

The Psychology of Mass Killers: What Causes It? How Can You Prevent It?

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [History](#)

In Las Vegas on 1 October 2017, it appears that one man (although it might have been more) killed 59 people and shot and injured another 241 (with almost 300 more injured while fleeing). The incident got a lot of publicity, partly because the man managed to kill more people than most mass killers. However, because the killer was a white American and had a Christian name, he was not immediately labeled a terrorist, even though his death toll considerably exceeded that achieved in many 'terrorist attacks', including those that occur in war zones (such as US drone murders of innocent people attending weddings).

According to the [Gun Violence Archive](#), there is now an average of one mass shooting (arbitrarily defined by the FBI as a shooting in which at least four victims are shot) each day in the USA. By any measure, this is a national crisis.

However, while there has been a flood of commentary on the incident, including suggestions about what might be done in response based on a variety of analyses of the cause, none that I have read explain the underlying cause of all these mass killings. And if we do not understand this, then any other suggestions, whatever their apparent merits, can have little impact.

The suggestions made so far in response to this massacre include the following:

1. Making it much more difficult, perhaps even illegal, to own a gun. See ['Guns'](#).
2. Drastically reducing the prescription of pharmaceutical drugs (which are almost invariably being consumed by the killer). See ['Drugs and Guns Don't Mix: Medication Madness, Military Madness and the Las Vegas Mass Shooting'](#).
3. Recognising and addressing the sociological factors implicated in causing the violence. See 'violence is driven by socioeconomic factors, not access to firearms' argued in ['Another Mass Shooting, Another Grab for Guns: 6 Gun Facts'](#) and 'a deep sickness in American society' argued in ['The social pathology of the Las Vegas Massacre'](#).
4. Identifying whether or not the killer had ideological/religious links to a terrorist group (in this case ISIS, as claimed by some). See, for example, ['ISIS Releases Infographic Claiming Las Vegas Gunman Converted 6 Months Ago'](#).
5. Identifying and remedying the ways in which constitutional provisions and laws facilitate such massacres. See ['Las Vegas Massacre Proves 2nd Amendment Must be Abolished'](#).

6. Recognizing the way in which these incidents are encouraged by national elites and are sometimes, in fact, false flag attacks used as a means to justify the consolidation of elite social control (through such measures as increased state surveillance and new restrictions on human rights).
7. Limiting the ways in which violence, especially military violence, is used as entertainment and education, and thus culturally glorified in ways that encourage imitation. See [‘People Don’t Kill People, Americans Kill People’](#).

However, as indicated above, while these and other suggestions, including certain educational initiatives, sound attractive as options for possibly preventing/mitigating some incidents in future, they do not address the cause of violence in this or any other context and so widespread violence both in the United States and around the world will continue.

So why does someone become a mass killer?

Human socialization is essentially a process of inflicting phenomenal violence on children until they think and behave as the key adults – particularly their parents, teachers and religious figures – around them want, irrespective of the functionality of this thought and behavior in evolutionary terms. This is because virtually all adults prioritize obedience over all other possible behaviors and they delusionarily believe that they ‘know better’ than the child.

The idea that each child is the only one of their kind in all of living creation in Earth’s history and, therefore, has a unique destiny to fulfill, never even enters their mind. So, instead of nurturing that unique destiny so that the child fully becomes the unique Self that evolution created, adults terrorize each child into becoming just another more-or-less identical cog in the giant machine called ‘human society’.

Before I go any further, you might wonder if the expression ‘phenomenal violence?’ isn’t too strong. So let me explain.

From the moment of birth, human adults inflict violence on the child. This violence occurs in three categories: visible, ‘invisible’ and ‘utterly invisible’. Visible violence is readily identified: it is the (usually) physical violence that occurs when someone is hit (with a hand or weapon), kicked, shaken, held down or punished in any other way. See [‘Punishment is Violent and Counterproductive’](#).

But what is this ‘invisible’ and ‘utterly invisible’ violence that is inflicted on us mercilessly, and has a profoundly damaging impact, from the day we are born?

In essence, ‘invisible’ violence is the ‘little things’ we do every day, partly because we are just ‘too busy’. For example, when we do not allow time to listen to, and value, a child’s thoughts and feelings, the child learns to not listen to themselves thus destroying their internal communication system. When we do not let a child say what they want (or ignore them when they do), the child develops communication and behavioural dysfunctions as they keep trying to meet their own needs (which, as a basic survival strategy, they are genetically programmed to do).

When we blame, condemn, insult, mock, embarrass, shame, humiliate, taunt, goad, guilt-

trip, deceive, lie to, bribe, blackmail, moralize with and/or judge a child, we both undermine their sense of Self-worth and teach them to blame, condemn, insult, mock, embarrass, shame, humiliate, taunt, goad, guilt-trip, deceive, lie, bribe, blackmail, moralize and/or judge.

The fundamental outcome of being bombarded throughout their childhood by this 'invisible' violence is that the child is utterly overwhelmed by feelings of fear, pain, anger and sadness (among many others). However, parents, teachers and other adults also actively interfere with the expression of these feelings and the behavioural responses that are naturally generated by them and it is this 'utterly invisible' violence that explains why the dysfunctional behavioural outcomes actually occur.

For example, by ignoring a child when they express their feelings, by comforting, reassuring or distracting a child when they express their feelings, by laughing at or ridiculing their feelings, by terrorizing a child into not expressing their feelings (e.g. by screaming at them when they cry or get angry), and/or by violently controlling a behaviour that is generated by their feelings (e.g. by hitting them, restraining them or locking them into a room), the child has no choice but to unconsciously suppress their awareness of these feelings.

However, once a child has been terrorized into suppressing their awareness of their feelings (rather than being allowed to have their feelings and to act on them) the child has also unconsciously suppressed their awareness of the reality that caused these feelings. This has many outcomes that are disastrous for the individual, for society and for nature because the individual will now easily suppress their awareness of the feelings that would tell them how to act most functionally in any given circumstance and they will progressively acquire a phenomenal variety of dysfunctional behaviours, including many that are violent towards themselves, others and/or the Earth.

Moreover, this emotional (or psychological) damage will lead to a unique combination of violent behaviours in each case and, depending on the precise combination of violence to which they are subjected, some of them will become what I call 'archetype perpetrators of violence'; that is, people so emotionally damaged that they end up completely devoid of a Self and with a psychological profile similar to Hitler's.

These archetype perpetrators of violence are all terrified, self-hating and powerless but, in fact, they have 23 identifiable psychological characteristics constituting their 'personality'. For a full explanation of this particular psychological profile, see ['Why Violence?'](#) and ['Fearless Psychology and Fearful Psychology: Principles and Practice'](#). Of course, few perpetrators of violence fit the archetype, but all perpetrators are full of (suppressed) terror, self-hatred and powerlessness and this is fundamental to understanding their violence as explained in 'Why Violence?'

Rather than elaborate further in this article why these perpetrators behave as they do (which you can read on the documents just mentioned), let me explain why the suggestions made by others above in relation to gun and drug control, socioeconomic factors, ideological/religious connections, constitutional and legal shortcomings, resisting efforts to consolidate elite social control, and revised education and entertainment programs can have little impact if undertaken in isolation from the primary suggestion I will make below.

Once someone is so emotionally damaged that they are effectively devoid of the Self that should have defined their unique personality, then they will be the endless victim of

whatever violence is directed at them. This simply means that they will have negligible capacity to deal powerfully with any difficult life circumstances and personal problems (and, for example, to resist doctors prescribing pharmaceutical drugs), they will be gullibly influenced by violent ideologies, education and entertainment, and they will have virtually no capacity to work creatively to resolve the conflicts (both personal and structural) in their life but will do what was modeled to them as a child in any effort to do so: use violence.

And by now you have probably realized that I am not just talking about the mass killers that I started discussing at the beginning of this article. I am also talking about the real mass killers: those politicians, military leaders and weapons corporation executives, and all those other corporate executives, who inflict mass violence on life itself, as well as those others, such as academics and those working in corporate media outlets, that support and justify this violence. This includes, to specify just one obvious example, all of those US Senators and Congresspeople who resist implementing gun control laws. See [‘Thoughts and Prayers and N.R.A. Funding’](#).

In essence then, if the child suffers enough of this visible, invisible and utterly invisible violence, they will grow up devoid of the Selfhood – including the love, compassion, empathy, morality and integrity – that is their birthright and the foundation of their capacity to behave powerfully in all contexts without the use of violence.

Instead, they will become a perpetrator of violence, to a greater or lesser extent, and may even seek employment in those positions that encourage them to support and/or inflict violence legally, such as a police or prison officer, a lawyer or judge – see [‘The Rule of Law: Unjust and Violent’](#) – a soldier who fights in war or a Congressperson who supports it, or even an employee in a corporation that profits from violence and exploitation. See [‘Profit Maximization is Easy: Invest in Violence’](#).

In addition, most individuals will inflict violence on the climate and environment, all will inflict violence on children, and some will inflict violence in those few ways that are actually defined as ‘illegal’, such as mass killings.

But if we don’t see the mass killers as the logical, if occasional, outcome of (unconsciously) violent parenting, then we will never even begin to address the problem at its source. And we are condemned to suffer violence, in all of its manifestations, until we inevitably drive ourselves to extinction through nuclear war or climate/environmental collapse.

If you are looking for a lead on this from political leaders, you are wasting your time. Similarly, there are precious few professionals, particularly in the medical and psychiatric industries – see [‘Defeating the Violence of Psychiatry’](#) – who have any idea how to respond meaningfully (assuming they even have an interest in doing so). So why not be your own judge and consider making [‘My Promise to Children’](#)?

In addition, if further reducing the violence in our world appeals to you, then you are also welcome to consider participating in the creation of communities that do not have violence built into them – see [‘The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth’](#) – signing the online pledge of [‘The People’s Charter to Create a Nonviolent World’](#) and/or consider using the strategic framework on one or the other of these two websites for your campaign to end violence in one context or another: [Nonviolent Campaign Strategy](#) and [Nonviolent Defense/Liberation Strategy](#).

In summary then: For the typical human adult, it is better to endlessly inflict violence on a child to coerce them to obey. Of course, once the child has been terrorized into this unthinking obedience, they won't just obey the parents and teachers (secular and religious) who terrorized them: they will also obey anyone else who orders them to do something. This will include governments, military officers and terrorist leaders who order them to kill (or pay taxes to kill) people they do not know in foreign countries, employers who order them to submit to the exploitation of themselves and others, not to mention a vast array of other influences (particularly corporations) who will have little trouble manipulating them into behaving unethically and without question (even regarding consumer purchases).

Or, to put it another way: For the typical human adult, it is better to endlessly inflict violence on a child to coerce them to obey and to then watch the end-products of this violence – obedient, submissive children who are powerless to question their parents and teachers, resist the entreaties of drug pushers, and critique the propaganda of governments, corporations and the military as well as the media, education and entertainment industries – spiral endlessly out of control: wars, massive exploitation, ecological destruction, slavery, mass killings.... And to then wonder 'Why?'

For these terrorized humans, cowardly powerlessness is the state they have been trained to accept, while taking whatever material distractions are thrown their way as compensation. So they pass on this state to their children by terrorizing them into submission too. Powerfully accepting responsibility to fulfill their own unique destiny, and serve society by doing so, is beyond them.

The great tragedy of human life is that virtually no-one values the awesome power of the individual Self with an integrated mind (that is, a mind in which memory, thoughts, feelings, sensing, conscience and other functions work together in an integrated way) because this individual will be decisive in choosing life-enhancing behavioural options (including those at variance with social laws and norms) and will fearlessly resist all efforts to control or coerce them with violence.

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