

The Wonder of Adolescents

Desired Outcomes

- Increase information regarding “Modern Day” adolescents
- Share professional perspectives
- Challenge our current beliefs and or practices

Invitation

- I invite you today to be open to the possibilities through thinking differently

Introduction

- Today you may feel challenged through what I present.
- You may feel uncomfortable, for I may ask you to question your current beliefs.
- I may ask you to consider altering your current view of adolescents and boys in particular.
- I may present perspectives regarding your political or social views. Perhaps you may need to reflect on methods of understanding yourself and your process of disciplining the children with whom you interact.

Introduction

- It may challenge you in how you are currently relating to adolescents.
- In the end, the intentioned purpose is to bring clarity in how we love and mentor these young men and women who stand before us.
- This intent grows; above all else, from the love we have for our adolescents, a love that has been; fearfully, confusingly, and incompletely expressed to them over these last few decades by the adults in their lives.

Adolescents

General

Background

Information

Sleep

- On average ~ Teenagers need 9.25 hours every night
- With the busy lives they live now they are getting about 7.5 hours
- That is part of the reason they are falling asleep in the class
- The other reason is: maybe teachers are not engaging them...

Brain Development & Waves *(continued)*

- Our brains do not stop developing
- Until about 25 y.o
- Adolescents have a new growth spurt in their melon just about the same time that their hormones attack...
- If you are confused by their behavior, join the club ~ so are they

Teen Behavior

- The adolescent can be calm & loving one minute
- Crazy the next ~ “Intolerable”
- An adolescent can get straight A’s but forget the most innocuous things that will “**tick you off**”
- But they did not do it on purpose
- They simply forgot

Teen Behavior

- There are at times that “common sense” ain’t so common among teens
- Peer pressure is HUGE
- They are overly challenged by a busy & complicated world today

Teen Behavior

- They will argue with their parents like enemies
- BUT ~ When asked who they admire, they will speak about their parents
- Teens understand that their parents are doing the best they can for the most part

Divorce & Loss

- We have a situation in the United States where fifty-percent of marriages is ending in divorce and our young men are becoming disenfranchised due to losing the most immediate and positive presence in their lives, their fathers.

Divorce & Loss

- According to Drs. Judith Wallerstein and Joan B. Kelly, who conducted a ten-year study of children of divorce, if children are deprived of one of their parents, or if the parents quarrel and compete with each other for their child's affection, these children are more likely to have lower self-esteem and some nature of psychological and emotional damage.
- Children take divorce very hard, for they are extremely attached to both parents and most children want their parents to stay together. When parents separate, it knocks the props out from under their children. Children, as well as adults, go through a classic mourning process after divorce, much as if someone close to them died.

Suicide

- **What if our country had a silent epidemic of destruction and suicide among its youth, notably our young men?**
- White men run the highest risk of suicide. In fact, they account for almost 75 percent of the **31,000 suicides a year in the United States.**

Suicide *(Continued)*

- Suicides among young people nationwide have increased dramatically in recent years. Each year in the U.S., thousands of teenagers commit suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds, and the sixth leading cause of death for 5-to-14-year-olds.
- Teenagers experience strong feelings of stress, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, and other fears while growing up.
- For some teenagers, divorce, the formation of a new family with step-parents and step-siblings, or moving to a new community can be very unsettling and can intensify self-doubts. In some cases, suicide appears to be a "solution."

Suicide *(Continued)*

- 1970 = 23,480 (16,629/male - 6,851/female)
- 1980 = 26,869 (20,505/male – 6,364/female)
- 1985 = 29,453 (23,145/male – 6,308/female)
- 1990 = 30,906 (24,724/male – 6,182/female)
- 1992 = 30,484 (24,457/male – 6,027/female)
- 1993 = 31,102 (25,007/male – 6,095/female)
- *These numbers are from the web site*
www.evangelicaloutreach.org/suicide.htm

Suicide *(Continued)*

U.S. Suicide Statistics (2005)

Actual Suicides

- 1.3% of all deaths are from suicide.
- On average, one suicide occurs every 16 minutes.
- Suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death for all Americans.
- **Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24 year olds.**
(1st = accidents, 2nd = homicide)
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 25-34 year olds.
- **Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students.**
- More males die from suicide than females.
(4 male deaths by suicide for each female death by suicide.)
- More people die from suicide than from homicide.
(Suicide ranks as the 11th leading cause of death; Homicide ranks 13th.)
- There were over 800,000 suicide attempts in 2005

Violence

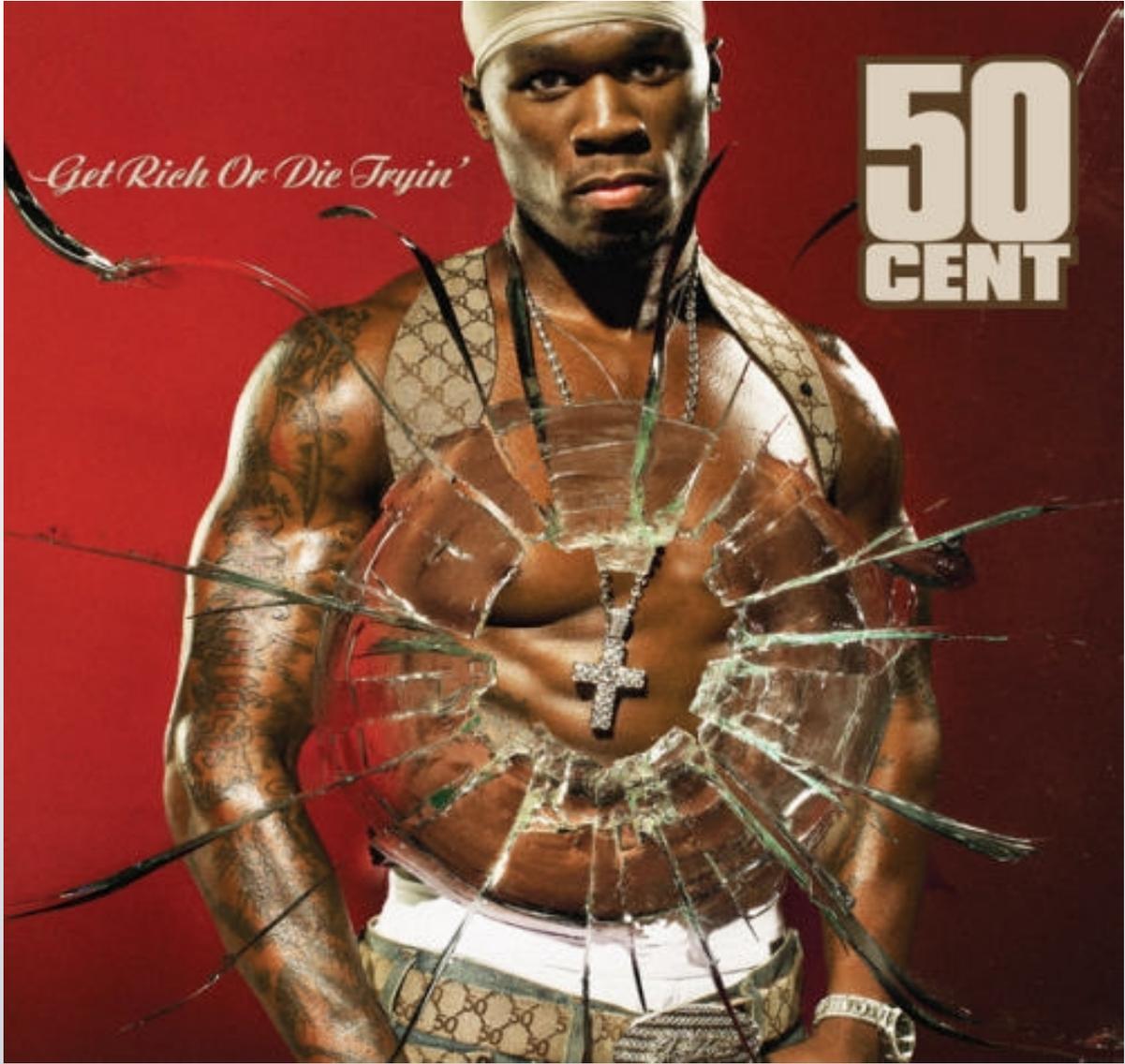
- What if almost every spring, as schools were drawing to a close, our society had situations in which young men went on shooting sprees killing classmates and teachers?

Violence *(Continued)*

- School violence has become a major issue in many American communities. Much of what is being acted out in the classrooms and corridors of schools are symptoms of what is occurring in society, and it does not bode well for the future if we do not respond now. School violence was ignored in the 1950s, 1970s, and again in the 1980s. Today, what is happening to youth, not only in school but throughout society, can no longer be ignored.
- The get-tough strategies being implemented in many communities are deemed necessary but are woefully insufficient. Many students are filled with rage and resentment. The self-destructive behaviors and negative attitudes seen in growing numbers of young men and women reflect, in part, the pandemic nature of the behavior that is emotionally bankrupting our schools and corrupting our society.

Violence *(Continued)*

- Americans cannot afford to ignore or minimize the magnitude of violence in schools and the implications it has for the larger society.
- This is not a game.
- In five to ten years these young men and women will become part of the adult population. They are the people who will be expected to safeguard and enhance the civil, human, political, and economic rights of the citizens of our country. It is the future of this nation and the kind of society we want that is at stake.



Hip ~ Hop/RAP a Primer

- Historically comes from Bronx, NY
- Building the Cross Bronx EXPWY displaced thousands of poor people that fueled a rage among the poor in that neighborhood and Rap/Hip-Hop was born
- Main streamed in the 80's
- Lyrics "promote" alcohol/drug use and violence
- Race is not a boundary for adolescents regarding this music
- This music is VERY popular among adolescents
- Lyrics promote minimal respect for women
- If you have average American on your courses – there is a very good chance that HIP-HOP/Rap is a large part of their world and in their relationships with friends
- **Do you listen to Hip-Hop/Rap?**

Hip ~ Hop/RAP

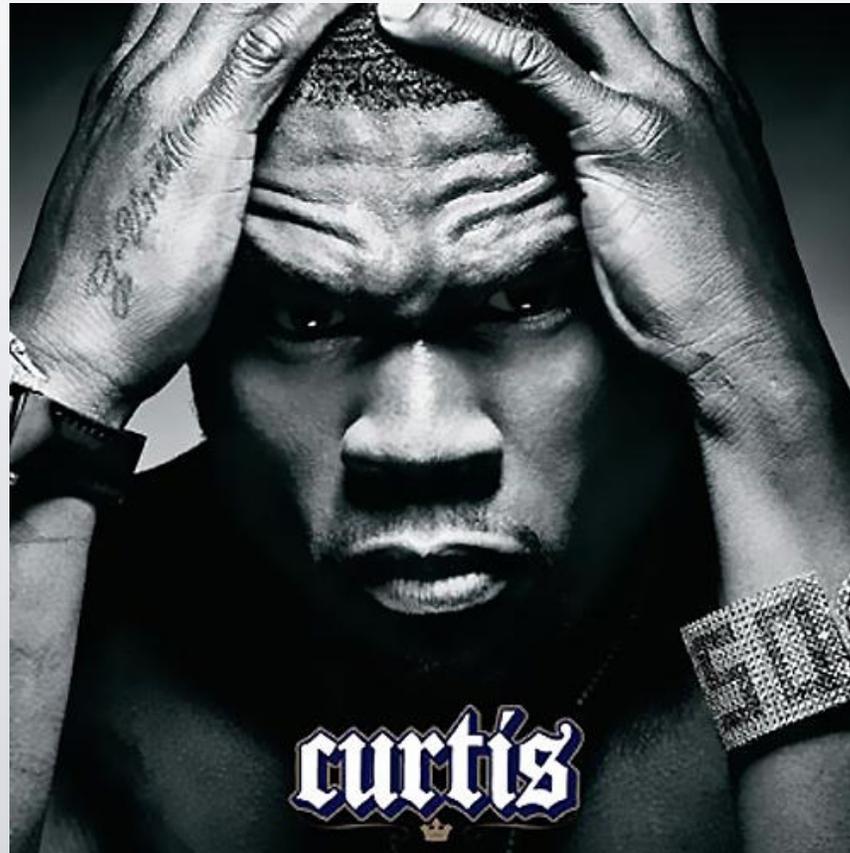
■ Do you listen to Hip-Hop/Rap?

50 Cent: FULLY LOADED CLIP

*"You wann' problem wit' me? - No problem, it's all good
I ain't fresh out the hood, I'm still in the hood...
nigga see me when ya see me
I appear and disappear wit' the heata like Houdini
They parry wit' bull...t - git'cha azz popped
Don't believe me - ask Fam, they got his head shot
I'm in the cut like germs, I do durrt like worms
Smoke weed, now I'm sure, nigga it's my turn
I fire on ya azz, dem hollow-tips burn, baby burn
I'm screamin' "F..k the cops!", 'fore I 'round my glock
Test my pistol on my bitch, nigga f..k dat box!
Dat's how P. got knocked, dat's how jewl got drop
But Dre beat dat nigga, go 'head, repeat dat nigga
You might learn a lil' summin' if you learn to stop frontin'
My nigga look easy on three p's b-p's, rollin' locc-in'
I'm runnin' wit' the Dope-man"*

"Fidy"-Cent...

*"I keep tellin
'Fidy'
You are a
good looking
kid, you should
smile more..."*



Violence *(Continued)*

- AND: We are a country at war in two different theatres on foreign soil

The Wonder of Boys

Adventure, Danger & Risk

- Boys are hard wired differently than girls
- They are hard wired to seek out adventure, danger & risk
- Otherwise why would they do some of the dumbest things possible?

POSSIBILITY **The Heroic Journey**

We are all possibility, and the world should be possibility or it dies in our hands.

Everyone should have at least one time in their life when they feel chosen, wanted, held up for some kind of special treatment.

To be excited, to be wanted specifically for some task, and to feel a possible dream is on the edge of fulfillment.

There is no mercy in this world if at least once in our lives we do not feel the privilege of being wanted where we also want to be wanted...

Crossing the unknown sea ~ Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity

--David Whyte

The Heroic Journey

(One possible hook)



Hunter Gatherer to Agrarian Age

- When we moved from hunter/gatherers to the Agrarian Age, children became necessary.
- They were a source of work and prosperity for those who farmed.
- They grew up watching and being party to the work, their fathers did.
- They were mentored by parents, relatives, and extended family members.
- Families were intact out of need, not just for love and belonging.
- Farming families needed large numbers of children to get the work done to live a sustainable life.
- They were IMPORTANT. They helped plant and harvest the crops, get the chores done to support the family to receive room and board.

Agrarian to Industrial Age

- When the fathers left the farms to go to the cities to make money to feed the family the children, boys in particular, no longer saw or experienced first-hand what their father's did or understood it.
- When the fathers left the farms to go to the cities to make money to feed the family, and later brought the family to the city, large numbers of children became a drain on limited resources, un-needed and unimportant for family sustainability.
- They and we lost the aspect of the close extended family and effective mentoring it offers.
- Children, unless they worked in industry or made money somehow to support the family, became a BURDEN on limited resources.

Industrial Age to The Mall Age

- Now that children are economically unimportant to families in gaining food or goods, they are shuffled to the “waiting rooms of America – The Malls.”
- Malls are a haven for kids away from home where parents are less involved in their day-to-day lives and do not interact with their friends or see what they do often enough.
- These children are influenced by a great number of things that are not appropriate and have little adult guidance.

Industrial Age to The Mall Age

- Who are the adults adolescents interact with in the mall?
 - Discussion:

The Mall Age to,

The Electronic Age...

Is yet to be written and we
are the authors.

Being the Adult in the Relationship

- Every child we come in contact with looks to us to see what kind of adult they should be
- Walt Disney & Mike Vance story...

**“Isn’t it great to be
the adult the little
boy always
wanted to be!”**

~Walt Disney

Boys Like Balls

- Boys are spatial learners
- Meaning that they like wide open spaces
- They like throwing things
- **Throwing rocks on course...**
 - DISCUSSION
 - Best Practices

Growing up in These United States

- What societal expectations do our boys face in the U.S.?

– ***DISCUSSION***

Stoicism

- Boys are expected to be stoic
- “Boys don’t cry.”
- Boys volunteer/are drafted into war (OIF/OEF – Vietnam)
- Boys are not soft
- “Boys are rough”

Shame

- Boys have shame in being “soft”
- Confronting them directly with an audience does not work
- Arguments will ensue
- Protecting their “shame”
 - ***DISCUSSION***

Competition

- Boys are hard wired to compete
- Not to be cooperative in competition
- Boys compete by putting each other down

Competition

- They sit around the camp fire and smell each others farts and laugh
- This behavior may never disappear...

Band of Brothers

or

Lord of the Flies

Band of Brothers or Lord of the Flies

- One minute boys can be the best pals
- Joking – “Bagging on one another”
- Figuring out the pecking order
- The next they can become the pack in Lord of the Flies
- And no one wants to be Piggy...

– ***DISCUSSION***

Band of Brothers or Lord of the Flies

- What are some strategies to stay the Band of Brothers and not become Lord of the Flies?

– ***DISCUSSION***

Choice Theory

The Five Basic Human Needs:

Dr. William Glasser, founder of Choice Theory

- **Survival**
- **Love & belonging**
- **Power or recognition**
- **Freedom**
- **FUN...**

Choice Theory (Continued)

- Using Choice Theory as a strategy to assist adolescents in making more effective choices to get what they want
- Focus on the need being fulfilled
- NOT the behavior

The Five Basic Human Needs

- **Survival**

The Five Basic Human Needs

- **Love & belonging**

The Five Basic Human Needs

- **Power or recognition**

The Five Basic Human Needs

- **Freedom**

The Five Basic Human Needs

- **FUN...**

Fini

- Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids and nobody's around-nobody big mean-except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff-I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and *catch* them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know - it's crazy