

I think I see a connection. . .

Between Mass Shootings and Media Exposure!

The more media coverage of a mass shooting, the more mass shootings there seem to be. Could mass media coverage be stimulating copycat shootings? So many of these people who commit murder appear to be people who see themselves as powerless. They are loners who want attention or are afraid they cannot protect themselves in an ever-increasingly dangerous world.

Negative attention is better than no attention at all.

For some, going out in a blaze of glory appears to be their goal, while others feel that they are protecting themselves. Others just need to see their name and image on television.

- People who are in touch with their personal power never resort to violence.
- All violence stems from feelings of powerlessness in the perpetrators!
- Children are not born feeling powerless. Powerlessness is a learned way of thinking.

→We, as parents, teachers, media, and government, all use techniques that create feelings of powerlessness in others to get the behavioral changes that we desire.

→How are we, as a government, creating feelings of powerlessness in our citizens?

→How are we, as parents, teachers, and media creating a sense of powerlessness in our children?

**How could we, as parents, teachers, and media, create a sense of personal power in our children (empowerment)?

Let us start by asking how we as parents can instill personal power in our children. Empower children to stand up against bullies, molesters, and peer pressure.

Some parents are afraid of losing control, so creating empowered children is threatening. They will tell you they are just protecting their children from harm. These parents see themselves as nurturing, but when they feel powerless and must control, they overprotect their children.

A single parent came to see me, concerned about her fourth-grade daughter, Katrina, and her emotional well-being. Her mother said she was a very fragile child and very dependent. Hurricane Katrina was a devastating Category 5 hurricane that struck the southeastern United States in late August 2005, causing widespread destruction and significant loss of life. The mother demanded that her daughter's fourth-grade teacher never mention Hurricane Katrina because it was distressing for her daughter. "The teacher just doesn't understand how fragile Katrina is."

When my son, Darren, was nine months old, he could crawl but was still unable to walk. One day I was hanging curtains in our new house, and I had the six-foot stepladder in the front room. I went into the kitchen to gather some supplies, and when I came back, I saw Darren at the top of the ladder, rocking back and forth and laughing heartily, clearly having a good time. I called to my wife, who is in the bedroom, to come, "but do not react or get upset." When she came out, I heard her gasp, but she didn't react. I told her that he could obviously climb up the ladder, and if he could climb up the ladder, he could climb down. We should encourage him to come down with her on one side and me on the other, just in case. He made it down perfectly. We clapped and praised him.

Which one of the two children, Katrina and Darren, do you believe felt empowered? Which one would most likely join the Peace Corps and travel the world? Empowering is about giving individuals the freedom to make their own decisions, learn from their mistakes, and grow from them.

Katrina learned that the world is unsafe and that she cannot protect herself in it. Darren knew that he could discern what was safe and what was not and defend himself in it.

**"Failure will never stand in the way of success
if you learn from it."** Hank Aaron

How is the media worsening the problem? I first saw this during the Vietnam protests. There was extensive media coverage of the numerous riots occurring every day. This same scenario was repeated every time there were shootings, riots, and civil unrest.

Many people keep their television on all day, and what they receive is a steady drumbeat that the world is unsafe. Some people feel like it is not even safe to leave their house. We have had several incidents where strangers have walked up to a house to ask for directions or deliver a package, and they were shot on the spot or, in one case, through a closed door.

What is the purpose of the media's constant stream of negative news? The old media is saying, "blood sells." How often do you need to hear that the president is destroying the country's economy?" We are headed for a major recession. Your retirement savings are shrinking, and you will have to pay thousands of dollars more for just the bare necessities." (The world is not safe, and you are not safe in it.)

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You have a choice. You can keep doing what you've always done, and you will keep feeling the way you've always felt, or, since powerlessness is a function of your thinking, you can change your thinking and start empowering yourself and those you love.

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