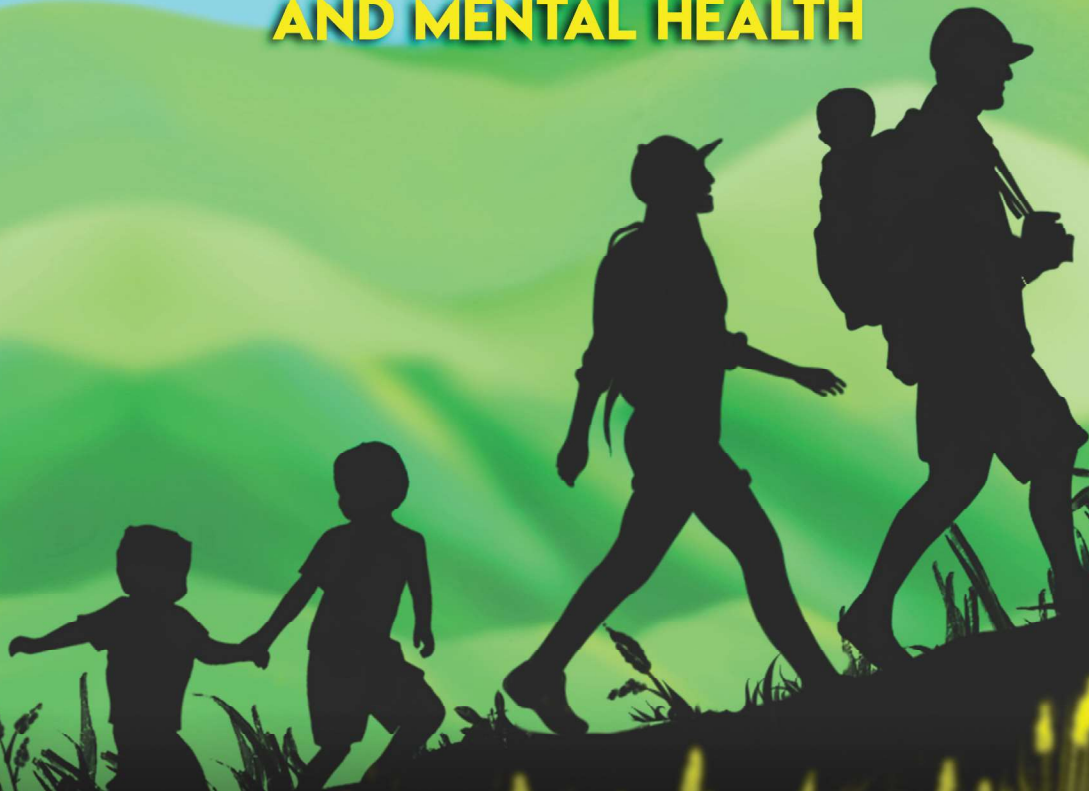


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D.R.E.A.M. WELLNESS

**THE 5 KEYS TO RAISING KIDS
FOR A LIFETIME OF PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL HEALTH**



DR. BRIAN A. STENZLER
M.SC., D.C.

9-4

BEING INNER DIRECTED

🎵 AMAZING GRACE

I will never forget, it was the opening Monday Night Football game, kicking off the 2001 NFL season: the New York Giants versus the Denver Broncos. This was the game to watch, and the Giants were the team to beat. Eight short months earlier, the Giants had lost in the Super Bowl to the Baltimore Ravens. During the off season, the Giants did not lose too many of their top players, and they added a few new great picks. Many predicted them to dominate the National Football League and repeat their appearance to the Super Bowl that season.

That night I had a bunch of friends over to my home to watch the game. We were hoping this would be the beginning of an epic Giants season. Unfortunately, it did not turn out that way. In the first quarter of the game, the Giants were getting blown out by the Broncos, and I was losing it. At half-time, I kicked my friends out of my home because I did not want to even look at anyone. I was that angry.

(When I was a kid, my dad had New York Giants season tickets, and my older brother Scott and I would go to the games with him regularly. I learned at an early age that when you are happy with how your team was performing, you would scream with joy, whistle and applaud. However, when things did not go as planned, it was because the referees were jerks, the coaches were morons or the players were terrible. When the Giants won, we were happy, or at least satisfied because they did what we expected them to do, and when they lost, we were angry. This attitude toward sports carried into my adult life. I know many of you can relate.)

The next morning when I woke up, I turned on my television to watch the “lowlights,” because from the Giants perspective, there were no highlights. When my television turned on, it was still on the same channel that the game was on the night before. Only this time, it was not a football game, it was the morning news program.

The very moment that my television screen showed an image, the second commercial airliner flew into the World Trade Center. As I watched in horror, I immediately forgot about why I even turned on the television. At first, I thought I was watching a movie or something. It all just seemed so surreal.

As I was watching the horrific events of 9/11 ensue in real time before my eyes just a few miles away from where I was sitting in my bed, I started to think about all of the people I knew that worked in and around those towers, including those in my home the previous night.

I was on the phone with my father watching it all unfold, which was exceedingly difficult, because only a decade earlier, he worked on the 104th floor of the North Tower.

Embedded in my memory forever will be our conversation when suddenly, at 9:59 a.m., I only saw dust around one of the towers. I said to my dad, "I think the building is gone." My dad said that I could not be correct; the smoke was just blocking the view of the building he used to work in. Within minutes, the news confirmed everyone's worst nightmare, and it continued to worsen.

Along with thousands of families affected by the tragic events of 9/11, the Stenzlers lost family and friends that we loved and cared for. It could have been much worse if my dad still worked at the company he departed from years earlier. My brothers Scott and Marc and sister Haley all worked in finance, and they quite possibly would have been working with my dad at that company. While that company employed many of my dad's friends and colleagues and someone my brother Marc cared for dearly, my immediate family was spared. Unfortunately, too many other families were not so fortunate. That company alone lost at least 658 of its 960 employees.

As the day went on (before we knew names of those who perished), I began to think about some of my friends who were in my home the night before that worked on Wall Street and that I kicked out of my home the night before. Is it possible that my last interaction with some of them would have been yelling because of a stupid football game? Thankfully none of those friends were killed the next day, but they could have been. I knew right then and there that I needed to make a major change in my life.

I started to look more deeply into my life, my frustrations and my reactions and realized that they were not necessarily serving me very well. I began to acknowledge that Michael Strahan, the defensive end for the New York Giants at the time does not care how many

people I adjust. That would not affect his life any more than how many times he sacks a quarterback affects my life!

I did a lot of reading, praying, meditating and professional/personal development seminars. At one of the seminars I attended, Dr. Bob Hoffman and Dr. Dennis Perman and their team at the consulting group, The Masters Circle, taught us what it means to be inner directed. This was life changing for me. Being *inner directed* in short is about not allowing outside (external) influences to control the way one reacts.

How many times have you overreacted to a situation or reacted in a manner that was not most productive? I know I have, that's for sure!

Every single day, we encounter situations and events from outside of ourselves that we had little or nothing to do with and typically cannot control. Let's refer to these as external influences. Anything outside of your own doing that can impact you physically or emotionally can be considered an external influence.

There are two things in this world . . . things you can control and things you cannot control. And one thing you can always control is how you respond to the things you cannot control.

Think about your life right now. How do you react (or overreact) to external influences? When you are inner directed, you are able to create a life where you are at peace no matter what the outside circumstances may be, and your reactions are not based solely on emotion. I am not in any way suggesting that we should be

robots or numb to the outside world and never have emotion, we absolutely should. However, we cannot allow those emotions to control us and affect us in ways that are not productive and in our best interests. Increased emotional reactions create anxiety, stress and discontentment. Maintaining a level of neutrality to external influences allows us to respond more effectively, thoughtfully and consciously resulting in a better outcome overall.

Much like the events of September 11, 2001, we will constantly need to deal with circumstances that we cannot control. My chiropractic brethren decided to take the pain and anguish of that attack and do something constructive with it.

For the first time in history, the chiropractic profession worked with the American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide relief workers with support by providing chiropractic care during their rescue efforts. Organized through the New York Chiropractic Council (an organization that I was an Executive Board member of), chiropractic colleagues from around the country and I served at respite centers in Manhattan thousands of rescue and relief workers, providing them much needed chiropractic care so they could perform the best at their jobs.

Between the combination of them receiving a loving adjustment and the touch from someone who cared for them, the workers would walk into our area with their heads down feeling exhausted, sad and deflated and they would leave a different person, with more energy, comfort and exuberance. Of all the services offered at the various respite sites, chiropractic care was the one that was requested to be available to the workers 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for more than an entire year. (In 2001, I received the award of New York

Chiropractor of the Year from The Council for helping coordinate the efforts of bringing in and scheduling chiropractors from around the country to the respite sites.)

Learning to be inner directed does not take one day. It takes a lot of practice, discipline, prayer, meditation and patience. For me, one of the ways I exercised my inner-directed muscles was to learn and daily recite the Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr.

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference."

Being inner directed is not just about controlling your emotions when bad things happen. It encompasses your attitude and perception toward everything, including why you do what you do the way you do it as learned in the ULT (*see Ch. 9-3*).

Some people are just wired to thrive with praise and acknowledgement for the good deeds they perform. That too is an example of an external influence, one that you have absolutely no control over. While it may be in some people's nature to desire praise (which is one of the revelations you may discover after taking the ULT as it was for me), it should not be necessary. Your goal should be to always do your best, even when no one is watching. If you are a parent of a child under the age of 16, I recommend looking into Amy McCreedy's work with positive parenting; she teaches parents how to avoid turning your child into a praise junkie. Children need to learn to be inner directed just as much as an adult does. Remember, kids learn by observing adults, so be a good role model.

When you can control your emotions, think and speak positively and be inner directed, you will find that it will be easier to handle all setbacks gracefully. Also, you will find much more inner joy in your life as well as self-confidence, self-assurance and self-awareness. If you do not want to practice being inner directed for yourself, at least do it for your children. They are watching!

BONUSES & RESOURCES *6 Techniques to Manage Your Emotions*
Worksheet

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