Empathy

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Dy the time I was twelve, I had progressed from "If he doesn't get better, he may have to be institutionalized" to "He's a weird, screwed-up kid." But although my communication abilities had developed by leaps and bounds, people had ever higher expectations for me, and I began having trouble with what the therapists called "inappropriate expressions."

One time, my mother had invited her friend Betsy over. I wandered in as they sat on the sofa, smoking cigarettes and talking.

Betsy said, "Did you hear about Eleanor Parker's son? Last Saturday he got hit by a train and killed. He was playing on the tracks."

I smiled at her words. She turned to me with a shocked expression on her face. "What! Do you think that's funny?"

I felt embarrassed and a little humiliated. "No, I guess not," I said as I slunk away. I didn't know what to say. I knew they thought it was bad for me to be smiling, but I didn't know why I was grinning, and I couldn't help it. I didn't feel joy or happiness. At the time, as I approached my teenage years, it was hard to figure out exactly what I did feel. And I felt powerless to react any differently.

As I left, I could hear Betsy. "What's the matter with that boy?"

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Look Me in the Eye

My mother sent me to therapists, all of whom focused on My mother sent we to therapists all of whom focused on the sent we have the sent we ha My mother sent me to meet me feel worse than I already wrong things. Mostly, they made me feel worse than I already wrong things. Mostly, they had sociopathic thoughts. They dwelling on my so-called evil and sociopathic thoughts. They we dwelling on my so-called even me better. They just made me all full of it. They didn't make me better. They just made me all full of it. They diant figured out why I grinned when I he worse. None of them figured over by a train. Eleanor's kid had been run over by a train.

But now I know. And I figured it out myself. But now I know. Eleanor. And I had never met her kid I didn't really and for me to feel joy or sorrow on account, there was no reason for me to them. Here is whether there was no reaction anything that might happen to them. Here is what went through my mind that summer day:

Someone got killed.

Wow! I'm glad I didn't get killed. I'm glad Varmint or my parents didn't get killed. I'm glad all my friends are okay. He must have been a pretty dumb kid, playing on the train tracks.

I would never get run over by a train like that.

I'm glad I'm okay.

And at the end, I smiled with relief. Whatever killed that was not going to get me. I didn't even know him. It was all go to be okay, at least for me. Today my feelings would be exactly same in that situation. The only difference is, now I have been control of my facial expressions.

The fact is, from an evolutionary standpoint, people have inbred tendency to care about and protect themselves and the immediate family. We do not naturally care about people we do know. If ten people get killed in a bus crash in Brazil, I don't anything at all. I understand intellectually that it's sad, but I do feel sad. But then I see people making a big deal over it and puzzles and troubles me because I don't seem to be reacting same way. For much of my life, being different equated to be

bad, even though I never thought of myself that way. "That's terrible! Oh, I just feel awful!" Some people will carry on and carry on, and I wonder . . . Do they really feel that, or is it?"

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When something reaction but I still read involve danger, my i things?

My mother sent me to therapists, all of whom focused on the wrong things. Mostly, they made me feel worse than I already did dwelling on my so-called evil and sociopathic thoughts. They were all full of it. They didn't make me better. They just made me feel worse. None of them figured out why I grinned when I heard Eleanor's kid had been run over by a train.

But now I know. And I figured it out myself.

I didn't really know Eleanor. And I had never met her kid. So there was no reason for me to feel joy or sorrow on account of anything that might happen to them. Here is what went through my mind that summer day:

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Wow! I'm glad I didn't get killed. I'm glad Varmint or my parents didn't get killed. I'm glad all my friends are okay. He must have been a pretty dumb kid, playing on the train tracks. I would never get run over by a train like that. I'm glad I'm okay.

And at the end, I smiled with relief. Whatever killed that kid was not going to get me. I didn't even know him. It was all going to be okay, at least for me. Today my feelings would be exactly the same in that situation. The only difference is, now I have better control of my facial expressions.

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