

The roots of violence are not unknown:

The misled brain and the banned emotions

By Alice Miller

The Facts:

1. The development of the human brain is use-dependent. The brain continues to develop its structure in the first four years of life, depending on the experiences the environment offers the child. The brain of a child who has mostly loving experiences will develop differently from the brain of a child who has been treated cruelly.
2. Many children on our planet are beaten in the first years of their lives. They learn violence from the start, and this lesson is wired into their developing brains. No child is ever born violent. Violence is NOT genetic, it exists because beaten children use, in their adult lives, the lesson that their brains have learned.
3. As beaten children are not allowed to defend themselves, they must suppress their anger and rage against their parents who have humiliated them, killed their inborn empathy, and insulted their dignity. They will take out this rage later, as adults, on scapegoats, mostly on their own children. Deprived of empathy, some of them will direct their anger against themselves (in eating disorders, drug addiction, depression etc.), or against other adults (in wars, terrorism, delinquency etc.)

Questions and Answers:

Q: Parents beat their children without a second thought, to make them obedient. Nobody, except a small minority, protests against this dangerous habit. Why is the logical sequence from being a misled victim to becoming a misleading perpetrator ignored world-wide? Why have even the Popes, responsible for the moral behaviour of many millions of believers, until now never informed them that beating children is a crime?

A: Many of us were beaten, and we had to learn very early that these cruel acts were normal, harmless, and even good for us. Nobody ever told us that they were crimes against humanity. The wrong, immoral, and absurd lesson was wired into our developing brains, and this explains much of the emotional blindness governing our world.

Q: Can we free ourselves from the emotional blindness we developed in childhood?

A: We can - at least to some degree - liberate ourselves from this blindness by daring to feel our repressed emotions, including our fear and forbidden rage against our parents, who had often scared us to death for periods of many years, which should have been the most beautiful years of our lives. We can't retrieve those years. But thanks to facing our truth we can transform ourselves from the children who still live in us full of fear and denial into responsible, well informed adults who regained their empathy, so early stolen from them. By becoming feeling persons we can no longer deny that beating children is a criminal act that should be forbidden on the whole planet.

Conclusion: Caring for the emotional needs of our children means more than giving them a happy childhood. It means to enable the brains of the future adults to function in a healthy, rational way, free from perversion and madness. Being forced to learn in childhood that hitting children is a blessing for them is a most absurd, confusing lesson, one with the most dangerous consequences: **This lesson as such, together with being cut off from the true emotions, creates the roots of violence.**