



The Body Never Lies: The Lingering Effects of Hurtful Parenting

By Alice Miller

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An examination of childhood trauma and its surreptitious, debilitating effects by one of the world's leading psychoanalysts.

Never before has world-renowned psychoanalyst Alice Miller examined so persuasively the long-range consequences of childhood abuse on the body. Using the experiences of her patients along with the biographical stories of literary giants such as Virginia Woolf, Franz Kafka, and Marcel Proust, Miller shows how a child's humiliation, impotence, and bottled rage will manifest itself as adult illness—be it cancer, stroke, or other debilitating diseases. Never one to shy away from controversy, Miller urges society as a whole to jettison its belief in the Fourth Commandment and not to extend forgiveness to parents whose tyrannical childrearing methods have resulted in unhappy, and often ruined, adult lives. In this empowering work, writes Rutgers professor Philip Greven, "readers will learn how to confront the overt and covert traumas of their own childhoods with the enlightened guidance of Alice Miller."

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In her latest vehement treatise, Swiss psychoanalyst Miller (*The Drama of the Gifted Child*) reprises her classic critiques of filial duty. In her view, our culture systematically denies childhood abuse sufferers access to their true feelings. Repressed emotional responses to early humiliations and unfulfilled needs are inevitably transferred to the body, Miller believes, producing long-term illness. She also believes that the majority of therapists are bent on fostering an attitude of forgiveness. Miller instead urges the reader to reappraise the substance of the Fourth Commandment, which she construes as containing "a kind of moral blackmail" and, reflecting on her own unhappy childhood, argues that what survivors of parental cruelty need most is someone who shares their feelings of indignation. Miller traces the relationship between inadequate or tyrannical parenting and adult bodily illness, depression and suicide in pithy biographies of Dostoyevski, Chekhov, Kafka, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and many others. Yet Miller is more a subjective observer and a guru than a social scientist. Her highly personal, undertheorized and generalizing approach will strike some as simplistic, yet those who loyally follow her child-centered philosophy will probably find much to enjoy in the conviction with which she writes. (*May*)

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Review

"Alice Miller's arguments are lucid, closely reasoned, and utterly convincing." (Elaine Kendall - Los Angeles Times Book Review)

About the Author

Alice Miller (1923-2010) is the author of such classic works as *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, *Prisoners of Childhood*, *The Body Never Lies*, *From Rage to Courage*, and *Free from Lies*.

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