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The Origins of Love

Our world is becoming increasingly violent. Social and political initiatives everywhere are seeking to counteract escalating trends of suicide, aggression, crime, destruction of the environment and ultimately, war.

Groundbreaking research has uncovered the source of why we as a species are either brutal and fearful, or peaceful and loving. This research produced the term SomatoSensory Affectional Deprivation Syndrome (SSADS), which describes a complex pattern of depression, violence, and fear created within the brain from the lack of affectional bonding between infant and mother and deprivation of bodily pleasure.

Prams, cots, bottlefeeding, circumcision, medicalised births, early day care and sexual repression are just a few of the culturally supported facets of separation that contribute to varying degrees of failed bonding, leading ultimately to the exploding rates of depression, violence, suicide and sexual abuse in Western countries today. Until the source is acknowledged, initiatives towards peace and justice are rendered fruitless, as world history affirms.

Featuring
How Culture Shapes the Developing
Brain and the Future of Humanity

By James W. Prescott, Ph.D.
Institute of Humanistic Science

And Bonding: the Origin of Love by Merryn Callander

How Culture Shapes the Developing Brain and the Future of Humanity

By James W. Prescott, Ph.D.

Institute of Humanistic Science

The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt — and there is the story of mankind. John Steinbeck—East of Eden, 1952

Without embodied love, peace is not possible. Without integrative bodily pleasure, moral behaviours of peace, harmony and human equality are not possible. Depression replaces joy and drugs are sought to drown the depression, the anger and rage that escalates into the violence of homicide, and suicide. Steinbeck recognised these facts, which science has now abundantly documented. The biobehavioural research supporting these relationships, however, has been ignored by the bureaucratic biomedical scientists and the political-religious stewards of society. Biomedicine has wrongly assumed that genes and not life experience has the primary role in shaping the developing brain for peaceful or violent behaviours, which has misdirected research on this subject for the past half century that has prevented health programs for true prevention. Drug 'therapy' is treatment not prevention.

Genetic engineering and medical drugs, unfortunately, dominate the political-social-monetary landscape for changing and controlling individual behaviour rather than changing our society and culture for changing and liberating human behaviour from the chains of our self-destruction. The religious chains of tyranny and violence have bound humanity throughout history, which has placed man at war with himself; between man and woman; between parent and child; and with nature itself. The most violent primate on this planet against the female of its species and her offspring is *Homo sapiens*. No species can survive with this magnitude of violence against the female and her offspring. How did this happen?

How did the human primate become the most violent primate on the planet when our closest genetic relative, the bonobo chimpanzee, with whom we

share 99% of our genes, is the most peaceful primate on the planet? For too long the false genetic mechanism for determining and controlling behaviour has been pursued.

Our peaceful ancestors

As De Waal and Lanting (1997) note: *Had bonobos been known earlier, reconstruction of human evolution might have emphasized sexual relations, equality between males and females, and the origin of the family, instead of war, hunting, tool technology, and other masculine fortes. Bonobo society seems ruled by the 'Make Love, Not War' slogan of the 1960s rather than the myth of a bloodthirsty killer ape that has dominated textbooks for at least three decades.*

According to Hrdy in her book *Mother Nature*, great ape mothers carry their infants wherever they go. Fathers, by comparison, are rarely in direct contact with babies. And 'It was the mother who continuously carried the infant in skin-to-skin contact — stomach to stomach, chest to breast. Soothed by her heartbeat, nestled in the heat of her body, rocked by her movements, the infant's entire world was its mother. *No wild monkey or ape mother has ever been observed to deliberately harm her own baby.*' (p. 179).

What happened along the evolutionary trail where infanticide and injury to the young suddenly appeared in the great ape *Homo sapiens*? Why is sexual abuse of the pre-pubertal young unknown in the primate evolutionary record but is common in *Homo sapiens*? What genetic or cultural factors could possibly account for this difference?

Extensive scientific research in animals and humans has documented, without question, that mother/infant/child separations (loss of bonding/mother love) induces a variety of developmental brain disorders that mediate depression, impulse dyscontrol, chronic stimulus-seeking behaviours that includes self-

mutilation, the violence of homicide and suicide and parental violence against offspring.

The *Time-Life* documentary, *Rock-a Bye Baby*, documented some of the scientific breakthroughs that were made possible through research supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute of Health (NIH) in the 1960's and 1970's. This documentary film was premiered at the 1970 White House Conference on Children. It is as relevant today, as it was over 30 years ago. (<http://www.violence.de/tv/rockabye.html>)

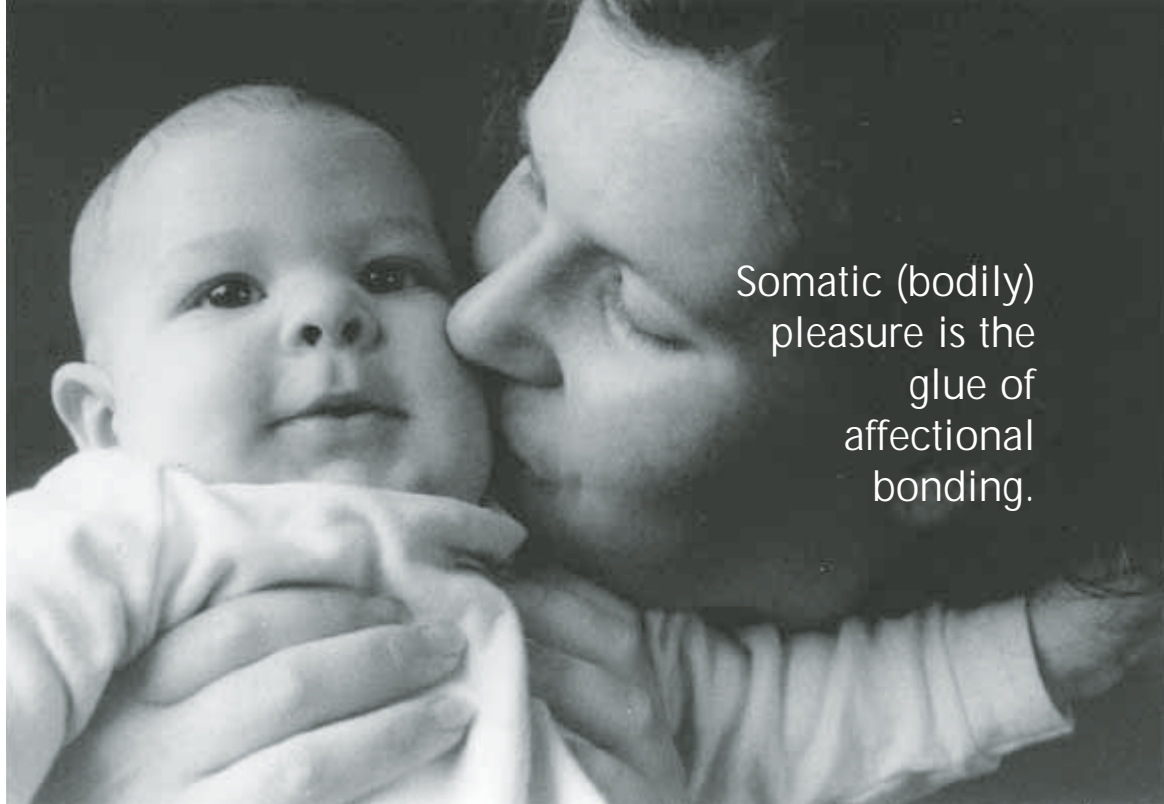
Research by Drs. William Mason and Gershon Berkson demonstrated that introducing infant monkeys to artificial body movement provided by a 'swinging' mother surrogate could prevent the adult emotional/social/sexual and violent behavioural pathologies that developed in stationary mother surrogate reared infant monkeys. These findings led to my development of the brain-behavioural theory of the 'maternal-social deprivation' syndrome that I called *SomatoSensory Affective Deprivation* (SSAD) that placed the cerebellum in a central role in the regulation and integration of emotional, social and sexual behaviours.

Bonded children, bonded societies

These laboratory findings of depression and violence, due to failed bonding in the mother-infant/child relationship, were confirmed by my cross-cultural studies on tribal cultures. Through these studies, it was possible to predict with 80% accuracy the peaceful or homicidal violence of 49 tribal cultures from a single measure of mother-infant/child bonding, as demonstrated by continuous baby carrying on the body of mother or a close relative acting as a mother, throughout the day for the first year of life.

The peaceful or violent nature of the remaining ten cultures could be predicted from whether adolescent sexual expression was supported or punished. In short, these two measures of affectional bonding: a) mother-infant/child relationship and b) adolescent sexual relationships could predict with 100% accuracy the peaceful or violent nature of these 49 tribal cultures distributed throughout the world.

My subsequent studies on 26 tribal cultures, whose weaning age was 2.5 years or greater, found that 77% of these cultures were rated low or absent in suicide. Suicide ratings were significantly different between cultures with weaning age of two years or less versus 2.5 years or greater. It appears that a vulnerable period in brain development exists at this time to explain this difference. Affectional bonding in the mother-infant/child relationship influences later



Somatic (bodily) pleasure is the glue of affectional bonding.

Photo by Katrina Folkwell

sexual affectional relationships where 82% of cultures with weaning age of 2.5 years or greater also supported youth sexual relationships and were rated low or absent in suicide.

These critical findings need to be replicated on modern human cultures that utilise modern technologies of brain-behavioural development assess-

ment, studies that the NIH has yet to conduct. WHO and UNICEF recommend breastfeeding for 'two years of age or beyond'.

Transmitting joy through breastfeeding

In America, only 6.8% of mothers are breastfeeding at 12 months; 2.7% at 24 months; and 1% at 30 months.¹

SomatoSensory Affectational

Deprivation (SSAD)- altering the hardwiring and software of the developing brain

SSAD (SomatoSensory Affectational Deprivation) is the process of impaired or failed mother-infant bonding that results from a deficiency in the infant's sensory stimulation via touch, body movement, smell and taste and breastfeeding. Virtually all infant mammals are vulnerable to the emotional-behavioural disorders that are induced by this somatosensory deprivation. The specific emotional-behavioural disorders that result, vary by species and have their influence throughout the lifespan of the individual.

The principal emotional-behavioural disorders characteristic of most SSAD-reared mammals include: depression; chronic-stimulus seeking (obsessive-compulsive) behaviours, (e.g., stereotypical rocking, thumb/penis sucking, and self-mutilation; hyperactivity and hyper-reactivity); tactile avoidance, impaired pain and pleasure perceptions; hypersensitivity to touch; impaired sexual pleasure and sexual functioning; alcohol/drug abuse, dependence, and addiction; and social alienation with anti-social behaviours that include violence, suicide and homicide.

SSAD induces a variety of neurobiological changes in the developing brain of SSAD-reared mammals, particularly primates, which create the above-described emotional-behavioural disorders. These brain-behavioural disorders occur primarily in the subcortical emotional-social-sexual

part of the brain that unfolds early in development — not the neocortical rational/cognitive brain that results from later brain development. A more complete and detailed illustration and description of SSAD can be found at <http://violence.de/prescott/afb/paper.pdf> and <http://www.violence.de/prescott/mp/article.html> and on The Origins of Love and Violence CDROM available at www.byronchild.com

Somatic (bodily) pleasure is the glue of affectional bonding. The failed development of the normal pleasure systems of the brain, through SSAD, induces disordered pleasure-seeking behaviours, whether through misuse/abuse of the sensory systems or from biochemical drugs. Primary treatment of SSAD disorders must involve the reconstruction of the pleasure systems of the brain so that neuro-integrative pleasure and not neuro-dissociative pleasure becomes the reality. (Gender inequality, sexual violence, narcissism, sado-masochism, addictions and obsessive-compulsive pornography are examples of the consequences of the neurodissociative brain.) The neuro-dissociative brain, induced by SSAD, mediates depression, anger/rage, and violence, whereas the neuro-integrative brain mediates joy, compassion, peace, and happiness. Integrated bodily pleasure is essential for the evolutionary development of love in *Homo sapiens*, which has been displaced by a disembodied Platonic/divine love that drives human alienation, depression and violence.

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.

... love is a brain gestalt that is formed primarily from sensory stimulation:
Body movement
Body touch
Body smell

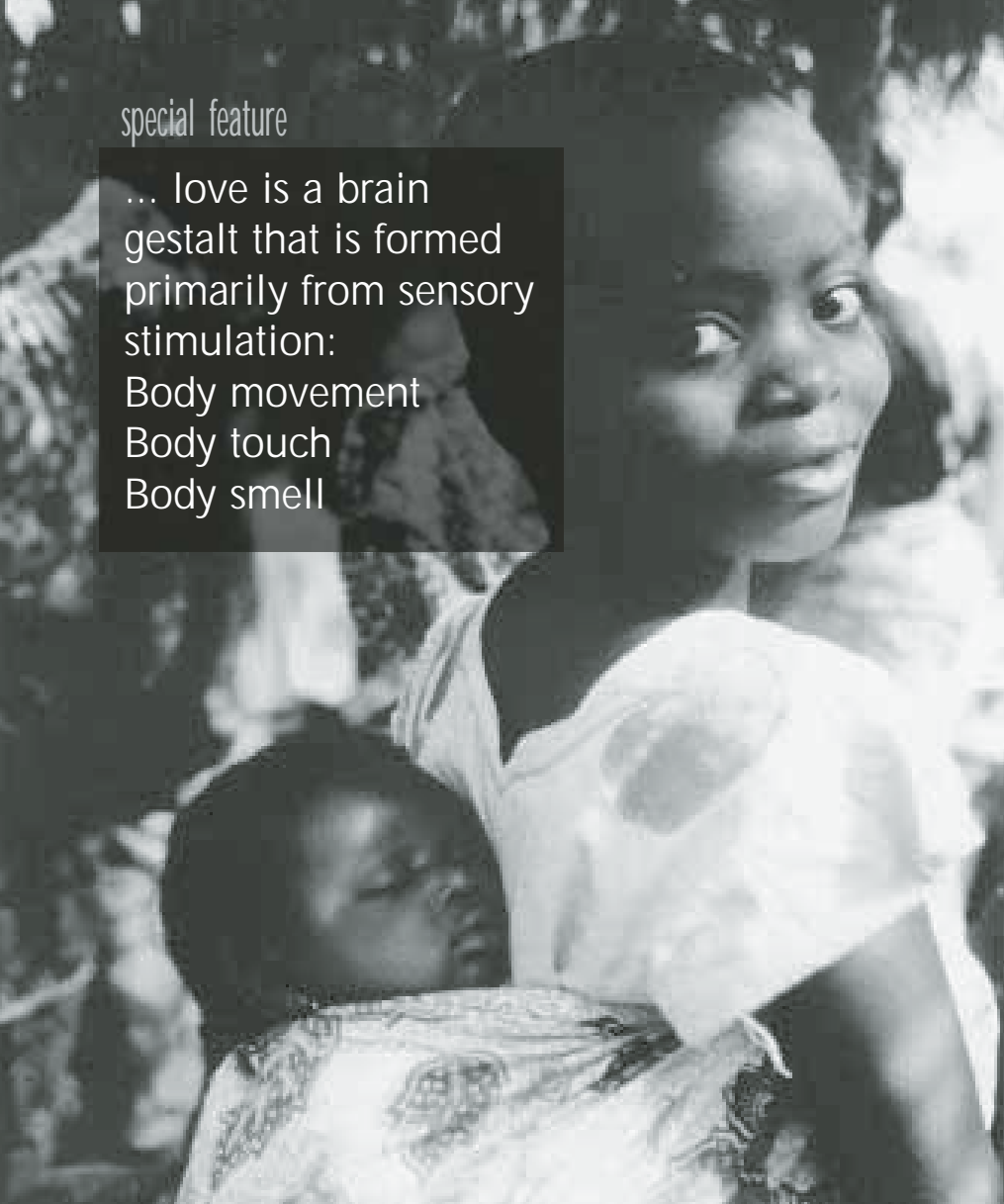


Photo by Katrina Folkwell

(Editor's note: Australian rates are difficult to assess as there is no national collection of statistics. However, from various state-based research it would appear that less than half of all Australian mums are still breastfeeding their babies at six months.)

Normal brain-behavioural development is being compromised through lack of sufficient breastfeeding bonding and the continuing use of infant formula milk that has the complicit support of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends breastfeeding for only one year, and does not actively oppose infant formula milk feeding which interferes with breastfeeding bonding.

There are well known deficits of the essential amino acid tryptophan in infant formula milk (and other vital brain nutrients) that can only adversely affect the normal development of the brain serotonin system and other brain neurotransmitter systems that mediate the many pathologies of emotional-social-sexual functioning that exist in our society today.

Tryptophan is a precursor amino

The Origins of Biological Love

The primary sensory-brain process involved in affectional bonding in the mother-infant relationship is the post-natal continuation of vestibular-sensory (movement) stimulation to the developing brain (the primary form of sensory stimulation in utero) and ensured by babywearing that allows the baby to experience continual movement as well as ready access to the breast that assures breastfeeding bonding. Without this sensory stimulation, the Somato-Sensory Affectional Deprivation Syndrome (SSADS), to one degree or another, is inevitable.

These studies lead to a conclusion that 'love' is a brain gestalt that is formed primarily from sensory stimulation of the three sensory modalities in the mother-infant relationship:

- Body movement (vestibular-cerebellar system);
- Body touch (somesthetic system); and
- Body smell (olfactory system).

Further, these three sensory modalities provide the foundations for the three different psychological dimensions of love relationships characterised as:

- Basic Trust (body-movement: vestibular-cerebellar sensory system);
- Affectional Pleasure Bonding (somesthetic-touch sensory system).

primitive emotional-sexual brain that is activated, in part, by pheromones.

The Two Brains of Love

In normal development, body touch, smell, movement, and taste are integrated during breastfeeding and encoded in the developing brain where the 'whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts'. The 'somatic brain gestalt of love' is first formed from the subcortical emotional-social-sexual brain. The later developing 'cognitive neocortical brain gestalt of love' is formed through the programming of the visual and auditory sensory neocortical brains that becomes integrated with the earlier 'somatic brain gestalt of love'. In most modern human cultures, the somatic brain gestalt of love is fragmented and poorly developed and the neocortical brain is wrongly programmed where pain becomes a virtue (good) and pleasure becomes a vice (evil).

These two brains, being wrongly programmed with sensory pain and sensory pleasure deprivation that are combined with the wrongful programming of the moral values of pain and pleasure in the neocortical brain, results in the development of the neurodissociative brain — and ultimately, depression, alienation and violence.

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.

acid that is converted into brain serotonin, deficits of which are known to mediate depression, impulse dyscontrol, drug abuse and the violence of homicide and suicide. It can be expected that other essential amino acids are also deficient in infant formula milk that leads to other brain neurotransmitter system abnormalities, e.g. those that mediate affectional bonding, e.g. tyrosine that is converted into brain dopamine that, in part, makes body pleasure possible, as do other molecules of love (Crenshaw, 1996).

Permission for bodily pleasure

It is well known that brain dopamine disorders lead to drug addictive behaviours, where drug pleasure is sought in lieu of natural body pleasure that is impaired or lost from failed mother-infant/child bonding and from impaired or failed sexual affectional relationships that begin in the teen years. Body pleasure that is *integrated* into higher brain

structures inhibits depression, drug abuse and violence, whereas *neurodis-sociative pleasure* (self-centred, hedonistic pleasure) mediates depression, drug abuse, sexual exploitation and violence.

Given the above, the escalating rates of depression, psychiatric medications and suicides among our children and youth in American culture, are not surprising. Suicides in American children aged 5-14 years have doubled over the past generation; and suicides in the 15-24 year age group has been the third leading cause of death for well over a generation. Depression is a leading mental health problem worldwide.

(Editor's note: Suicide is now identified as one of the leading causes of death in Australian young people. The suicide rate among young Australian males aged 15 to 24 years doubled in the past twenty years, four times the rate for young females.)

More American children/youth (5-24 year age group) have died from suicide over these past ten years (est. 55,000)

than have been lost in combat in the ten-year Vietnam War (47,355).

An equally damning statistic of the American culture is the finding that the ratio of suicides to homicides have systematically increased in the 5-14 year age group over this past generation: 1979-36%; 1994-60%; 1998-73%; 2000-89%. Why are American children filled with such depression and despair that they prefer death to living in their own families and in America, claimed to be the greatest nation on this planet by many? And why have national health authorities remained silent on this national disgrace where biomedical authorities have no answer to this question?

No war memorial exists for these children and youth of suicidal death. The combination of impaired or failed sensory affectional bonding with limited or no breastfeeding in the mother-infant/child relationship and failed sexual affectional relationships are a lethal combination for the development of depression, social alienation, drug

Ten Principles of Mother-Infant Bonding to Change the World

The following changes are essential if this new cultural brain of the infant/child/teen is to be developed. These changes would provide for a greater comprehensive structure of cultural change for the assurance of peaceful individuals and cultures.

1. Every pregnancy is a wanted pregnancy.
2. Every pregnancy has proper nutrition and prenatal care — medical and psychological — and is free from a toxic womb of alcohol, drugs, tobacco and other toxic agents of stress.
3. Natural birthing.
4. No genital mutilation (circumcision).
5. Breastfeeding on demand for two years of age or beyond.
6. Intimate body contact — babywearing during first year (and co-sleeping for the first two years and beyond).
7. Immediate comforting is given to infants and children who are crying. No infant/child should ever be permitted to cry itself to sleep — day or night.
8. Infants and children are for hugging and should never be physically hit for any reason or humiliated.
9. Infants and children are honoured and should never be humiliated nor emotionally abused for any reason. The emerging sexuality of every child is respected.
10. Mothers must be honoured and not replaced by any institutional day care because it harms children under five years of age.

James W. Prescott, Ph.D.



The transformation of a violent culture to a peaceful culture begins with the transformation of the individual who, as an infant/child, is placed on a life path of **acceptance** rather than **rejection**; of **joy and happiness** rather than **rejection and depression**; of **love** rather than **hate**; of **peace** rather than **violence**.

abuse, sexual exploitation and the violence of suicide and homicide.

Children are now killing children; children are raping children; and the massive psychiatric medication of our children and youth that was unheard of a generation ago — all indicate the disintegration of America from within.

Early day care, recipe for disaster

The report of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care (SECC) found that infants and very young children who spend more than 30 hours a week in child care are far more aggressive. 'They scored higher on things like fighting, cruelty, bullying, meanness as well as talking too much, and demands must be met immediately,' according to Dr. Belsky, one of the principal investigators.

It has yet to be recognised that cruelty, bullying and meanness that terrorises so many of our children and youth in our elementary schools and high schools have their roots in the emotional trauma of mother-infant/child separations associated with illness and institutionalised day care. These collective emotional-social traumas in infancy/childhood, particularly when combined with child/teen sexual abuse, are sufficiently great to impair teen coping behaviours to emotional stress and to drive many students to despair and the violent acts of homicide and suicide. It is estimated that some 20% of America's students nationwide have contemplated suicide at one time or another.

Morality or truth?

We also need to recognise the role of theological/religious systems that makes an enemy of body pleasure — judging it as sinful and immoral — and which equates pain, suffering and deprivation as being morally virtuous. These moral value systems oppose millions of years of evolutionary biology (pain = avoidance; pleasure = attraction) and have equated the feminine with sin, wickedness and immorality. These moral/religious values have turned mind against body; male against female; parents against children; and children against parents. (See Ecclesiastics 25:24; Proverbs 23:13-14; Deuteronomy 21:18-21, for example; www.violence.de/prescott/women/article.html and www.montagunocircpetition.org).

We now know that integrated pleasure is the 'glue' of bonding and is necessary for the development of the moral person and of moral behaviours. If natural body pleasure is denied, depression and the artificial and destructive narcissistic and sado-masochistic pleasures of drugs and sexual violence often follow.

The future human

The human brain is the organ of our emotions, social relationships, moral values and cognitive/intellective development. The developing brain of the infant/child is encoded or programmed either for depression or happiness; for peace or violence and for human equality or inequality. These are learned behaviours rooted in the biology of our early life experiences (Montagu, 1971).

The transformation of a violent culture to a peaceful culture begins with the transformation of the individual who, as an infant/child, is placed on a life path of acceptance rather than rejection; of joy and happiness rather than rejection and depression; of love rather than hate; of peace rather than violence. This transformation of the individual requires the building of a new cultural brain, one that embodies and expresses naturally peace, love and happiness. That brain can only be built with radical cultural change. Clearly, these changes are not possible without a restructuring of culture in ways that support and enable mothers to be nurturing mothers.

National legislation that interferes with mother-infant/child bonding must be replaced with legislation that supports nurturing parents and families.

The need for infant and early institutional child day care should be eliminated and public funds now utilised to support commercial infant/childcare enterprises **should** be used to support mothers and fathers directly, a policy whose proven effectiveness has been well established in Scandinavian countries.

Bowlby (1953), Cook (1996) and Belsky (2003) have warned the world of the dangers of institutionalised day care of infants/children and Montagu (1971) informed the world of the dangers of loss of mother love, lessons that have been ignored by the modern world. ☺

Editor's note: See page 13 in this issue for Dr. Prescott's extraordinary CDRom, **The**

Origins of Love and Violence, available through *byronchild* magazine.

With thanks to *Touch the Future*. References to this article and more extended articles on this subject can be found at: www.TTFuture.org/Prescott and www.violence.de.

With thanks also to Dr. John W. Travis MD, Meryn Callander – Alliance for Transforming the Lives of Children, www.aTLC.org

James W. Prescott, Ph.D. is a developmental neuropsychologist and cross-cultural psychologist. He joined the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda, MD where he created the Developmental Behavioral Biology Program of the newly created NICHD and served as its Health Scientist Administrator from 1963-1980. During this period, Dr. Prescott initiated and established a number of basic brain-behavioral research programs, which documented that the early life experiences of mother-infant separation induced a variety of developmental brain abnormalities in the infrahuman primate.

NOTES: (1) Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1988-94-NHANES 3, Variable HYB5, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD)

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A stone sculpture of a woman holding a baby. The woman has a serene expression and is wearing a crown or halo. She is holding a baby in her arms. Below her, there is a structure that looks like a house or a nest with a small arched entrance and a staircase leading up to it. The sculpture is set against a dark background.

Bonding

and the Origins of Love

By Meryn Callander

• Bonding by Natural Birth

The same hospital that offers superb medical care to those who are ill almost inevitably provides an environment for childbirth that introduces unnecessary risks, obstructs the normal physiological process, and inculcates anxiety, dependency, fear, and loss of self-control in women giving birth.

Western culture has built an entire system of care — obstetrics — around the belief a woman is not able to successfully birth on her own. The modern attitude of asserting control over and attempting to ‘manage’ a birth is not only the antithesis of trust in a woman’s body and the normalcy of childbirth, but renders impossible the experience of childbirth at its best.

There is no scientific justification for most standard hospital interventions. Routine hospital practices initiate a vicious cycle by disturbing the natural process of birthing, thereby increasing the likelihood of complications and the need for increasingly complex (and dangerous) interventions, and pain-relieving drugs. Most routine interventions, other than those used for the approximately 5% high-risk births and normally recognised long before birth, threaten the health of mother and baby.

Birth centre deliveries clearly show the superior outcome from fewer interventions, and homebirths (with a skilled birth attendant) show a lower mortality rate than uncomplicated hospital births, and far less harm to the baby.

• Bonding by Being There

A child’s optimal development requires at least one parent serve as primary caregiver during the child’s pre-verbal years, ie, the first two or three years of life.

A minimum of three to six months of direct parental care is necessary in the period after birth. A child’s early relationships with her primary caregivers are particularly profound because they shape — very literally — the neurochemistry of emotion and the entire nervous system, including the brain.

Usually, if both parents are employed full-time, more than half of a child’s waking hours are spent with substitute caregivers. Early lack of a consistent caregiver causes later social consequences, since the type of attachment that forms between child and caregiver serves as a prototype for later social relationships. Babies who receive responsive and consistent care develop the sense that their world is essentially satisfying; that people around them are responsive and caring. Those who learn they cannot trust may feel that adults are replaceable, love uncertain, and human attachment a dangerous investment. This affects their ability to relate to others, learn, develop an optimistic orientation to life, and become responsible members of society.

If daycare is an absolute necessity, parents should find the very best affordable, maintain a close watch, and consistently and lovingly compensate whenever they can.

• Bonding by Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding affords physiological and psychological advantages for baby, as well as mother, that formula cannot begin to approximate.

Every species of mammal formulates a milk that is specifically adapted for that species. The blue whale gives birth to enormous newborns with immense caloric needs. Because the newborn cannot hold its breath for long while suckling underwater, the mother has evolved a rich milk and powerful letdown reflex that literally pumps milk into the baby’s mouth in enormous squirts.

Nature has formulated human milk to be very low in fat, so the infant must suckle quite frequently. While baby feels secure, snuggled into mother’s breast, the breastfeeding mother produces hormones that promote a physiologic bonding between them. With bottlefeeding,

convenience usually wins out — baby receives less caressing, rocking, and eye contact than the breastfed baby.

Human milk is rich in nutrients needed for brain development. Approximately 400 nutrients in breast milk are not present in artificial formulas; and the amount of fats and other nutrients in mother's milk changes as the baby's needs change. Maternal antibodies in breast milk help to fight infant infections and cannot be duplicated in formula. Breastfed babies are sick less often.

A baby's breastfeeding contracts mother's womb, causes her body to produce hormones that calm her, reduces the likelihood of her experiencing breast cancer, and correlates with less osteoporosis in later life.

• Bonding by Conscious Parenting

Children are innately good, innocent, worthy, and social.

Our socially conditioned perceptions of the infant/child being innately self-centred, unsocial and uncooperative, stand in stark contrast against those of many indigenous cultures. In these cultures children are assumed to be innately good, innocent, worthy, and social in their motives; fighting, disobedience and punishments are virtually unheard of.

This alternative perspective makes parenting a pleasuring rather than a policing experience. It calls for a style of parenting that is compassionate rather than condemning, responsive rather than reactive, cooperative rather than adversarial. Holding the distinction between a child's essential being and her presenting behaviour, the issue is never about her being obedient or disobedient, smart or stupid; it is only about her being relatively aware or unaware, ignorant/innocent or understanding, knowing or unknowing, able or unable.

Trust and love blossoms. The child whose nurturing needs are fully met is far less likely to be disruptive when parents must focus on something other than him — and the joys of parenting are multiplied a thousand-fold.

• Bonding by Co-sleeping

A child's sleeping in the parental bed fulfils a basic human need.

Rich or poor, black or white, large or small, families all over the world sleep together and have done so since the beginning of humankind. Infants and children thrive on high levels of tactile contact. A baby's sleeping with mother for the first few years of life is proven to contribute to an emotionally maturity. The child whose need for touch has been fully met grows into adulthood with the healthy high esteem that is prerequisite to fulfilment in life. Cuddly bears, thumb, pacifier or bottle cannot give an infant the love and security she needs. She may learn to suppress — but never erase — this need — turning instead to things instead of people for comfort.

Babies need our love and warmth by day and night. At night, with mother and baby sleeping alongside each other, baby sleeps easily, secure in the presence of mother, stirring to feed, then sleeping again. Her temperature can never be maintained as well as when she has skin-to-skin contact with another human. Constant warmth helps to keep a baby asleep and breathing regularly.

The more security you can offer your baby, the more secure she will be. Co-sleeping enhances the child's healthy self-esteem and eventual independence.

• Bonding by Maintaining Genital Integrity

Circumcision: Despite claims that babies feel no pain, studies prove that babies feel pain more sharply than adults.

Pain is serious. It is not something to be dismissed, ignored, or laughed at. It does not 'toughen' little boys. Circumcised babies suffer from an abnormally lowered pain threshold, consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder.

In the course of every circumcision babies scream, tremble, and/or cry. Many hold their breath, defecate, or vomit. Some fall into a semi-comatose state. While this enables a baby to distance himself from his agony, it has dangerous consequences for the brain. Some infants cry for hours afterwards. Some withdraw, becoming less responsive and more irritable, others cry for extended periods and

seem inconsolable.

There are no valid medical reasons for performing circumcisions. Complications range from lacerations, hemorrhage, infections, penile amputation, and urethral damage to deformed penises. There is no accurate data on the rate of complications and hospitals are not obligated to report circumcision accidents.

The foreskin is not 'dirty'. Its immunological functions actually protect the body from harm. Circumcision does not decrease urinary tract infections and does not prevent premature ejaculation. Despite badly reported research, the intact penis is not more likely to spread sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS.

Because the foreskin is one of the most sensitive parts of the body, a circumcised male, and his partner, can never reach their full birth potential of genital pleasure.

• Bonding by Babywearing
Babywearing (wearing a baby in a sling or pouch) allows parents the freedom to continue their normal daily routine while providing the richest and most desirable environment for their child.

Perhaps the most important aspect of babywearing is that it provides the somato-sensory environment (movement, closeness) needed for the essential affectional bonding between parent and infant. Babies are exposed to the post-natal continuum of stimulation to the developing brain that contributes to their ability to love and be loved later in life.

Social conditioning has led parents to believe that if a baby is held or carried too frequently they will be spoiled, clingy or demanding. Research reveals otherwise. The physical and psychological benefits associated with babywearing encourage children to feel secure and content and build a solid sense of self-esteem.

Babywearing not only promotes an intimate connection between parent and baby, it is hailed as one of the most important factors in the healthy physical, intellectual and social development of infants.

Babies worn in slings are less clingy and tend to initiate separation

much earlier than babies less frequently held. It allows them to be at the centre of activity not the centre of attention, which is a wonderful environment proven to stimulate brain development and cognitive learning.

- **Bonding by Nurturing**

Sexuality

Equating knowing with doing (and information with permission) is fabrication. Research confirms that children who share a satisfying relationship with their parents and grow in an atmosphere of openness towards sexuality, grow up more slowly and more responsibly.

Comprehensive sexuality education (as contrasted with sex education) is not simply a matter of raising children to be disease-, pregnancy-, and exploitation-free. It is about supporting children's development and growth towards healthy sexual maturity across not only the physical, but also the emotional, social, and ethical dimensions of sexual wellbeing.

As a child grows, there are countless opportunities, by example and direct instruction, to provide the keystones of a healthy sexual life: the values of love, affection, closeness, integrity, responsibility and commitment.

This education begins the moment we are born — in the perceptions, reactions and actions of others towards our body and gender. It continues moment-by-moment through countless interactions with those around us. Our children need us to share our values and to clarify and interpret the multitude of confusing and competing values and value systems in the surrounding culture.

The loving and respectful way you name and touch your infant/child's body can teach him that all of his body parts are good, that physical closeness is both safe and wonderful, and that he is loveable. This is the single most important lesson our children can learn with respect to sex and sexuality. ©

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