



# IMAGE AWARENESS WELLNESS INSTITUTE

## *Boys Adrift*

1271 HIGH STREET, AUBURN, CA 95603 • PHONE (530) 823-7092 • ORDER LINE (800) 359-6091  
HOURS: TUES. – FRI. 10 A.M. – 4 P.M. • E-MAIL: MAIL@IMAGEAWARENESS.COM WEB: WWW.IMAGEAWARENESS.COM

May 2008

Volume 4 : Issue 4

### BOYS ADRIFT

This newsletter is somewhat of a review of the book by Leonard Sax, M.D., entitled *boys adrift* (New York: Basic Books, 2007). The subtitle is *The five factors driving the growing epidemic of unmotivated boys and underachieving young men*.

Dr. Sax is concerned with the fact that the number of young men ages 22 to 34 still living at home has increased by 100 percent in the past 20 years. Even more disturbing is the fact that it is not just financial difficulties which are creating this problem, but rather a lack of motivation.

The number of undergraduate students who are male has declined from 70% in 1949 to 42 percent in 2006. Colleges are now scrambling to recruit qualified males. Males today are on the receiving end of affirmative action. Once in college males are significantly less likely to distinguish themselves academically and much less likely to graduate.

### CHANGES AT SCHOOL

Dr. Sax believes that five factors are involved. The first is changes at school. Kindergarten no longer focuses on drawing, dancing, painting, and singing, but rather on reading and writing. Sax points out that this sets boys at an immediate disadvantage because girls develop two years more rapidly than boys do. Girls are ready for reading and writing in kin-

dergarten, but boys are not.

A little nutritional note here. Some have suggested that the lag in development of boys is contributed to by zinc deficiency. Zinc intake is marginal in the American diet, and boys have a much higher zinc requirement than do girls.

At a young age boys can be relegated to a "dumb" group resulting in a resentment of school which they carry with them for the rest of their educational career.

American education focuses on book learning rather than experience. This focus tilts toward girls rather than boys who are more likely to learn through experience. Physical education and competitiveness have been eliminated from schools and men are inclined in this direction much more than women.

### VIDEO GAMES

A series of studies has shown that "the more time your child spends playing video games, the less likely he is to do well in school." Playing violent video games causes young men to have a more violent self-image and to behave more violently. Video games tend to become a substitute for real life which is more difficult and less easy to control.

### MEDICATIONS FOR ADHD

American children are at least three times more likely to be pre-

scribed medications to treat ADHD than children in any European country and almost all these children are boys.

It is easier to diagnose a young boy with a brain-based disorder than it is to alter the educational process to suit the child.

Dr. John Gabrieli found that medication for ADHD improved the learning performance of normal children and children diagnosed with ADHD equally.

Unfortunately, the side-effects of the medications are neglected. These medications can turn an agreeable, outgoing, an adventurous boy into a lazy and irritable child.

Professor William Carlezon of Harvard Medical School found that stimulant medications used to treat ADHD caused animals to lose their drive when they grow up. They become lazy and don't want to work hard even to escape a bad situation. Low doses for short periods were shown to damage an area of the brain called the nucleus accumbens which converts motivation into action.

Brain imaging has shown that video games alter the functioning of another area of the brain called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) which takes motivation and drive and gives it a context and target. The end result of video games appears to be to provide reward for



## IMAGE AWARENESS WELLNESS INSTITUTE

1271 HIGH STREET, AUBURN, CA 95603  
PHONE (530) 823-7092 ORDER LINE (800) 359-6091  
E-MAIL: MAIL@IMAGEAWARENESS.COM  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE! [WWW.IMAGEAWARENESS.COM](http://WWW.IMAGEAWARENESS.COM)

achievement without any connection to the real world.

### ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS

Estrogenic pollutants appear to be able to delay the maturation of boys while accelerating that of girls. Male animals exposed to estrogenic pollutants common in plastics and pesticides become less motivated and do not learn as well. Exposure to bisphenol A and phthalates makes animals hyper and they appear unable to slow down.

These same chemicals have been associated with weight gain in children. In boys one sees higher estrogen and lower testosterone. The risk of bone fracture for boys doubled between 1960 and 1990. This is contributed to by lower testosterone levels and increased consumption of sodas. One in three college men now reports erectile dysfunction.

### THE LOSS OF POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Finally, maturation is a modeling process. Far too many men do not have a positive role model to pattern themselves after. This has been a major problem in the black community. High divorce rates have made it a societal problem.

### ROLE OF NUTRITION

The problem males face in the United States go far beyond nutrition, but nutrition probably does play a part in this problem. A poorly nourished child will be more inclined to spend his time indoors rather than outdoors. Allergies and asthma will limit physical activity.

Lack of nutrients can alter behavior and mental functioning. Dr. Francis Pottenger, Jr., M.D., found that when cats were fed foods depleted of nutrients simply by the cooking process behavior changed. Female animals became aggressive. He gave these animals names like Tiger, Cobra and Rattlesnake. By contrast, male animals "are more docile, often to the point of being unaggressive and their sex interest is slack or perverted."

Poorly nourished animals became much more fragile and susceptible to disease. They demineralized and became more prone to broken bones. Animals fed processed foods developed allergies, asthma, and arthritis. Pottenger wrote, "...a poorly nutritioned individual is apt to be irritable and unpredictable without cause. Exhaustion, in varying degrees, is a universal symptom of deficiency." Boy's Adrift is an excellent book, but it ignores one very important aspect of the problem we face.

We could do all he recommends and still face a deteriorating situation if we ignore the fundamental importance of sound nutrition.

### REFERENCE:

Pottenger, Francis M., Jr., *Pottenger's Cats*, La Mesa, Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation, 1983, 11, 46.

### REMOVAL OR ADDITION TO THIS NEWSLETTER

If you wish to be removed from this health-letter simply send us an email requesting to be removed. If you wish to add an email address send us the address with a request to be added.

### WEB RESOURCES

[www.yourbodysignlanguage.com](http://www.yourbodysignlanguage.com)  
[www.imageawareness.com](http://www.imageawareness.com)  
[www.jimmcafee.com](http://www.jimmcafee.com)

### DISCLAIMER

This publication contains the opinions and ideas of its author. It is intended to provide helpful and informative material on the subjects addressed in the publication. It is provided with the understanding that the author and publisher are not engaged in rendering medical, health, or any other kind of personal professional services in this newsletter. The reader should consult his or her medical, health or other competent professional before adopting any of the suggestions in this newsletter or drawing inferences from it.

The author and publisher specifically disclaim all responsibility for any liability, loss, or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of use and application of any of the contents of this newsletter.