

## **Boys' feelings and movement**

Boys convert feelings to movement. Little boys get onto their tricycles, then bicycles, and then cars, as they grow older, when they have an emotion or feeling to deal with. They go to the gym and work out. This has been the case from the earliest of times and both parents and teachers must realize this natural need of boys and men. Boys need space and need the opportunity to move when faced with issues or problems and when dealing with their emotions and anxieties.

Research now indicates that movement can, in fact, re-ignite feelings. When mothers or fathers engage in action-oriented activities with their sons, their boys begin to open up and talk. The same applies to teachers and their male students. Do something with him - something he enjoys - in the middle of it, he will often reveal the problem that is concerning him.

When your son comes home from school, throws his bag into the corner and says, "I hate school", questioning him will often produce little response. Go for a walk around the block with the dog, kick a football with him outside, or engage in some activity he enjoys, and during this time he will often disclose the issue, which is causing him concern. In particular, we must become sensitive to the early signs of feelings being masked, such as bad grades, rowdy behaviour, depression, seeming quiet, drugs/alcohol, perpetrator or victim of violence with the attitude "everything is fine". Try to stay close when your son is wearing his mask. Harold Hulbert states " Children need love - especially when they don't deserve it"

William Pollack in his book "Real Boys" says we need to learn a new way of talking to boys so that they don't feel ashamed or afraid to share their feelings. The phrase "how could you have done that?" should be replaced with "what's happened?" so as not to trigger the shame response which causes boys to clam up through embarrassment, especially when this is done in front of their friends. Dads will often find that their son is a bit prickly towards him and this is a natural part of a boy trying to assert his independence. Regular physical activity with your son will go a long way to smoothing relationships between the two of you. Activity with him is a great way of bonding without the need for conversation.

