

What Abused Children Can Teach Us

REVIEW BY MARSHA BORDEN, NCSP

The *Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog And Other Stories From a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook* is an interesting, easy-to-read book. Bruce D. Perry, MD, PhD, and Maia Szalavitz chronicle the intimate life stories of children who have suffered horrific abuse and neglect at the hands of the adults in their lives. A few of the stories cover high profile cases, including the Branch Davidian children in Waco, Texas, and the boy who was treated as a dog for the first 5 years of his life.

Bruce Perry is a child psychiatrist who specializes in childhood trauma. In writing the true stories of children he has treated over the years, Dr. Perry's goal was to illustrate what infants and young children

need for healthy brain development and how neglecting these needs can have a profound impact on every aspect of a child's growth. The book includes current research on brain functioning, as well as the most effective treatments to help victims of childhood trauma.

Dr. Perry is honest and

often self-deprecating, pointing out mistakes he's made and sometimes poking fun at himself and his profession (even going so far as to call himself a "shrink"). He is critical of institutions that are supposed to help children but often fail, including Child Protective Services, law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, and the medical system, including hospitals. Dr. Perry writes with compassion and great insight, often detailing his own thoughts and feelings as he sorts through the emotional wreckage of his client's lives.

The book was written to appeal to a wide audience. For the mental health practitioner, Dr. Perry discusses his "neurosequential approach," which, in part, involves providing traumatized children with experiences appropriate to their developmental needs, not their current chronological age. The authors take the time to explain psychological jargon, so the book is also perfectly appropriate for parents, teachers, and others who are interested in how trauma affects children and what we can do to help.

Everyone who reads this book will be impacted by the stories of children and alleged satanic ritual abuse, sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, and children witnessing the murder of parents. Dr. Perry's stories can be difficult to read and occasionally hard to believe, but they provide hope that patterned, repetitive treatment in a safe environment can have an enormous, positive impact on the brain, despite years of trauma.

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THE BOY WHO WAS RAISED AS A DOG AND OTHER STORIES FROM A CHILD PSYCHIATRIST'S NOTEBOOK: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing
By B. D. Perry, MD, PhD, and M. Szalavitz
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