



Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents a growing number of area residents of diverse backgrounds brought together over the 2002 Iraqi crisis. We support multilateral action for non-violent conflict resolution, human rights, ecological integrity for the planet and international law, through education and dialogue locally and globally. We encourage everyone's participation as we strive for peace and justice to build a better world for future generations.

BPI web site:

www.boundarypeace.20m.com

Boundary Peace Initiative regular meetings suspended until at least 3 commit to attend. For info call 250 442 0434.

To Do

Mothers Day Peace Walk May 8th. Meet at **noon in Haynes Park Osooyos** to walk to the Canada/USA border; **program begins at 2 pm.** For those unable to accompany the walkers please park on the Canadian side of the border and wait to be accompanied by a border guard to the gathering area.



Mothers' Day Proclamation

By: Julia Ward Howe, Boston, 1870

Arise, then, women of this day! Arise all women who have hearts, whether our baptism be that of water or of fears!

Say firmly: "We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience. We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says "Disarm, Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."

Blood does not wipe our dishonor nor violence indicate possession. As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of counsel. Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them then solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the great human family can live in peace, each bearing after their own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

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(From last column) Mothers' Day

In the name of womanhood and of humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.

Mother's Day was originally started after the Civil War, as a protest to the carnage of that war, by women who had lost their sons.

Ed. Note: It is good to remind ourselves of what the true purpose of Mother's Day was and think about what it has become. Not that it is a bad thing to honor our biological Mothers, it is good, but it is one of the most commercially profitable holidays of the year.



Spare the rod - the biology of poverty and violence

**From: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs:
May 2014 (IRIN)**

Scientific advances in human biology may soon have a profound bearing on the policies that governments and organizations adopt towards young mothers, caregivers and babies in poor and stressed communities.

There is an emerging body of scientific evidence to show that the environment in which a very young baby develops is pivotal in shaping its brain in ways that can significantly influence its chances in later life.

“Toxic stress”, depicting a relentless cycle of stress inflicted on a child whose parents may be battling to survive, unable to nurture it properly; or where there may be violence, neglect and/or poor nutrition, can result in negative patterning on the baby’s brain that can inhibit intellectual and emotional growth and hamper his or her chances of success. This negative imprint, just like a positive imprint, gets handed down from one generation to the next.

University of Cape Town-affiliated neurobiologist, Barak Morgan, says: “We have known for a long time that early childhood is very important, but now science is telling us exactly how important it is.”

Whereas educational policies tend to stress the importance of the early school years, the new science suggests that the birth to three-year time frame could be the most cost-effective and critical period for intervention in a child’s life.

In a paper entitled, “Biological embedding of early childhood adversity: Toxic stress and the vicious cycle of poverty in South Africa”, Morgan explains how signals from the environment are known to add permanent “epigenetic marks” onto DNA during sensitive periods of early brain development – both before and after birth. Then a period of resistance settles in, where it becomes very difficult to change these pathways. It is not known exactly when all of these brief, sensitive windows occur, but the first two to three years in a child’s life are critical for him or her to acquire emotional self-regulation skills that make the difference between failure and success later in life.

Spare the rod

Groundbreaking research by Canadian Michael Meaney several years ago on lab rats showed that the amount of licking and grooming the baby rats received in their first days of life determined their responses to stress.

Those that received minimal licking and grooming were primed to survive their environment with “flight or fight” responses” by having more epigenetic marks on the brain’s major stress gene. Pups that were licked and groomed adequately, regardless of whether by their biological mother or a surrogate mother, had less of these marks, which made them resilient to stress and primed to thrive. Later studies on humans, also in Canada, showed that the brains of suicide victims had more epigenetic marks, similar to those of the poorly nurtured rat pups.

“The shape and impact of these pathways are sculpted in a once-off way during early development when environmental influences, as mediated by parental care, are most deeply embedded in offspring biology,” Morgan writes. Crucially, the epigenetic marks hamper the development of more sophisticated, flexible “top down” brain functioning that is associated with strong self-regulation and the ability to thrive, as distinguished from more reflex, survival-oriented, “bottom up” brain functioning.

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(From last column) Spare the rod

Morgan writes that children with poor self-regulation are shown to mature into adults with “significantly higher rates of substance dependence, criminality, financial problems and single parenthood, and significantly lower income, financial planning skills, socioeconomic status and physical health.”

He adds: “Only very recently has interdisciplinary neuroscience begun to reveal and characterize the stress of chronic poverty as a major environmental toxin that becomes embedded in the biological fabric of bodies and minds in ways that cripple healthy development.”

Nature and nurture

Things have moved very fast since these fairly recent research findings and an entire body of literature is now emerging around “how the environment gets embedded in biology,” he says. The new findings render the “nature” versus “nurture” debate obsolete. Morgan says it is now clear that genes and the environment form an inseparable whole. “Genes can do nothing alone, something in the environment must tell DNA when and what to do. Nature versus Nurture turns out to be Nature *and* Nurture,” he writes.

Furthermore, this embedding of the environment in the genes “gains intergenerational momentum”, he says. The lab rat research shows that rat pups that were not licked and groomed properly, matured into adults that did not nurture their own pups properly either. This helps to explain how the cycle of poverty and deprivation can be reinforced from one generation to the next.

While there is always room for new science, those in the field are not contesting the latest findings. Some argue that there is enough evidence at hand to nudge governments into implementing new policies that aim to reduce the impact of violence and poverty on babies and toddlers. Leading the pack is Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child director, Jack Shonkoff, an expert in child health and development.

“Our knowledge about what is happening inside a child’s brain must direct our attention outside – to the environment – and to reducing poverty and violence. Later exposure in life to these negatives can also impact a child’s development but early exposure seems to be the most scarring”

After a recent UNICEF panel discussion by scientists on the subject, Shonkoff said in a televised interview: “The quality of the foundation we build in the first couple of years doesn’t completely determine everything that is going to come later, but it nevertheless sets you up for a lifetime of good prospects for healthy development, or it puts you in a deep hole that says the risks are much greater that you will have problems across the board.”

In the interview Shonkoff says that the new science is leading to a much deeper understanding of why poor nutrition is so problematic in early childhood. “It’s not just because kids are not growing well but it’s because their brain development is affected by it.” He adds that interventions that merely offer stimulation for children in poor communities are inadequate. “It’s a matter of figuring out how to protect their developing brain from the stress – toxic stress – associated with chronic exposure to violence, really deep poverty and the day-to-day stress of just barely getting by.”

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(From page 2) **Spare the rod**

Lawrence Aber, a psychologist from New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, is an expert on the impact of poverty and violence on early child development. "Before, policymakers didn't think very young children would be affected so badly because they didn't talk or didn't seem to be aware," he says. "Now however, science has shown just the opposite. In fact they are highly sensitive to their environment – more so than at any other time in their life cycle." Aber is involved in research on how HIV/AIDs and poverty impacts on children in South Africa.

Policy implications

The new research has profound and practical implications for policy, he believes. "Our knowledge about what is happening inside a child's brain must direct our attention outside – to the environment – and to reducing poverty and violence." Later exposure in life to these negatives can also impact a child's development but early exposure seems to be the most scarring. "The earlier the twig is bent the more likely it is to grow in the direction you bend it. The earliest years are the most vulnerable years," he adds.

But what is the prognosis for the countless babies who have already been exposed to toxic stress? The science seems to suggest that early damage is irreversible. This is not so, say the scientists, however. "It is not just a story of doom and gloom, or a case of once bent always broken," says Aber. "One must remember that human beings – including very young and vulnerable ones – have enormous capacity for resilience, or what developmental scientists call plasticity. Children can bounce back. We can help them recover from the toxic stress they experience in infancy and toddlerhood."

Morgan also cites research on Romanian babies in institutions that shows the importance of timing to counteract the effects of stress. The cognitive and social outcomes for severely emotionally deprived babies adopted before 20 months of age were as good as those of their Canadian and British peers who had not been deprived. However, for those adopted after 20 months of age, the prognosis was less rosy. There is also the "dandelions" and "orchids" hypothesis, which suggests that some children (dandelions) are less genetically predisposed to being influenced – positively or negatively - by their environment than others who are more sensitive (orchids).

While there is growing awareness of the need for investment in children long before they enter school, Aber believes that not everyone is ready to act. "The logic is irrefutable but we haven't made the policy investments yet," he says, adding however that governments in developing countries "are starting to realize that if they don't affect change in the first years of a child's life there will be a glass ceiling on what can be achieved in the education system and ultimately, on national productivity."

For children living in poverty in South Africa, where domestic violence rates are high, toxic stress "is a newly recognized pandemic that must be addressed," Morgan argues.

Invest in children

But what kind of interventions can be made? Aber cites the benefits of the "conditional cash transfer" system on poverty alleviation efforts in Latin America and increasingly, Africa and South Asia.

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Book Recommendations



Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World

By [Tina Rosenberg](#) © March 29 2011

Publisher: WW Norton

The fearless Tina Rosenberg has spent her career tackling some of the world's hardest problems. The Haunted Land, her searing work on how Eastern Europe faced the crimes of Communism, garnered both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In *Join the Club*, she identifies a brewing social revolution that is changing the way people live, based on harnessing the positive force of peer pressure. Her stories of peer power in action show how it has reduced teen smoking in the United States, made villages in India healthier and more prosperous, helped minority students get top grades in college calculus, and even led to the fall of Slobodan Milosevic. She tells how creative social entrepreneurs are starting to use peer pressure to accomplish goals as personal as losing weight and as global as fighting terrorism. Inspiring and engrossing, *Join the Club* explains how we can better our world through humanity's most powerful and abundant resource: our connections with one another.

Ed Note: If you read a book or see a film you feel is of value and interest to others, please let me know at L4peace@telus.net .

(From page 3) **Spare the rod**

“These cash payments to very poor families are conditional on the family’s investment in the child’s development,” he says. These schemes encourage mothers to attend antenatal classes, get their babies immunized and their children to attend school, for example. They can be adopted to help minimize the effects of poverty and violence too.

Visits from health workers to new mothers have been shown to improve parental practices in Khayelitsha, South Africa, for example. Programs that help parents understand the dangers of exposing their young children to toxic stress, and help them find ways to shield them from it, can help too.

But what is called for, says Aber, is far more than small-scale programmatic intervention. “The entire system needs to address this on a broad population level.”

The Warrior Archetype

Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation; October 22, 2015
(Submitted by Karen Piddock and Sandra Hartline)

The warrior is a timeless, primal archetype at the core of both individuals and groups. Men especially are attracted to warrior energy. All the hunters, defenders, athletes, guards, knights, and samurais are, in fact, telling us there’s something valuable about focus, determination, and courage for the common good. In the developed world, warrior energy is, thank God, often sublimated into activities of business and sports. But even here, a clear goal toward a larger good, beyond self, and for purposes greater than prestige and power is usually absent. The true warrior has largely morphed into the celebrity, which hardly makes it warrior energy any more.

The perennial weakness of warrior energy, according to Robert Moore, is that it lacks breadth and depth. Focus and determination are good, but that’s not everything. The secret of a good warrior is that one must be in tutelage to a good and wise leader. The warrior without a good “king” or “queen” has no wisdom, no temperance, no balance, no final goals beyond tracking, fighting, and killing the enemy.

The warrior archetype is not going away any time soon, nor should it. Our job is to educate and redefine the warrior in the way that Moses, David, Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Dorothy Day lived out their passion. Warrior energy is not in its essence wrong. It takes warrior energy to see through and stand against mass illusions of our time, *and* be willing to pay the price of disobedience. It takes warrior energy to see through the soft rhetoric of “support our troops” which cleverly diverts from the objective evil of war. It takes warrior energy to walk to a different drum, disbelieve the patriotic trivia, and re-believe in the tradition of nonviolence, civil resistance, and martyrdom--the way of the cross.

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(From last column) **The Warrior Archetype**

The warrior in all of us is desperately searching for something heroic, transcendent, or self-sacrificing. Mark Kurlansky suggests how nonviolence might help us recover true warrior energy: “Pacifism is passive; but nonviolence is active. Pacifism is harmless and therefore easier to accept than nonviolence, which is dangerous. When Jesus said that a victim should turn the other cheek, he was preaching pacifism. But when he said that an enemy should be won over through the power of love, he was preaching nonviolence.” [1]

Nonviolence requires courageous love. Thomas Merton writes that “non-violence implies a kind of bravery far different from violence. In the use of force, one simplifies the situation by assuming that the evil to be overcome is clear-cut, definite, and irreversible. Hence there remains but one thing: to eliminate it. Any dialogue with the sinner, any question of the irreversibility of his act, only means faltering and failure. Failure to eliminate evil is itself a defeat. Anything that even remotely risks such defeat is in itself capitulation to evil. The irreversibility of evil then reaches out to contaminate *even the tolerant thought* of the hesitant crusader who, momentarily, doubts the total evil of the enemy he is about to eliminate.” [2] Nonviolence, on the other hand, comes from an awareness that I am the enemy and the enemy is me. I cannot destroy the other without destroying myself. I must embrace my enemy just as I welcome my own shadow.

My father Francis of Assisi said, “I am the Herald of the Great King.” Francis never stopped being a warrior-knight. He just found a greater king. His image of self and victory changed. His goals grew broader, his heart deeper. He was still ready to spill blood for the cause, but now it led him to a personal visit to the Sultan in Egypt in the very midst of the bloody Christian Crusades. He was prepared to offer his male milk.

Warrior energy needs to be wholly dedicated and given *somewhere* or to *something*. It must be focused and released for the warrior to know that she or he is alive and has character. Our work is to find worthy causes and goals to receive worthy warrior energy.

References:

- [1] Mark Kurlansky, *Nonviolence: The History of a Dangerous Idea* (Modern Library: 2008), 6.
 - [2] Gandhi, edited by Thomas Merton, *On Nonviolence* (New Directions: 2007), 21.
- Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Radical Grace*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Center for Action and Contemplation: 1991), 12.

The Boundary Peace Initiative (BPI) welcomes articles. All articles are the responsibility of the author and may not be common consensus. To submit an article, contact **Laura** at **250-442-0434** or **L4peace@telus.net**. The BPI is a member of: BC Southern Interior Peace Coalition, Abolition 2000, Lawyers Against the War, affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation; we work with local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

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Go to the Government of Canada website for emails of all MPs, Ministers at **http://www.canada.gc.ca**