

Updates to Parenting For A Peaceful World

version 2

Index

2nd ADDENDUM TO PART I; CHAPTER 1, ‘Current Dilemmas’	2
2nd ADDENDUM TO PART II, CHAPTER 2; ‘Childhood through the ages’ Section: Parenting ‘instinct’: myth or reality?	2
ADDENDUM TO PART II, CHAPTER 3: ‘The Infanticidal Mode’ Section: Child Mutilation	6
ADDENDUM TO PART II, CHAPTER 11: ‘Yugoslavian Childhood: From war to Democracy’	7
PART III, CHAPTER 15: Section: ‘American reforms set the pace’	8
PART III, CHAPTER 15: Section: ‘Sweden reaps benefits of better nurturance of children’	11
PART III, CHAPTER 15: Section: ‘Social rewards of reforms in Uruguay’	12
ADDENDUM TO PART III, Post-script: ‘A case study of child abuse in Australia’	12
ADDENDUM TO PART IV, CHAPTER 17: ‘Social consequences of corporal punishment’	13
ADDENDUM TO PART IV, CHAPTER 17: ‘Is corporal punishment here to stay?’	14
ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 21: Section: ‘Neuro-biology and neuro-chemistry of violence’	15
ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 21: ‘How shame affects the growing brain’	15
ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 21, ‘Nurturance and optimal brain development’	16
ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 22	16
ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 22, ‘Universal pathways of emotional development’	17
ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 23 Sub-section: ‘Is healing possible?’	19
ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 24, ‘Five Rites of Passage’	19
ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTERS 25 and 26, Sections: Baby’s emotional needs at this time	20
<i>Sub-sections: ‘To be responded to promptly’ and: ‘To receive a timely response to her needs’</i>	20
ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 26, Section: Baby’s emotional needs at this time	21
<i>Sub-section: To be held almost constantly</i>	21
<i>Sub-section: To receive loving eye-contact</i>	21
<i>Sub-section: To receive a timely response to her needs</i>	21
<i>Sub-section: To sleep near Mum and Dad</i>	22
<i>Sub-section: ‘How emotional wounds affect behaviour’</i>	22
ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 25: ‘What happens at this time’	22
ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 25: ‘The most wounding experiences’	23
ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 28: ‘Child’s emotional needs at this time’	23
ADDENDUM TO PART VII, CHAPTER 31: ‘Is the world becoming a better place?’	24

Updates to Parenting For A Peaceful World

2nd ADDENDUM TO PART I; CHAPTER 1, ‘Current Dilemmas’

According to entrepreneur and environmentalist Paul Hawken¹ the world’s top 200 companies have twice the assets of 80% of the world’s people, and those assets are growing at a rate 50 times faster than the income for the world’s majority². In view of these disparities of astronomical proportion, it is meaningless to speak of poverty and disadvantage in our world unless we speak of it in terms of the dysfunctional unwillingness to share resources equitably. A boost in productivity is less important than a boost in altruism – a natural human impulse that has been suppressed in favour of competitiveness and aggression wherever parenting styles are authoritarian and punitive.

[Return to index](#)

2nd ADDENDUM TO PART II, CHAPTER 2; ‘Childhood through the ages’

Section: Parenting ‘instinct’: myth or reality?

The question of whether pre-historic foraging societies were essentially violent or peaceful may be for now an unsolvable riddle. Anthropologists and historians continue to tussle with this question, and there are many proponents of both theories: peaceful versus violent origins. One popular belief holds that humanity in its indigenous state has always been noble and peaceful, and that agriculture first, and industrialization second, have made us more violent and selfish. The competing view is that humans are historically and originally barbaric and violent, and we have been evolving socially towards more civilized societies. What does the history of human violence have to teach us about the nature of our parenting instincts?

So far, my research has led me to report that a majority of the world’s hunter-gatherer societies, past and present, have had high rates of violence, either in the form of warfare, homicide, infanticide or other forms of social and domestic violence. One approach used by anthropologists and ethnographers to learn about the prehistoric origins of human social behaviour is to investigate and compare contemporary hunter-gatherer societies. Since their lifestyle, technologies and social organization have remained unchanged for millennia, they may have much to teach us about prehistoric societies. In his survey of a number of such comparative ethnographic studies, anthropologist RC Kelly³ reports that the majority of hunter-gatherer societies are warlike. Only a minority of these societies, somewhere between 9% to 13% of them, rarely engaged in war. Frequent warfare is evident among 64% of hunter-gatherer societies. Additionally, Kelly’s review of studies found that those societies lacking war are not necessarily free of violence; they tend to have high rates of homicide and domestic violence. In fact, homicide rates among hunter-

¹ 2007, *Blessed Unrest – how the largest movement in the world came into being and why no one saw it coming* Viking, NY

² *ibid* p119

³ 2000 *Warless Societies and the Origins of War* University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor

gatherer societies are on average higher than among agricultural societies. Although these findings seem to suggest that the earliest, prehistoric foraging societies had a high capacity for violence, they don't guarantee that conclusion.

Nevertheless, a small proportion of peaceful and egalitarian hunter-gatherer societies have always existed. What was it that enabled them to be peaceful, what distinguished them from the others? The more relatively peaceful societies, according to Kelly's⁴ studies, are characterized by an absence of social stratification, an even distribution of wealth, and non-punitive, non-authoritarian child rearing practices. The Semai, forest dwellers in the center of the Malay Peninsula, is one of the few examples of non-violent semi-sedentary societies with low homicide rates⁵. Unsurprisingly, they also use highly nurturing and non-authoritarian child-rearing methods⁶.

RC Kelly suggests that the proportion of warless foraging societies was probably higher in pre-history, as societies then were more likely to have been unstratified and lacking organization beyond the banding together of a few family groups. This explains, according to Kelly, the scanty archaeological evidence for warfare between 35000BCE and 10000BCE.

Violence among hunter-gatherers has been correlated with a significant presence of a number of parenting practices that conform to Lloyd de Mause's 'infanticidal mode'. This led me to propose that the human parenting instinct and capacity for empathy are vulnerable to environmental forces, that if parents are severely stressed and struggling for their survival, the capacity for sustained, intimate and empathic parenting suffers – sometimes catastrophically. Since the original publication of *Parenting for a Peaceful World*, I have found further evidence that the quality of environment that parents find themselves in can powerfully influence parenting behaviour and hence social behaviour. In other words, when parents feel safe, supported and nourished, they tend towards more expression of nurturing instincts, and when parents are severely stressed, over time the quality of parenting behaviour is likely to suffer. Over a few generations, if environmental conditions change significantly this can radically alter cultural behaviour, first by changing the way parents raise their children.

In his book: *Sahasia – The 4000BCE Origins of Child Abuse, Sex-Repression, Warfare and Social Violence in the Deserts of the Old World*⁷, James De Meo PhD examines evidence from ethnographic, archaeological, anthropological, climatological and palaeo-climatic field studies⁸ to uncover an distinct pattern of increased social violence as a response to sharp deteriorations in food supply.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semai

⁷ 2006, Natural Energy Works, Oregon

⁸ including anthropologist GP Murdoch's (1967) *Ethnographic Atlas: A Summary*
Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press - a data base of 1200 cultures from
around the world

De Meo gives several examples of ancient cultures that did not subordinate women, and who left behind little or no evidence of social violence or warfare. He speaks of an era, at the dawn of settled, agricultural society, when herders, agriculturalists and hunters traded with each other and tended to live peacefully, in an atmosphere of abundance and resource security.

The period spanning from 6,000BCE to 4,000 BCE, saw catastrophic changes in climate that led to severe desiccation, and hyper-aridity expanded rapidly throughout previously moist and fertile regions of 'Saharasia'. A huge belt of desert developed and spread across northern Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and north-western China. This vast expanse of arid and inhospitable country had once teemed with life; it had been wet, lush and green. Human inhabitants of these once fertile regions had once benefited from an abundance of arable wild grains and domesticable animals. The possibility of surplus production in these regions had, before the onset of these catastrophic climactic changes, enabled the first agricultural settlements to emerge.

This devastating deterioration in climate and the resulting desertification precipitated widespread and chronic famine and malnutrition. Over centuries, societies in these regions adapted by becoming more competitive and aggressive in nature and organization. Violently patriarchal societies may have always existed here and there, but according to De Meo's survey they made their first large scale and lasting appearance from around 4000BCE to 3500BCE. Many of these severely drought-affected civilizations were forced to abandon agriculture and return to a nomadic, but militaristic way of life. Permanent settlements remained only in areas adjacent to secure water sources.

As these more aggressive peoples, the product of despair, scarcity and malnutrition, became increasingly competitive and aggressive through the generations, they began to migrate outward to colonize moister and more fertile territories. Warring tribes fanned out in all directions, everywhere displacing, subjugating, exterminating and subsuming gentler peoples as they advanced. Their readiness for violence, as well as their horsemanship and metallurgy tended to give them a devastating military superiority. For example, De Meo suggests that the military use of cavalry and battle chariots were developed among nomadic tribes from the drought affected Asian steppes.

Neolithic farming and trading communities of North Africa and the Middle East from 10500 BCE to 4000BCE were generally cooperative and peaceful in social behaviour, according to De Meo, there was little significant social stratification among them and strongman rule was unknown. They left behind no war weaponry and an abundance of sophisticated art. De Meo tells how, from around 4000BCE onward, regions east of the Nile endured waves of violent intrusions from mounted nomadic warriors who came from beyond the Iranian plateau. Whereas prior to this era local cultures tended to be relatively gender-balanced, the status of women was hence reduced to servitude and concubinage following these invasions. Eastern invaders brought with them their harsh child-rearing practices, including circumcision, swaddling and infant cranial deformation.

De Meo traces migratory routes that radiated from these unfriendly desert regions of the world, and shows us how over the centuries, through progressive migration and military conquest these patriarchal, infanticidal and warlike societies spread throughout much of the globe, taking their harsh customs with them and assimilating or destroying gentler cultures in their path. Migration and conquest extended violent patriarchy through much of Africa, into Western and Northern Europe, east into Asia, across Polynesia and Oceania, and through the Bering Strait into the Americas. Harsh parenting styles produced more war-capable cultures, and so the cultural honouring of battle and martial arts has predominated for millennia, through much of the world, up to this day.

Piece by piece, De Meo completes the puzzle by revealing how formerly unarmoured civilizations were transformed, building more fortifications and adopting combat weaponry as patriarchy spread in all directions. Such were the results of invasions by the Mittani across the Caucasus, the Hittites into Anatolia, the Hurrians into Mesopotamia, the Dorians into Greece, Italic speaking people into the Italian peninsula and various Aryan groups into India and Persia. Peaceful and egalitarian societies in all continents would either learn to adopt more violent ways, or face being overrun or marginalized. To De Meo, this explains why excavations of the earliest known fortifications in Europe are dated to around 3500BCE. Each wave of patriarchal/warrior migration and invasion brought with it the characteristic, traumatic child-rearing modes. De Meo methodically makes the case that infant swaddling, genital circumcision, cranial deformation and child sacrifice existed first among warrior-nomad people from this band of desert he calls 'Saharasia' (there is also evidence of infanticidal-mode practices independently emerging from the harshest desert areas of Australia and the Americas).

Over centuries, groups of relatively peaceful, child-nurturing people were eventually annihilated, enslaved, assimilated, or forced to retreat into fringes and forests. The desertification of these vast 'Saharasian' regions has triggered a demographic catastrophe of global proportions, which over the centuries rippled into every continent. Humanity is only now beginning to heal from this millennia-old social devolution.

De Meo's collection of evidence seems to call for a slight adjustment to De Mause's telling of the evolutionary tale. There is some powerful evidence that a great number of relatively peaceful, socially just and child-nurturing societies prevailed for long periods in pre-history. Ultimately, De Meo's evidence adds credence to the essence of De Mause's psycho-historical model. De Meo has strongly confirmed that in every case, cultures that subordinate women and inflict trauma on their children produce more violent and warlike societies. De Meo has further substantiated the role of childrearing as a major driving force of history.

So, whereas De Mause draws a picture of originally infanticidal human societies that tended to use competition and violence as predominant survival strategies, De Meo argues for a rapid social decline towards harsh parenting and violent societies that was the result of catastrophic climactic factors, around six thousand years ago. In De Meo's assessment of the evidence, human societies that arise in areas of friendly climate and

abundant resources will evolve towards social harmony and empathic child-rearing styles, provided that they remain free from invasion by patriarchal, warlike neighbours. Both accounts place child-rearing styles at the very centre of how a society's behaviour is shaped. De Meo's account has one advantage, however. He has, I believe, demonstrated that the quality of parenting behaviour depends on the support offered to parents by their social and natural environment. Our ability to be tender towards our children rests on how well nourished and cared for we are. The parenting instinct is vulnerable, and if life is a struggle, it can suffer.

De Meo shares the recognition of all psycho-historians that social violence has its roots in childhood: 'Human violence and warfare were the products of social institutions which inflicted great pain and trauma upon children...'⁹. By implication, a return to peaceful society will be possible if child-rearing reforms aimed at healthy attachment and non-violent parenting are enacted – and if parents receive more social, educational and financial support.

The human instinct for nurturance lives side-by-side with the potential for selfishness and aggression, depending on the way our natural and social environment treats us. Even the best of parents can break under severe stress, and parenting behaviour suffers. Over generations, overwhelming stress on parents will skew any society towards violence. The implications for policy makers are clear: financial, social and educational support for all parents – such as well-paid parental leave, breastfeeding support, early intervention, etc¹⁰ should be a top priority in every nation.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART II, CHAPTER 3: 'The Infanticidal Mode' Section: Child Mutilation

There is a curious ancient form of customary child mutilation that was not represented in the original text of *Parenting for a Peaceful World*. This form of infant mutilation warrants special mention because, as is the case with the many variants of circumcision, it existed among numerous cultures, in every continent. I am referring to the traditional practice of infant cranial deformation (ICD). This excruciating procedure involved binding infants' skulls in extremely tight bands, or trussing them tightly between two flat wooden boards. The bands and boards were applied through the day and night, and removed only for occasional bathing. This resulted in chronic, splitting headache, and sometimes led to bleeding through the nostrils. The crushing pressure of ICD was applied

⁹ De Meo, J (2006) *Sahasasia – The 4000BCE Origins of Child Abuse, Sex-Repression, Warfare and Social Violence in the Deserts of the Old World* Natural Energy Works, Oregon, p 424

¹⁰ see my list of proposals in *Parenting for a Peaceful World*, p 379, and the first updates, dated 11/11/5: **ADDENDUM TO PART VII, CHAPTER 31: 'Emotionally healthy children: a communal responsibility'** Section: Government and industry sponsored steps to a more peaceful world www.our-emotional-health.com/addendums.pdf

for at least the first two years, leading to grotesquely flattened or weirdly elongated skulls.

As with other forms of child mutilation, it is hard to see what survival advantage this one offers – other than chronically raising cortisol levels in children’s brains, thus creating a potentially more violent and insensitive individual¹¹. Such relentlessly traumatic practices would have produced huge quantities of neurotoxic cortisol in the children’s brains, maintained daily at soaring levels. This would cause severe damage to the hippocampus and areas of the prefrontal lobes concerned with impulse control and empathy – likely producing the nervous systems that characterise remorseless fighters, and individuals hard-wired for hair-trigger violence. As well, cranial deformation may have offered a military edge to its practitioners. It is said for instance, that the Huns’ monstrous and outlandish appearance, with their bulbous eyes and enormous foreheads, struck terror into the hearts of all who faced them in battle. The Huns practiced a severe form of ICD that left its victims with permanently elongated, conical skulls.

It is doubtful that the decision to traumatize children so severely in order to produce a warrior society is a consciously made decision. But nevertheless, societies the world over have acted intuitively to deprive children of tenderness and the battle-ready warriors that resulted have rewarded many of these harsh practices – well into modern times.

ICD was common among Central Asian warrior nomad societies, such as the Hittites, Scythians, Sarmatians, and Huns. Evidence of ICD has also been found in the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, Northwest China, in Nth America’s Pacific Northwest, in Inca Peru and Mesoamerica. The Huns later introduced this practice into Europe. ICD skulls have been unearthed in Australia’s south east, together with archaeological evidence of tribal violence against women, dated back to a period between 11,000BCE to 7,000BCE. This coincided with a period of extreme aridity in this area, adding weight to De Meo’s theory that cultural violence arises as a result of chronic environmental harshness.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART II, CHAPTER 11: ‘Yugoslavian Childhood: From war to Democracy’

In the first addendum¹² for this section, I stated that heavily authoritarian and patriarchal family types were not confined to the former Yugoslavia in the early 20th century, but were common in many parts of Eastern Europe. Here I included my parents’ country, Romania. This was the nation that produced Nicolae Ceausescu - one of the most psychopathic dictators of modern times – and his devoted followers during the communist era. Just as with all other demagogues, Ceausescu’s brutality finds its roots in his childhood. Nicolae was the third son in a family of 13 children – not exactly a font of parental attention for him as a child. His father was a violently abusive alcoholic who

¹¹ see: ‘Neuro-biology and neuro-chemistry of violence’, page 232, *Parenting for a Peaceful World*

¹² dated 11th November, 2005

frequently beat and humiliated him. As a likely complication of this child-abuse, Nicolae spoke with a strong stutter for which he was often ridiculed as a child. He left home at age 12 to escape his father's violence – only to perpetrate it against an entire nation upon his rise to power¹³.

[Return to index](#)

PART III, CHAPTER 15: Section: 'American reforms set the pace'

In this section I presented the psycho-historical view, with supportive evidence, that the USA managed to become a world leader in democratic governance at a time when it was also a leader in child-rearing reform. American child-rearing reforms, such as ending wet-nursing, swaddling and child abandonment, preceded – and, as psycho-historians argue, to a large degree *caused* - democratic reforms extraordinary for their times.

I fear that it would be incomplete, however, to present the USA as a world-leader in democracy and social justice when today, so many industrialized democracies have advanced well beyond what Americans have achieved in social evolutionary terms. In recent years in fact, the USA has become equally renown for its arrogant foreign policy, for the erosion of its democratic institutions and for its role as a spoiler on international environmental initiatives. The USA has fallen dramatically from its historic position of leadership in terms of human social advancement. Why has American social evolution stalled, even regressed?

There are probably many factors contributing to the demise of American leadership, but I believe that a stunning failure to progress on children's wellbeing is at the core of America's violence and social decay. On most key indicators, the care of children in USA lags badly behind the rest of the industrialized world.

- Corporal punishment is still legal in schools in 22 states, where teachers strike children on the buttocks with a wooden paddle¹⁴. This practice is unique to USA, and entirely unknown among all other developed nations.
- Instruments especially designed for child-beating are still openly marketed to parents. No legislation exists to ban these sales, and there is a plethora of American parenting literature, much of it religious in nature, that instructs parents on how to use these instruments.
 - Here you can read quotes from several popular book titles freely available in the USA that instruct parents to use corporal punishment: www.stopherod.net/
 - Here you can view one of the advertisements for child-beating devices: www.stopherod.net/rod-petition.html
 - According to a Massachusetts-based Christian child-protection activism group, 'Stop the Rod': 'The US is the only country that allows devices to be advertised and sold for whipping babies!'¹⁵

¹³ Stephenson J (1998) *Poisonous Power: Childhood Roots of Tyranny* Diemer Smith

¹⁴ www.nospank.net/classrm.htm and: www.stophitting.com/disatschool/

- Troubled teenagers are sent to unregulated, privately owned juvenile boot camps that exist throughout the nation. In many of these boot camps discipline includes severe beatings, electric shock treatments and/or solitary confinement, and a number of deaths have ensued. Citizen groups have been formed to expose and combat this widespread institutionalised abuse of children. Since it defies belief that wholesale child abuse and human rights violations could be perpetrated in such a scale in a purportedly ‘civilized’ nation, it is well worth viewing the evidence presented at these sites, especially the profusion of media articles reporting the facts:
 - isaccorp.org/
 - caica.org , cafety.org
 - www.nospank.net/boot.htm .
- The USA has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy, sexually-transmitted disease, illicit drug use, obesity, diabetes and use of anti-depressants in the industrialized world¹⁶.
- The average American 3-4 year-old child watches around 5 hours of TV per day. One in four 6 month to 2 year olds have a TV in their own rooms, two in three 6 year olds and nine in ten 8 to 16 year olds also have a TV in their own rooms¹⁷.

By age 18, the average young American will have viewed 200,000 acts of violence on television alone¹⁸. But is that something to worry about? Does onscreen violence make viewers more violent? There are now over 1000 studies that firmly say ‘yes’¹⁹. The six most prominent medical groups in the USA have issued a Joint Statement on the Impact of Entertainment Violence on Children²⁰. Together they assert that evidence is overwhelming and clear: media violence increases aggression in children. Additionally: ‘... prolonged viewing of media violence can lead to emotional desensitization toward violence in real life’. Psychologists now conclude that: ‘...the scientific debate over whether media

¹⁵ www.stoptherod.org

¹⁶ Hawken P (2007) *Blessed Unrest – how the largest movement in the world came into being and why no one saw it coming* Viking, NY page 118
and: Paul, G (2005) ‘Cross-National Correlations of Quantifiable Societal Health with Popular Religiosity and Secularism in the Prosperous Democracies’ *Journal of Religion and Society* Volume 7, pp 1-8

¹⁷ Sigman, A (2005) *Remotely Controlled – How Television is Damaging our Lives* Vermillion, London, p50

¹⁸ American Academy of Pediatrics: (November, 2001) ‘Policy Statement: Media Violence’ *Pediatrics* Vol. 108 No. 5 pp. 1222-1226 -
aappolicy.aappublications.org/

¹⁹ Sigman, A (2005) *Remotely Controlled – How Television is Damaging our Lives* Vermillion, London, p134

²⁰ www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jstmtevc.htm The groups are: American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association

violence increases aggression and violence is essentially over...'²¹. There is no longer any doubt that such massive doses of daily viewing among most American children, with the high prevalence of media violence, has been skewing the population towards higher rates of social – and possibly international - violence.

- Despite being the wealthiest nation, in 2001 the USA had one of the lowest maternity leave provisions in the world; an average of 12 weeks with no pay. This is considerably less than every European country, less than all countries in the Americas (north and south), and even less than most African and Asian countries²².
- The USA is the only country in the world besides Iraq where metal detectors are needed in schools²³.
- The USA has one of the higher incidences of SIDS in the world, ten times Japan's rate, one hundred times Hong Kong's²⁴.
- The USA is the only remaining secular country in the world where infant boys are routinely circumcised at a rate of around 50% - despite the fact that no medical association in the world recommends this practice anymore²⁵, and despite the fact that it is now recognized as an unnecessary, traumatic and damaging procedure²⁶.
- The USA has the second worst newborn death rate in the developed world (www.thebusinessofbeingborn.com).
- The USA has an appallingly low percentage of babies born in Baby Friendly Hospital (BFHI) accredited facilities. The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, spearheaded by the WHO and UNICEF, has proved to be critical in elevating rates of breastfeeding around the world – a key public health issue. In Sweden, 100% of babies are born in BFHI accredited facilities. In Norway, it is 77%, in Switzerland it is 55%, Denmark 22%, Australia 19%, UK 16% - but in USA it is a paltry 1.4%²⁷.
- In 2007, the USA earned second last place in a list rating children's wellbeing among 21 of the world's affluent and developed nations²⁸.
- The USA remains one of only two nations, along with Somalia, not to have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

²¹ Anderson CA et al (December 2003) The influence of media violence on youth
Psychological Science in the Public Interest V 4(3) pp. 81-110
Blackwell Publishing

²² www.apesma.asn.au/women/maternity_leave_around_the_world.asp

²³ Hawken P, (2007) *Blessed Unrest – how the largest movement in the world came into being and why no one saw it coming* Viking, NY, p118

²⁴ Lewis T, Amini F, Lannon R (2000) *A General Theory of Love* Vintage Books, NY
p195

²⁵ www.circumcision.org/position.htm

²⁶ Goldman R (1997) *Circumcision, The Hidden Trauma* Vanguard Publications

²⁷ www.babyfriendly.org

²⁸ www.unicef.org/media

The USA will not progress from its present level of social evolution (and therefore is unlikely to progress politically in an enduring way) until it takes some critical strides forward in child-rearing reform. If the current parenting and educational styles prevail in USA, I doubt that a change of government in November 2008 can bring more socially advanced policies that will last, and not be reversed by subsequent administrations.

[Return to index](#)

PART III, CHAPTER 15: Section: ‘Sweden reaps benefits of better nurturance of children’

In February 2007, UNICEF released a report on children’s wellbeing in 21 of the world’s richest democracies, based on measures of children’s material wellbeing, health and safety, education, quality of peer and family relationships, their behaviour, and children’s own subjective sense of well-being. This survey placed Sweden second from the top of the list²⁹ - USA and UK are at the bottom. Interestingly, the study found no strong link between per capita GDP and children’s wellbeing. Once basic levels of prosperity are established, more money does not translate to more wellbeing.

Sweden is one of the few countries having complete BFHI compliance³⁰. Around the turn of the millennium, the Swedish breastfeeding rate at 6 months of age was 69%³¹, while in USA it was 36.2%, in Australia it was 47%³², and in UK it was 21%³³.

The Swedish government has committed itself to a 100% reduction in their fossil fuel dependency by 2020³⁴. Even if this ambitious goal proves to be unreachable, this is an exemplary case of national responsibility and care, setting a standard for the world to follow.

It may be no accident of history that a nation that leads the world in its treatment of children should also be such a courageous leader in environmental policy. As I mentioned in *Parenting for a Peaceful World*³⁵, studies have found that individuals raised in nurturant family styles tend to be friendlier towards green and progressive policies. The progressive aspects of Swedish society and politics are, at least in part, the result of its better attitudes towards children.

[Return to index](#)

²⁹ www.unicef.org/media

³⁰ every maternity ward in the country is part of a WHO accredited Baby Friendly Hospital, and every baby is born in one of these facilities www.babyfriendly.org

³¹ Brekke et al, Breastfeeding and introduction of solid foods in Swedish infants: the ‘All Babies in Southeast Sweden’ study, *British Journal of Nutrition* (2005), 94, 377–382

³² www.kellymom.com/writings/bf-numbers.html#usa

³³ www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_phase-out_in_Sweden

³⁵ p 181

PART III, CHAPTER 15: Section: ‘Social rewards of reforms in Uruguay’

In November 2007, Uruguay became the 20th nation in the world, the first Latin American nation and the first Spanish-speaking nation to legally ban the corporal punishment of children³⁶. This measure is very likely to produce further social evolutionary gains in years to come.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART III, Post-script: ‘A case study of child abuse in Australia’

In this post-script, Jessica Perini³⁷ reported on the highly controversial detention of children who had arrived in Australia with families seeking refugee status. In November 2007, the newly elected government announced plans to terminate the ‘Pacific Solution’; in other words to end the practice of incarcerating asylum seekers offshore, and has shut down detention centres in the Pacific islands of Nauru and Manus³⁸.

There is much that remains to be explored about Australia’s collective conscience. Why did such a large part of Australia’s population remain unmoved by this humanitarian nightmare, despite the many reports of children suffering severe psychiatric disorders as a result of detention? Why did the fabricated claims that refugee families were throwing their children overboard, once proven false, still fail to deter Australian voters from re-electing the leaders responsible? Why is Australia one of the ‘Coalition of the Willing’, having sent troops to co-invade Iraq, when the reasons for this invasion have been soundly discredited? Why did the Australian government doggedly and repeatedly refuse (until 13th February, 2008) to say ‘sorry’ to aboriginal victims of ‘The Stolen Generation’? If the leaders we elect, re-elect and re-elect again enact inhumane policies on our behalf; this reflects a pervasive cultural trend. If over the last three electoral terms the wealthy Australian nation appeared to lose its heart and its sense of fairness, the first question we should be asking in order to understand what has happened to us, is: ‘What is the state of Australia’s children?’ I would not necessarily suggest that the treatment of Australia’s children is the single factor underwriting this national backslide in compassion. Nevertheless, the following list of indicators would surely augur badly for the state of the nations’ emotional health:

- Only two industrialized countries remain that have no comprehensive, federal ban on corporal punishment in schools - Australia is one of them³⁹. However, most Australian states have the ban in place.

³⁶ www.endcorporalpunishment.org

³⁷ www.chilout.org

³⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSSYD13633220080208?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNewshttp://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSSYD13633220080208?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

³⁹ www.endcorporalpunishment.org

- There is no movement to legally abolish corporal punishment in Australia at the national level.
- Australia has one of the world's highest rates of medical intervention at birth⁴⁰.
- Only one in five babies are born in a registered Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative facility⁴¹.
- Maternity leave provisions in Australia are far less generous than in other developed nations. Although mothers can take 12 months off work, other than a small, lump sum bonus they are not guaranteed any pay⁴².
One in three one-year-old babies are in formal daycare, and almost one in two toddlers are in formal daycare at two years of age⁴³ – while evidence abounds as to the detrimental emotional and developmental impact of premature separation⁴⁴.
- The education of Australia's children has been downgraded as a national priority in recent years. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, Education at a Glance 2007⁴⁵, says that Australia has the third lowest proportion of public expenditure on education among OECD nations – 73%, well below the OECD average of 87%. The report shows Australia's public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP is 4.3% - below the OECD average of 5%. Expenditure on early childhood education in Australia is 0.1 per cent, compared with an OECD average of 0.5 per cent.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART IV, CHAPTER 17: 'Social consequences of corporal punishment'

Individuals who were brought up under punitive parenting styles tend to favour harsher law and order policies domestically, they are more likely to support war as a foreign

⁴⁰ 29% caesarean rate: Increase in caesarean section rates among low-risk women in Queensland, 1990–2004 MJA 2006; 185 (7): 404-405, Trisha C Johnston and Michael D Coory. Meanwhile: "The World Health Organization (WHO) states that no region in the world is justified in having a cesarean rate greater than 10 to 15 percent" www.childbirth.org

⁴¹ www.babyfriendly.org

⁴² http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/maternity_leave_around_the_world.asp

⁴³ abs.gov.au

- ⁴⁴ for a summary of the research, see first updates to *Parenting for a Peaceful World: PART VI, CHAPTER 30: 'Who Parents the Parents?'* Section: Childcare - www.our-emotional-health.com/addendums.pdf, and: Biddulph (2005) *Raising Babies- should under 3s go to nursery?* Harper Thorsons, London

⁴⁵ www.oecd.org



policy, and they tend to oppose pro-environment policies. This phenomenon has been identified by sociologists Milburn MA and Conrad SE⁴⁶ and makes intuitive sense, since corporal punishment and shaming of children has been strongly implicated as a factor shifting individuals' attitudes towards acceptance of violence.

George Lakoff, professor of cognitive science and linguistics at UCLA Berkeley has also identified this trend, and he presents the results of his research in his book: *Don't think of an elephant*⁴⁷. Lakoff agrees that people who grow up in authoritarian, 'strict-father' models of family, tend to vote conservatively and tend to not listen to the environmental message. Violence in childhood even translates into violence or insensitivity towards Nature in adulthood. There is an important message for environmentalists implicit in these findings. It won't do for us to agitate for legislation that protects the environment. In the words of Kali Wendorf, editor of *Kindred Magazine*: '...we can save a forest today, but if children are not raised to feel a sense of love, connection to the planet and empathy for others, then they will just grow up to cut down that same forest tomorrow'⁴⁸. Lasting change can only come from social and legislative reforms that support parents, protect children and guarantee them an empathic and nurturing environment in which to grow.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART IV, CHAPTER 17: 'Is corporal punishment here to stay?'

The international movement to bring an end to the corporal punishment of children seems to have entered a new, accelerated phase. Since the last time of writing, several more countries have brought this ban into law. These countries are: New Zealand, Holland, Portugal, Greece, Uruguay, Spain, Chile and Venezuela⁴⁹.

New Zealand is the first English speaking country to have enacted this law, and also the first in the southern hemisphere.

In keeping with its history and tradition of progressive social movements, Uruguay was the first Spanish-speaking nation to give children full protection, and was followed by three others within weeks. The movement to redefine corporal punishment as child abuse has now well and truly burst out of European borders, and can now be recognized as an international phenomenon. At the time of writing, 23 nations have enacted full prohibition, 2 nations have a Supreme Court ruling against corporal punishment, and a further 22 nations have commitments under way to bring in full abolition. This is almost a quarter of the world's nations.

⁴⁶ (1996) *The Politics of Denial* MIT Press, Cambridge

⁴⁷ 2004, Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont

⁴⁸ Downshifting – a movement to reclaim human dignity - Keynote address from the *Downshifting Downunder* conference, July 23rd, 2005, Sydney, Australia

⁴⁹ www.endcorporalpunishment.org/

Although it would appear that Australia is a long way from such a social advance, the Australian Childhood Foundation⁵⁰ has spearheaded a \$2.5 million taxpayer-funded campaign to educate parents on the perils of smacking, and on more effective approaches to boundary-setting.

Meanwhile, a new UN report on the promotion and protection of the rights of children⁵¹ has ramped up the rhetoric urging nations to ban corporal punishment. Based on an in-depth study by independent expert, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the report underscores the fact that: ‘Violence against children in the family may frequently take place in the context of discipline and takes the form of physical, cruel or humiliating punishment’⁵². His conclusion: ‘I urge States to prohibit all forms of violence against children, in all settings, including corporal punishment....’⁵³, and: ‘I recommend that States and civil society should strive to transform attitudes that condone or normalize violence against children, including...acceptance of corporal punishment...’⁵⁴.

At the current rate of change, we may be only years away from an era when hitting children will be considered unthinkable throughout the entire Western world and beyond.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 21: Section: ‘Neuro-biology and neuro-chemistry of violence’

When a frightened child is not soon comforted, the stress hormones that linger in his brain can destroy brain cells, particularly in the orbitofrontal cortex, an area responsible for impulse control and empathy. Thomas Lewis, Professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco⁵⁵, states that neglected children can have neurones missing in their *billions*, to the extent that their head circumference is measurably smaller.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 21: ‘How shame affects the growing brain’

Neuroscience has provided further explanation for why shaming children is, in the long run, such an ineffective way to set boundaries. When an adult shames a child, this triggers a chain reaction in the child’s brain that kills the ability for empathy or attention to others. The emotionally charged amygdala in the child’s brain overwhelms the prefrontal cortex, so the child’s ability to attend to others is drowned out by a self-focussed anxiety. Any ‘good’ behaviour that follows is based on fear and a shamed

⁵⁰ www.kidscount.com

⁵¹ Rights of the Child, 29th August 2006 www.violencestudy.org/IMG/pdf/English.pdf

⁵² *ibid* p13

⁵³ *ibid* p25

⁵⁴ *ibid* p26

⁵⁵ Lewis T, Amini F, Lannon R (2000) *A General Theory of Love* Vintage Books, NY - p199

preoccupation with self, not on any genuine concern for, or awareness of, the needs of others⁵⁶. Shame stifles empathy.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 21, ‘Nurturance and optimal brain development’

Eye contact is truly a staple of loving relationships. Nerve projections travel directly from the eyes to a brain structure sitting just behind and above them: the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) – a system that holds the key to empathy. So by meeting each other’s gaze, parent and child are interlinking their OFCs and thus forming an empathy loop. The OFC contains neurons that specialize in detecting emotion in others’ eyes and faces, as well as in their tone of voice. Eye-contact provides a stream of rapport that builds intimacy between parent and child⁵⁷.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 22

It is now understood that emotions influence the intellect, not the other way around. The dominance of the emotional centres in the brain is a verifiable property of the human neural circuitry⁵⁸.

The neural systems responsible for emotion and intellect are separate. A conscious decision to act happens *after* a wave of emotional readiness to act has passed through the brain, so that impulse and feeling precede thought. According to Thomas Lewis, professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco⁵⁹, the neocortex, the thinking and rational centre of the brain, is regulated by the limbic brain (an older, ‘mammalian’ centre of the brain that is enveloped by the cortex). In other words: ‘A person cannot direct his emotional life...He cannot will himself to want the right thing, or to love the right person...’, and: ‘Emotional life can be influenced, but it cannot be commanded’⁶⁰. This adds weight to the notion that it’s of paramount importance to nurture emotional intelligence in early childhood, the time of its formative beginnings.

[Return to index](#)

⁵⁶ Goleman D (2006) *Social Intelligence – the New Science of Human Relationships* Hutchinson, London, pp 53-4

⁵⁷ Goleman D (2006) *Social Intelligence – the New Science of Human Relationships* Hutchinson, London, pp 63-5

⁵⁸ Lewis T, Amini F, Lannon R (2000) *A General Theory of Love* Vintage Books, NY - Professor of psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco

⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰ *ibid* p33

ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 22, 'Universal pathways of emotional development'

When it comes to our emotionality, professor of psychiatry Thomas Lewis confirms, we are all in the same boat irrespective of our ethnic origins: 'Culture...doesn't determine the configuration of facial expressions: they are the universal language of humanity'⁶¹.

I originally stated in this section that: '...there are no biological differences between the 'races' — in fact, there is no genetic basis for the concept of 'race'. It is nonsensical to talk about 'Blacks', 'Whites' or 'Asians', other than as an expedient — but altogether shallow — label'⁶².

This is not to say that inter-ethnic (notwithstanding the blurriness of the term 'ethnic') biological differences do not exist beyond matters of external appearance. There clearly are a few biological differences, beyond skin colour, that distinguish human groups. Some diseases have a higher incidence among certain ethnic groups, (for instance, hemochromatosis affects Europeans), there are differing inter-ethnic capacities for digesting dairy foods, and differing side-effect reactions to some pharmaceutical drugs⁶³.

It still holds, however, that the concept of race is a blurry one at best, and there certainly do not appear to be 'race'-based differences in emotionality or in stages of emotional development in childhood. The idea of racial superiority has been pronounced dead and buried. Whereas it was once popularly held by many among technologically advanced cultures that industrialized people were more clever or evolved in some way, there is no cause for gloating.

Intelligence and resourcefulness is hardly an ethnically biased trait, as is so well argued by Jared Diamond in: *Guns, Germs and Steel – a short History of everybody for the last 17,000 Years*⁶⁴. The structures of civilization did not emerge among some people and not others because of differential cleverness.

So why did agriculture and increasingly sophisticated technology develop among some groups and not others, to the point that some cultures exist in a super high-tech space age while their contemporaries rely on stone-age tools? The key to the great leap forward in technology is the capability for settlement and agriculture. This is the only way for any group to achieve the food surpluses that allow for the diversification of roles and professions, and therefore the time and opportunity to research and develop technological advancements. In other words, while farmers supply the food for the whole population, other specialists have the time to invent, develop, manufacture, administrate, educate and

⁶¹ *ibid* p39

⁶² Grille, R (2005) *Parenting for a Peaceful World* Longueville Media, Sydney, p 253

⁶³ For instance: enalapril reduces blood pressure in 'whites', but has little effect in 'blacks' - Nicholas Wade (2006) *Before the Dawn – Recovering the Lost History of*

our Ancestors Penguin, NY p182-3

⁶⁴ 1997, Vintage, London

keep records. Having idled in a stone-age existence for millennia, once agriculture is found, societies are transformed by leaps and bounds. Technological progress then accelerates over centuries, decades and years.

So, are the high-tech 'races' smarter than the others? Were the builders of the first complex civilizations and advanced city-states in the Fertile Crescent (Middle East), Central and South America, Central Asia and China endowed with superior wit? Or was it simply lady luck that enabled these people to develop agriculture and animal husbandry, to a level that gave them their fateful military and territorial advantages? Jarred Diamond demonstrates that it was purely environmental factors that gave them the edge. Agricultural societies emerged in those geographical regions that were blessed with an abundance of domesticable grains and animals, and the climactic and soil conditions that made agriculture possible. In other words, human ingenuity and courage are universal, but it was good fortune rather than superiority that led to technological dominance.

Chinese civilization emerged in 7500BCE where there were an abundance of wild millet, rice, domesticable pigs and silkworms. Four thousand years later, Mesoamerican civilizations appeared where indigenous corn, beans, squash and turkeys were plentiful. Andean cities were made possible by the potato, manioc, and the docile llama around the same time. The earliest known agricultural societies rose up in the Fertile Crescent (Middle East), where wheat, barley, peas, lentils and chickpeas originated. The Mediterranean and the Middle East enjoyed by far the greatest concentration of species of large domesticable grasses with edible seeds, amenable to cultivation. Domesticable animals such as sheep, goats, cattle, fowl and horses native to these lucky regions provided food, clothing, transport and military might. West and Central Asia held the ancestors of sheep and goats, while cattle came from Eurasia and North Africa. The wild boar, ancestor of the pig, originated in Eurasia and North Africa. The horse came from southern Russia.

There was nothing remarkable about Europeans that explains the present-day dominance of European cultures. The arable grains, the domestic animals, the technological and administrative skills that make civilization possible were imported into and spread throughout Europe by waves of migration and invasion from the Middle East and Central Asia. Societies that thrived into the twentieth century with unsophisticated technology did so because they lacked the variety of domesticable plants and animals that benefited Europeans and some Asian peoples. All human groups are of equal potential, and emotionally we are all the same in essence: the basic neural structures are universal, and every healthy human passes through the same stages of core emotional development in childhood.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART V, CHAPTER 23 Sub-section: ‘Is healing possible?’

I stated in this section that healing of emotional wounds is certainly possible, but when trauma results in neurological changes, the earlier in life this happens, the harder it is to reverse these changes. The earliest hurts are the hardest to heal.

Psychiatrist Bruce Perry⁶⁵, founder of the Child Trauma Academy in USA, explains the nature of psychological healing. Emotional trauma usually takes place over a period of time, gradually causing neurological damage and biochemical changes in the brain. Healing therefore requires repeated experiences of restorative relationship (loving care, safety, respect), consistently over a period of time. Lasting changes happen only when these enriching experiences happen consistently enough to rebuild neural networks that animate a new repertoire of relating styles. Sometimes healing can only take place if the person’s relationships and environment change, it’s not only about the things that are done in the psychotherapist’s office. Healing is a journey, it requires changes in the nature and feel of relationships, and it does not take place in a moment. Neurosequential healing involves restoring to the wounded individual the essential developmental experiences that were missed: such as human touch, holding, rocking, listening with empathy, freedom of self-expression, safety, freedom from violence or manipulation, etc.

Australian psychologist Vicky Flory⁶⁶ investigated the use of Emotionally Attuned Parenting strategies to treat children suffering from severe childhood depression and anxiety. Flory’s researchers did not treat the ailing children but the parents; giving them sessions aimed at increasing the parents’ empathy for their child, helping them be more aware of their child’s distress, and challenging their negative judgments about their children’s behaviour. Even though they were dealing with severe and chronic psychiatric disorders - which on average the children had been suffering for five years - there was significant symptom reduction. As Bruce Perry elucidated, for healing of emotional wounds to take place, the nature of relationships must first change.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 24, ‘Five Rites of Passage’

Further endorsement for the formative significance of the first seven years of life comes from British psychologist, Margot Sunderland⁶⁷. Sunderland states that the massive forming, reforming and dismantling of brain connections slows down at around age seven, due to the increased myelination (a fatty sheath covering nerve tissue) of brain cells that takes place around this time. This strengthens neural pathways and fixes them in place, which contributes to a cementing of the character structures that have been developing. A critical formative window is closed around this time, and henceforth change is more hard won.

⁶⁵ *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog – and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist’s Notebook* (2006) Basic Books, New York

⁶⁶ ‘A Novel Clinical Intervention for Severe Childhood Depression and Anxiety’ *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 2004, Vol 9(1) pp: 9-23

⁶⁷ *The Science of Parenting* 2006 DK Publishing, London

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTERS 25 and 26, Sections: Baby's emotional needs at this time

Sub-sections: 'To be responded to promptly' and: 'To receive a timely response to her needs'

Margot Sunderland's review of child development research adds weight to the idea that we should not leave crying babies unattended, and that parental responsiveness is the key to healthy attachment in babyhood. A distressed, crying baby's nervous system is dependent on the parents' comforting to bring it back into balance. 'The more responsive you are to your infant,' explains Sunderland, 'the greater your regulation of her body arousal systems will be, and the more long-lasting the effects'⁶⁸.

Babies who are left to cry unattended show elevated levels of cortisol, and after six hours of separation from the mother, a baby's stress hormone levels can be twice as high as that of a baby whose mother is close⁶⁹. Over time, these neurotoxic levels of cortisol cause damage to brain cells and upset the balance of brain chemistry.

Joining a growing, international chorus of expert voices, Sunderland warns that babies' nervous systems can become permanently 'wired' for hyper-arousal, if they are not consistently comforted by their parents. Emotional neglect can and often does lead not only to long term psychological vulnerabilities, but also to physical ailments such as: asthma, heart disease, eating and digestive disorders, sleep problems, high blood pressure, chronic muscular tension, headaches and chronic fatigue. On the other hand, a parent's soothing ministrations activate the *vagus nerve* in the child's brain stem, which regulates the function of major organs, the digestive system, the heart rate, breathing and the immune system. Healthy function in all these biological systems is dependent on parental responsiveness and warmth. When parents are responsive to their children's emotions, there are a multiple and profound health benefits that last a lifetime.

Researchers are giving ever more attention to the ways in which early emotional neglect disrupts the balance of brain chemicals, with long-term implications for social behaviour. Emotional neglect in early infancy suppresses levels of vasopressin and oxytocin neuropeptides; neurochemical systems which are critical in the establishment of social bonds and the regulation of emotional behaviors⁷⁰.

[Return to index](#)

⁶⁸ *ibid* p44

⁶⁹ *ibid* p75

⁷⁰ Wismer Fries AB, et al (2005) 'Early experience in humans is associated with changes in neuro-peptides critical for regulating social behavior' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Vol102(47), pp 17,237-17,240

ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 26, Section: Baby's emotional needs at this time

Sub-section: To be held almost constantly

I had stated in this section that: 'A baby's need to be held is virtually unending'⁷¹. That may be true for most babies, but perhaps it would be more accurate to say that healthy attachment depends on parental *responsiveness*, rather than interminable holding – and that is an important distinction to make. Emotionally secure children are not necessarily the ones that are held the most, but the ones who are held *on their own terms*, in other words, the ones who are hugged when they want to be and given freedom to move about when they want to be⁷². Certainly, most babies appear most tranquil and contented when they are held for most of the day, but in order to be responsive to the baby - rather than to an instruction in a book! – we need to be flexible, attuned to the baby's communications, and prepared to be surprised at times.

Sub-section: To receive loving eye-contact

Eye contact in and of itself is not necessarily what satisfies babies' longing for connection. What helps babies to feel connected is that the parent's facial and ocular expression is visibly responsive to them. Experiments show that if a baby watches a smiling image of her mother on a TV monitor, he is likely to become distressed. This is because her smile is not contiguous with the baby's communications. The baby soon realizes she is irrelevant, she has no impact on her mother. The baby is only contented when her mother's face is responding to her. Synchrony is what they look for, and infants can noticeably detect the most minute changes in their mothers' facial expressions⁷³.

Sub-section: To receive a timely response to her needs

In the early years, parental responsiveness is at the very centre of what helps babies to feel secure. This has prompted the Australian Association of Infant Mental Health Inc. to issue a Position Paper⁷⁴ on the subject.

This paper states: 'Babies become distressed if left to cry alone, and this can precipitate negative long-term consequences if done repeatedly', adding that on the other hand: '... research indicates that responding appropriately to infants' cues can have positive long term, and possibly transgenerational consequences'.

⁷¹ Grille, R (2005) *Parenting for a Peaceful World* Longueville Media, Sydney, p301

⁷² Lewis T, Amini F, Lannon R (2000) *A General Theory of Love*
Vintage Books, NY p75

⁷³ *Ibid* p62

⁷⁴ go to: www.aimhi.org, click on 'Policies and Submissions' and look up Position Paper number 2

Sub-section: To sleep near Mum and Dad

Babies' sleep rhythms are disrupted if they are separated from their mother, and their sleep is shallower, with more frequent awakening. Separate sleeping lowers the level of growth hormone in the blood, and depresses immune system activity⁷⁵. Co-sleeping (when safety conditions are observed) can save lives. According to professor of psychiatry, Thomas Lewis: '...the human societies with the lowest incidence of SIDS are also the ones with widespread co-sleeping⁷⁶.

In a British campaign called *Sleep Safe, Sleep Sound, Share a Room with Me*, the 'Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths' and 'Babies R Us' have joined forces to promote the important health message that "the safest place for a baby to sleep is in a cot in the parents' room for the first six months". This is known to substantially reduce the risk of cot death. In the largest ever cot death study, it was found that over half the deaths (52%) might have been prevented if the baby had slept in the parents' room'⁷⁷.

Sub-section: 'How emotional wounds affect behaviour'

The often shallow and overused diagnoses of 'attention deficit disorder', 'hyperactivity' or 'oppositional-defiant' disorder risk doing the child a considerable disservice, since diagnostic categories fail to see the child in the context of his or her relationships and emotional history. Child psychiatrist Bruce Perry warns that these disorders can frequently be '...the remnants of a response to some prior traumatic situation...' ⁷⁸, and: 'While not all ADD, hyperactivity and oppositional-defiant disorder are trauma-related, it is likely that the symptoms that lead to these diagnoses are trauma-related more often than anyone has begun to suspect'⁷⁹. Perry explains these behavioural reactions as a child's over-reactive stress response, or a hyper-sensitive 'freezing' or dissociative response that makes a child unable to focus attention or to respond to requests. Current knowledge demands a preventive approach: nurture healthy emotional development in children, and we would forestall a huge array of psychological problems.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 25: 'What happens at this time'

The first hour after birth can be a life-changing and powerful experience of indescribable love and unshakeable bonding – and much has been learned about why this is the case. At the moment of birth, mothers experience huge surges in levels of several key hormones: oxytocin, the hormone producing loving feelings, beta-endorphin, the hormone of pleasure, and prolactin, the hormone that induces tender and maternal behaviour. These

⁷⁵ Lewis T, Amini F, Lannon R (2000) *A General Theory of Love*
Vintage Books, p79

⁷⁶ *Ibid* p195

⁷⁷ www.fsid.org.uk/babiesrus2005release.html

⁷⁸ *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog – and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook* (2006) Basic Books, NY, p51

⁷⁹ *Ibid* p51

hormones are enhanced again through direct, skin-to-skin contact with the baby, and through breastfeeding. In undisturbed birth, when this hormonal cocktail reaches its zenith, it is described as an ecstatic cocktail that brokers the deepest and most loving bond between mother and newborn. This ultra-high dose is Nature's investment for cementing this profoundly loving bond, essential to the baby's survival, and to his emotional and physical health. It results in a loving attachment that reverberates for a lifetime, informing all future intimate relationships.

The critical, joyous perinatal bonding process can be severely disrupted by the drugs administered in modern obstetrics. This is because these drugs suppress the natural secretion of the 'ecstatic' hormone-cocktail. The blissful feelings that can arise during birth and bonding can be diminished or numbed altogether under medicalized birth conditions⁸⁰.

For a more in-depth summary of this remarkable process, see my new book: *Heart to Heart Parenting* (2008) ABC Books, Sydney, chapters 3, 4 and 5. Also see: Buckley S, (2005) *Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering* One Moon Press, Brisbane.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 25: 'The most wounding experiences'

Researchers keep finding out more about how a mother's stress impacts on the emotional health of her unborn child. In a study of mothers who were pregnant and were directly affected by the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York, it was found that their infants had abnormally high levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. This effect was more detectable if the mothers were into the third trimester of gestation at the time of the traumatic event⁸¹. These findings make sense, since a stressed pregnant mother's cortisol is transmitted to the brain of her unborn child through the placenta. It appears that when the pregnant mother's stress is intense or long-lasting, this can also reset the child's neuro-chemical balance.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART VI, CHAPTER 28: 'Child's emotional needs at this time'

I mentioned in this section that it is unjust to punish toddlers for their tantrums, since the frontal lobes of the cortex, responsible for impulse-control, are still relatively disorganized at this age. Psychiatrist Bruce Perry states that in fact, the development of this brain region is not complete until much later: and it is still '...showing significant reorganization well into the early twenties'⁸². It is certainly very unreasonable and

⁸⁰ Buckley S, (2005) *Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering* One Moon Press, Brisbane

⁸¹ Yehuda R, et al (2005) 'Transgenerational effects of posttraumatic stress disorder in babies of mothers exposed to the World Trade Center attacks during pregnancy' *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* Vol 90(7) pp 4115-4118

⁸² *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog – and Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook* (2006) Basic Books, New York, p65

biologically baseless to expect a toddler to be a paragon of self-containment, or to be able to modulate his own tantrums.

[Return to index](#)

ADDENDUM TO PART VII, CHAPTER 31: ‘Is the world becoming a better place?’

In the 1980 and 1990s, UN Human Development Reports⁸³ stated that 81 countries took significant steps toward democracy, and today, 140 countries hold multi-party elections. In 1990, only 10% of countries had ratified all six of the world’s major human rights instruments, by 2000, nearly half of all countries had. In social evolutionary time-scale terms, we are today experiencing a very rapid march towards a peaceful, integrated and just global society, the pace and scope of which is entirely unprecedented.

However, UN reports have also found that progress on poverty has ground to a halt, and 54 countries are poorer now than they were in 1990. This is certainly one of the bigger threats to advancements in parenting. History has shown time and again that when parents are placed under dire stress, their capacity to be emotionally attuned to our children suffers, and even collapses altogether. This is a major risk factor for winding back the clock of social evolution, and tends to regress societies towards authoritarianism⁸⁴.

In 2002, the World Health Organization estimated that 0.3% of deaths around the world were caused by war⁸⁵. When compared to historical rates of war-related mortality⁸⁶, and considering the high-tech weaponry that abounds today, this suggests that on the whole humanity has made considerable progress in finding non-violent means of dispute resolution.

Meanwhile, the global arms trade has arrested its downward slide since the end of the Cold War, and has begin to climb quite steeply. The technology of war remains the largest sector of expenditure in the world, at over one trillion dollars annually, and it has been rising in recent years. World military expenditure in 2005 was estimated to comprise 2.5 per cent of world GDP, or an average spending of \$173 per person. In 2005 it had increased by 3.4 per cent in one year, and 34 per cent over 10 years. The USA, responsible for about 80 per cent of the increase in 2005, is the principal determinant of this current world trend, and its military expenditure now accounts for almost half of the world total⁸⁷. One can barely imagine the miracles that could be achieved if (similarly to what was done in Costa Rica many decades ago) military spending was re-diverted towards education, poverty eradication, development of renewable energy, and

⁸³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/>

⁸⁴ See second updates: CHAPTER 2, ‘Childhood through the ages’, Section: Parenting ‘instinct’: myth or reality?

⁸⁵ www.who.int/whr/2004/annex/topic/en/annex_2_en.pdf

⁸⁶ Grille R (2005) *Parenting for a Peaceful World* Longueville Media, Sydney, p 385

⁸⁷ www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/ArmsTrade/Spending.asp#WorldMilitarySpending

environmental restoration. A peaceful, just and sustainable global society rests on child-rearing reforms and the improved human relations that would follow.

The impact of economic growth in its present form is causing devastating environmental harm, bringing the planet perilously close to a catastrophic decline in viability⁸⁸. Climate change is the greatest challenge facing humanity at the start of the 21st Century⁸⁹.

But there are reassuring signs that humanity is undergoing a seismic shift in consciousness. Populations are awakening to these environmental, economic and social challenges, and rallying in waves of socially responsible action that span the globe. Almost two million organizations have emerged around the world, promoting social justice, indigenous rights and environmental sustainability⁹⁰. This powerful social movement has no historical parallel since it comprises a myriad independent entities striving for a common purpose, despite the fact that most are unaware of each other, and there is no leader, no figurehead and no single unifying manifesto. This is suggestive of a collective shift in human consciousness: we seem to be poised on the threshold of a more empathic, ‘we-centred’ rather than ‘me-centred’ social ecology.

Consider this: when in 1787, the abolitionist (anti-slavery) movement began in London, it was the first time in history that a citizen group was formed to defend the rights of people that they didn’t even know, and to file grievances on behalf of others⁹¹. Contrast that to the contemporary world with its myriad social justice groups, and we discover a prodigious growth in human compassion.

Child-rearing reforms around the world have been a major driving force behind this heart-centred social movement. Imagine the kind of world that would be possible, if nations continue to enact the child-rearing reforms that are called for by the established science of child development.

[Return to index](#)

⁸⁸ Richard Eckersley, (2004) *Well and Good – morality, meaning and happiness*
Text Publishing, Melbourne, Australia pp35-37

⁸⁹ Human Development Report 2007/2008 Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a
divided world
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>

⁹⁰ Paul Hawken (2007) *Blessed Unrest – how the largest movement in the world came into*

being and why no one saw it coming Viking, NY
⁹¹ *Ibid* p5