.

“Did you break that?” The child answers truthfully, “Yes Mummy”. Ruth promptly delivers the smack.

The problem here is that Ruth was only thinking about herself. If she had been thinking about her

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child she would have realised she has just punished her child for telling the truth. The next time something is broken by the child or a sibling who has learned how things work in Ruth's household, the scene looks like this:

“Did you break that?” “No Mummy, I didn't break it.”
“Well who did?” “I don't know.” “Well I'm going to find out who did, and that person is going to get a smack from me.” The punishment is either avoided or delayed by telling a lie, and avoidance of punishment is a powerful stimulus to learning.

Ruth just taught her child to tell lies, but Ruth would not know this, because Ruth was thinking only of herself.

Parents must be prepared to forgive their child's unwanted behaviour. If you forgive their failures, they will forgive your failures when you are old and incompetent. As in the Christian “Our Father” prayer “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us..”

The mother-child relationship is paramount

From birth, the way mothers care for their children will become the way children learn to care for themselves and value themselves as individuals.

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Your mother teaches you to love yourself from the way she loves you.

The relationship with your mother is crucial up to the age of 12 years. This is the age in many indigenous cultures when the boys pass into the care of the men of the tribe and when their training for manhood begins.

There are some similarities in western cultures. In the Jewish Bar Mitzvah, a boy of 13 declares "Today I am a man."

In general, after 12 years of age, a boy's relationship with his father becomes more important. Your father is supposed to teach you how to survive in the world and how to get what you want.

When boys grow up in a one-parent family - boy and Mum, boys may learn to become men from the neighbourhood gang or sports team. Boys after the age of 12 are very sensitive to the influence of older males.

This is the time that boys can become criminals.

CHAPTER THREE

Where is Dad and who's taking his place?

The boarding school?

The Boy Scouts?

The neighbourhood gang?

Mum's new boyfriend?

Boys growing up with just their mother and no father, usually demonstrate, after the age of 12 years, the need for male role models .

Indigenous Australian culture generally believes that girls grow naturally into women by the changes in their bodies and the different roles that are naturally forced on them through puberty and motherhood.

However, boys have to be taught to become men. In the mid 20th century, having a full-time job turned a boy into a man. Even a 15 year old apprentice was assigned the identity of a man. It was more difficult to assign adulthood to university students pursuing further studies until they found their first job.

In the 21st century the relevance of earning your own money is less important, as is the divide between young men with a job and young men without one.

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When teenage boys at school are growing up without a Dad, looking for a male role to emulate, they might be likely to seek membership in a local neighbourhood gang.

Street love: Why kids join gangs despite the risks of arrest and violence

By José-Ignacio Castañeda Perez, Matthew Hendley, Byron Mason II and Braela Kwan/News21 Sept. 3, 2020. This report is part of [Kids Imprisoned](#), a project produced by the Carnegie-Knight News21 initiative,

“Ruben Saldaña was 12 when he joined a gang after moving to a part of Homestead, Florida, that he called a ghetto. By 13, he was leading his “junior gang.”

“I became a gang member before I even hit puberty,” said Saldaña, who now runs a mixed martial arts diversion program for kids in high-crime areas in central Florida. “

“Saldaña said the crimes committed by juvenile gangs had little purpose.”

“It wasn’t even like Chicago organizations who were fighting over millions of dollars of drugs,” he said. “It was foolishness. Children who were misguided by misguided kids. The blind leading the blind. And then that’s what I became, a blind leader.”

Dr. Gabriel Cesar, assistant professor of criminology and criminal justice at Florida Atlantic University,

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grew up in Inkster, Michigan, outside Detroit, where he was always surrounded by a criminal element of drugs, gangs and violence.

Although he was never officially affiliated with a gang, Cesar would hang around older kids who would sell drugs and commit crimes.

“For all intents and purposes, I grew up in a gang,” he said.

Cesar described gang-affiliated children as “traumatized youth.”

“They are kids that faced adversity in life and didn’t have the social capital and the social network resources to absorb that trauma and overcome it,” Cesar said.

“These at-risk children across the United States are exposed to a variety of factors that increase their likelihood of joining a gang, including a lack of supervision, poverty and gang-affiliated families, according to a [2020 article](#) in the journal Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, which Cesar co-authored.”

“Once children join a gang, experts say, a range of consequences puts them at a heightened risk to enter the juvenile justice system, including an increase in criminal offending and a higher probability of arrest.”

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“Gang involvement is a risk factor for negative outcomes,” Cesar said. “It makes you more likely to be a victim and it makes you more likely to be an offender.”

When a neglected boy without a father joins a neighbourhood gang, he is joining a wild animal pack that has different rules from those of his society.

His future then becomes very “dicey”. Chance happenings, like being in company with another person breaking the law, can bring down punishment and may decide the boy’s life direction from then on.

CHAPTER FOUR

Different rules for highly sensitive children

If you have a child who was born highly sensitive, it is important that you understand how this sensitivity affects discipline and learning.

Highly sensitive people account for about 20% of our population. These people react excessively to extremes. They are uncomfortable if it's too hot, too cold, too dusty, too bright. They may suffer from allergies, they feel pain too acutely from minor injuries, too loud noises hurt their ears.

These children tend to avoid body contact sports, and they may prefer their own company to being in a group.

On the positive side, these children are usually more creative and artistic, tend to like mathematics and music, and will likely grow up to become our scientists, musical composers, writers and poets.

They usually get bullied at school and may experience symptoms of anxiety in situations that would not bother their less sensitive classmates.

We need to think about these highly sensitive children here, because they will not be able to tolerate thoughtless punishments. On the other hand they will react positively to reward, much quicker than less sensitive children.

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Loving parents of highly sensitive children will save themselves and their children much anguish if they take the time to learn about this trait of hypersensitivity.

Almost one hundred years ago, (he began writing in 1928) the famous Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov became aware that some highly sensitive people had nervous systems that actually magnified sensory information coming into the brain.

These people tended to break down more easily under stress, with their nervous systems switching on inhibitory nerve networks that provided protective inhibition to overloaded neural networks.

Dr Elaine Aron

In 1991, Dr Elaine Aron began studying "the innate temperament trait of high sensitivity". (see her website "The Highly Sensitive Person" at <https://hsperson.com>)

On her website, Dr Aron states: "If you find you are highly sensitive, or your child is, I'd like you to know the following:

- Your trait is normal. It is found in 15 to 20% of the population.
- It is innate. Biologists have found it in over 100 species.

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- You are more aware than others of subtleties. This is mainly because your brain processes information and reflects on it more deeply.
- You are also more easily overwhelmed.
- This trait is not a new discovery, but it has been misunderstood.
- Sensitivity is valued differently in different cultures.

Susanne Wilkie's Experience

My wife Susanne Wilkie is a psychologist who has a lot of experience working with children. She often becomes concerned to hear sensitive children or teenagers describe themselves negatively as being “too sensitive” as though this is some defect that they have failed to correct.

Often Susanne is able to reassure sensitive people that they have been born with a significant advantage in being sensitive, creative, and thoughtful, and therefore likely to become successful in certain fields of endeavour.

Sensitive people are often interested in music, singing, drawing, dance and art, and they like having time to themselves so they can think.

Because of their increased sensitivity they tend to react to irritants and pollens in the air, to become

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allergic to additives in foods, and they are more susceptible to environmental toxins.

Some of the highly sensitive kids in their early childhood have experienced blocked up Eustachian tubes and ear infections that may become chronic.

Some may develop learning problems at school associated with under-development of auditory processes.

Therefore some sensitive children can be disadvantaged by specific learning problems that other non-sensitive children have as well.

But the sensitive ones tend to be teased about their difficulties, they usually blame themselves for having problems, and they tend to withdraw and become anxious about going to school.

In my psychiatry practice, I have seen highly sensitive adults already badly damaged by misinformation and being mistreated by teachers and employers. Some highly sensitive adults experience being bullied at work, and these people may have been bullied in the schoolyard as well.

In relation to stress breakdown, highly sensitive people should be advised that they will become overwhelmed and anxious before their "average" companions will, they will need more sleep than the others, and they should withdraw from stressful situations early, before they show signs of breaking down.

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Stress Breakdown

The first sign that over-stressed sensitive children are becoming overwhelmed and about to break down, is that they suddenly experience free-floating anxiety.

Free floating anxiety is a vague, urgent feeling of unease or dread.

At the same time they may feel tense and easily startled, and experience body symptoms caused by the unconscious mind preparing the body to run away or fight. And in some cases, being prepared to drop to the ground and play dead.

A person who cannot avoid the stressful situation they find themselves in, (which happens often in the life of a disadvantaged child) can keep going by using their will power and their "don't power" and their energy reserves. But inevitably, these energy reserves will run out, causing (as well as anxiety) one or both of these two symptoms:

- Loss of the ability to control your emotions. You may flare up suddenly into anger, tears or laughter.
- Loss of the ability to motivate yourself. You cannot force yourself to get back to work.

If the sensitive child still cannot find relief from the stressful situation, they may then experience the

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three symptoms of the third stage of stress breakdown:

- You may suddenly find many forms of stimulation quite disagreeable, and you will tend to withdraw emotionally and avoid sensory stimulation. You may find noise, bright lights, people touching you, tight clothing and loud music, intolerable.
- You may suddenly lose the ability to not react to things you have previously put up with for years. You may become suddenly intolerant of faults and failings in others and in yourself.
- You may appear to others to have undergone a personality change. Important responsibilities now seem to be ignored, while you continue to react normally to unimportant matters.

A parent affected by the same stress as their child is experiencing, will lose their capacity to discipline their child, because of the central nervous system changes of stage three breakdown in the parent.

William Wilkie's book "A Useful Book for Counsellors" shows how to prevent and treat stress breakdown.

Meanwhile, here is a poem to help you remember the three main groups of symptoms we find in stress breakdown:

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Poem on stress breakdown

In stress breakdown. the very first sign
Is feeling tense and nervy most of the time.

And if you don't work out what's getting you up tight
And you just go on will power, thinking you'll be all
right-

Two things can happen when your battery runs
down

You can find yourself just sitting around
Can't get started;

Or flying off the handle, bursting into tears
Getting more emotional than you've been in years.

The family might recognize you're going off your
head
And lovingly suggest you spend the day in bed.

There are three stages in stress breakdown,
I've mentioned one and two,
And I won't be surprised at all,
If what I said, you already knew.

But here's the situation that really worries me
Only just a very few can recognise stage three.

Stage three symptoms can't be underestimated-
For many people wrongly think love's just
deteriorated.

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Suddenly you can't stand noise or any stimulation
You just want to get away from the whole situation.

All your loved one's faults and failings
You never criticize,
Suddenly you just can't stand
They're intolerable in your eyes.

And your reaction pattern changes;
Big problems you don't see
While unimportant details
You treat attentively.

When all these things
Are happening,
That we don't comprehend -
Love relationships are weakened,
On which family life depends.

New mothers and stress breakdown

Of the many different high stress occupations and situations, I would like to make special mention of the mothers of newborn babies. They often have to cope with stress they cannot avoid while missing out on sleep. And many new mothers have been weakened nutritionally by the metabolic demands of their unborn child, the effects of the hormones of pregnancy, and sometimes an exhausting labor.

The mothers of newborn babies can suddenly develop serious stress breakdown symptoms, quite often experiencing the three stages at once. This is because their state of health is quite precarious in

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this post-natal period. The mother of a newborn baby can suddenly deteriorate from seeming quite normal to appearing deeply emotionally and mentally disturbed, unable to respond to the baby's needs, simply as a result of stress breakdown. Many cases of post-natal depression are in fact cases of serious stress breakdown.

It is usually not difficult to differentiate the post-natal stress breakdown cases from true post-natal depression. Stress symptoms disappear with 48 hours rest, while the symptoms of true post-natal depression persist in spite of rest. It is essential for true post-natal depression to be recognized early because this is a serious illness that requires medical treatment.

I do not agree with the current practice of sending women home from hospital soon after the baby is born. It is sending wrong signals to our society. Hospitals are expensive, noisy and inconsiderate places, and we cannot blame women for wanting to get home to their families as soon as possible. But some women seem to think because they are allowed home they are capable of a normal work load.

Chinese women have the right idea. They have a tradition called "sitting the month"; the mother of a newborn baby does nothing other than breast-feed her baby and attend to her own hygiene for one month after the baby is born. While she is being looked after by her husband and others in the family, she is recuperating her strength. Traditional Chinese belief is that in this post-natal period,

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women are very vulnerable to all sorts of illnesses because of their weakened condition.

CHAPTER SIX

Healing.....Back to brat camp

Delinquent people are criminals. Criminals are feral people. They observe the rules of behaviour appropriate for wild animals and not domestic animals.

To cure delinquency we need to tame these wild young people all over again. Here is a section from the Introduction outlining the basic method of taming a wild animal:

“Consider what is required in taming a wild animal We need to confine the animal in a secure space where one specific person, the handler, can visit it frequently. We would leave the feeding of this animal to the handler. While the animal is being fed and is well disposed toward the handler, the handler would begin to touch the animal so that it progressively became less afraid of being handled by a human being.”

“Once the handler is confident of the developing mutual trust in the relationship between animal and handler, the handler can begin giving the animal more freedom and begins teaching the animal the basic rules that apply in its relationship with human beings.”

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It seems that the programs helpful in curing delinquency recreate a loving family atmosphere within a locked secure facility.

The useful programs set out below showed the necessity of rehabilitation training by motivated kindly teachers in taming the delinquents.

NCJRS Virtual Library. Development of a Learning Culture in a Youth Detention Centre and Its Effects on Staff and Clients

NCJ Number 204829. Author(s) Frank Duggan; Satch Campbell Date Published December 2003

“This paper examined the Quamby Youth Detention Center located in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory to outline the effects of change management on both staff and clients. Quamby is a 32-bed residential facility for young males and females between the ages of 10 and 18 years. Within the facility a negative culture and philosophy had developed which was impacting poorly on both the youth and the staff. “

“The creative use of effective education and training in tandem with cooperation throughout the facility led by an inclusive management approach established a vibrant learning culture.
“

“The learning culture in turn was used to include the clients in the decision making process that built up the social capital within the facility. “

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“An empowerment process was encouraged for both staff and clients. The results of an established vibrant learning culture indicated that for both staff and clients, a more healthy organisation developed.”

RMIT University. Centre for Innovative Justice 13th December 2018

“We were recently lucky enough to attend a roundtable hosted by Save the Children in Melbourne, to hear from David Romero McGuire of the Diagrama Foundation about innovative youth justice practices in Europe.”

“Diagrama is an international non-profit organisation that pioneered an alternative juvenile detention model in Spain, building relatively small-scale residential facilities that they call ‘re-education centres’.

“The centres operated by Diagrama are wholly focused on educating young people and preparing them for release, supporting them to gain the social and formal skills needed to obtain employment and re-integrate into their local communities.”

“Another feature of the Diagrama approach is a reward system where young people quickly gain increasing levels of autonomy and access to the community. Contact and connection with family and community is strongly encouraged and supported, and families receive their own dedicated support.

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Young people on remand have equal access to facilities, programs and services.”

“Diagrama’s broader ethos is explicitly non-punitive. They seek to pair strong boundaries and expectations around behaviour with genuine warmth, care and encouragement.”

“This directly responds to the fact that many young people involved in the criminal justice system are there precisely because they have not experienced these.”

“There is ever increasing awareness in Australia of how commonly children involved in offending have been exposed to poverty, family violence, intergenerational trauma, and formal Child Protection involvement, but also of how better early support for their families could have prevented this.”

“Diagrama has grown to become responsible for the care of 70% of young people in custody. They are now working to expand their model across Europe, focusing on the UK.”

“There are many indicators of the success of the Diagrama model – one example given was that they employ far fewer staff than are usually required in juvenile detention centers, in a sector where staffing generally represents the greatest cost.”

“The culture of the centres clearly plays a large part in this, but so does the staffing, which in turn shapes

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the culture. Most of the staff are educators who teach social skills through daily modelling in the context of their relationships with the young people.”

“Staff are generally tertiary educated but, most importantly, are selected on the basis of their strong commitment to supporting young people’s growth and education.”

“We were fascinated to hear about one aspect of the Spanish justice system, where Judges, lawyers and prosecutors are actively involved in monitoring the progress of a young person in juvenile detention post sentence.”

“This is a fairly alien concept for Australian jurisdictions, but not impossible for us to implement. Where procedural fairness can be ensured for the young person, it’s a practice that has the potential to foster a strong culture of accountability for the system and the service providers – something the NT Royal Commission confirmed is desperately needed.”

“The Diagrama approach to juvenile detention provides us with genuine inspiration in relation to how we can reorient juvenile justice systems away from a punitive culture that compounds young people’s trauma and social exclusion.”

“But the principles applied by Diagrama also reinforce the need to make that shift much more broadly across our education and social services

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sectors, to prevent children from being drawn into the system in the first place.”

Thus the best way to rehabilitate our feral citizens who continually break our rules, re-offend and endanger our people, is to realise they are just being wild people, so we:

- Lock them up
- Feed them and be kind
- Teach them the rules again

But maybe we could save these people and our communities a great deal of suffering if we loved them and brought them up properly in the first place.

Let us be hopeful

Here is a Christian view of juvenile delinquency.

God created each of us with the desire for free will. Built into each of us is a desire to do things our way, to escape from the rules of our parents. As well, we are born with specific gifts and skills.

Whatever our major gift is, it is usually our major weakness. Teenagers who want to do things their own way may have an irrepressible energy that one day could be useful in running their own business, or

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to persist in doing the right thing despite the threats of corrupt officials.

We know we will have to retrain the gang members who have managed to hurt other people and themselves. We will have to think of them as feral human beings, lock them up and teach them the rules all over again.

We will look for the personality gifts that led them into a neighbourhood gang and into criminal groups. We will protect them, provide for them and encourage them the way a good father does. If they do something wrong, we will lock them up, and start teaching them the rules all over again, as a good father does.