



The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook--What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing

By Bruce Perry, Maia Szalavitz

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Child psychiatrist Bruce Perry has treated children faced with unimaginable horror: genocide survivors, witnesses, children raised in closets and cages, and victims of family violence. Here he tells their stories of trauma and transformation.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In beautifully written, fascinating accounts of experiences working with emotionally stunted and traumatized children, child psychiatrist Perry educates readers about how early-life stress and violence affects the developing brain. He offers simple yet vivid illustrations of the stress response and the brain's mechanisms with facts and images that crystallize in the mind without being too detailed or confusing. The stories exhibit compassion, understanding and hope as Perry paints detailed, humane pictures of patients who have experienced violence, sexual abuse or neglect, and Perry invites the reader on his own journey to understanding how the developing child's brain works. He learns that to facilitate recovery, the loss of control and powerlessness felt by a child during a traumatic experience must be counteracted. Recovery requires that the patient be "in charge of key aspects of the therapeutic interaction." He emphasizes that the brain of a traumatized child can be remolded with patterned, repetitive experiences in a safe environment. Most importantly, as such trauma involves the shattering of human connections, "lasting, caring connections to others" are irreplaceable in healing; medications and therapy alone cannot do the job. "Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love," Perry concludes. (*Jan.*)

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From Booklist

Although many parents fret over how to raise a more academically and financially successful child, Perry has learned a thing or two about how not to raise a prospective sociopath. Here he shares the stories of several children he has encountered in his decades as a child psychiatrist and expert on childhood trauma. Each child, from the seven-year-old who offered him sexual favors to the eponymous boy who spent his early years living in a dog cage, taught Perry something about the effects of early childhood trauma on brain development. His discoveries contradict the formerly held precept that children are emotionally resilient and will outgrow insults to their psyches. On the contrary, he says, severe and occasionally even not-so-severe emotional or physical abuse can chemically alter early brain development, resulting later in the inability to make appropriate, socially sanctioned behavioral decisions. Perry doesn't promote what he calls the "abuse excuse" for antisocial or criminal behavior; rather, he makes a powerful case for early intervention for disruptive children to prevent adult sociopathy. *Donna Chavez*

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Review

"Readable, informative about the workings of language, memory, trust, and choice, and ultimately optimistic---while critical of a society that exudes violence and ignores prevention---this book demands and deserves attention from parents, educators, policymakers, courts, and therapists. Highly recommended." ---
Library Journal Starred Review

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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William Grant:

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