
**About the Author:** Gurian is a therapist, educator, and author of seven previous books. He has served as a consultant to families, school districts, youth organizations, community agencies, the judiciary, the media and policy makers. He has training videos for parents and volunteers that are used by Big Brothers and Big Sisters agencies throughout the US and Canada. His work mirrors the diverse cultures in which Gurian has worked, lived, and studied. Prior to becoming a lecturer and consultant, he taught at Ankara University and Gonzaga University. Currently, Gurian shares a private practice with his wife, Gail (*book jacket*).

**Summary:** According to Gurian, unless the “natural fire” inside a boy is carefully refined by parents, mentors, and educators, the physical, emotional, moral, spiritual, and social lives of all young males will be consumed by “flames.” These flames are seen in adolescent drug and alcohol abuse, criminal behavior, media addiction, sexual obsessions and other assorted problems. Male adolescents are the most under-nurtured people in our society, yet this is the most important time in developing a boy’s identity and ability to live life. The majority of adolescent males experience emotional neglect because our culture has not attended to boy’s emotional development. Adolescent boys are biologically at an emotional disadvantage, according to Gurian, as the male emotional system is unique. Adolescent males have as much as 20 times more testosterone than adolescent females. This propels them toward quick tension release and getting tasks accomplished in short order. These characteristic ways of male behavior do not allow much time for relating emotionally to others. Adolescent males are prone to dominance patterns, mechanistic behavior, delayed emotional responding, and giving less thought to the consequences of their behavior. Further, the few ways that our society allows men to form emotional relationships have all been stripped away. Gurian therefore advocates *talking* (and *more* talking) as the best way to help boys to understand and to appropriately demonstrate their emotions.

Gurian addresses three stages of the teen years that correspond to early, middle, and late adolescence, and which he terms the “Age of Transformation” (ages 9-13), the “Age of Determination” (ages 14-17), and the “Age of Consolidation” (ages 18-21). Rites of passage mark the transition from one age to another. Gurian advocates “natural nurturance” as the appropriate approach to educating boys for emotional development. By this, he means that parents and other adults must understanding how a boy is “built” (psychologically) and creating educational strategies that take into account the particular strengths of males.

**Reviewed** by Jamie Buck. Jamie holds a B.S. degree in communications, and she is a former graduate student and parent.