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PRESERVATION

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CC: Jeff Bleich
This is very interesting
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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
11-24-99

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CONFIDENTIAL

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29 July 1999

William Jefferson Clinton
President, The United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

11-24-99

Dear Mr. President:

Over the past 40 years, violence has become an increasingly severe problem for Western culture as a whole. In no way is this trend limited to gender or within any racial, socioeconomic, religious, or political subgroup. Although it is American culture that concerns us most during the current crisis, any attempt to understand and alter this trend in our country must acknowledge its near universality. Just as economic markets exhibit cyclicity, human attitudes toward specific emotions and systems of emotion modulation also change in sequence. In order to appreciate the depth of our problem, it is essential to sketch its origins.

Well documented is the turbulence and dangerousness of life in the Middle Ages, when merely bumping into someone in the town square might occasion a fight to the death, and when couples might engage in sexual behavior in full view of others. All of this began to change in 1530 when the philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam published a manual of good behavior for small boys that *for the first time* made misbehavior embarrassing. His book went through more than 130 editions well into the 18th century, and a 1558 adaptation even today is read in some parochial schools! These two books ushered in four centuries of strict behavioral control by the shame family of emotions, and with it a new level and type of respect for authority. Deadly brawls evolved first into the symbolic fight of fencing and eventually to team sports, while sexuality came ever more under the sway of shame until the beginning of the 20th century when Freud mistook embarrassment for a force he called "repression" and worked hard to pick apart the controls it had installed. In rapid succession over the past 40 years have come such advances as near-universal availability of contraception, bright lighting and apartment building window technology that reduced the possibility of privacy and the shame of being seen by others, massive increase in the availability of drugs that undo the reticence brought by shame, and technology that allows us to see in the dark and distribute words and images universally. The "old ways," the authoritarian systems of shame-based behavioral control that had worked for centuries do not now work and cannot work because the changes within people brought by such advances in technology have rendered this type of control inoperable. Furthermore, we've lost the whole idea of authority required by that system.

In previous communications I have made reference to my concept of the Compass of Shame, four poles of behavior marshaled when people evade the information that the physiological mechanism of shame has evolved to illuminate for them. During most of the 450 years since Erasmus and others took control of rowdy and bawdy behavior by making it embarrassing, the overwhelming majority of people responded to shame at the *Withdrawal* and *Attack Self* (deference) poles of the compass. Now we as a culture have shifted back to the more dangerous options available at the *Avoidance* (narcissism) and *Attack Other* (violence) poles, handling personal shame as a response to insult. Worse still, the incorporation of the technology of guns, videotape, drugs, and automobiles into our culture has made the experience of shame even more dangerous than it was before the Renaissance. Despite that all emotions are important, we have excellent evidence that the overwhelming majority of the violence seen in our society results from this shift in the management of one single emotion! Even casual review of broadcast and print interviews with both perpetrators and survivors of school violence demonstrates unanimous agreement that unfettered humiliation is its major cause.

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How best, and how quickly can we modify so massive a shift in the emotion management system of an entire culture? Clearly, we must influence our children before they have become set in the ways outlined above. Culture is maintained and managed in home, school, and through worship. Whatever we do must be integrated with these powers.

Wherever we have taught people about the nine families of emotion and the Compass of Shame, our group has shown that discord, violence, and other forms of antisocial behavior are reduced significantly in individuals, couples, families, businesses, schools, and communities. Our system demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of all anger and fighting may be traced to activity at the *attack other* pole of the compass. When we suggest new ways for the management of shame, most bad situations calm considerably.

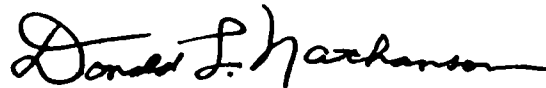
Our first initiative is aimed at the teaching profession. The Tomkins Institute is far less interested in conflict resolution than conflict prevention. **From Insult to Injury: A Plan to End School Violence** is a highly systematized program through which teachers will learn the nine families of emotion, the Compass of Shame, and how to teach this material in a student workshop environment. This **Philadelphia Initiative** harnesses the creativity of teachers by validating their own expression of affect in their own personal styles. We foster the instruction of students at all levels of the educational system in ways carefully adjusted for age and local conditions. In selected situations we will use the ISS (**Internalized Shame Scale**), a 10-minute psychological test devised by a member of our group, from which we can identify the small number of students for whom clinical attention may allow reversal of the kind of shame response seen in the Littleton massacre and other outbursts of student violence. We have shown that the encounter between kids who shame and kids who are shamed is central to the problem of violence in the schools. We understand better than anyone that the person who most shames others has already been hurt by internalized shame and is in the greatest need of attention. In the language of infectious disease, unless so stopped the chronic shamer can infect a whole cluster of unsuspecting peers. Bullies have much less power when kids are immunized against the toxicity of the *attack other* response.

National concern about the "crisis in the schools" mandates urgent attention. With the cooperation of the Philadelphia School District, we plan to start the first pilot program in one of the most "difficult" high schools anywhere, and a second in an elementary school. If in this Fall semester we can show significant change in the volatility of our most challenging environments, we can bring hope to a justifiably frightened nation.

Both pilot programs will be covered by a video crew under the supervision of an Academy Award winning director/producer of documentary films. The drama of the difficulties and accomplishments of these teachers and students will be edited into professional video presentations of theory and practice to be used when the program as a whole is brought from its pilot version to the entire community of American schools. From October through December 1999, while these two projects are operating, our Institute will conduct a national study of school districts in order to identify which should be prioritized for rollout. A representative range of districts will then be contacted and assessed for interest. Because the problem is so huge and the need for its solution so urgent, the Tomkins Institute plans to start a national awareness campaign publicizing the results of its Philadelphia Initiative, and offering it to interested school systems. The campaign will be multi-faceted, utilizing Public Service Announcements from television and radio stations, print ads in selected professional and trade publications, public relations tools such as video, audio, and print interviews, published reference material, Internet indexing to its website, and website program documentation and analysis. Through a toll-free telephone number we will provide personal response to questions of educators, parents, and students. Through its website, the Institute will also introduce a moderated e-chat discussing issues of school violence and offering direction for their resolution. We welcome inquiries from any school system and should be able to initiate programs within six months of a request.

The problem of school violence, which masquerades as an issue limited to the emotional development of children and adolescents, is only a small part of a larger danger threatening the American way of life. Central to it is the way a people manages its genetically based innate emotionality. The Silvan S. Tomkins Institute exists for the sole purpose of helping people understand and manage their emotions, and looks forward to helping our nation and its President both in this crisis and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Donald L. Nathanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Donald L. Nathanson, M.D.
Executive Director
The Silvan S. Tomkins Institute

Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior
Jefferson Medical College

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9.13.99

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Tom Vash

9-13-99

Columbine was a blip on youth-violence screen

By Jack Kelly
TELEDS/CNN/SLADE

Crimes committed by juveniles have plunged since 1993

The slaughter at Columbine High School last spring, the worst in a string of shocking school murders, took 15 lives and tied the country in knots as it tried to figure out why, how and what to do about youth violence.

Hard to find in the clutter of emotion and solution-seeking has been some good news: While sudden acts of murder by children without prior criminal records seem to have risen slightly in frequency — from almost never to once in a while — juvenile violence overall is in decline. After soaring in the early 1990s, the rate of teen violence has dropped like a rock since 1993. It is now below the rate for 1989.

The trend is promising, and experts have learned a great deal about how to reach juveniles in trouble before they become hardcore criminals. Treatment programs that work provide young offenders with the structure, guidance, attention and love they often don't get at home.

The average age of students at the world-famous Boys Town outside of Omaha, Neb. — nearly half of whom are girls — is 14. Some are as young as 10 and some as old as 18. About four in five have problems with substance abuse. Boys

and girls live in groups of eight, in 45 family homes, each run by a couple whose full-time job is to parent the youths.

There is a television in each home even though students are kept so busy with school, homework, athletics and chores that they don't have much time to watch it. Music that glorifies violence or degrades women is not allowed.

At George Junior Republic in Grove City, Pa., 450 boys ages 9-18 live in groups of eight in family homes run by married couples, most of whom have children of their own. Rules and the daily routine are pretty much the same as at Boys Town.

"The thing that most of the boys seem to be missing is an intact family," said Richard Losasso, vice president. "We provide a family environment as much as we can."

If there is a one-word answer to the problem of juvenile crime, experts say, it is "parenting."

Gary Emmons, headmaster of the Brush Ranch School, a private boarding school in the mountains northeast of Santa Fe, N.M., agrees: "Every juvenile treatment program that works has five elements:

"First, strong positive role mod-

els, especially male role models for boys.

"Second, a highly structured environment — no rap music or gang clothes, little or no television, very little free time.

"Third, lots and lots of attention.

"Fourth, immediate, predictable consequences for inappropriate behavior.

"And fifth, opportunities to develop self-respect through genuine accomplishment."

Mr. Emmons' sentiments are echoed by youth professionals ranging from the Rev. Val Peter, executive director of Boys Town, to Maj. Scott Bowman, headmaster at Robert Land Academy, a military boarding school for unruly adolescents in Wellandport, Ontario.

Robert Land Academy considers itself successful when a boy has progressed to a higher level of education and remained there at least a year while staying clear of drugs and alcohol. By this measure, the school claims an 84 percent success rate. Tuition and room and board amount to \$17,300 per boy for a 10-month school year.

Boys Town sets a similar standard with the additional requirement of attendance at church services. Boys Town claims a success rate of 80 percent at an average

annual per-child cost of \$32,485.

Such results compare favorably with virtually every government-run youth corrections program in America. In Ohio, it costs \$63,440 a year to house a juvenile in a state facility. The recidivism rate after six months is nearly 35 percent. In Pennsylvania, the average annual cost of nine youth facilities run by the state Department of Public Welfare is \$66,087.

"Historically, we had a recidivism rate of 60 to 70 percent after 18 months. That's about the same as everywhere," said James Anderson, executive director of the Juvenile Court Judges Commission. He's working with the Pittsburgh-based National Center for Juvenile Justice to develop a system for tracking recidivism and other relevant measures, such as post-incarceration education and employment.

The residential treatment programs wouldn't be needed as much if parents, school officials and community leaders kept young people busier in the first place, according to Pueblo, Colo., District Attorney Gus Sandstrom, a former Green Beret. In 1980, he co-founded the committee on juvenile justice for the National District Attorney's Association.

One reason for the decline in the rate of violent crimes committed by young people may be the increasingly common practice of sentencing juvenile offenders as adults.

"There are a handful of kids who commit most violent juvenile crimes. If you take more of them off the street and put them away for a longer period of time, the crime rate goes down," said Peter Reinartz, chief of the family court division of the New York City law department.

"Juvenile courts have yet to figure out whether they are a social service agency or a part of the criminal justice system," said Mr. Reinartz.

Most experts believe that if society wants to teach children that it is wrong to break the law, the children must be held accountable the first time they are caught, even if the punishment is slight.

"The system lies to kids all the time," said Mr. Sandstrom, the Pueblo DA. "We tell them they're going to get in trouble if they break the law. Then the cops pick them up and give them a lecture and release. Then the first time they're taken before a judge, they get probation. They have maybe five major offenses before a judge finally slaps them. And then they ask, 'Why me?'"

• Distributed by Scripps Howard

The Washington Times
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1999