

[PDF] On Killing: The Psychological Cost Of Learning To Kill In War And Society

Dave Grossman - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: On Killing: The Psychological

Author: Dave Grossman

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Drawing on interviews, published personal accounts and academic studies, Grossman investigates the psychology of killing in combat. Stressing that human beings have a powerful, innate resistance to the taking of life, he examines the techniques developed by the military to overcome that aversion. His provocative study focuses in particular on the Vietnam war, revealing how the American soldier was "enabled to kill to a far greater degree than any other soldier in history." Grossman argues that the breakdown of American society, combined with the pervasive violence in the media and interactive video games, is conditioning our children to kill in a manner similar to the army's conditioning of soldiers: "We are reaching that stage of desensitization at which the infliction of pain and suffering has become a source of entertainment: vicarious

pleasure rather than revulsion. We are learning to kill, and we are learning to like it." Grossman, a professor of military science at Arkansas State University, has written a study of relevance to a society of escalating violence.

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From Library Journal Grossman (psychology, West Point) presents three important hypotheses: 1) That humans possess the reluctance to kill their own kind; 2) that this reluctance can be systematically broken down by use of standard conditioning techniques; and 3) that the reaction of "normal" (e.g., non-psychopathic) soldiers to having killed in close combat can be best understood as a series of "stages" similar to the ubiquitous Kubler-Ross stages of reaction to life-threatening disease. While some of the evidence to support his theories have been previously presented by military historians (most notably, John Keegan), this systematic examination of the individual soldier's behavior, like all good scientific theory making, leads to a series of useful explanations for a variety of phenomena, such as the high rate of post traumatic stress disorders among Vietnam veterans, why the rate of aggravated assault continues to climb, and why civilian populations that have endured heavy bombing in warfare do not have high incidents of mental illness. This important book deserves a wide readership. Essential for all libraries serving military personnel or veterans, including most public libraries.

Mary Ann Hughes, Neill P.L., Pullman, Wash.

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