

Brett McKay:

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Brett McKay here and welcome to another edition of The Art of Manliness podcast. Now there's been a lot of discussion in the media these past few years about what is wrong with boys? What's wrong with men? Why aren't they succeeding in school anymore? Why are they less likely to go to college than women now? There's all these statistics that are thrown out.

Whenever there's this discussion about what's wrong with boys what's wrong with men, very rarely are the solutions offered. When solutions are offered it's often, "Boys just need to be more like girls and men need to be more like women."

Our guest today makes the case that's not necessarily true. That rather we need to understand the unique ways that boys and men's neural biology affects how they relate to the world and adapt to our culture to that and embrace that, those unique attributes of men and boys. His name is Michael Gurian. He's the author of 28 books, and he's dedicated his life and career to helping teachers, helping parents, helping institutions help boys. That's been a big part of his career.

Today we're going to talk about his first book that he wrote. It's called 'The Wonder of Boys'. We'll be discussing how boys and girls are different and how their brain biology affects the way they relate to the world. We're going to discuss the differences between how boys and girls show empathy. There's this stereotype that boys aren't empathetic, but they are in fact emphatic, they just do it differently.

We're going to talk about what parents can do to help their young men, help their boys grow into strong young men. We're also going to talk about the importance of things like community and extended family and nurturing and growing a young man. It's a fascinating discussion. We really scratch the surface of his work so you'll need to go and check out more on his website and we'll give that, the website, at the end of the podcast.

Without further ado, let's get on with the show.

Michael Gurian welcome to the show.

Michael Gurian: Thank you.

Brett McKay: You have devoted your career to helping boys and young men and your first book that you wrote that addressed some of the problems that you saw in the way that schools or therapists or social workers or even parents approached how they helped or taught boys was a book called 'The Wonder of Boys'. Can you describe some of these problems that you saw that made you start looking deeper into this and how we approach helping our young men and boys?

Michael Gurian: Yeah this is back in the 1990s, late 1980s early 1990s where I was working with clients. I was completing my research. I did two years of research in Turkey to compare it to male and female behavior patterns. All of that sort of the science base of it. Then of course I was seeing clients as a therapist. I just kept seeing more and more boys who were having trouble.

I began to look at it not just from a personal standpoint but on like what's out there. There really wasn't much out there; it's a very girls-oriented time. I have two daughters so obviously that's fine, I'm not a boys versus girls person and it's all ... Everyone I believe needs help. At that time there wasn't anything on boys and I thought, "I've got to do this. I have to write this down.

People don't realize how far behind boys are in school, how far behind girls they are, how much more violence they're experiencing. Across the board in terms of our social indicators, they're having great difficulty. What I was able to identify was a whole political landscape that was difficult, which of course is hard to cover in a parenting book.

I just mention it, but what I really wanted to do is I wanted to help, as you say, caregivers, parents, therapists, anyone at the grassroots working with boys to be able to see these issues. To see that we don't train teachers in how the male brain works so it's very difficult for a lot of our teachers to do as well with boys as girls, because the classroom is set up better for girls but they don't even realize.

Or we don't train therapists on how to provide therapy to boys and men. Very few boys and men stay in therapy. The therapy field is mainly for women. Obviously that's good but we really need to get therapy to boys and men; they need it, but we're not training the therapist in how to do it for males so males walk out.

The problems are across the board in any area, and I can give you the statistics if you want, but I can tell people pretty much across the board now.

Brett McKay: Yeah. Have you noticed any difference, any changes? Have things gotten worse since then or have things improved in some areas? What do you see now?

Michael Gurian: What I'm finding is that in the areas of the country, usually in neighborhoods or in schools or in institutions where in the last 20 years they have raised their awareness and they've created sustainable systemic change. That things are improving for both boys and girls, but in much of the country statistically, no it's getting worse. We're putting more males in prison; we're having more violence, less guys going to therapy.

In other words those things we're not solving at a kind of macro level, but at the grassroots in the last 20 years, there's been enough consciousness-raising in certain neighborhoods and institutions. At the Gurian Institute we spend a lot of time with them. We train a lot of teachers in their schools. In those schools there is improvement.

Brett McKay: Fantastic. You alluded to one of the problems that schools or institutions face when dealing with boys and girls, they often treat boys the same as girls. Or they have their approach to boys the same as they do with girls, but you make an argument that there are bio ... There's differences between boys and girls on a biological level that, and on a cultural level, that affects the way they relate to the world emotionally and mentally. Can you describe how these differences affect boys differently from girls?

Michael Gurian: Yeah. These are differences in nature, nurture and culture. Nature is what comes in on the X and the Y chromosomes, what comes in to our genetics, comes in to brain development in utero before we're born; that's nature. The male and the female brain come in very different so of course it's a spectrum of over seven billion people now.

You've got a brain spectrum of course, and males and females can be anywhere on that spectrum except that the 3.5 billion males are on the male side of the spectrum and the 3.5 billion females are on the female side of the spectrum.

What we mean by that is that for instance if you have a Y chromosome that triggers markers while the baby is carried in utero and Y obviously is male. While the baby is carried in utero and those markers trigger

testosterone to flood through the male system, so through the male cells and the male tissue.

That testosterone reformats the brain. For instance, you and I and every male listening to this, we don't have the verbal centers on the right side that every female listening to this has. That was all set in utero. That was all set via the X and the Y chromosome and then their linkage to the markers and then to the flow of hormone and the reformatting.

All that happens actually between six months in utero. When babies are born they're born boys and girls. Again that's a spectrum, there's no stereotype, it's a spectrum. The girls no matter what culture they're from, no matter what continent it doesn't matter, they're going to have verbal centers on both sides of their brain and they're going to have linkage between those verbal centers and their emotive centers and their sensorial centers on both sides of the brain.

Males are going to have the verbal centers on the left and they're going to have therefore linkage only on the left for the emotions and sensors. On the right, males have visualgraphic and spatiomechanical centers. For instance, I did my two years of my comparative research in Turkey. I could go to a village in eastern Turkey where ... that was polygamous where the culture was completely different than New York urban culture.

The play patterns and the behavior patterns of the males and females were exactly the same, because the brains are the same; male brains are male brains, female brains are female brains. No one else had really I guess put this together in the way I had for child development before 'The Wonder of Boys' and I think that's why 'The Wonder of Boys' sort of surprised people.

I find that nature-based research very very fascinating. However, we include nurture and culture too because nature, nurture, and culture are all important for gender. We take the nature, we're nature-based. I'm a nature-based theorist I take nature first, then I look at nurture and culture in the neighborhood in the community. What we find is that these brain differences are robust, worldwide they're robust.

Then each family and each community nurtures and then culturates. If we understand the nature-based differences, the great thing is we're able to intervene in the nurture and in the culture to say, "Hey, look at this school. The nurturing system in this school is really does not understand the way these male brains are set up. No one has showed these wonderful teachers brains scans."

Our team goes in and shows the brain scans and says, “Look how different these brains are here. Let’s do these things.” For instance, with males they’re need to physically move more in order to concentrate. That will not be true of every male but it will be true in a classroom of 25, it will be true for around four to five males. Okay, the teacher knows to do that now and have strategy now for doing that, so that that male can physically move around to stimulate parts of his brain that don’t get stimulated if he sits still.

In a female brain, those parts of the brain do get stimulated. That’s one of the reasons boys are getting 70% of the Ds and Fs in the US right now is these wonderful teachers don’t know this. Once they know it then it really changes the kids’ lives.

Brett McKay: What are your thoughts about, there’s been a lot of reports really about the growing use of Ritalin and stimulants like that to keep ... Is that being overprescribed for ADD.

Michael Gurian: Oh yeah. Well we have two things going on. One thing is, and these are in a sense two different topics.

Brett McKay: Sure.

Michael Gurian: One thing is that most of the Ritalin is being used in the US and we want to remember that most of these diagnosis are in the US. The way in which these two things relate is that but they’re from different ideology, different sources. The misdiagnosis, the source of that is what I just described in the schools and then in the parents.

They feel a lot of pressure; they want their son to succeed. He’s having trouble; they don’t understand that some of the trouble comes from the lack of training of the teachers so they try getting him on drugs. Then the school is saying, “Look the kid can’t focus, he can’t sit still.” Whenever I hear that one then I know probably going to be misdiagnosed because it’s pretty normal for these five boys to not sit still. That’s the misdiagnosis; it comes from just a lack of information and a lack of training.

On the other hand we are also creating more brain disordered kids in this generation. That’s an issue of genetics and environmental toxins. That’s like a whole other programme; that’s about genetics and epigenetics. Maybe you’ve had other geneticists on to talk about that both in the dad’s sperm and in the mom carrying the baby. We believe there are

some things happening genetically because of plastics and estrogen receptors in these things that we're trying to figure out now.

We have an increase in brain disorders for both boys and girls, but we also have a misdiagnosis for boys on the ADD.

Brett McKay: We're going to take a quick break [inaudible 00:12:56] from our sponsor.

Hey Art of Manliness listeners, we interview a lot of authors today on The Art of Manliness podcast like today, we're interviewing Michael Gurian. If you don't have a lot of time to sit down and read you commute a lot and you have time to listen, audiobooks are a great way to consume information on the go.

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You mentioned culture an important part of what a boy needs or what ... The important part of what makes up a boy's emotional and mental life. In your book 'The Wonder of Boys' you describe a few components of male culture that ... I got the jest that it was sort of ubiquitous around the globe like high level principles of what makes up a male culture?

Michael Gurian: Yeah, and yes absolutely. What I'm always trying to put in my books are things that I can prove worldwide, so that we can all process ourselves beyond the nature versus nurture. Some of the cultural elements that I'm looking at like for instance wherever I study boys, I can see that they are creating a culture that is ... that involves more aggression nurturance for instance than girls are. I need to describe what that it.

Aggression nurturance is different than empathy nurturance. Empathy nurturance tends to be more verbal emotive, so it's more how do you feel and it's asks for and receives back information about feelings. It uses words to transmit that information. Memories and stories to transmit that information. It tends to be more softer, so it's soft touch-oriented. I come to you and I touch you and I say, "How do you feel? How can I help you?"

That's empathy nurturance. We all practice it males and females. Females tend to practice it more and for longer periods of time because they use more words for their emotions. Males tend to form cultures that use more aggression nurturance. Aggression nurturance is someone falls down it's "Get up we need to you. You're okay come on get up," because there's an aggression game being played.

There's competition being played. The self-esteem is not based as much in feeling immediate empathy and extending that empathy. The self-esteem, the transmission of self-esteem comes through this competitive game or something that involves aggression and it involves pushing each other and bopping each other on the head and wrestling. All these things where males are transmitting love.

Now both males and females can wrestle, both males and females can talk about their feelings so everyone is using both empathy and aggression nurturance. In any culture that we study boys and girls, we see males creating their culture around more aggression nurturance.

That's an example of boy culture that we have to more deeply understand and we do. We can't just say, "Okay you hitting your friend on the head is wrong, go to the principal." We have to look at aggression nurturance say, "Wow! That was actually a very nurturing gesture but it scared this person over here who doesn't understand it." Whereas these two boys are nurturing each other and they're helping each other.

One of the big messages for me in all this, and this is for both boys and girls is we intervene way way too much and way too quickly in the lives of these kids. These kids are trying to be themselves and they're trying to challenge each other. Unless there's danger, unless they're really dangerous to each other which a slot on the head is not danger. Unless they're danger, we need to step back and study their culture better.

That's what that chapter on Boy Culture is about, to help people study boy culture so that we don't keep overreacting to it and robbing it of its assets.

Brett McKay:

That kind of brings up the question how do you ... You know bullying is a big problem it's in the news a lot, how do you make that distinction between that aggression nurturance where boys are sort of just razzing each other good-naturedly? How do you make that distinction between that and bullying, because I think some parents would say that any type of aggression nurturance is bullying that you're just like ...

Michael Gurian: Right, again that's just because we spend so little time studying boys. If we study boys what we see is that there is a difference between aggression and violence. I know all of us want to stop violence, so what I ... Part of my work has been to create a distinction. In other words everywhere I go, every lecture I give, every keynote I give I always make this distinction and say, "All right, let's distinguish now between what's aggression and what's violence so we stop overreacting to aggression?"

Aggression is one organism or a nation state obviously it could be a country, one organism that tries to manipulate, control, challenge or exploit another organism. Everyone's aggressive including girls. Boys and girls we're all aggressive maybe in different ways but everyone will have an aggressive moment in life in which we will be trying to control someone else, manipulate etc. Parents are very aggressive with kids; kids are aggressive with parents etc. That's aggression; that's not violence.

The kid pushing the other kid and then them laughing, that's challenge, that's nurturance, that's, "Yeah you know I manipulated you by pushing you," but there's no danger. Violence is when one organism or system attempts to destroy the other organism. We include in that destruction of core self because we've got to include psychological, psychological abuse or emotional violence.

If I push another kid into a locker and then we both laugh about it, and then the other one grabs the other one and puts him in a stranglehold and we're all laughing about it, we need to realize that this is a transmission of love. That's obviously not bullying. Bullying would have to be violent, and that would mean that I, let's use me, I'm trying to destroy the core self of this other person.

For instance, if I am a bigot and I call someone else a nigger or call someone else a fag and I keep doing that, it's very clear I'm a bigot and I want to destroy the core self of this other person. That is bullying, and that is violence, and that's psychologically abusive and hurtful. So many of these other things are not.

The FBI has tried to come out and say, "Okay, how much bullying is actually going on?" The [inaudible 00:20:21] 13%. We would say 13% is too high, we would rather have zero, but at the same time that does also mean that most of these interactions are not bullying. I'm begging us to study it all more carefully so that we figure out what really is destruction of core self, and that's what we focus on.

Brett McKay: In one part of the book you talk about the stages of the boys emotional and mental development. I know it's kind of detail but a rough sketch from infancy to early 20s, what stages do boys go through? What can parents, role models do to help them journey, navigate safely through these different stages?

Michael Gurian: Let me pull out a few because as you said there's just so much there.

Brett McKay: Sure.

Michael Gurian: Let me pull out a few because it's in a way one of the most important questions we can ask since our kids are developmental. What works for them when they're two won't work later. I'll pull out a few; let's pull out birth to two. There's a time where it's really, once we have food, shelter and clothing, let's assume we have that, it's really about attachment. It's going to be all about bonding and attachment.

In that stage, some things for folks to look at, so if anyone listening has a baby birth to two, look at things like screen time. How much of the child's time is he spending in front of the screen and therefore maybe not bonding? They're spending a lot of time like in a daycare or childcare facility and they're watching a couple of movies. That's not good for him because it's really all about bonding.

It's also about physical kinesthetic exploration of the world so that his brain tissue and his synapsis so they close and they build in a way they need to. Those are key things to look at there. If he's staring at a screen he's not touching things, he's not grabbing things, he's not out in the world so we could be negatively impacting his brain development. Obviously if he's not attached we could be negatively affecting his brain development.

For instance, if both parents are working, which many are and that can be absolutely fine, make sure that that boy has at least one other caregiver during the day that he's being held by and bonding with especially birth to two. One of the things that gets missed with boys is people think of them as tough etc. and they don't realize that birth to two there are some ways in which the bonding mechanisms for males are really more fragile than we realize. They need a lot more bonding than maybe the stereotype would tell us, so that would be very important.

Pick another one let's say in the four to six age group. Now obviously in that developmental stage they've developed etc. Key thing that happens there is parents may notice that the boy is not developing certain things

as quickly as maybe his sister did. That could still be very normal. Boys reading writing, anything that has to do with their verbal so it's just word production.

For a lot of boys they're a year to a year-and-a-half behind girls in that. When you use an aggregate of thousands and thousands of boys and girls you see that more girls are speaking in fuller sense as more quickly than more boys. A lot of people hold their boys back in kindergarten, and that's fine. That can be fine. In other words, just be aware that there are these developmental differences.

Jumping ahead to early like 10 to 12 that's another big stage a number of things go on; one is brain pruning. Just know that between 10 and 12, what your son is doing now between 10 and 12, that will probably stay. It's a use it or lose it thing that goes on in the brain. If he's playing three hours of video games, which I hope he's not, just remember that could damage him for life.

In the sense that those are the synapses, that's the bridge, that's the stuff that will stay, the grey matter that will stay, because the brain will prune out when it's not being used. We would really rather between 10 and 12 that he's doing things that you know are going to be important for his meaning in life, his purpose, his talent set, and his socio-emotional bonding. Do as much of that as we can since that's what's going to stay. Stuff that isn't really as good for him in the long term maybe don't do those.

Another thing that goes on and I'll do one more jump to like 13/14 is the psychological separation. There's a lot of individuation that goes on now and can't happen earlier, can't happen later. It's just the general time for it. Moms may notice that the boys are pulling away. A danger zone can be if they boys psychologically pull away from mom, which many of them have to. They've got to figure out what a man is.

It's really normal for any child to individuate, but if there isn't dad around or if there aren't two or three other males around who can mentor these boys ... We have a big problem right now with these early adolescent boys who don't have male mentors, don't have fathers, don't have male role model.

They don't have to individuate from mom so they're basically isolated and alone developmentally. That leads to obviously ... can lead to prison, gangs, lack of motivation in school etc. all sorts of bad things. We want to focus, if someone's listening and has kids at that age group, look around

and make sure there's dad and/or two or three other males around who this boy can walk in the footsteps of those males as he psychologically individuates from mom.

Brett McKay: Okay, that-

Michael Gurian: Those are a few.

Brett McKay: Yeah, that was great. That last bit about having not just dad but also male mentors around leads me to my next question. One part of your book that is really loved is when you talk about the importance of the three families in a boy's life. I think that's something that doesn't get really focused on very much when we talk about nurturing our children. Can you talk about what those three families are and what role they should play in a boy's life?

Michael Gurian: I believe, I base this in my research base which is science which is ... I'm using neuroanthropology, neuroscience, neuropsychology. As I look at this data around the world, the patterns I see are patterns in which the healthiest kids, both male and female, are kids raised in some form of a three family system, rather than in one nuclear family but a three family system.

What it means is you've got the nuclear unit because that's the initial attachment unit. That unit could be hetero, it could be mom and dad. It could be intact hetero, [inaudible 00:27:22] mom and dad intact family. It also could be adoptive family. It also could be two men or two women, so a gay or lesbian family. It also, there's a lot of divorce, it could be a divorce family then it becomes a blended family. Or it could be a single parent after a divorce or a non-marriage. That's the nuclear unit.

The way nature seems to have set up human development is with the understanding that there's fragility in the nuclear unit. As we not only look at the US and other cultures but look back at history, we notice that every nuclear unit has right around it extended family systems: grandma, grandpa, aunt, uncle, cousins. That whole extended family unit; that's the second family.

Now in the US we're mobile and it's a huge country so very often the grandparents don't live next to the kids so that's fair enough. The human being is wired for that second family. What I'm always advising parents are don't just rely on nuclear family, look at your own family, keep that as strong as safe as you can and keep having these the second family around you.

That nanny could be second family, the daycare providers we want them to be second family. In other words we want one or two of them really bonded with our kids like second family. Obviously if our blood relatives are around then we want to use them and exploit them, yes? If they're not around we want to look at coop, we want to look at any kind of structure or system. Later it could be Boy Scout, later it could be big brother big sisters.

Whatever all systems in which there are these other people who become intimate with in their bond with our child like a grandma or grandpa; that's always the sort of standard. You've got first family however it's formed but it's fragile and so we therefore need second family. Then what wraps around the second family has always been a tribal community. This also we can see anthropologically throughout history.

Human beings we've got to remember, human beings are nature-based. All this culture stuff is really really recent. Human beings are nature-based; our cells are wired, our chromosomes are wired for a certain kind of nurture. We want to remember the tribal nurture, that's the third family. For us many of us are not in tribes per se but our religious group if we're at all religious that can be a third family.

Our school, we want to be going to schools or interacting with schools in such a way that they are like third family at least. Some when they're a very small school they can become like second family. The larger schools let's at least make sure they're like third family so that ... so those institutions wrap around and support what's being done in the second and the first family. That there's constant interaction between these two, not isolation between the nuclear family and the school.

If people think this way, then people are thinking for a second and third family. Then that ends the kind of negative trends that I think we have where people will say, "Well you know if you could just give me three tips to have a healthy tribal." Or, "What's the one thing I should say to my son to get him to be healthy?" That's not how human beings are wired to parent, and that's not how human beings are wired to receive love and to grow.

The one thing I can always tell people if you want to have a healthy kid, I can't tell you what his/her genetics are; that's his own thing. If you want to have a healthy kid your best chance of that is a strong first, second and third family relationship.

Brett McKay: Do you think like the disintegration of the second family and third family in American life because I feel like we're not really community-based anymore. Like you said people will get up and move away from their extended family, and then they belong to these anonymous large schools or large corporations or large networks.

Do you think that's been contributed to some of these like really troubling instances we've seen with young men with guns, like these mass shooters? They all seem to describe the same thing like they feel alone like no one saw them or recognized them or respected them. Does disintegration of those three families play a part in that?

Michael Gurian: Oh absolutely, absolutely. Over the years, over the last 16/17 years I've been asked to look either by other professionals or by the media at the profiles of school shooters. They try to do some consulting and some assistance. What I've been able to see in this is that the social isolation cascading into depression or chicken and egg depression and social isolation.

Nuclear family generally is somehow disintegrated, but it's not nuclear isolation from extended family. Isolation from these other three or four people who we need to be bonded to this kid. Then in the third family as you described that's where the bullying can often take place. That creates even more isolation obviously and pain.

One of the things I've tried to say is really what you're saying which is that we should go back and look at the disintegration of the three families around these kids. As a nation that's really what we ought to be targeting. We need to really reeducate, basically I think reeducate the American populace to understand that it takes three families. Every parent needs some advice or training or just a cultural conversation so that they look at these things so that these guys don't have to become so isolated.

Some of these guys are genetically sociopathic; that's different that's not created. That's pre-birth, but most of them have been abused in some terrible way which would not have happened if they weren't so isolated and/or they're very isolated so multivariable. When you put all that together you have to bracket out genetics but at least you can look at your nuclear, look at your extended, and look at your tribal or communal and say, "Okay, basic developmental assistance for these guys does not exist. They're socially isolated and they're chronically depressed." For males, that is more likely going to turn to violence than for females.

Brett McKay: I know a lot of our listeners are dads, how should fathers approach and think about their role as a father in order to maximize their son's personal growth and emotional and mental health?

Michael Gurian: I want to say two things at once to fathers.

Brett McKay: Sure.

Michael Gurian: One is just be yourself because there's a lot out there about here's the way you should father. Well, my message is you be yourself; be yourself. As you're being yourself do things. Transmit your values to your son because ultimately his journey is a journey of character development. He wants to live a life of purpose and he wants to figure out what a man is.

Every one of us, even us in these generations in our feminists and post-feminist generations, the culture can do what the culture wants, but these boys want to know what a man is. If they don't know what a man is, they're going to be 20/25/30/35 and they're still not going to know.

That is a very difficult way to be an adult male. Transmit these values, transmit your life stories into ... Pour yourself into this boy in the way that is you, not in the way that's Gurian, but in the way that's you. For some of these guys it will not involve a lot of words. For some fathers, they're being told they should talk all the time but that's not how they're set up. For them they need to do, always be doing things.

"Okay, told you to mow the lawn. While you're mowing the lawn I'm going to be reading. I'm going to be right here. My presence is going to be right here near you," let's say. Not every day but once a week. Or, "I need to fix the car and you want to play a video game. No I think you should come out and fix the car with me," because what the boy needs is father presence.

He needs father presence in the way that father is father. If it's in fixing a car, then that's where the pouring of that man, of that guy's manhood, of his fatherhood, of his being himself, that's going to pour in through the fixing of the car. There may be very few words spoken. For other guys, me I'm very talkative I'm a talker so I'm constantly wanting to talk. Well, that's fine too. However it is that the transmission of this goes on, let it go on.

The second major thing I'll say to fathers is that we live in a time that is very confused about fathering so if ... We know however, that the lack of a father is one of the primary determinants of male distress, so that

father is really really important. Now there certainly are some fathers, maybe 5% of fathers, who are dangerous bad people so I'm going to bracket them out for this answer.

Most fathers are good enough. To the father and to Mom, if Mom and Dad are fighting, that should have nothing to do with the father's relationship with the son. If Mom and Dad divorce, it's crucial that Mom backed away from shaming the father, because the boy will need the father. Of course once the boy hits puberty he's going to need the father even more.

One of the saddest trends that I think is causing a lot of social problems today is that post-divorce father are being forced into becoming friends with their son. They're not transmitting, they're not pouring themselves in, they're just basically begging for contact with this son. When the son comes over they're just ... they're do anything. "Let's go to pizza, let's play video games." They'll do anything just to be friends with these sons so the sons don't turn away.

We're going to have to fix that as a culture because what the son ... What we need to do is even if there's a divorce or separation, we need to support the father's role with that son. That's going to mean women are going to have to alter some of the messages they send even though they're very angry at their space. It's going to mean fathers are going to have to fight harder to keep their father-son relationship and not let it go to a friend and, "I'll just entitle you and buy you anything and that should be it."

Brett McKay: For our listeners who aren't dads, what can they do to be a male mentor? I get that question a lot is how you can become a male mentor because it's sort of awkward. You don't want to foist yourself upon some young male, "Oh I know everything and listen to me." Any practical tips if there's a guy who's just like, "I want to help but I don't know how to do that."

Michael Gurian: Yes, depending on age group, let's say that ... First of all when it comes to the older age group, if it's folks who are in retirement and older, we want to get every single retired male who has time now, that's the reason I say retired or older. We want to get every single male who's retired connected with a younger male.

I would say in this age group I would beg you if you're listening to go to your faith community, to go to big brothers big sisters or to go to scouting or to go ... Call your local Department of Social and Health

Services, ask them if they have a programme. Call your school district and ask if you can come in and read to the kids, boys and girls obviously and see if a bond emerges.

Call any relative in your family even if they live far away, you can still use email and Skype. Get connected to at least one boy that you mentor through his developmental process. That's easier because you have more time.

Okay now going to folks who are working. For men who are working but don't have kids, if you have family call the family members so that if they've got a son so that you can get more involved in that son's life. Some of that should happen organically because you're the favorite uncle let's say for one of your nephews. If it hasn't happened that way then put in the call say, "Listen, I've learned about this I want to be part of it. I want to be part of the second family."

Then go to any institution, and right now I would say the easiest institution is the faith community because a lot of faith communities: Jewish, Christian, Muslim, a lot of faith communities are awakening to this. They can be the liaison. They have for instance, the passage programme or confirmation programmes or these things that they're trying to institute. Or they're noticing that males are not going to Church, they're not going to synagogue after about 12/13. They really want to reinvigorate males and masculinity.

Call them, call the Pastor, call the youth Pastor, get involved in doing a trip with them. That would be if you have a faith community. If you have no faith community you're not involved in that, then the school is a good institution. Get a hold of the school counselors and say, "Here's who I am." Now some of the schools will say, "Well we've got to vet you." Okay, fair enough. Be available for that, and be ready for questions like embarrassing questions about ... They want to make sure you're not a sexual abuser.

If you can push yourself through that, go through that in these institutions and then say, "Look, I value the mentorial relationship and I want to be a mentor." If the school isn't allowing you to do that, then wow! There is some advocacy you can do in that school and say, "Well why not? Why won't let me? What's going on here?" Same with faith community.

Really press and really push hard in all of these institutions. Show them you understand what mentoring is and make yourself available, and it

may be a battle. It may be a battle. If they haven't awakened to the need, it may be a battle.

Brett McKay: Well Michael Gurian, we just scratched the surface today so where can our listeners go to find out more about your work?

Michael Gurian: The easiest way is just go michaelgurian.com, michaelgurian.com M-I-C-H-A-E-L-G-U-R-I-A-N.COM and that links to every one of our different programmes and services and products.

Brett McKay: Fantastic! Well Michael Gurian, thank you so much for your time; it's been a pleasure.

Michael Gurian: Thank you. Anytime have me back. You're doing great work, thank you.

Brett McKay: Thank you. Our guest here is Michael Gurian; he is the author of the book 'The Wonder of Boys'. You can find that on Amazon.com, and also make sure to check out MichaelGurian.com for more information about his work with young men and boys.

Well that wraps up another edition of The Art of Manliness podcast. For more manly tips and advice, make sure to check out The Art of Manliness website at artofmanliness.com. Again if you enjoyed this podcast and you got something out of it, I'd really appreciate if you go to iTunes or Stitcher or whatever it is you use to listen to your podcast and give us a review. Much appreciated. Until next time, this is Brett McKay telling you to stay manly.