

# Beyond Resilience

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*Please note: this hand-out is intended as a **supplement** to the presentation, not as a **substitute** for the presentation. This handout is NOT intended to be read separately from the presentation; it cannot “stand alone.” If you would like to get a sense of the presentation but did not have the opportunity to attend, please read my second book **Boys Adrift**, especially chapters 3 and 8; also my third book **Girls on the Edge**, especially chapters 1, 2, and 3; the 2017 update of my book **Why Gender Matters**; and my latest book **The Collapse of Parenting**. You can reach me at [mrcad@verizon.net](mailto:mrcad@verizon.net) but please also send a copy to my personal email [leonardsax@gmail.com](mailto:leonardsax@gmail.com).*

**The established consensus in 1964: encourage immigrant children to assimilate as soon as possible.** For the scholarship underlying this consensus, see Milton Gordon’s monograph *Assimilation in American Life: the role of race, religion, and national origins*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964. Because of this long-held consensus, the more recent finding that immigrant children now do better than American-born children is regarded as evidence of a “paradox.” Scroll to the bottom of this document for citations documenting the immigrant paradox.

**Connections across generations:** Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

In the 1960s, James Coleman found that the majority of American teens valued their parents’ opinion more than the combined opinion of all their friends. (He reported his findings in his monograph *The Adolescent Society*.) That’s no longer the case today. But peer relations are contingent and ephemeral. When peers matter more than parents, kids become anxious and fragile.

The opening chapter of my book *The Collapse of Parenting* is titled “The Culture of Disrespect” – which is a fair summary of contemporary North American popular culture, as experienced by children and teenagers. Examples of the culture of disrespect include Eminem, Nicki Minaj (I showed the cover of her Anaconda album), Miley Cyrus (I showed the cover of her Bangerz album), Justin Bieber, Bruno Mars, and Akon. Akon claims to be a convicted felon, but he isn’t. (For more about the awful role models which American

culture now offers to boys, see my book *Boys Adrift*.) The Disney Channel also exemplifies the culture of disrespect, with shows such as *Dog with a Blog* and *Jessie* and *Liv and Maddie*. American T-shirts: “*Do I look like I care?*”

*“I’m not shy. I just don’t like you.”*

*“You looked better on Facebook.”*

*“I need another drink. You’re still ugly.”*

You will rarely find such T-shirts outside of North America.

Bruno Mars won six Grammys on January 28 2018, including the Grammy for Best Song, “That’s What I Like.” The song begins with these lyrics:

*I got a condo in Manhattan  
Baby girl, what's hatnin'?  
You and your a-- invited  
So gon' and get to clappin'  
Go pop it for a player, pop-pop it for me  
Turn around and drop it for a player, drop-drop it for me*

For more about Bruno Mars and his award for Best Song, January 28 2018, please see my essay “You and Your [Expletive] Invited,” online at

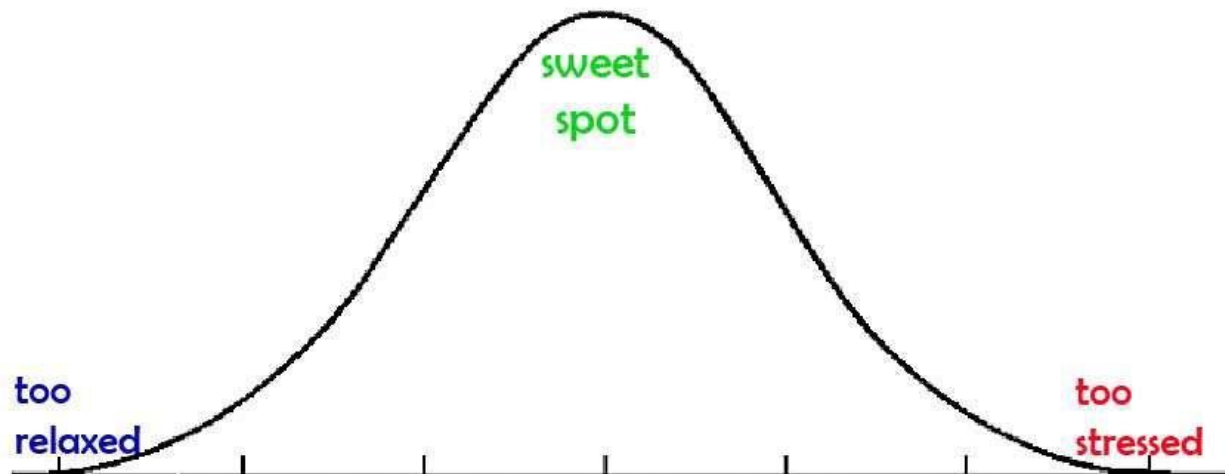
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/sax-sex/201802/you-and-your-expletive-invited>.

Three big changes in American culture over the past 30 to 50 years:

- 1) The breaking of bonds across generations
- 2) Prioritizing of same-age peer relations over parent-child relations
- 3) The emergence and (now) the dominance of the culture of disrespect

The quote from Michel de Montaigne comes from his essay *On Education*, which originated as a letter to the Lady Diane de Foix, written in 1580.

The Yerkes-Dodson curve (my rendering):



The wisdom of Donna Lindner (Agnes Irwin School): when your child comes home from school and tells you about something bad that happened at school, your child is looking to you for guidance about whether or not this is a big deal.

Whether or not you are invited to a party is NOT the most important thing in the world. You must teach that simple insight to your child.

Robert Grant (Shore School, Sydney Australia): “I hope your son will be **profoundly disappointed** during his time at this school.”

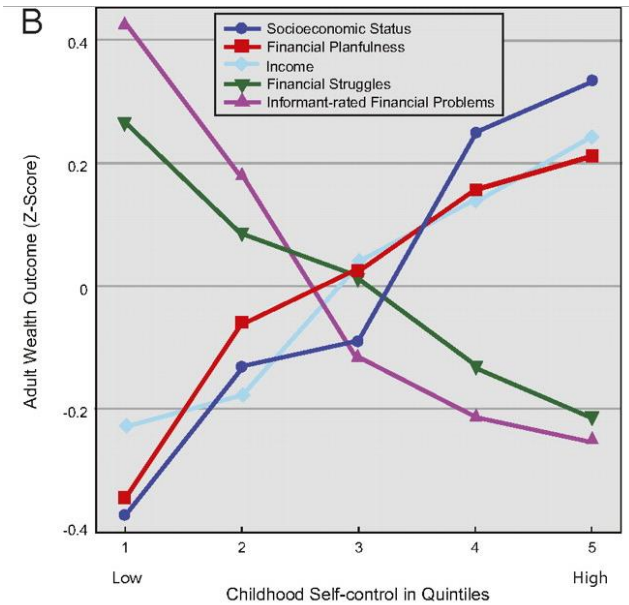
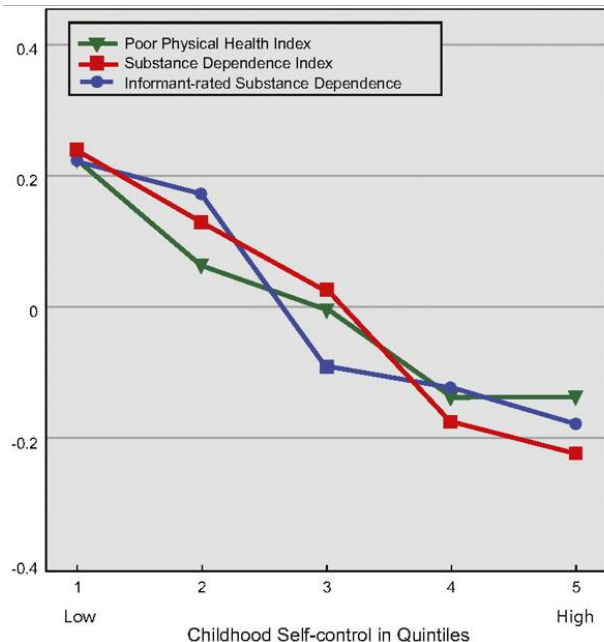
Summer job working at a greasy spoon may be a better choice than an internship with an investment banking firm.

Longitudinal cohort studies demonstrating the importance of Conscientiousness:

Roberts et al. 2007 = Brent W. Roberts and colleagues, “The Power of Personality: The Comparative Validity of Personality Traits, Socioeconomic Status, and Cognitive Ability for Predicting Important Life Outcomes,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2:313-345, 2007, full text at <http://classdat.appstate.edu/COB/MGT/VillanPD/OB%20Fall%202012/Unit%202/Personality%20Articles/The%20Power%20of%20Personality%202007.pdf>.

See Terrie E. Moffitt and colleagues, “A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety”, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108: 2693 – 2698, 2011, full text online at <http://www.pnas.org/content/108/7/2693.full.pdf+html>.

These two graphs come from Moffitt et al. 2011:



Teaching virtue should be your top priority for your daughter or son.

Jennifer Finney Boylan, "A Common Core for All of Us" *New York Times*, March 23 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/23/opinion/sunday/a-common-core-for-all-of-us.html>. For a rebuttal, see my exegesis of Deuteronomy 6:7 in *The Collapse of Parenting*, pp. 133 – 134.

**Teaching virtue:** prioritize the teaching of humility. Micah 6:8. Household chores are fundamental to teaching humility.

### UCLA study: the new cult of fame

"The Rise of Fame: An historical content analysis," online at

<http://www.cyberpsychology.eu/view.php?cisloclanku=2011061601>.

For more context, please see Alex Hawgood's article for the *New York Times*, "No stardom until after homework," <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/fashion/how-teenagers-handle-the-webs-instant-fame.html>.

Resilience can mean "robust" or "adaptive." You want your child to be adaptive, which is to say UnFragile.

Don't ever refer to your child as a "straight A student" – because if you do, you are inculcating a fear of failure.

Bloated self-esteem leads to resentment.

Enlightened humility – founded in a genuine interest in other people – is more likely leads to contentment and happiness.

Practical wisdom means – among other things – helping your child figure out whether it is wiser to persevere (be robust) or move on to something else (be adaptive). Help your child to determine what her motivations are. If she wants to be an actress because she wants to be famous, that's not a healthy motivation.

Antifragility means transforming:

- 1) **Fear** into prudence
- 2) **Pain** into information
- 3) **Mistakes** into initiation
- 4) **Desire** into undertaking

(from Taleb, *Antifragile*, p. 157)

No devices in the bedroom! – i.e. no UNSUPERVISED Internet access. The guidelines were updated in October 2016: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.aspx>. The full text of the AAP guidelines, as published in the journal *Pediatrics* November 2016, is available at no charge at this link:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/138/5/e20162592.full.pdf>.

Here's a link from the AAP to create a "family contract" for kids' use of media:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx>.

Some practical suggestions (you will find all these, and more, in *The Collapse of Parenting*):

- 1) No earbuds or headsets in the car. When you're in the car, you should be listening to your daughter, and she should be listening to you. It's fine to listen to music – TOGETHER. How about songs from *Singing in the Rain* or *The Sound of Music*?
- 2) No screens in the car
- 3) Ban the bedroom. No screens in the bedroom. The family should spend time together, physically together, even if they are not entertaining one another.
- 4) Choose "Unplugged" vacations. No, your daughter is not allowed to bring her best friend along.

When I met with Dr. Wright, head of school at Shore (Sydney, Australia), I asked him: What is school for? He answered: *preparation for life*. I asked him: what is life for? He answered:

- 1) *Meaningful work*
- 2) *Someone to love*
- 3) *A cause to embrace*

I'm not saying that Dr. Wright has all the answers or that you must accept his answer.

But it is *an* answer.

There is a false dichotomy between the "Tiger Mom" and the "Irish Setter Dad." The Tiger Mom is all about achievement. The Irish Setter Dad just wants kids to have a good time. Both are mistaken. (I borrow the phrase "Irish Setter Dad" from P. J. O'Rourke's article "Irish Setter Dad," *The Weekly Standard*, April 4 2011, <http://www.weeklystandard.com/irish-setter-dad/article/555534>. I do not endorse O'Rourke's article.)

The search for meaning. Without meaning, life has no point. The result is anxiety, depression, and disengagement. Your job as a parent is to educate desire: to instill a longing for things higher and deeper.

Why are young people today so much more likely to be anxious and disengaged compared with young people from the same demographic 30 years ago, and compared with young Scottish or Australian or Swiss today? Here are my answers:

- We have allowed the culture of disrespect to disorient students
- **We can change that**
- We have failed to teach virtue and character, with authority
- **We can change that**
- We have allowed relations with same-age peers, as well as social media and video games, to take priority over connections across generations
- **We can change that**

Here are some comments about my books:

**Why Gender Matters** “. . . is a lucid guide to male and female brain differences.”

*New York Times*

**Boys Adrift** “. . . is powerfully and persuasively presented. . . Excellent and informative references and information are provided.”

*Journal of the American Medical Association*

**Boys Adrift:** “A must-read for any parent of boys. This is real science, and Dr. Sax thoroughly uncovers the important health issues that parents of boys need to be tuned into.”

*Dr. Mehmet Oz, host of “The Dr. Oz Show”*

**Girls on the Edge:** “Packed with advice and concrete suggestions for parents, *Girls on the Edge* is a treasure trove of rarely-seen research on girls, offering families guidance on some of the most pressing issues facing girls today. Dr Sax’s commitment to girls’ success comes through on every page.”

*Rachel Simmons, author of Odd Girl Out*

**Girls on the Edge:** “This is essential reading for parents and teachers, and one of the most thought-provoking books on teen development available.”

*Library Journal*

**Girls on the Edge:** “The best book about the current state of girls and young women in America . . . offers astonishing and troubling new insight . . .”

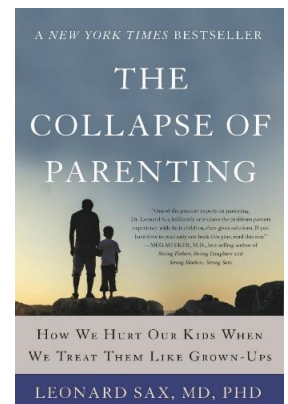
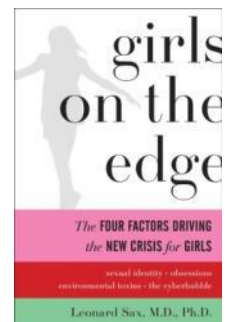
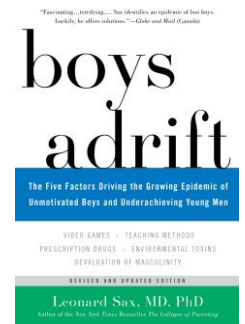
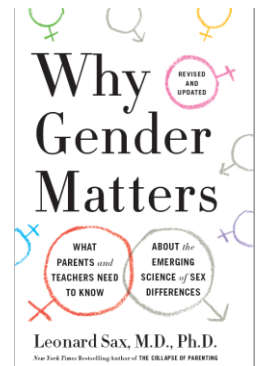
*The Atlantic*

**The Collapse of Parenting:** “One of the premier experts on parenting, Dr. Leonard Sax brilliantly articulates the problems parents experience with their children, then gives solutions. *The Collapse of Parenting* is academic but practical, simple but deep. If you have time to read only one book this year, **read this one.**”

*Meg Meeker MD, author of Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters and Strong Mothers, Strong Sons*

**The Collapse of Parenting:** “With years of experience and research working directly with parents and children, Dr. Leonard Sax provides an important glimpse into parenting in modern times, where it’s gone wrong, and how to fix it. Being a parent has never been more important and Dr. Sax explains how to avoid parenting pitfalls and raise your children well.”

*Bill Bennett PhD, former US Secretary of Education*



**The Collapse of Parenting:** *"A comprehensive breakdown of where parents have gone awry and how they can get back on track to teach virtue and character to their children. . . .Sax provides a series of easy-to-follow solutions that help bring parents and children back to the same page, working toward a healthier, more respectful, and conscientious attitude. . . .With the author's solid advice, parents have a good shot at achieving these goals."*

*Kirkus Reviews*

*If you're going to read one book on parenting this year, make it **The Collapse of Parenting** by Leonard Sax. What makes a good nonfiction instructional book is an author who has extensive real world experience in the subject matter and who has the ability to write clearly. Leonard Sax has both.... This is quite simply a good book that is easily read and will provide sound advice for giving our children the best chance to succeed in life.*

*New York Journal of Books*

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**Documentation of the immigrant paradox:**

Here are some citations demonstrating that girls and boys whose families have recently immigrated to North America are less likely to be anxious, or depressed, compared with girls and boys born and raised in North America:

- Margarita Alegria and colleagues, "Prevalence of mental illness in immigrant and non-immigrant Latino groups," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, volume 165, pp. 359 – 369, 2008, full text online at no charge at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2712949/>.
- Huong Nguyen, "Asians and the immigrant paradox," in *Asian American and Pacific Islander Children and Mental Health*, edited by Frederick Leong and Linda Juang, volume 1, pp. 1 – 22, 2011.
- Liza Suárez and colleagues, "Prevalence and correlates of childhood-onset anxiety disorders among Latinos and non-Latino Whites in the United States," *Psicologia*



*Conductual / Behavioral Psychology*, volume 17, pp. 89 – 109, 2009, full text available online at no charge at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2800359/>.

- David Takeuchi and colleagues, “Immigration and mental health: diverse findings in Asian, Black, and Latino populations,” *American Journal of Public Health*, volume 97, pp. 11 – 12, 2007. This article is an introduction to a special issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* (AJPH) devoted to documenting and understanding the interaction between immigration status and mental health in the United States. Full text online at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1716240/>. From that special issue of AJPH, see for example “Immigration-related factors and mental disorders among Asian Americans,” *American Journal of Public Health*, volume 97, pp. 84 – 90, full text at <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2006.088401>. This article documents a peculiar gender quirk in the immigrant paradox: while the immigrant-paradox effect was generally stronger for females than for males (i.e. being born outside the U.S. was more protective for females than for males), English-language proficiency was a greater risk factor for males than for females. If you are male, and you were born in Asia, and you move to the United States, then mastering English puts you at greater risk of mental disorder; but that’s not true if you are female. Go figure.

Here is some of the evidence that girls and boys whose families have recently immigrated to the United States are less likely to engage in binge drinking or other forms of alcohol abuse, and/or substance abuse:

- Michele Allen and colleagues, “The relationship between Spanish language use and substance use behaviors among Latino youth,” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, volume 43, pp. 372 – 379, 2008.
- Donald Hernandez and colleagues, “Children in immigrant families: demography, policy, and evidence for the immigrant paradox,” in Cynthia García Coll and Amy Kerivan Marks (editors), *The Immigrant Paradox in Children and Adolescents: is becoming American a developmental risk?* Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2011.
- Guillermo Prado and colleagues, “What accounts for differences in substance use among U.S.-born and immigrant Hispanic adolescents? Results from a longitudinal prospective cohort study.” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, volume 45, pp. 118 – 125, 2009. Prado and his colleagues document that foreign-born Hispanic adolescents are significantly less likely to engage in drug abuse, compared with similarly-situated U.S.-born Hispanic adolescents. They conclude that the key difference is that the U.S.-born

Hispanic teens are looking to their same-age peers for guidance, while the foreign-born Hispanic teens are looking to their parents and to other adults for guidance.

- William Armando Vega and colleagues, “Illicit drug use among Mexicans and Mexican Americans in California: the effects of gender and acculturation,” *Addiction*, volume 93, pp. 1839 – 1850, 1998.

For more documentation of the immigrant paradox with regard to adolescent sexuality, and intercourse before 15 years of age, see Marcela Raffaelli, Hyeyoung Kang, and Tristan Guarini, “Exploring the immigrant paradox in adolescent sexuality: an ecological perspective”, chapter 5 in Coll and Marks, *The Immigrant Paradox in Children and Adolescents: is becoming American a developmental risk?* See also Tristan Guarini and colleagues, “The immigrant paradox in sexual risk behavior among Latino adolescents: impact of immigrant generation and gender,” *Applied Developmental Science*, volume 15, pp. 201 – 209, 2011.

North American popular culture in 1964 was a culture which endorsed and taught respect for parents.

North American popular culture in 2018 is a **culture of disrespect** (see chapter 1 of my book *The Collapse of Parenting*, “the culture of disrespect”).