The Making of a Killer

Killers Are Made, Not Born!

Let me suggest some causes for individual murders and mass killings that are seldom discussed.

Killers in grocery stores, schools, churches, and malls, for the most part, are ordinary people that you would hardly notice, and yet they strike out and kill without warning. We cannot go a week without there being some killing.

Some killers are ordinary people, some are young punks, and some are the neighbors next door. The overwhelming majority of these killers are fearful people. Many of these people are loners, and their only source of information is from mass media outlets. From what they see and hear on television, they believe *the world is not safe, and they are not safe in this world*.

You believed the world was a safe, nurturing place as a child. So, today what do you believe about the world you are living in? Where did you learn your view of your world? For most people, your concept of the world is 90% based on what you hear and see in the mass media.

Who controls the news content that you watch and hear? Politicians and the mass media are constantly putting their biased spin on what is happening. Is this an accident, or is it a planned strategy to create a feeling of powerlessness? . . . . It is about power and money. And, it is about who controls and who makes the decisions.

Who decides what you watch and hear in the media? Is it the politicians or the media, or is it you? It is all the above.

There is an old news industry adage, "If it bleeds, it leads." That means that stories involving violence, gore, or other bloodshed are more likely to be

featured prominently in news coverage. This is because such stories are often considered more interesting and attention-grabbing than other types of stories. It is these stories and pictures that sell. Violence, gore, conflicts, and bloodshed sell newspapers and TV news shows.

What is the result for those who watch and read the news? **Fear**. And, fear is based on the here and now. "Breaking News." Does the news of the latest mass murders make you feel safer or that the world is unsafe?

And, since fear and powerlessness are based in the here and now, they can be changed! The source of fear is always in the future. You do not fear the past. You may fear the consequences of your past behaviors, but these consequences are always in the future. Fear of an unsafe world drives people to fight or flight. Have you ever heard someone say, "If he becomes president, I am moving to Canada?" I first heard it said about Johnson, and since then, all it has been said about every presidential hopeful.

Birds fly, fish swim, and people feel. You are not condemned to be a fearful reactor. You are free to choose both your feelings and your behaviors (to watch negative news or not) because you have the power to think whatever you want to think. The way you feel is determined by what you believe and think. Your behavior is based on the awareness of what you feel. You can only make decisions based on what you are aware of. And, if fear and powerlessness surround you daily, then your reactions will be based on your fear.

**You are what you think.
And with your thoughts,
you make the world.**
Buddha

**You have power over your mind—
not outside events.
Realize this, and you will find strength.**
Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor

You feel the way you do right now

because of the thoughts you are thinking at this moment.
David Burns MD 1981 Psychiatrist

You have just finished watching the latest mass murder, and a stranger approaches your door. What do you do in this unsafe world? Shoot or run, and you're too old to run. You live in the woods, and a strange car full of people drives up your isolated driveway. What do you do in this unsafe world? Protect yourself and start shooting from your safe spot.

There is a group of people that are somewhat different from you, it becomes easy to project your fear onto them and start seeing them as a threat. What do all these examples have in common? The feeling of powerlessness.

All violence comes from feelings of powerlessness.

Yes, many places in this world are unsafe. Distinguishing between reality and imagination requires getting well-balanced and reliable information that everything is not unsafe.

"We suffer more from imagination than from reality."
– Seneca, Roman philosopher, 65 AD

Your right brain's imaginary fears can have real-life consequences. We hold ourselves back or attack because our fears frighten us into doing the unthinkable. **We are frightened and paralyzed by what is not real**!

The phrase "If it bleeds, it leads" remains a powerful force in the news industry and will likely continue to be used for many years.

What can you do so that you do not feel so powerless? Stop watching the media stories involving violence, conflicts, gore, and bloodshed. Stop letting politicians use violence to pass their political agenda.

Yes, sometimes, and in some areas, the world is unsafe. However, there are no absolutes, and that is absolute! Therefore, it is imperative that you

have a way of distinguishing between what is safe and what is unsafe. The question is, how do you need to change your life to make the distinction?

Negative news can have some negative effects on decision-making and mental health, including:

- Increased stress. Exposure to negative news can increase levels of stress hormones, such as cortisol, which can lead to physical and mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and sleep problems.

- Reduced optimism. Constantly hearing about bad things happening can make it difficult to stay positive and hopeful about the future. This can lead to feelings of hopelessness and despair, making it difficult to cope with stress and challenges.

- Increased social isolation. People constantly exposed to negative news may withdraw from social activities and relationships. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, which can further worsen mental health problems.

- Increased risk of developing PTSD. People who have been exposed to traumatic events, such as natural disasters, war, or violence, may be more likely to develop PTSD if they are also exposed to a lot of negative news. This is because negative news can trigger memories of traumatic events, leading to flashbacks, nightmares, and other symptoms of PTSD. Kathryn Buchanan, psychology department at the University of Essex.

Powerful Tools for Boosting Wellbeing
- Stop watching negative news."
- Should we not work for a safer world, a world in which we feel safe? However, we should not create a society where people feel powerless and controlled, such as during the pandemic.
- Since all violence comes from feelings of powerlessness, should we not seek ways to empower ourselves and each other? Grandpa used to say, "It is not what you say; it is how you say it." Ordering, commanding,

demanding, and threatening do not make anyone feel safe. Pay attention to how people speak to you and how you speak to other people.

- In our homes, schools, and work, look for ways to empower yourself and others. How could you say it differently so that the person would feel empowered? Empowerment starts with you. Unless you feel empowered, you cannot empower anyone else.

What do you believe about this world? Is the world not safe, and you are not safe in this unsafe world? What is your reaction to the world you live in? You do make a difference.

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