

Written by Patricia Turnier  
Monday, 23 May 2016 17:37

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Dr. Glass, M.D., P.A. was born in America and grew up in New Jersey during the 1940s. He is a physician and forensic psychiatrist expert based in Houston, Texas. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Swarthmore College and later graduated from Northwestern University's the Feinberg School of Medicine in 1967. He has over 48 years of clinical experience. He did his residency at Yale New Haven Hospital and presently works at George S Glass MD. In addition, he is associated with Houston Methodist Hospital. He received a Board Certification by the American Board of Psychiatry in 1976 as an addictionologist. Furthermore, he has been certified in Alcoholism and other Drugs of Dependence by the American Medical Society since 1986. He is a Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Baylor College of Medicine, the University of Texas Medical School at Houston, and the Cornell Weill Medical Program at The Methodist Hospital in Houston. He has been a professor for medical students and psychiatric residents.

Dr. Glass created the Navy's Substance Abuse Program in 1972 at the Bethesda Naval Hospital. Since then, he has been the Medical Director, the owner, and the doctor who developed the Substance Abuse and Psychiatric Treatment Programs in a variety of public including private settings. He has managed inpatient, residential and outpatients from these programs.

Dr. Glass is known as one of the few doctors in the United States who possesses the expertise to assess pilots for the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration), as well as the Airline Pilots Association. Moreover, he performed independent medical examinations for the Texas Board of Medical Examiners, the Texas Bar Association's Grievance Committee and many others companies with unions.

The physician has written more than 30 articles for peer reviewed journals. Furthermore, he has presented at a large number of professional summits on topics related to psychiatric and substance abuse including meetings of the Texas Criminal Lawyer Association and the Advanced Family Law Seminar of the Advanced Family Law Seminar of the Texas Bar Association.

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Dr. Glass wrote two books with David Tabatsky: *Blending Families Successfully* and *The Overparenting Epidemic*

. David Tabatsky wears multiple hats. He is a father, a writer, an editor, a teacher, a director and a performing artist. He obtained his bachelor's degree in communications and a master's degree in theater education, both from Adelphi University. He penned

*Write for Life: Communicating Your Way Through Cancer*

and coauthored several books such as *Chicken Soup for the Soul's*

*T*

*he Cancer Book*

. He presently lives in the Big Apple.

*The Overparenting Epidemic* covers themes such as the risks of overscheduling activities for children. The book raises interesting questions, and the authors expose the consequences of overparenting: difficulty for children to become independent adults, etc. It can also create a feeling of entitlement among the offspring. Readers will learn in the book that some divorced couples overparent because they compete for the affection of their children. This extract illustrates the form that overparenting can take:

"Parents with demanding jobs that require them to put in long hours and/or travel out of town may feel guilty about being away from their children. As a result, they often overcompensate, either by overscheduling their kids with afterschool and weekend activities to make up for their lack of involvement, or by packing in too much activity during the parent-child time they do have, all in a misguided effort to make up for their limited time with their child. This is the same phenomenon that divorced parents who have their children only part-time go through when they try to package a week's worth of parenting into their limited visitation time".

As well as other substantive information, *The Overparenting Epidemic* provides archetypes of parents with strong examples. The book also includes a parental aptitude test and an interesting webography at the end.

Dr. Glass' and David Tabatsky's other book *Blending Families Successfully* relates about the challenges of blended families (it means a reconstituted or a step family). This book will help parents of blended families understand what their children are going through (a sense of abandonment and so on) and how to try to make the situation better for everybody. The book aims to aid parents seize the challenges of beginning new lives with blended families, and to support their kids by making the necessary adjustments. The doctor explains how to approach

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unavoidable dilemmas when they happen. The book offers important lessons about the link between divorce and self-esteem issues,

[depression](#)

, substance abuse and other relationship failures that often result from the breakup of a family. The book will be useful for people who are in blended families. It will also help parents to understand what their children are going through after a separation. Dr. Glass is a pioneer psychiatrist who provides guidelines for blended families via his book. The psychiatrist also shares his personal experience in a blended family and does not shy away from sharing his mistakes. We discover the lessons he learned, including how he evolved as a father and stepfather.

Blending Families Successfully

is a roadmap to families going through similar experiences.

Overall, the books of Dr. Glass and Mr. Tabatsky will teach readers that emotional and social intelligence are required to become effective parents. The books remind readers that the most important thing for parents is to raise their children to become balanced and responsible adults. In addition, these books will be useful for future parents. Dr. Glass is not a physician in an ivory tower, using scientific jargon that few people will understand. He shares his expertise in an accessible language to make ensure the general public will comprehend.

To summarize, over the past decades Dr. Glass has worked as the administrator, owner, and medical director of inpatient hospital treatment programs, day hospital programs, a community mental health center, and a residential treatment center. Moreover, the physician occupied the position of Chairman in the Department of Psychiatry at several Houston hospitals. Dr. Glass provides in particular forensic and expert witness services in: substance abuse (including treatment with methadone, for instance); PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder); workplace sexual harassment; mitigating factors regarding substance abuse in criminal defense; DWI (driving while impaired); psychiatric medications (SSRIs, antipsychotics), methadone and malpractice. Overall, he has clinical experience treating adults, adolescents and geriatrics with substance abuse and other psychiatric issues. It is important to note that since 1986, he has been helping families, attorneys and courts deal with the psychological consequences of divorce. Dr. Glass has developed, managed and conducted independent medical evaluations for the FAA, the Airline Pilots Association, the Texas Board of Medical Examiners, the Texas State Bar, multiple Fortune 500 companies and their unions, and federal, state and local courts and their jurists.

In regards to his personal life, Dr. Glass lives with his wife in Texas. Four of his children have MBAs and his fifth child is in the process to obtain one. Dr. Glass' wife has a master's degree in education. In the interview below, the psychiatrist mainly spoke last fall about his books and his expertise regarding mental health issues.

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**P.T. There are parents who are not aware that they do not have healthy communication with their [teenagers](#) and young adults to this extent: some of their [underage offspring](#) went through grave situations such as an abortion and the parents have no clue about it. How can parents avoid such serious situations and keep an open communication with their children?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. I think it is a great question! These serious issues always come up after the fact. People will say for instance, oh my God I did not know my daughter had an abortion, that my child was doing drugs, etc. Things are discovered after the act or the event occurred. There is a process in all of this and everything starts when the kid is little. Everything is about not having communication early on. Some parents do not know how to listen to their children or decode the non-verbal communication. Some are not sensitive to their needs, and even if they have more experience, they invalidate the feelings of their children. Over times, this creates a rift. The children will find the answers outside of the home and in the wrong places. So, when the child ends up having an abortion, hanging out with non-recommendable friends or sneaking out of the house, a long history of bad or lack of communication occurred. So, these behaviors are not a beginning but a manifestation of what happened over time. In this regard, it is important to get a sense of where things are going from the start. If communication feels uncomfortable, it is important to talk about it instead of jumping in by telling the children how you disagree because you decided that your perception is right and theirs is wrong. Things are not that different with people who are getting a divorce. You saw my résumé and as you know, I do forensic work. I meet couples who are separating. Often, when I dig, I discover that the signs were there years before the partners decided they could not deal with the infidelity, the overspending and so on. They just chose to deny it, ignore it, avoid it, etc., and in some cases even before the marriage.

The communication should work both ways; it is not one-dimensional. Some parents ask their child a question, but because their view is already set up (in other words, they have a preconceived notion of what happened) they will not really listen to what the kid has to say. They jump in and do not give the child a chance to express themselves, or talk about anything instead of trying to understand their kid. This kind of behavior will make it much harder for the child to talk about anything. So, it is highly important for parents to have an ear for their offspring.

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**P.T. [Bullying](#) is a hot topic that is often discussed currently. What are the main personality traits of bullies? Can you also talk about the dangers of [bullying](#) and its consequences (psychological...) for children, teenagers and young adults? Do you have tips for them and their parents about the protection they can get at school and so on to create a safe environment?**

**Dr. G.** Sure. Bullying is about finding a target who appears vulnerable to the aggressor. Bullies are often uncomfortable or insecure with themselves. It makes them feel better to find somebody that seems more vulnerable and focus on the victim's differences. Bullying is about scapegoating and stereotyping. This represents essentially what bullying is about. It is important for parents to find out the real reason why their child does not want to go to school, why they are unhappy, etc. They need to be intuitive and perceptive. This is a good way to discover if their kid is being bullied. To avoid overparenting, it is important to give the child tools to allow them to respond themselves. However, if it is more serious, the staff including the administration of the school have a responsibility to make sure that their school is a safe environment for everyone. With these situations, the parent has to take action and needs to inform the administration of what is going on. These steps will bring the bullying issue to the attention of the authorities. The parent has to be aware of the culture of the school because unfortunately some academic institutions ignore the unhealthy climate or even support the aggressors. It has to be a top priority for parents to make sure that their children are happy in their formative years and if they have to, the kid might need to change school.

The main consequences of bullying among children are: nightmares, anxiety, fear, insomnia, psychosomatic symptoms (stomach aches, breathing problems,...), attention deficit, low concentration (which will of course have an impact on the grades in school), aggressive behavior (some bullies even have been victims of violence and do not know how to deal with their pain and frustration appropriately so they lash out on other people), depression and low self-esteem. Some of these consequences can also be found among teenagers and young adults. In the most serious cases among these two groups, some may be even more prone to suicide. It is important to add that the human brain is not fully developed until the age of 30, so psychological violence can be really detrimental to minors.

Again, it is important for parents to grasp in what academic environment their children are really in. Sadly, it happens that a school as a system decides that a certain kid will be a C student and whatever the child does, nothing will not change!

**P.T. They do not believe in the child.**

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**Dr. G.** Exactly! The kid has been permanently labeled. Regarding the impact of bullying, I would like to add that the consequences depend on when it started. There is so much pressure for kids to fit in especially during adolescence. Teenagers might start to feel badly about themselves if they are not part of the in-crowd, for instance. The victims internalize what the bullies say about them and it becomes the truth. They might think that there is something actually wrong with them. If they do not have close people who counteract these effects, it can be devastating because they are in their formative years and their identities are not fully developed yet. So, having a supportive family is really important. When you get older, you generally have more a sense of who you are. This is not the case for children and teenagers. They start to internalize what is being said to them and it can erode their self-esteem, or worse. They might have all kinds of reactions. Some will withdraw and become depressed. Others will fight and be angry because they do not want to hear negative things about them. These are the two most frequent responses. The driving part of all that is they come to believe in some ways they are actually deficient. This represents the destructive consequence of bullying. Unfortunately, some kids who feel it is their fault might feel embarrassed to talk about all this and will keep it to themselves. The long-term consequences are often really serious. Overall, bullying can create a lot of confusion for young people and they might feel bad about themselves most of the time.

**P.T.** Some young people are being [bullied](#) by their family members, so there is no real possibility of escape, especially if they are minors. What might be the long-term consequences for them?

**Dr. G.** Bullies can also feel badly about their own verbal [abuse](#) . At some point, they stop being in denial and they recognize what they are doing is not right. Some are ashamed of themselves, unless we are dealing with a psychopath with no conscience.

The long-term consequences are the same for the victims. Just like in schools, some are being bullied, scapegoated and put in a special position in the family where they are being labeled: “she is the smart one, he is the dumb one and she is the trouble-maker”. Once that is set, it becomes a label. The other family members will not disrupt the system because they do not want to become the new scapegoat. So, it becomes easier for them to just put their heads in the sand and let the status quo remain.

**P.T.** The same phenomenon happens in schools. Some kids see what is going on but will not interfere because they do not want to become the new scapegoat.

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**Dr. G.** Exactly! For them, it is just easier not to say anything. Bullying in families can manifest in different ways, and can be combined with physical assaults including sexual abuses. I have a case in mind regarding the family dynamics where the woman was being sexually abused by her father. She was picked on all the time and her mother did not say anything. The patient did not accept that the mother did not defend and protect her. There are two things that happen most of the time: the child goes on to become, a high achiever, like Bill Clinton, Obama or Ford (their fathers practically abandoned them) or they do not achieve anything later in life. They had to succeed extraordinarily to undo their negative self-worth. The female that I was talking about earlier became a very successful businesswoman (she achieved more professionally than the other siblings) but all the family members knew that the father was always picking on her. Nobody stood up for her. The mother was scared to end up in the street with her children because she was not financially independent.

When a child or a teenager is being [abused](#) the consequences can manifest in different ways, for some their marks will go down, and so on. The parents have to be astute and ask the right questions to find out what is really going on. If a kid was an A student and there is a sudden change, the parent has to notice this; same thing with the teachers.

Teenagers can try to find the wrong escape given that they are not in control of their environment. They might start to hang out with gangs or spend time with people who have a bad self-image. To the extreme, some will run away or will take drugs or alcohol to numb their pain. About the negative self-image, I would like to add this happens also with divorce, no matter what the parent says to the child. I mean even when parents repeatedly tell the child it is not his/her fault; it happens that the kid will feel otherwise on an emotional level. As you read in my résumé, you know that have a long clinical practice with people who have addiction. Often, I discovered that their problems with toxic substances started early in life when their parents split up. They felt that the separation was due to them, some were A students -- a good athlete and so on -- and things went down afterward. Or again, the opposite occurs: they become high achievers.

**P.T.** We often see this phenomenon in the entertainment industry. Many artists who were abandoned by their fathers for instance became high achievers.

**Dr. G.** Definitely! I am thinking about Billy Joel for instance. I can also give an example from another field. I am thinking about Steve Jobs. Often, these people are making a statement with their success. Others will become depressed and will act violently physically and/or verbally



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because of the rejection they felt growing up.

**P.T.** [Bullies](#) grow up and can be in position of power. Often, they will harass their employees, for instance. Some will even try to [destroy](#) careers and in some cases they will unfortunately succeed doing it. What advice do you have for their victims and how can they protect themselves from these people?

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. It is true! There is no simplistic solution. Bullying at work is a power relationship and to step outside might be difficult. If people have an option or a choice, he/she has power or freedom. Some individuals have the possibility to find another job. Others have the choice to stay by saying to themselves, it is only temporary, or the harasser will not be there forever. It is important to assess the situation and take serious decisions, especially if your own health is at stake. If the person feels trapped forever, it might become really unhealthy. Often, people who commit suicide for instance, feel they have no options. I have heard or read studies about people who jumped from a bridge and survived. Most of the time, they realised there were solutions to their problems. So, to recognize there are options or choices is important. You may not like them, but it makes life tolerable. This represents the first step. The second thing is even bullies have people on top of them. So, it is important to know the organization chart of the company you are working for. The bullies might respond to the pressures from their own bosses and/or the human resources department if you denounce the situation. When I was working in a Navy hospital, we had about four patients who narrated the same story of their recruiting office. They complained about the man who was running this office. So, we had to speak to his boss to make sure there would be a change. In fact, it happened that we had in our practice to talk to someone two or three levels higher than the bully. Some organizations are sick and will maintain the status quo, others reluctantly will fire the problematic boss but for them it will be a way to admit they made a mistake.

Earlier, I mentioned how some individuals feel stuck and believe they have no options. Often, I like to give the example of the athlete George Blanda to people who are chronically negative. I am talking about individuals who feel they did not have a fair chance in life. Blanda is a professional football player. He has a deformation and despite that, he holds a record in his field. His parents didn't cuddle him growing up.

**P.T.** Nor “[overparent](#)” him, I guess!

**Dr. G.** Exactly! They encouraged and pushed him to be successful. They told him on a regular



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basis to do the best with what he has. I think it is a great story and there are many others like that out there. As a psychiatrist, I believe that it is important for people to assess their options. It happens that some individuals feel they do not have choices. It is not always the case, and sometimes it is a question of being flexible and be open to new possibilities.

**P.T. More than ever there is sick leave because of work in Western countries. How do you explain the increase of this phenomenon over the last few decades? What preventive advice do you have as a specialist for [mental health](#) ?**

**Dr. G.** About the sick leave, I do not know the details. I mean I do not know if the phenomenon is due to more liberal work policies adopted by companies: are they allowing more sick leaves to their employees? Or, they give the opportunities for more access to alternative treatments such acupuncture or massage. Maybe, there is some of that. I also believe that a shift occurred in terms of the work ethic. In addition, there is a change regarding how employees see their companies. It is not the norm anymore that you work for 40 years for GM for instance and then you retire. In fact, the sense of bilateral loyalty between both parties does not really exist anymore. There is no sense that the company will take care of you if you take care of them. That is gone for most people. There may be loyalty toward the boss but this is different. Something else also occurred. It happens more and more that people have multiple careers. Recently, I read an article in The Wall Street Journal. It was about a second career which occurred during retirement. They gave the example of an old surgeon teaching aging fellow members to become general practitioners because their physical surgical skills are not in the same shape as before, but they still have the knowledge.

Life is about balance. So, seeking this is the best advice I can give. There are books such as *Monkey Business*

and *Young Money*

by Kevin Roose that are about the sacrifices made by young people who worked at Wall Street, etc. They have to deal with a great number of work hours, uncivilized and arbitrary bosses with great demands. A few of the young workers were able to go through this whereas others could not.

**P.T. I think this example is really interesting because it explains the rise of sick leave on the job market. In addition, I heard about people in their 20s who were working at Wall Street and died of a heart attack because of the stress.**

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**Dr. G.** Exactly! Others will use drugs and alcohol to cope with all this. They get a great salary just after they leave college. There is pressure to perform and the price to pay is severe, because they do not have an outside life.

**P.T.** Do you think that the new technology encourages a much faster rhythm at work and has an effect on the health of employees?

**Dr. G.** I do not believe it is just related to this. I have to go back again to overparenting. Some [parents](#) put pressure on the child to do things during a quick period because they think they do not have the option to do it in their spare time.

I think that everything is so organized that kids have less time to themselves and maybe less freedom. They go to school, have tutors, go to sport events, etc. They have no time just to sit back and think. Back in the days, it was not like that. I could play with my friends all day during my childhood and we didn't have much adult supervision. There were fewer risks also at the time. Being too structured can kill the opportunity to be creative. As I was saying, there is no balance in this way of doing things and the same goes for the job market.

**P.T.** It makes me think of the army where everything is regimented.

**Dr. G.** It is worse than that because at the army, soldiers have free time. In many settings, there is a pressure to do something all the time. It is like overparenting again. You always have someone tell you what to do, how to do it and so on. Some parents want their children for instance, to become a great baseball athlete, because it was their dream growing up and they want to live it through their kids. This is a great burden they put on the shoulders of their infants especially if they do not have any interest in this sport or do not want to master it. To go back to your question regarding sick leave, there are more articles now about people who need more sleep. There was also a macho mindset in the past where people claimed that five hours of sleep was sufficient.

**P.T.** Decades ago, there was no talk about parenting difficulties like now with workshops and so on regarding parenting skills. What happened? Are we in this situation because the village is not there anymore? I am referring to the famous quote: "it takes a village to

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**raise a child”.**

**Dr. G.** One reason for this is we are seeing the breakdown of the extended family. Maybe sixty years ago or more, people lived closer to where they grew up. So the relatives were around to help you raise your child. With this support, you learned easier how to take care of your children by observing. Often people married someone from their neighborhood with similar backgrounds and mindsets. Now, people who have total different subcultures (of all kinds: religion, social class, etc. in other words, heterogeneity) become couples and then the differences come out. Some are able to deal with them and for others it can be a serious issue. The fact is that some of them do not get support from their relatives. This might create isolation.

Things can be even more complicated in divorce cases, because when parents get separated, the one who does not have custody might have less control on what is going on with his or her child. For instance, if the parent has questionable friends, etc. When divorced parents do not communicate with each other well and disagree on almost everything, it can be very difficult to handle at the expense of the children. It happens that the other parent for example will let the kid go to bed at 3 a.m. As long as the child goes to school and is not abused, little can be done. This is why classes on parenting are useful. The divorce rise favored the increase of parenting classes and workshops. Sometimes, parents prefer to turn to these classes for advice instead of talking to their own parents because they did not agree with the way they were disciplined by them. Others will even choose to do the complete opposite by hardly disciplining their children.

It can take a village to raise children, but it facilitates things when it was the village where you grew up with. Decades ago, when children misbehaved, parents would know quickly about it because neighbors looked after them. Now, it is the opposite; people do not want to intrude or get involved.

**P.T.** The youth period has lengthened over time. Do you think that over-parenting has been influenced partially by Western culture where it seems that people become adults (with family responsibilities and so on) later (because people study longer, enter the job market later, etc.) in life compared to decades ago when people got married sooner and created families earlier?

**Dr. G.** I think it is both and other factors are involved. In my day, when you decided to go to college, it represented a demarcation point in life of how you would do financially.

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**P.T. You went to an Ivy League also.**

**Dr. G.** I went to Yale for my psychiatry and I went first to other colleges such as Northwestern University. It is important to say that there was no college ranking like now back in my days. The demarcation line was obtaining a graduate degree.

Another phenomenon occurred -- birth control. It made a big difference for women. They did not have to marry the first person with whom they had sex with. Before the arrival of the pills, this was the social mindset. If a college guy got his girlfriend pregnant, he had to drop out, work, and so on to support his family. The pill gave more options to both genders. When we think about the time women have their first child, decades ago if you were 30 and were not a mother, it was considered too late. Now, women have children in their 40s. We live longer and things changed. The time frame expanded. In addition, the push to have many kids is not there anymore. Decades ago, when women went to college, the main goal was to find a husband. Now, they will wait to build a career first. When I think again about the overparenting book, adults want to have it right in every way (the right school, the right job, etc.) and not make mistakes, especially when they do not have many children like before. If the couples have several kids, then it is easier to accept that each kid is different, and it will not be a big deal if they do not all become college graduates. However, when they have fewer children, they have the tendency to put more pressure. If the children do not succeed it will be like a bad reflection on them.

The social pressure is also a factor. We hear constantly about the difficulties related to the economy, about jobs going overseas, so people feel they have to be the most equipped academically and so on to get the best opportunities. There is also a paradox. More than 50% of college students take five years to complete their degrees. This was not the case in the past. They want to take time to figure out their interests, to explore, etc. Before, we had to complete our degrees fast and enter the job market. Now, this sense of urgency is not present.

**P. T.** I started university when I was 18 and if my parents had let me skip another grade when I was younger, I would have started when I was 17. Years later, I realised that I could have taken a year off to travel, etc.□

**Dr. G.** I understand. It could have been an opportunity to grow differently.

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**P.T. Everybody can benefit from travelling, but I think politicians and psychiatrists especially need to travel to understand other cultures, customs, etc.**

**Dr. G.** Absolutely! I believe it is important to set flexible goals for yourself because there is never a guarantee that it will happen. The same thing is true about overparenting. A balance is always important. Children have to be able to make their choices. It is unhealthy to leave no room for your kids to express what they want for themselves. If you are open, they will come to you and talk to you about it.

**P.T. How else do you explain the over-parenting phenomenon? Is one of the reasons the fact that some young people get into more serious trouble than decades before? Did over-parenting started in the Sixties in the U.S. when sex, drugs and rock and roll ruled the day. In addition, do the media create a certain level of phobia among some parents by exposing disturbing problems that some youth are dealing with these days?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. There are several factors involved. In the 60s, parental control rebounded. Parents believed they knew everything, but the kids rebelled. It was part of the essence of the radical movements of the sixties. It did not go anywhere or very far. Many of these radicals later became professors and these academics took over the universities.

In the past, parents had their rules and you needed to respect them. They held the truth and children could not negotiate. Now, everything is being negotiated and parents want to be friends with their kids. This phenomenon compounded with divorce. I see it in my practice. Some parents with part time custody of their children will make sure their kids have a good time with them because they want to be certain their children will want to come back. In these circumstances, it is hard to discipline them, because if they do, the children will feel they are having a bad time and will not be eager to return.

My generation grew up with drugs and when we become parents, we are trying to instill rules that we broke. We are being put in a duplicitous role. You know as an adult about the consequences, but it puts you in a delicate position given that you did the same thing when you were younger. In the sixties, we had access to pills, so sex was not a big deal like before.

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The media creates phobia, to a certain extent. The media makes a big deal about a lot of things, especially negative news. So, it makes people become overprotective. I observed that the most worried are grandparents. In addition, when people have fewer children, they have more time and can become overprotective.

**P.T. You wrote in *The Overparenting Epidemic* that if fathers took paternity leave more often, overparenting would decrease. Can you elaborate on that? In addition, you penned that California became the first state offering six weeks paid leave. In your opinion as a psychiatrist how much weeks should the entire country offer to improve the health of American families?**

**Dr. G.** For some men when they were married, they were part-time fathers because they were busy with their careers. When the woman is the only one really taking care of the children (and if she has her own career, she ends up with two shifts), it can be overwhelming for her and overparenting might occur. After a separation, some men realise how much time is required to take care of children. They become more understanding about what it takes to raise kids and what their former spouse went through. They become more involved. It is sad that it took a separation to make this happen. Their experiences change when they get involved in childrearing. I cannot really comment about the number of weeks people should get for parental paid leave. I think it is more about making it a priority as a parent. In my clinical experiences, I observed that for addiction programs, parents who are high level executives make the time to be present for their children, whereas others with less demanding jobs, do not. Some parents can be on paid leave for years and yet do nothing at home.

**P.T. Researchers Wallerstein and Kelly noticed that “four-fifths of the youngest children (of divorced parents) studied were not provided with either an adequate explanation or assurance of continued care. In effect, they awoke one morning to find one parent gone”. How can adults prepare their children properly for a divorce or separation? There are parents, once they got divorced; they divorce from their children also. What advice do you have for parents to help them create a lasting relationship with their offspring?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. There is a lot in that question. I met Wallerstein. Regarding the researchers you named, they wrote in their books that whatever the extent of negativity the spouses have between them, as long as they stay and live together, the children will think the nature of the relationship concerning the parents is normal. So, they are shocked when the divorce occurs and this is when they realize how bad things were. In my practice, I noticed that for several kids who were high achievers at school and/or in sports, their performance declined years before the separation, because of the tension in the house. They internalized the negativity and became

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worried. Despite this, they will always be shocked when the divorce happens. The authors you named wrote in their books that there is never an adequate discussion with the children to prepare them for the divorce, whatever the parents say to them. All the parents can do is say that the separation is not about them but about the fact that mom and dad cannot get along, while reminding them that they are loved

There are kids who will be very affected by the divorce, their world will feel chaotic. There are children who feel they are between two houses and think they do not really have a place. They need a lot of support. The parents can make their children feel it is their place by letting them decide about the color of their bedrooms, for instance. This will make them feel that they are part of the home.

Unfortunately, some people divorce from their spouse, but from their children too. Sometimes it is the other parent who is not mature enough to keep the marital difficulties they had to themselves, they manipulate the children who feel they have to take a side. The kids should not be put in this position. Some parents feel they have no control on how the other former mate influences the children to be against them. In other words, they alienate the kids from them.

Parents need to understand who their children are, what is important to them according to their age. At some point in their lives, they may be drawn to athletic activities. Later, it could be toward artistry, and this is okay. Evolution is part of life. It is important to support them in their interests. They need to feel that you are interested in them, whatever they do. This is what the relationship is all about. What is important is to establish a healthy relationship.

**P.T. When I read *The Overparenting Epidemic*, I thought about parents who violate the boundaries of their children even when they become adults. You wrote about some parents who even police their children by hiring a private investigator. They can also adopt this approach when their children are studying overseas. Once on Oprah's Talk show, they showcased an American mother who was following her 27 year old daughter with her car. How do you explain these controlling behaviors by some parents (in other words, what usually motivate them to react that way)? What are their typical psychological profiles? Are they usually prone to control other areas of life such as being a boss who micromanages their employees or who will hire a private detective to spy on their mates because they suspect them from adultery for instance?**

**Dr. G.** About the first part of your question, for example I knew a business man who had a big



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enterprise to take care of. He had adult children in their twenties overseas. He managed to put a tracker on his son's car, like in a CSI show.

**P.T. [Laughs].**

**Dr. G.** He called me once to let me know that his son was not in his room studying but was in a bar. I told him you are paying me to take care of your kid. Don't you have thousands of employees to supervise?

**P.T. [Laughs out loud].**

**Dr. G.** I told him the most important thing for his son is to pass his exams and not the daily micromanagement. I believe it is a dynamic that installed itself years ago. It is a two-way process. For instance, there are kids who will text their parents right away (even before the end of the class) and complain about a teacher who gave them an unsatisfactory grade. They will say the teacher does not like them. Occasionally, parents call the teacher or the school and will ask, "Why are you picking on my child?" instead of assessing the situation as a whole to see if the kid really studied for the exam, for example. Some will even remind the school that they are a donor or they paid a great deal the tuition for the private school and they expect that their kids are well taken care of. All this is really about people who have self-esteem issues of their own or insecurities issues. They do not trust themselves. So, they do not trust their child. If you raised your kids with the right values, you should be confident that things will be fine when your children are on their own.

**P.T. I think also some parents are not capable to let their children go figuratively speaking.**

**Dr. G.** Interesting!

**P.T. Are these parents only controlling in the family setting, or do they have the tendency to micromanage their employees and so on?**

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**Dr. G.** It depends. Some people are bossy, domineering, overcontrolling (whatever you want to call it) in every area of their lives and yet others will only behave this way in certain aspects of their lives, or will react that way just at home because this is what is important to them. Some people are great doctors, but when they come home, they will have no patience if things are not in order, because they feel they gave enough of themselves at work. Some adults do not have a life, and their child becomes the center of it. Often their life is measured by their kid's success. If their child goes to Harvard, to them it means they are a good parent. If their kid gets a B, it means they are a bad parent. This puts a lot of pressure on the child (whether it is what the kid wants or not) and it is unfair. If their child is not a baseball star, it means to the parents they are defective if they highly value this sport.

I have seen parents micromanage their children so much that they do not let them be a normal kid. Others have high aspirations for their children and they expect them to fulfill it. Some even lash out toward the child and become abusive. In my book, I give the example of a man who delegated the academic part to his wife, and if she did not make sure that their kid was an A student, he blamed her. So, the child got caught in the expectations and hopes of their parents.

For other areas, once people start to hire a private detective, it means he/she can do it in any other sphere of their lives. They might do it for work, spy on their life partner, etc. Some entrepreneurs hire a detective to get an investigative report before they conclude a business deal.

The parents need to value their children before they are old enough to do it themselves. This will help them to internalize positive things about themselves. Studies were done with concentration camps survivors. In several cases, it was found that in spite of the horrible situation they were in, they managed to find something positive among the guards. For example, some prisoners painted the face of the guards' favorite uncle or grandfather. It resonated with them that they were able to do something they were not supposed to. In fact, it was unusual. So, it always helps to find qualities in people and the same thing goes for parents.

**P.T.** I do not have siblings but I observed that one of the worst things parents can do is to compare their children.

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**Dr. G.** Definitely! It would be like saying who your favorite kid is. Comparing children is terrible for everybody. The same thing is true regarding what I said earlier about scapegoats in families. Some may appear complacent, complicit or indifferent because they are not saying anything, but they do not want to be associated with anything negative. They do not want to be defined that way.

**P.T.** There are parents out there who are unable to treat their adult children as men or women. In fact, they really never heard or saw them while they don't even consider their needs. What advice do you have for adult children who want to have boundaries with their controlling parents? Again, some parents cannot simply let go their children figuratively speaking when they become adults. What advice do you have for these parents?

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. It is hard to see people change. It is difficult also for kids to see their parents aging. Some became caregivers for their parents who were strong, vibrant and vital. It can be even upsetting for certain people. For parents, it is partially a control issue (some adults will control the relationship with their children by offering money to buy a car for instance). Certain parents feel they know best because of their experience: "Let me tell you how it is done". Nobody likes being told what to do, especially when it was not solicited. People can have this feeling toward an employer, a friend, etc. Once children become adults, parents need to be able to take a step back. Unfortunately, for some it is not easy to do that. For instance, adult children can tell their parents "I love you, but I will only take one call from you per day" or "I am busy at work," and so on. They have to find a way to say to their parents that they need some space. There is a comedy movie entitled *The Guilt Trip* with Barbra Streisand. She plays an aging Jewish mother. Her son needs help with his career. She goes to a job interview with him. After, all of the sudden, she gets a life and things change. Unfortunately, it happens in real life. There are parents who go to job interviews with their children to make sure they will perform. Others will write their kids' school essays, etc. It creates dependency and it can impact children's self-esteem because they will feel that they are not able to make a decision before checking with their parents. There is a fusion happening in these relationships (it is known in psychology that fused relationships can lead to codependency) sometimes and it makes the reliance stronger. Again, the parents' job is to give life skills and tools to their children because they will need to find their way in the world.

If you are stuck and you acknowledge it, you will ask the person you feel is the best suited to provide you advice. If you let your kid go, you will have to go on with your life but to do this, you need to have one. Unfortunately for certain parents, their entire life was to raise their kids, and once their children grow up, they do not know their roles and identities anymore. If you had a career and you gave it up, what do you do now? How do you pick up and start over? A transition is required but often they do not know how to adapt their relationships with their adult

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children. It can even be more difficult when the parent only has one child.

**P.T. For years, I did not understand why people would elope without telling their parents. But with time, I came to realise that in some cases, if they did not do this, they would never get married, because their parents are too controlling.**

**Dr. G.** Or the parents will never like anybody the children bring home. Eloping is impulsive but some adult children might think it is the thing to make a stand, because their parents do not listen to them.

**P.T. Is there a link between a symbiotic relationship and overparenting? Some parents have no boundaries; they can even get involved in their children's love life whatever their age without their consent and in some cases behind their backs they will adopt over controlling or sabotaging behavior. What advice do you have for adult children who are stuck in these unhealthy relationships with their parents?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. The adult needs to remind their parents they love them but they have to make their own decisions. It can be difficult but they have to be courageous. I have seen parents go to the extent of running a background investigation on their child's partner. I do not think there is much difference between a symbiotic relationship and overparenting. Symbiotic is a more psychological and/or psychiatric pathological term which starts basically in early development. A symbiotic aspect of a relationship can start as early after giving birth, for example. Overparenting is more moderate and less morbid. It represents a spectrum or a scale issue. Most people are somewhere in the middle. But some will be at the extreme, and this is the stage of overparenting. It can happen after an event. For instance, if a kid gets hurt during football, in certain parents it can trigger the will to become overinvolved and intrusive. It is about the idea of the parent knowing better than the child, and rarely listening to the kid. The later step is, "it is my money and I do not want someone that I do not approve to profits from it." Certain parents again will use money to control their kids, and some will even utilize the inheritance issue. This kind of mindset can also be a reflection on them. Parents might me unsure that they raised their kids well, so they doubt their children's judgement. Other adults can feel guilty because they did not spend enough time to educate their kids correctly. It is healthier to speak directly to the child if you have suspicions regarding the partner, for instance, instead of going behind his/her back because you feel you know what is best.

**P.T. What message do you have for parents who have difficulty loving or accepting their**

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### **children for who they are?**

**Dr. G.** I think about stepparents who have stepchildren being raised by somebody else. They have different backgrounds. It is important to see the qualities in the child whether it is your own child or a stepchild. A common interest that you can share is also beneficial. As a parent, it is your responsibility to do this. You have to adapt to your children. For example, one of our children loves to take walks. It is not activity I would choose first, but given that it brought him joy, I do it and appreciate the moment we spend talking. It gives us quality time. He likes going to restaurants. Thanks to him, I discovered sushi and I like its taste. He also loves learning languages and we encourage that.

**P.T.** I have the feeling that you did not push your children to take a certain path. Certain parents for instance, would like their child to be a physician and nothing else. They do not even think about what their kids are interested in or do not consider their aptitudes.

**Dr. G.** In these situations, everybody loses and will be disappointed. The children do not have the freedom to choose what they love and excel while the parents insist for their kids to embrace a profession in which they have no interest. It is important for parents to be flexible. At some point in their lives, their children might be interested in sport, for example, and later it might be travelling. People change and kids are no different. Now, more than ever it is not unusual that an adult will have had three different careers by retirement. So, as a parent it is not constructive to try to pigeonhole your children.

**P.T.** In *The Overparenting Epidemic* you penned that diagnoses of childhood [mental disorders](#) have increased as children's free-play options have declined. Does that mean the youth is being medicated more than ever and other solutions are not enough explored? In addition, given that children are now more sedentary than before with all the technologies: computers and so on, in your practice which health consequences (such as obesity) have you observed among youth? This sedentary lifestyle can create less socialising with other children because they often play less together outside. Did you notice in your practice more problems among minors regarding social skills?□

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. In today's age, there are so many diagnoses. If something happens, the person will receive a diagnosis. It started a lot with ADDs (attention deficit disorders). Boys mature differently than girls. If they are distracted in courses, speak to their friends and do not

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concentrate enough, they get labeled. It is not considered that things can change later in life and the child will behave more seriously afterward. I believe there is an over-prescription and over-diagnosed of ADD, etc. Before teachers knew children better. Now, often schools are overfilled, and teachers do not have time because they are overloaded. If kids misbehave twice, they will be sent to the nurse. If the nurse does not resolve the situation, then perhaps the kid will be thrown out of school and will end up in an alternative school, for example. People won't necessarily take the time to see what is really happening with the child: is there problem at home, etc.? If teachers had more time for children and if parents spent more time with their kids (because in some cases, they just dump their children at school and expect the system to take care entirely of their education), I believe the outcome would be different. The medication of the child becomes a simple solution instead of using family counseling, tutoring, etc. At times, the parents are overwhelmed and do not give the right structure that the child needs. Certain professionals also have a lot on their plates. For instance, there are psychiatrists who will see more than 40 people a day, so this means they spend about 15 minutes with each patient. Some will prescribe medication after the consultation, but with children, medication is not necessarily the right approach. The therapeutic aspect is neglected. Some psychiatrists prescribe medication to manage behavior, like antipsychotics, which make the child respond quickly to rules, etc. But, it can also make them more sedentary.

In our era, kids play with computers and their cell phones instead of playing outside. This is how problems like obesity occur, that you already mentioned. In addition, medication might cause that. Children are less involved with other people because they are caught up with their electronic toys. Sadly, it becomes a vicious cycle. Of course, they lack social skills given that they are not playing with other kids. It often creates in them a will where they want to be entertained instead of going outside, being playful and taking initiatives. They expect being told what to do, and it becomes a problem for everybody. The kid can be lost. Some are more withdrawn and isolated. So, they do not know how to take care of themselves given that everything is planned for them. It creates dependency and this also can be related to overparenting. We see situations where children will play with their iPhones at the dinner table, instead of interacting with the rest of the family.

**P.T. We observe an increase in diseases among young people like diabetes type 2, which can be related to a sedentary lifestyle and being overweight.**

**Dr. G.** Definitely! Moreover, eating junk food does not help either.

**P.T. You wrote in The Overparenting Epidemic that the issue of overparenting is not strictly an American phenomenon but in China for example, parents tend to focus too**

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**much attention on their only child given that the government enforced a one-child-per-family law. Based on your knowledge and your clinical practice, did you notice that overparenting is a phenomenon more common in families with one child or the number of kids do not make a difference?**

**Dr. G.** The more kids you have, the less time you have to overparent. Sometimes, when parents have children years after the oldest ones, they have a tendency to overparent because they feel they have to get it right this time. Some divorced parents also behave that way because they sense that they have to make it up to the child. When you just have one child, it is easier to focus solely on that kid.

**P.T.** You wrote in *The Overparenting Epidemic* that despite of some progress in terms of Civil Rights and so on there are still people who suffer from their [differences](#)

. Youths are more vulnerable to this and some even killed themselves because of it.

There are still people who have no clue about Anne Frank,

[Malala Yousafzai](#)

or who never heard about books such as

*Black Like Me*

whatever their age and level of education. Gaining these types of information can help more people to understand one another. What can be done in the society to include more consciousness and awareness. In addition, what schools can do to help inclusiveness in the educational system?

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. I think it is more a global question. The idea of inclusiveness is great. Knowing the stories of Malala and others are important for all of us as human beings. Awareness programs can be useful. It can be interesting to have diverse parents talk about their lives in their original country. My grandkids at school are immersed in programs like that. The parents bring meals from their nations and talk about that to the children. A friend of mine passed away recently. He was Jewish and lived during the Holocaust in Poland when he was 13. Fortunately for him, he was able to run away and he was very resilient. For the last twenty years of his life, he went to schools to educate people regarding Jewish history and shared his experience. His parents were successful and wealthy when the Nazis came into power. He saw Nazis kill his sister. My friend spoke to kids from all ages and religions. It makes it more real when someone shares his experience, instead of learning about it in a book. This is what gets children's attention. Overall, I think this is what needs to be done.

**P.T.** I think [physicians](#) are among the most interesting authors because they



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**understand society and have a lot of knowledge. Recently, I watched Black Like Me on DVD. In it I learned that at some point in his life, John Griffin was supposed to study medicine in France. I knew he was blind before his experience in the Deep South but I had no idea it was for ten years. In addition, for a while he was paralysed because of spinal malaria. The prognosis was unknown and miraculously he recovered. I think he was among the greatest American philanthropists. His experiment was not about money. He did not make a lot of profit, he was not a businessman. His experience in the Deep South that he shared in his book gave a rich heritage to the United States and to the world. A biopic about his life should be made.**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. This is really interesting!

**P.T.** Given that my webmag is about diversity and that we live more and more in a mixed community, to what extent does the bible of psychiatrists, the DSM-V (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), lend importance to ethno-psychiatry?

**Dr. G.** This last version of this book talks about the importance of considering the cultural background of the individual before deciding on the diagnosis. It is a start but it probably sounds like lip service. I also think political correctness goes sometimes over the top. For instance, sometimes a culture will be used to justify aggressive behavior or hostile communication by saying it is part of the person's traditional background. It is important to bring nuances in assessments and use the collaboration of other mental health professionals, ideally who are part of different cultural backgrounds, to validate certain findings.

Cross-cultural psychiatry is a division of psychiatry regarding the cultural context of mental disorders and the challenges of addressing ethnic diversity in psychiatric services. It is also important to contextualize the individual by considering that each culture has its subcultures, social classes, etc., when a bio-psychosocial assessment of the patient and a treatment plan need to be done.

**P.T.** You provide information in **Blending families** about how children can react to the arrival of a new sibling. What is the best way to prepare a child from a traditional family or any other type of family for a baby to prevent feelings of abandonment, jealousy, resentment and so on?

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**Dr. G.** It is important to talk to children about what is happening, the changes that will occur and to make sure they get involved in the process. Ask them for instance to choose a color for the baby's room and encourage them to play with the baby. In other words, be inclusive. It is important also for parents to spend time individually with each child. Be affectionate with all your kids not just with the baby. It will help them avoid feeling abandoned or resentful. They will also feel more secure.

**P.T.** I remember once I saw a Canadian documentary where the parents had a biological son and decided to adopt a Chinese baby. Viewers could tell that on the boy's face he was not happy. He probably questioned why he was not enough for his parents.

**Dr. G.** Interesting! This is an ongoing issue which takes different forms. In terms of gender, for instance, it happens that parents have a boy and all of the sudden they get a girl. Sometimes, the boy asks why he was not enough or even question if he was good enough. It is important for parents to treat their children equally.

**P.T.** Some parents make the decision to divorce when the children become adults. You wrote in your book **Blending families** that at any age the children are affected by the separation. How is the impact different at each stage: childhood, teenage years and young adults?

**Dr. G.** There is always an impact. For young adults, it can be upsetting if they perceived their parents' relationship as very stable. Or they might understand the reason of the separation intellectually, but they won't grasp it emotionally. They might ask themselves why their parents could work things out in the past but cannot work things out now. Sometimes, they handle the situation by avoiding both parents. It is difficult for them to see that the foundation of their life is fractured. Often, teenagers will internalize what happened and will feel that the separation of their parents was their fault. Some think that if they were different, the parents would stay together. They can feel that way even if their parents tell them otherwise. As I said before, they might start to hang around with the wrong crowd and with people who also feel bad about themselves. Others will start abusing substances, etc. For little kids, the separation can be really disruptive because consistency is even more crucial in their lives. They also internalize the situation and feel it is their fault. They can think that if they were more lovable and so on, then the divorce would not have occurred. They have the tendency to think something is wrong with them.

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**P.T. I will always remember what a young man shared with me on the day of his birthday. He was alone spending time in a bookstore and I asked him what he was doing there by himself on his birthday. He told me that he didn't want to upset his parents if he chose to spend the day with one of them. I could tell he felt torn. What parents can do to prevent these kinds of delicate situations?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. The bottom line is that parents need to behave like adults and put their differences aside for their children. Parents are supposed to be the mature ones in the relationship. Even if they do not get along, they have to find a way to make things right for the kids. For instance, I know a young man who had to visit his parents in separate rooms during his graduation. The biological parents had acrimony and were never able to work on their issues. They didn't really move on. You need to do what is in the best interest of the child. It is not up to the kid to shrink to make their parents comfortable.

**P.T. There are patients who are caught in toxic relationships and some are physically violated. It happens that some are ashamed to tell the truth to their physicians and will even lie about how they have been hit, for instance. What message as a psychiatrist do you have for them?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. If patients keep things to themselves, nothing will change and their abusive situation might get worse.

**P.T. Sometimes they are afraid of the consequences of speaking out.**

**Dr. G.** Definitely! Some patients might be afraid of being beaten again, etc. Often, there is a history there. Some come from a dysfunctional family and were beaten during their childhood. They had no power over their situation. But when they become older they get caught up in another dysfunctional relationship because this is what they were used to. There is a pattern. They do not necessarily know the difference between a healthy relationship and an unhealthy one. Some, like children may even internalize what happens and feel it is their fault or that they deserved it because of the abuser's manipulation, so they will not be inclined to get help. Or, they will make excuses for the partner by saying he had a bad childhood, etc.

**P.T. There is so much to say. It is taboo for example the psychological and/or physical**

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**violence that some men go through. Many will not talk about it because they are scared that people will not take them seriously or that they will laugh at them.**

**Dr. G.** Definitely! It can be embarrassing for a man in the society to raise this issue. So, they prefer to not talk about it. This is true. If people grew up in a family where members were abusive, again, this is all they know. They are not used to more healthy communication. So, they come to think this is how people behave. If you grew in a family where verbal abuse and more were not tolerated, you know that it is not normal when this occurs. Sadly, there are people who grew up in abusive families who come to think that they are defective and deserved to be abused. It is important to talk about it, because then they will hear that what they are going through is not acceptable.

**P.T. With all the new technologies, at what age do you think it is appropriate for parents to let their children have a Facebook account and a cell phone? Do not hesitate to explain why.**

**Dr. G.** It is difficult to pinpoint a specific age when young children can have a Facebook account and a cell phone. I do not believe it is appropriate for kids to call or text their parents during class, for example. I think for instance it is okay for twelve-year-olds to occasionally have a cell phone with them when they are going to the movies, to be able to call if they need a ride or something. It is appropriate for safety. This is different than having a cell phone all the time. In some cases, the will comes from peer pressure. There are 10-year-olds who want a cell phone just because all of his/her friends have one.

It is good to give accountabilities to children. If teenagers want a cell phone all the time, it is good to give them the responsibility of paying a monthly amount. Then they will learn a sense of duty and will understand that it is not solely about their rights. They will respect the time limits because they will have to pay the additional fees. They will be careful to not violate the monthly plan.

When children are old enough to use social media without monitoring, parents should start to educate them about the precautions to take about what they put online, given that for instance future employers might make an investigation on social media, etc. Of course children have to respect the legal age to register on Facebook, etc.

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**P.T.** It is known that [stress](#) can have a tremendous impact on health. In addition, studies show that the higher and more prolonged stress, the longer it takes to recover. Can you elaborate on how stress can affect mental health and what advice do you have in terms of prevention depending on the life stages?

**Dr. G.** I will answer your question more globally. Stress is often a normal response to an anxiety-provoking situation. It can happen in a foreign environment for instance, such as a jungle with wild animals. It is normal to react to this sort of situation. The problem is about what the person does overtime with abnormal, prolonged stress which can be detrimental.

You are mainly talking about chronic stress. If children are in a family where they are always worried if their parents will beat them, this will create a long-term stress situation. The same thing occurs with a woman who always has to worry if her partner will beat her.

Children who grow up in an abusive family will learn to function as if they will always get hit. They are walking in eggshells. With time, their outlooks in life might be pessimistic, and these feelings can stay with them for years. Depending on the gravity of the stress, individuals might experience insomnia, headaches, nightmares, etc. Chronicity may install after a grave situation and it could take the form of post-traumatic stress syndrome, for example.

Often, children with divorced parents feel that they are not in a safe place. Many times, they think the environment is not quite theirs even if you tell them they are home and you try to reassure them. Kids who have overprotective parents (and this what my book is about), when they do something on their own, their parents will criticise them for trying to accomplish something by themselves. So, when they try to initiate something, they have more anxiety more than a typical child. If the parents always remind the kid to check with them, the child will have a lack of confidence in the long-run. For example, in these situations these kids might immediately text their parents if they get a bad grade. Children will not learn to navigate through life easily if the parents do not give them the required tools. They won't know how to take responsibility for themselves and find their own solutions. They instead become nervous and expect the parent to come to their rescue. In these contexts, they will have the feeling that they are not able to take care of themselves. This is a real illustration of what overparenting does. Again, it can affect their self-esteem and even make them feel defective. When they become adults, these sentiments might manifest in different ways, such as an inability to take initiative, etc. It goes on both sides. Some kids will sit and reflect after getting a bad grade; they will grow from the experience. Others will immediately call the parents. If children say that the teacher does not like them, the parents then might say "I will take care of this". Instead, the parents should make kids take the responsibility if they fail because they didn't study enough. There is a very

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interesting book written by George Valliant, a psychiatrist and a Harvard professor. In 1938, he conducted a study to see how to create successful executives. For six years, the research studied 50 Harvard freshmen and/or sophomores to determine the main characteristics of people who are successful in their careers. For instance, Valiant assessed business executives and senators. They noticed that several were athletics -- you could see it visually with their broad shoulders, and so on. Valiant followed these people for decades after 1938. The researchers spoke to their roommates, family members, teachers, etc. The author realised that their physicality was not instrumental to their success, but they had good life hygiene: they didn't smoke or drink alcohol. It gave them a lot of strength and resilience to overcome obstacles, including bad parenting. The problem is that children do not have a choice (some adults have the choice and do not take it) and kids can be stuck with bad and highly stressful relationships. The longer they are exposed, the longer it will take to heal. Some children unfortunately can become abusers later in life and will not be able to break the dysfunctional cycle. Others will have internalized the abuse they were exposed to growing up and will be affected forever. Some will be able to overcome it by seeking professional help, for instance. Others will be stuck in different spheres of their life or in some of them. The effects will be different depending on the individual and whatever their life stages. There is no simple resolution.

Overall, stress can be positive and negative. Having stress because you are going for the first trip in your life overseas is good stress. But bad stress can affect the body and the mind. Whatever the age, the severity may be different depending on the person and to what he/she was exposed to. The most important thing to limit the effects is to eliminate the amount of time of exposure as much as possible.

**P.T.** In recent decades, progressively there is questionable content (that would have been forbidden in the past) in the media and technology related mostly to drug, sex, foul language (including women denigrating themselves by using the b\* word for instance) and violence. There is also a tendency to dumb down the youth by not exposing them anymore to brilliant characters such as Alex P. Keaton from the 80s sitcom *Family Ties*. In addition, to my knowledge the female counterpart was never really created in a situation-comedy. If there was one, it has not been highly popular like Alex P. Keaton. Given that the media is the fourth power, as a psychiatrist what might be the effect on the youth when they are exposed to this unhealthy material, and how parents can protect them?

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. You make a really good point. I think the media makes many things appear normal. Little kids might be shocked to discover that when people die, they are really dead. They will not see them acting in another show. The media can create confusion between fiction and reality. People are exposed to a lot of violence with many deaths. It can be detrimental when

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children and teenagers are exposed to this. Many people, regardless of age, become desensitized to violence or bad behavior.

**P.T. I read once that by the age of 18, in average people in North America saw 18 000 murders on TV and that was a while ago. The statistics for younger people are probably also disturbing.**

**Dr. G.** I am not surprised to hear that. In addition, pretty much everything now is open to the public eye and we will see talk shows that encourage or accelerate the breakup of marriages for instance. About the gender issue, there are teens who are not adults yet and at 16 they see images that may influence them to make the decisions to change by becoming transgenders, etc. Often, young people find role models in the wrong places and they are not on TV which gives the illusion that you know the stars because they have access to American homes through the small screen.

There is still a glorification of people who are macho and athletic. There is not enough emphasis on valuing intellectualism. The media does not make it look cool to be knowledgeable. When some young people are being portrayed bright often he/she is a geek with no or poor social skills. So, intelligence is not appealing to youth. In this regard, there is a legitimization of not being too bright and of putting focus on great physical appearance. With the first amendment in America, people think they are allowed to say anything. This can create problems when you are trying to raise children. So, it is up to parents to monitor what their children are watching. It is always better to have the TV and computer in a common room.

**P.T. Since the last decades, we are seeing the glamorization of criminal life in movies, music videos and TV shows. It seems that some celebrities are practically celebrated if they had a criminal past.**

**Dr. G.** Absolutely! There is the glamorization and legitimation of this lifestyle. There is an impact in many levels in the society. For instance, in the past if children had problems at school, they would have problems also at home because of it. Now some parents, will fight the teacher while backing up their children no matter what instead of supporting the system. If someone is arrested by a cop, he/she has to listen otherwise there will be consequences if you do not respect the authority. The list goes on.



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**P.T. You have an upcoming book entitled ADDICTION: It's Not Your Fault But It Is Your Problem . Without giving too much away, what can your future readers expect from it?**

**Dr. G.** Dependence usually develops over time. The people around the addict often know about it. Some will be in denial, others will ignore it or find ways to explain the addiction or minimize the problem.

**P.T. The people around the addict can be addicted also.**

**Dr. G.** Definitely! The book is partially about what they can do for their addicted loved ones and what early signs they missed. The book is also about helping people to reflect on the reasons they waited so long to get help. Some seek help because it becomes inevitable. Others hesitate because they feel it will reflect badly on them. There is stigma attached to addiction issues. Often, the addict will blame everybody else except him/her. Some do not have insight (introspection). Sometimes, the people who care about the addict think that their love will be enough to fix the person, which is not realistic. So, my upcoming book is about why the people do not recognize what is really happening. It is important for parents to listen to other people such as professionals because you cannot be objective when you are dealing with your children with serious issues such as addictions. You are in pain as a parent and it can be difficult to see things clearly.

**P.T. Are you going to have a co-author for your next book or will you write it alone?**

**Dr. G.** I do not know yet. I am still working on it.

**P.T. What advice you want to give for aspiring physicians and for those who want to become a forensic psychiatrist?**

**Dr. G.** [Silence]. I think the best thing first is to be a good psychiatrist. Being able to listen to people, etc. You need to have this experience first and the rest will follow. To become a good forensic psychiatrist, you have of course to be interested in legal issues. I know people who

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never really had an experience in psychiatry and started quickly to become a forensic one. I do not recommend this road. It is important to embrace this profession because you have a real interest in it, not for the money and so on, if you truly want to contribute for the community while providing your scientific expertise.

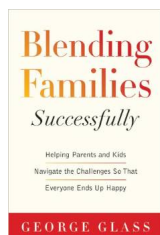
**P.T. Thanks for sharing your expertise, Dr. Glass.**

**Dr. G.** I am flattered that you really took the time to read both of my books. I am very impressed with your thorough questions. You poured awesome questions into me and it was fun doing this interview! It was great and you are very knowledgeable! Obviously, you thought a lot about the issues we discussed.

**P.T.** It is always a privilege to interview physicians who provide the population with a lot of information. In addition, great books definitely give me material to make interviews with in-depth questions. I realised that most doctors I interview love working with children. So, I guess this must mean that I am interested in the well-being of children and they are the future. To finish, I think we would be in a better world if all kids were valued. No child is born aggressive; they learn violence from society. I saw a documentary once which mentioned how Mark Zuckerberg's parents told him on a regular basis while he was growing up that he was a prince. This allowed him to reach his fullest potential at least, professionally speaking!□

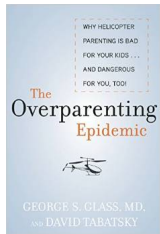
**Dr. G.** We can stay in touch.

**P.T.** It would be my pleasure!



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The books are available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or .ca

### **Education/Training of Dr. Glass:**

Swarthmore College, B.A.  
Northwest University Medical School, M.D.  
Psychiatric Residency, Yale University Medical School  
Lt. Commander, U.S. Navy

### *Professional Qualifications*

Certified, American Board of Psychiatry/Neurology  
Certified, American Medical Society of Addiction Medicine

### *Professional Affiliations*

Distinguished Life Fellow, American Psychiatric Association  
American Medical Society of Addiction Medicine (State Chairman 1974-1986)  
American College of Forensic Psychiatry (former Board Member)  
American Academy of Psychiatrists in the Law

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### *Academic Affiliations*

Baylor College of Medicine  
University of Texas Medical School in Houston  
Cornell Weill Medical Program at the Methodist Hospital in Houston

### *Areas of Expertise*

Substance Abuse Problems (DUI, etc.) and Treatment  
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder  
Sexual Harassment in the Work Place  
Psychiatric & Substance Abuse Issues & Treatment as a Mitigating Factor in Criminal Defense  
Assessment of Psychiatric, Emotional and Functional Impairment after an Injury  
Defense of DWI's related to the Standardized Field Sobriety Tests  
The Side Effects and Sequellae of Psychiatric Medications, specifically SSRI type antidepressants and AntiPsychotics on individuals  
Psychiatric and Substance Abuse Malpractice  
Issues in treatment with Methadone including that with Methadone Maintenance Programs  
Workplace violence  
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder — PTSD  
Psychopharmacology

### *Professional Expertise*

25+ years Private Practice  
Medical Director, Multiple Psychiatric/Substance Abuse Facilities  
Director, Evaluator and Manager, Corporate and Union Employee Assistance Program  
Past Chairman, Harris County Medical Society Physician Counseling Committee

### *Publications/Presentations/Media*

30+ Professional Publications

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Oxygen Network Case Study

Houston TV interview

Quoted in Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Houston Chronicle

Speaker at National and State Professional Meetings including

American Psychiatric Association, American Association of Law and Psychiatry, American

College of Forensic Psychiatry, Texas Family Lawyers Association, Texas Trial Lawyers

Association, Airlines Pilot's Association, Texas Psychological Association, Houston Council on Alcoholism

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