Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys

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   A. Young male violence in the U.S. Highest rate in the industrialized world.
   B. Brain differences between boys and girls.
   C. Boy underachievement in school.

II. What’s Different About Boys? A Psychological Perspective.
   A. Controversy. How different are they?
   B. The overlapping bell-shaped curves of boys and girls.
   C. Early differences in attachment.

III. The Socialization of Boys.
   A. They are systematically steered away from having an emotional life.
      1) The way boys are socialized re: emotions. Mothers, fathers and sisters.
      2) The change from age 7 to age 15.
      3) The loss of facial expression by manhood
   B. Does a boy have to be turned into a man?
      1) David Gilmore’s “Manhood in the Making”
   C. Is it their hormones? The issue of testosterone
      1) “High fighters” with low testosterone; social leaders with high testosterone.
      2) Kleinfelter’s Syndrome (xxy).
   D. Are boys socialized by other boys?
      1) Gender-exclusive groups.

IV. The Boy Experience of School.
   A. Boys are “thorns among roses” in elementary school.
      1) Brain vulnerability
      2) We see boys through the lens of learning disabilities, antisocial behavior and ADD. All boys painted with the same brush.
      3) Two destructive archetypes.
         a. wild animal
         b. entitled prince
      We ask too much of boys developmentally, and not enough morally.

V. Boys and Discipline.
   A. The high cost to boys of harsh discipline.
      1) The lessons learned from harsh anger and punishment.
      2) The history of batterers.
VI. **Boys and Their Mothers.**
A. The culture creates doubt in mothers. Tells them not to “smother their boys.” Why?
   1) What we know about the attachment needs of boys and girls. The right kind of attachment.
   2) Mothers dealing with a “differently flavored” child. “They really are different.” What is her experience and transference to males.
   3) Developing a sense of humor. ex. 400 lbs of boy.

VII. **Boys and Their Fathers.**
A. Lost fathers, lost sons: love, anger and playing together.
   1) Reed Larson and Maryse Richards *Divergent Realities:* a “closeness gap.” Fathers a “ghost-like presence.” Fathers working at their desk believing they are available.
   2) Fathers who aren’t involved early are factored out. The power of early fathering.
   3) The value of play and the way fathers father.

B. The hunger for father and other role models.

VIII. **Male Adolescence.**
A. The male culture of cruelty.
   1) Example of the hockey player
   2) Boys’ bathrooms and boys’ locker rooms
   3) Hazing and initiation
   4) The devaluation of everything feminine or tender.
   5) Homophobia

B. Boys withdrawing from family and friends.
   1) Social isolation in boys
   2) Fear of failure and fear of rejection

C. Filling the emotional void with alcohol, drugs and impersonal sex.
D. Striking back in anger: aggression, violence and delinquency.
E. Embracing failure: dropping out of academics and athletics.
F. Cruel and heartless relationships with girls.
G. The need for a road to manhood: initiation and guidance.

IX. **Coming to Grips with Boy Underachievement.**
A. The growing discrepancy between girls and boys: MCA’s scores and college.
B. Have boys changed? Have girls changed? Has school changed?
C. Addressing the needs of boys in school. (They won’t make it easy!)
X. **What Do Boys Need?**
   A. Give boys permission to have an internal life, approval for the full range of human emotions and help in developing an emotional vocabulary so that they may better understand themselves and communicate more effectively with others.
   B. Recognize and accept the high activity level of boys and give them safe boy places to express it.
   C. Talk to boys in their language---in a way that honors their pride and their masculinity. Be direct with them; use them as consultants and problem solvers.
   D. Teach boys that emotional courage is courage, and that courage and empathy are the sources of real strength in life.
   E. Use discipline to build character and conscience, not enemies.
   F. Model a manhood of emotional attachment.
   G. Teach boys that there are many ways to be a man.