

Bullied School Shooters?

As a teacher hearing about the shooting at Columbine in 1999, I knew immediately these two young men had terrible loner issues, a ‘warning sign’ that, tragically in this case, and in all the major school shootings, have led to horrific occurrences. The two Columbine individuals said they wanted retribution for being chided, laughed at, bullied; one of them writing before the event, “I have always been hated, by everyone and everything.”

Over the years after this first majorly publicized shooting, I have watched and determined that bullying is the primary cause for these school shootings. Most of these bullying situations have been of those with learning differences, but also the shooter at Uvaldi was bullied for being a stutterer. Being bullied forces individuals into “reclusion,” either entirely alone or maybe with one dear friend, *they denied the crucial need in one’s life to belong.*

The Uvaldi individual, mercilessly teased from early on, according to his sister, lost his best friend who had to move away. From then on, for his own sanity and psychic protection, he joined a group that welcomes any who are such lost, a group with dark purposes for the world.

Those who become shooters have very often long been victimized terribly by others.

Being ‘reclusive’ is often part of an overall assessment that decides that “this is an individual who has Autism Spectrum characteristics. I prefer to refer to these and other differences as on the ADD-autism spectrum: Attention Deficit Disorder, ADD, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, ADHD, dyslexia, Asperger’s Syndrome, and autism. Once diagnosed, these students are thought to need medication to fit our world, and many do not like taking it because it gives them an altered and driven feeling.

The shooters at Sandy Hook, and now Parkland, were treated for ADD-autism spectrum symptoms at the time, or earlier in their lives, and the Virginia Tech shooter, in special education as a student, “never hugged people,” reported his grandfather. This symptom is often associated with an ADD-autism spectrum disorder, for hugging is too intense for their body’s enlarged experience of sensations.

And, in the case of others with some other condition such as anxiety disorder, medications are the prevalent response. So, all of these individuals were either on behavioral treatment drugs and/or antidepressants, which can very strongly induce suicidal and homicidal thinking. Many of the other shootings in America have been perpetrated by non-spectrum, but antidepressant-medicated, individuals, which is well documented on the internet; Google this to take a look.

The following is not a criticism of schools, for we have thought it a helpful approach, but with a new understanding, we can find the approach that will work.

Medicating those that stand out in our schools and society as different, often loners as a result of being labeled and then ostracized and bullied, can bring these hugely tragic results. Many parents and young adults do not want the side effects of these drugs, but as far as education, some schools and county school districts are still depending on, sometimes INSISTING, that spectrum individuals be put on medications. I know of parents who have had to go to court to allow them to choose not to put their child on a drug.

Medications for some can help, and both the individual and their parents know when this is working. However many, after trying, quit the medication for, as I mentioned, they hate how it drives them in order to focus their attention in class, makes sleep difficult for them, and denies them finding ways to manage their lives, as who they are.

So, what about that? Who are these spectrum individuals? Who they are is much different than what is thought by most people.

Tragically, from their early lives, they have been denied a correct understanding. ADD-autism spectrum individuals are seen as, and told over the many, many years, some even since preschool, that they are ‘less.’ They are negatively labeled, and seen (by intermediate school or earlier) as “loners with problems.” However, this is all caused by the different orientation they have, which is a difference, not a disorder. Then, they are often medicated so they can ‘adjust’ to our world, which often adds to the problems which exasperate their differences, all for which they are, *very often bullied.*

Finally, something can break. And, the negative way in which we have seen them, is what some can become, or became.

Now to explain, *what is this different orientation?*

These individuals live like the title of an older Disney movie: “Inside Out,” for they are here, hard-wired to literally live ‘inside out,’ meeting life viscerally with the heart and right brain, and with very sensitive nervous systems.

The heart, researched particularly by The Institute of HeartMath in Boulder Creek, California, has been found to have its own intelligences with which it influences the synergistic, connection-to-life-and-others operations of our brain. (Please see my papers, “Heart Centered Minds” and “The Inside Out of Autism” at my website: HeartCenteredMinds.com.)

In addition to the connective heart, the right brain works like a satellite dish, receiving wide and subtle degrees of information all at once, from the realm of full possibility. This affords these individuals to be: intelligent, gut-empathic, inspiration motivated, big-picture oriented, out-of-the-box-thinkers, also often drawn to physical or hands-on activities and wanting to help others and the world. Therefore, many are able and compelled to discover life principles and/or meaningful solutions by which they make important contributions in various disciplines.

Lincoln, Poe and Edison, along with many other great minds, were oriented in this way, thought to have a ‘disorder’ while they were in school, schools they often then abandoned. Each of these, and many other great minds, had their own mix of characteristic differences and gifts, and fell into any one of the ADD-autism spectrum categories, again ADD, ADHD, dyslexia, Asperger’s Syndrome, or autism.

And, similar to many of the ‘great minds,’ these students have trouble with left brain skills: the linear/repetitive aspects of math, sometimes the written word, organization, schedules...for these individuals lack a left-brain filter which organizes incoming information and stimuli in a sequential, linear fashion.

Hence, reading, writing, listening can all be difficult, and directives to do so makes life overwhelming. Also, too much stimulation or linear input overwhelms them. So, their attention turns away to their natural right brain realm of reception or envisioning, which I define more accurately as Attention Differently Directed, (ADD), rather than Attention Deficit Disorder, as it is defined today. Einstein, dyslexic from birth, figured out $E=MC^2$ by right-brain envisioning sitting on a light beam. (And, this orientation is not just for geniuses like Einstein.)

Individuals on the ADD-autism spectrum need a challenge with its hidden promise of discovery, or helping others to keep them engaged.

Additionally, no left brain filter makes it difficult to read social communication: nuances of idioms, trending phrases, body language. Hence, these individuals are alone, or maybe with one other person, or on a computer, and they are then seen as 'reclusive loners.'

So, put all that information above together:

- labeled as 'less' since preschool or before
- very often medicated often causing additional problems
- live 'inside out' from their heart and right brain, which operates like a satellite dish
- intelligent, intuitive, inspired, think outside-the-box, big picture-oriented, discover life principles, enjoy hands-on activities, want to help others
- often like other great minds, usually in a smaller way
- lack a left brain filter so are overwhelmed and have trouble with linear, sequencing, left brain skills: sometimes re: reading, writing, listening, organizing, repetitive work (some autistics good at this, however),
- turn away from too much linear input toward their open receptivity, thus having Attention Differently Directed
- need a challenge to stay focused and inspired
- find social communication difficult, so are often loners

With all this background and now particularly related to shootings, my terms 'medicated loners' encompass our huge misunderstanding of them which subjected them to years of actual abuse, and for some, led to their violent reaction to their mistreatment.

But, to also include how they *can* function, social or not, these individuals can find the 'shaping' left brain skills, alone, or with the assistance of others, to express their many particular interests, gifts and talents that exist because of their different orientation, ideas and solutions that can help our world. (Einstein's brother helped him write the famous linear equation.)

However, in great opposition to the way they primarily function, our larger world has focused more and more over the last 400 years on just our left-brain thought skills, separate from our abilities to be inspired by the heart/right brain connective principles. These are life intuitions, insights, and inspirations that pertain to our

lives together and can lead to beneficial solutions for all, when shaped by the abilities of our left brain.

We are living more and more in a virtual, left-brain governed world. This is enlarged by our use of screens, which flatten and two-dimensionalize our interactions and operations, accompanied by our ever-increasing ‘need’ for faster and faster (fingertip or voice) control.

This trajectory rockets us out into the mental ethers, as we unknowingly search for the illusive answers and the connection and belonging that the left brain, used alone, leaves behind. This has come with our greater disuse of our heart and right brain receptive and connective intelligences.

So now, without this background first of who these individuals are, and secondly of who we have become, we are presently misreading their behaviors, assuming they lack the needed, ‘normal’ skills to perform and understand in the way our world is functioning.

And in a repeating flood now, we are seeing, not mere copycats, but an inner shout from many similar individuals, in a media enlarged opportunity to cry out, “There is no way I can live treated in this way any longer.”

We must understand who they are so we can end this expression of their great suffering, their inner scream, which causes so much harm to others.

Our world ***needs*** the connective inspirations of their heart/right brains, and ***our own*** then shaped in partnership with our left brain to solve the many problems we face. We must recognize the mistaken way in which we have seen those who are different, here now in greater and greater numbers (1 in 34 in 2024). And we must ask, “Who have we become?” and how can we gain greater access to our own heart and right brain connective knowing once again?

Please see an older, yet still amazing Ted Talk on this topic:
Ken Robinson, “Do Schools Kill Creativity?” February 2006, TED2006, accessed 8 January 2009,
https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity, 19:24.

