

FOSTERING FRIENDSHIP

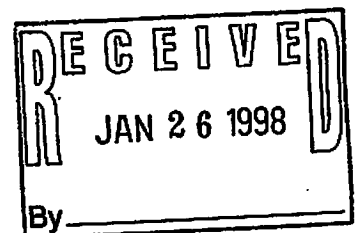
Pair Therapy for Treatment and Prevention

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From Perspective-Taking to Emotion-Making in a Middle School Pair

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Children are usually selected for pairs because they do not manage the give and take of successful relationships well. Typically, these children behave in either an "all give" or "all take" fashion. For such children, strong emotional experiences can become associated with a rigid interpersonal orientation (cf. Chapter 3). We know from temperament studies that shy, timid children are more sensitive to threats and are more likely than their peers to feel fear and anxiety (Kagan, 1984). We also know that aggressive children tend to expect aggression from others, feel hostile and vigilant, and underestimate the pain they inflict on their peers (Dodge & Somberg, 1987; Younger & Boyko, 1987).

The child who rigidly employs a limited range of strategies for resolving conflict may well become quite familiar with the emotional experiences these strategies arouse. For example, the child whose regular response to conflict is passive acquiescence knows only too well the fear of domination, the pangs of isolation, and the feelings of rejection by peers who shame him for his tendency to retreat. The child who routinely acts in other-transforming, controlling ways knows similar emotions equally well, but in a very different way. He may know the isolation of being rejected by peers who find him intimidating or label him as rude, and the rejection of teachers who perceive him as mean-spirited, manipulative, and controlling. Even when these affective experiences are so overwhelming that they are restricted from attention or memory, the child may still need to communicate them and will do so by unknowingly engendering similar affect in others.

In close, ongoing relationships, such as in pairs, children will frequently attempt to engender affect by swapping roles with their partner. For example, consider a child who has experienced undesirable emotions in a past close relationship as the result of another's actions. To communicate his experience, purposely or unknowingly, he d...ts sim-

ilar actions toward another child in order to make the other feel what he has felt. Working from his own, subjective social perspective, he assumes that the actions will have the same effect on the other person as they had on him. The child is not only attempting to let the new recipient of these actions know how he himself felt earlier, he also assumes the role and affective experience of the past actor. This pattern of sharing negative affective experiences—for example, of the abused becoming the abuser—is as unfortunate as it is common. But people also engender positive affective experiences in various ways, such as through mentoring. A primary difference between these two forms of engendered affect is that the former reflects self-interested emotion-making; the latter suggests a high degree of social interest, in which the other's perspective is considered.

Much of this chapter examines the pair counseling relationship of Kenny and Carl, two sixth-grade public school students whose arrival in middle school began with debilitating conflict and isolating self-interest, but who, through sharing experiences and emotional roles in the pair world, developed greater social interest and competence that appears to have transferred back into the classroom. The relationship of Kenny and Carl illustrates the processes of engendering and assuming affect by focusing on how each boy initially made the other feel inferior when he himself had felt slighted, attacked, or rejected. On the one hand, their bullying and teasing provides confirmation for the modified conventional wisdom that, in moments of emotional pain, "misery recruits company." On the other hand, this case shows how positive social roles and personal identities can be created, maintained, and transformed by emotional experiences in close relationships. Through experiencing each other's social role, each boy's social identity was transformed and his repertoire of social skills expanded.

Engendered and Assumed Affect

The social roles we choose, or have placed upon us, are generally accompanied by defining emotional experiences (such as the timidity of "the nerd" or the aggressiveness of "the bully"). Although emotions are universal (Fischer, Shaver & Carnochan, 1990), and our natural response is to communicate them to others (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson 1994), it is the interpretations of the affective experiences associated with these roles that inform how we feel and the emotions we then communicate to others. Much of our emotional communication is based on our interpretations of the meaning of particular interactions. Emotions are understood in terms of our previous experiences and our current concerns,

and these interpretations are guided by a desire for competence (Basch, 1988; Klinger, 1982). We interpret our more complex and mixed emotions, consider how these emotions relate to our perspectives (Oatley, 1987) and concerns, and instinctively attempt to communicate them to others.

Two of the ways in which affective experiences, such as shame, pride, and inferiority or superiority, are communicated between individuals are through social exchanges in which these emotional states are engendered or assumed. People communicate their experiences by engendering them in others; they change their own emotions by assuming what they believe to be others' affective experiences. *Engendered affect* is defined as the experience of emotion that results from one individual's attempt to bring forth or recreate an affective experience in another. *Assumed affect* refers to the experience of emotion that results from creating or taking upon oneself a particular affective experience. Both are forms of sharing, transferring or communicating positive or negative emotional experiences. Sometimes these affective exchanges are done deliberately and consciously, such as when one person creates the positive experience in another that he has experienced in other relationships (such as mentoring).¹ Often they are done outside of one's conscious awareness, such as when one defensively inflicts pain upon another to assuage one's own suffering.

Assumed affect is inextricably connected to the process of engendering affect. For example, one's desire to assume an affective experience of power or superiority is often the motivation for engendering an affective experience of inferiority in others. Engendered affect, whether it results from diverse activities such as aggression, retaliation, storytelling, empathizing, mentoring, or enacting particular roles in a close relationship, becomes a way of recycling affective experiences from one person to another. It is a way of communicating through experiences rather than solely through words.

Alfred Adler's (1927; 1930) theory of how superiority strivings assuage inferiority feelings suggests one reason why individuals often create affective experiences out of self-interest rather than social interest. Adler believed that because humans are interdependent, needing to rely on each other to survive, we all tend to feel somewhat inferior. We ideally overcome these common feelings of inferiority by developing our individual talents and strengths to the fullest in a way that benefits the community. That is, feeling incomplete and inadequate by ourselves, we strive for superiority by contributing to the collective good. This shift becomes the bedrock of social interest and human development.

Developing social interest is not the only response to inferiority feelings. Experiencing more than one's share of inferiority feelings can turn

this process back upon itself, leading the striving for superiority to become gauged in terms of self-interest rather than social interest. Inferiority feelings can result from any perceived difference about oneself that may be associated with "inferior." There are internalized inferiority feelings (such as low self-esteem) and situational feelings of inferiority (like the affective experience of being teased), both of which may exist in a person simultaneously. One response to deep feelings of inferiority is to strive toward superiority out of self-interest—to elevate one's social status, the interpretation of one's worth relative to that of another person or group. This turning away from the collective interest and towards one's own needs, however, can thwart the development of more mature social development.

Pair counselors must consider these kinds of affective experiences as they are communicated through the pair's interactions. For instance, by creating negative affective experiences in others, a child who feels inferior may create (or interpret) a community of "inferiors" compared to whom he can feel "superior," and thus transfer away the isolating affective experience of feeling like an outcast. Out of self-protection he engenders negative affective experiences in others in order to assume a positive affective experience for himself and to communicate his painful experience.

Because therapy, and particularly pair counseling, is concerned with helping individuals learn to interact and feel more competent in their social worlds, it is imperative for therapeutic success that children in pairs come to think and act from perspectives based on social interest as well as self-interest. Emotion-making out of social interest requires the more mature cognition that allows one to see beyond the circumstantial nature of emotion and to appreciate the personal and interpersonal elicitors of emotion (Harris, 1985). It also requires that one be concerned as much with one's relationship with others as with one's subjective concerns (Tharinger, 1980). Less differentiated perspective-taking suggests a limited awareness of the connection between one's own emotional needs and the ways in which one consciously or unconsciously engenders affective experiences in others or assumes them in oneself. It is marked by the absence of empathy, care, and concern for others. A goal of pair counseling is to foster an attitude of social interest so that there is synchrony between the emotional tone children desire in their relationships and the ways in which they typically engender affect in others.

Pair counselors can help children and adolescents better understand how their actions may reflect their need to belong and their feelings of inferiority. By helping pairmates identify and explore how emotions govern their pair relationship, pair counselors can promote children's emotional perspective-taking abilities. The pair counselor knows the

history of the pair's relationship, and can identify re-emerging themes and the exchanges of roles and affective experiences. She can then interpret and discuss the engendered affect with the children, and help them understand which actions build up rather than break down relationships. With increasingly differentiated emotional perspective-taking abilities, children can develop the skills they will need to manage social relations pro-socially out of social interest, rather than reactively out of self-interest.

In an effort to promote social interest, a pair counselor can explore the meaning a child makes when a shift in emotions has taken place in the pair world. In the case study that follows, in my role as pair counselor I discussed with Kenny and Carl my understanding of the ways in which they shared with each other their emotional experiences—their engendered and assumed affective experiences—of shame, power, inferiority, and superiority. The primary questions in this case were: Would their awareness of the emotional results of their actions increase? Would it parallel changes in their behavior and self-understanding in the pair sessions? Would these in turn translate into positive changes in their classroom behavior and academic performance?

"The Two Dumb Stogie Brothers": A Story About Friendship

October 1

It was my first week as a counselor at an urban middle school. My task that day was to observe the sixth-grade students and talk with their teachers. In the coming weeks, I would work with the teachers to select students and match them with an appropriate form of counseling (individual, pair, or group). On this day I observed students in their classrooms, putting faces to the names of students whom teachers had referred for services.

At 7:45 that chilly October morning, I entered Mrs. Ford's classroom, along with the other early birds. Most students stopped at their lockers to hang up their coats or to talk briefly to their friends, except for one boy. He went straight to his seat and sat down without making eye contact with any of the others. He hid his head in his arms, which lay folded on the desk.

After school I spoke with Mrs. Ford about Kenny. "Kenny," she paused. "He is one of the children I've already referred. He should be on your list. I'm very concerned about him. This year he has really become withdrawn. I see the other children tease him, and he's very sensitive,

you know." Kenny was experiencing difficulty in making friends, and his response to the teasing and cajoling of his peers was to withdraw and sometimes to cry.

I met with Kenny on October 20, after his mother signed the permission form for him to be seen by a counselor. Kenny described himself as lonely, having few friends, either at school or home. Each day after school Kenny took care of his little sister and watched TV. He was not allowed to play outside because his mother felt that the streets in his neighborhood were too dangerous. On most days he went straight home from school and was asleep before his mother returned from work.

Things were difficult at home, he admitted, but it was at school that he faced his most serious problems. Kenny stated clearly that the teasing and bullying he received was his most pressing problem and current concern. At school, Kenny was singled out as different. He had moved to the United States from the Caribbean when he was in fourth grade. At first he experienced no problems of prejudice among his peers. But once he moved from elementary school to middle school, his peers teased him about his unusual accent. They singled him out because his skin was considerably darker than most of the other (African-American) students. They repeatedly criticized him, saying that his clothes were shabby and he was unkempt and dirty. On top of this, the other students found out that Kenny was really quite bright, and then ridiculed him for being a nerd. Quickly he became the class scapegoat.

Like so many students, Kenny struggled to make the difficult transition from elementary to middle school. I asked him how he would change the school if he could. In simple, curt responses he replied, "No fighting. No picking on people. No weapons. And no bringing *Gameboys* (computer game) to school." Clearly Kenny did not feel safe at school.

A month or so before this interview, Kenny had offered to sell his *Gameboy* to Carl, another student in Kenny's class. Carl took the toy and then refused to pay Kenny. Kenny explained that he had tried to enlist his teacher's help, but she did not resolve the issue. Curiously, his teacher had mentioned the incident to me earlier as an example of Kenny's timid nature. She said, "Kenny just gave the game away after I had retrieved it for him." Regardless of the actual circumstances, Kenny clearly felt he was without support, without an ally; in response he isolated himself from his classmates.

Kenny described Carl as the biggest bully in class. I asked Kenny if his life would be better or worse if he could become friends with Carl. When he replied "better," I asked him whether he would like to meet each week with me and Carl. The thought of being alone with this ferocious

bully must have frightened Kenny because my suggestion sent visible shivers through his body. I explained that through pairs he might become Carl's friend or at least learn better how to deal with guys like Carl, and that this might put an end to some of the bullying he was subjected to in class. Cautiously, he agreed to enter into a pair relationship with Carl.

I met with Carl a few days later. It turned out that Mrs. Ford was concerned about Carl's rough play and the way he intimidated his peers. She noted that since he started to pal around with a boy named John, Carl had become even more aggressive toward his peers. She also told me that his class work was not satisfactory, and she wasn't sure whether it was a matter of effort or ability. Carl had been held back a grade for academic failure, and Kenny was a year behind his classmates because of his language abilities; this put them both at risk for dropping out.

When we spoke I was surprised by how friendly and personable Carl was—Kenny had prepared me to meet a bully. After a few introductory comments, I began talking about pair counseling. "I wanted to talk to you about meeting once a week, with someone else in the class, to talk about things, to play games, and learn how to become better at making friends. I also thought it might be nice for you to be able to do stuff outside the class with another student." Carl jumped in eagerly asking, "Like to meet each other, and play with each other, and learn about each other and stuff?" Pleasantly surprised, I continued, "The person I thought we would work with is Kenny. Is that OK?" "Sure," he answered more compliantly than I had expected.

Throughout our conversation it became clear to me that Carl was not really aware of how his peers viewed him at school. Kenny and Mrs. Ford's descriptions were of a child who was perceived by his peers as aggressive and intimidating, yet Carl seemed to view most of his peers as friends. Carl also made an odd connection between having friends and making good grades in school. For Carl, it seemed that being cool and being a good student were mutually exclusive categories. Likewise, Carl's understanding of friendship, and his assumption that all of his classmates were his friends, suggested to me that Carl was not very skillful at understanding social or emotional perspectives other than his own. He knew, however, that somehow his "fooling around" had a negative influence on his grades and his friendships.

My supervisor and I agreed pair counseling appeared to be an appropriate intervention. Both boys seemed to value and desire friendships, but flounder in establishing and maintaining them. Although Kenny referred to a few classmates as friends, he did not see them as social support. Carl seemed to believe he had more friends than may actually

have been the case; but he also seemed to know these relationships were based on intimidation more than friendship. For both boys, an inability to engage in competent peer relationships was accompanied by poorer academic work. Contrary to Carl's belief, it seemed that Kenny and Carl both needed to develop better friendship-making skills if they were to get back on track in school, both academically and socially.

Reflectively Assuming Affect: Trying to Get Along

November 14 and 21

During their first session together we covered the ground rules: No hurting each other. No damage to the property. They must do everything together. Aside from Kenny's timidity, there was no sign that day of the antagonism Kenny had suggested existed between them. Both seemed excited about this opportunity. They talked about games, sports, and other shared interests. Quickly Kenny and Carl selected a board game that would become one of their home-base activities.

The second session the following week became the first of several during which they played the same board game together. They chose *Monopoly*, and quickly learned that I was not going to interfere in their game playing unless I saw that they could not solve their problems together. As they played, Carl seemed to assert his dominance by pilfering small amounts of money from the bank and refusing to pay when he landed on Kenny's property. Kenny did not stand up for himself. He seemed to enjoy playing, and tolerated Carl's cheating in order to avoid conflict. Late in the game, Kenny briefly mentioned Carl's liberal withdrawals from the bank. I supported his assertive questioning of Carl, but Kenny let the issue slide after Carl ignored him. Toward the end of the game they were playing together smoothly, occasionally laughing and frequently sharing each other's enthusiasm.

As we had previously agreed, during the last ten minutes of the hour we reflected on how things went. "Did you enjoy today?" I asked them. Carl replied, "Yeah, it was fun." "What did you like?" I continued. Carl: "I like how we started playing. We didn't have no arguments or nothing like that, laughing all through the game." "How did that work?" I asked. "We cooperated," Carl explained. Kenny added, "And we agree with each other." "That's fantastic. Were there any problems?" I asked. Kenny quickly replied, "No," but Carl took a moment to think before adding, "argh, um, no." "Can you guys tell me about a way you solved a

problem together?" Both shook their heads. "Kenny, can you tell me any way you guys worked together?" "We asked each other and told each other what to do." Despite their denial of any conflict, Kenny and Carl seemed to be trying to get along with each other, first, by engendering only positive feelings in each other, and second, by avoiding the conflict that was so characteristic of their relationship.

Engendering Affect Reciprocally: Tapping Emotional Vulnerabilities

December 19

Now many weeks after my first meeting with the boys, several things had changed for Carl and Kenny. So far their work together in pairs had been productive and fun. It was clear, however, that their lives outside the pair room were not as easy. Kenny's problem of being picked on in class was not resolved but simply ameliorated by his work with Carl. Although Carl no longer picked on him, Kenny was still having to deal with other children who did. Similarly, the cessation of Carl's bullying of Kenny did not mark the end of Carl's rocky relationship with his peers. Carl still struggled to learn how to make friends without relying on intimidation.

In this session, the boys began the hour by selecting a game to play. They were unsuccessful in their negotiations. At this point in their relationship, Kenny usually would passively play whatever game Carl chose after feebly presenting his own preference. Kenny had made small challenges to the status quo of Carl's rule, though these met with limited success. Not yet prepared to verbally argue with or challenge Carl, Kenny typically expressed his defiance more in actions than in words.

Knowing that both boys were anticipating the upcoming Christmas holidays, I proposed that they draw or write a Christmas sign on the large chalkboard against the wall. Immediately Carl suggested, "Let's make a tree." Kenny said, "No. . ." Before he could suggest another idea, he was cut off by Carl. "I'll make the tree." I saw an opportunity to suggest cooperation: "Why don't you guys decide what you want to make first, what you want to write, and then do it together in the same area of the chalkboard." "I wanna make a present," explained Kenny. "No, make a tree over there," insisted Carl. The two separated and moved towards opposite ends of the six-foot chalkboard, all the while keeping a watchful eye on each other. Their unilateral actions precluded successful cooperation, and it set the stage for an emotion-making experience.

- Carl: I can't draw (as he laughs at himself).
 Kenny: Maybe we should write.
 Carl: Show a Merry Christmas stocking and a Happy Chanukah.
 Kenny: You don't know how to spell Chanukah (said quietly).
 Mike: What did you say, Kenny?
 Kenny: Nothing.
 Carl: He told me I don't know how to spell Chanukah.
 Mike: I don't either.
 Carl: It is C-H-U-N-K-A. What are you doing (to Kenny)?
 Kenny: I'm putting "Marry" here.
 Carl: I spelled "Merry" wrong. I put an E in it (seeing Kenny's writing, Carl changes the spelling of his word.).
 Kenny: M-A-R. . . (he begins to spell out proudly).
 Mike: "Merry" is right.
 Kenny: Yeah (not realizing that I'm suggesting he has misspelled the word).
 Carl: "E?" (Kenny realizes his error and changes the spelling).

In this exchange Kenny tapped into one of Carl's emotional vulnerabilities and a current concern. Carl was not a good student, and when it came to the three Rs, both Kenny and Carl assumed that Kenny was the superior student. When Kenny misspelled "Merry," and Carl quickly copied the misspelled word, I saw that Kenny could make Carl feel inferior simply by mentioning schoolwork, just as Carl could make Kenny feel inferior about being picked on in class. Using their reflective capacities to understand each other's emotional vulnerabilities, each seemed to strike the other's Achilles' heel when he himself was hurting most.

For the rest of the session, all three of us spoke about the issues that the boys felt made them unsuccessful in school. Carl was frustrated with his school performance. When I asked how school was for both of them, perhaps in order to have his partner share his feelings of incompetence and frustration, Carl quickly deferred this question to Kenny. "For him bad—not for me," Carl continued, "They was picking on him today." "What were they saying?" I asked Kenny. "They always saying stuff about hitting me, calling me names. They push me in the closet and lock me up. One girl calls me a faggot and uses a wooden ruler to slap me on the back of my head." "How did that make you feel?" I asked. "It make me feel real bad," Kenny replied. Curious to know how Carl experienced this scenario in class, I asked, "Carl, what do you think when you see people picking on Kenny?" Carl explained that he tried to stop them from bullying Kenny: "The more they attack him, the more I say leave him alone, the more they was messing with him, and the substitute

teacher didn't even say nothing." Kenny did not acknowledge Carl's assistance. He seemed embarrassed.

Once engaged in this discussion, each boy described how he would handle this situation. Their different approaches became apparent. Kenny described his all-give tendency when I asked him, "What do you think you will do when you go back to class?" He responded, "I dunno. Probably just sit around and let them beat me up." Carl took the opposite approach. Somewhat led by impulse and somewhat by his interpersonal style, Carl stated, "When I lose my temper I'll have to fight. I was getting ready to fight those girls, but changed my mind. But if there was no such thing as suspended, I'd send them out on a stretcher!" Coming from two very different points of view, the boys engaged in a lengthy dialogue about Kenny's options.

Toward the end of the hour the boys discussed why each felt the students picked on Kenny. Carl had been effective in ameliorating his own inferiority feelings by turning the conversation toward Kenny's current concern and emotional vulnerability, his social status. I was unclear whether Carl tried to recreate his inferiority feelings in Kenny so that he himself would not be the only one holding these painful feelings, so that Kenny would understand his affective experience, or to assume feelings of power or superiority.

Mutual Assumed Affect: Fostering Positive Experiences

January 15

This first session after the holidays was a positive one. Although it was uncommon for us to venture outside, today we went out doors to play ball in the school courtyard because the counseling room was being painted. My standard practice was to stand back and let them interact together, but I joined in and threw the ball with them. In my pair case notes² I recorded some significant interactions:

The boys and I threw the football in the snow. The boys were equally good at throwing the ball. Soon we began to throw tricky balls or sly tosses, and made playful but dramatic attempts to intercept the ball from each other. Suddenly, Kenny tackled Carl. A few moments later, the ball became a secondary objective as Kenny climbed on top of Carl in a playful attempt to pull him down. There was no retaliation from Carl as he tolerated Kenny's neophyte assertiveness.

For whatever reason, Carl decided to tolerate Kenny's overly assertive attacks. He may have done this as a reciprocal gesture of generosity, or

as a unilateral maneuver to receive praise from me, but it appeared to be a genuinely caring act. He fostered his own positive emotional experience of power and control in Kenny, an act that only indirectly benefited him but directly benefited their relationship. But Kenny was almost over-assertive during this hour. He became very bossy, and it was unclear to me how long Carl would tolerate this before reasserting his own power.

Engendering Affect Impulsively: Intimidating Physically

January 29

On the eleventh session, the third session after the winter holidays, the boys did not show up at the counseling room. I found them with their class in the gym, and Carl seemed embarrassed to be picked up there with Kenny by "a counselor." He turned his head and pretended not to see me. We had not met on the usual day because the pair was on a new schedule for the spring term. Initially the boys said they had forgotten we were to meet, but I wondered if they wanted to avoid meeting in pairs.

In the counseling room, we began with the usual reflection on the previous session and on the last week in class or at home. Neither boy said anything, so I opened by asking what they wanted to do that day. Boom! The arguing began. Last week Kenny had remembered that we would not meet on the regular day, but Carl did not; he showed up at the counseling room and waited. Carl attacked Kenny for not reminding him about the changed meeting day, and stated that that was what made Kenny a bad friend.

Carl repeatedly told us that he was not Kenny's friend because Kenny did not come down to the counseling room the previous week. He continued his verbal denigration of Kenny, and I asked Kenny if Carl was serious. "Nah, he don't mean it. He's just playing around," he said. "I don't mean it?" Carl challenged, as he got up from his seat and proceeded to walk around the long, wide table toward Kenny. Carl stepped behind Kenny, who stared straight ahead without movement. Carl gripped Kenny's neck with his hands and pretended to strangle him. Kenny and I were not sure whether Carl meant any harm. His approach was so slow and methodical that Kenny did not react in defense. He was passive, like when he was picked on in class, but he also maintained his position. When Carl asked, "So I don't mean it huh?" Kenny held fast, saying, "Nope."

For a moment it was tense. Because I was not sure Kenny was completely free of danger, I interceded, and Carl sat down. Through his "mock" physical intimidation, Carl recreated in us the frustrations, embarrassment and anger he experienced from being seen with Kenny and me in the gym. By pretending to strangle Kenny, Carl seemed to engender embarrassment and anger in Kenny, and he left me feeling frustrated and somewhat confused.

We spent most of the session talking about the feelings each of the boys and I had experienced and were experiencing in the pair. They could each describe their own emotions, but resisted seeing them in relationship to one another. The last few minutes of the pair were very quiet. I made empathic interpretations about both boys' feelings, expressed my own, and suggested that all of our feelings were understandable. They left the room solemnly that day.

Engendering Affect Unilaterally: "Kicking the Dog"

February 6

Two days before this session, I walked by Kenny's classroom and happened to peek in the window. There I saw Kenny with his head sunk down, his hands cupped over his eyes, to hide the tears that were falling. Although there was a period from November to January when Kenny was in good spirits, he had now come full circle, and his crying in class served to ostracize him even further from those few students whom Kenny had earlier seen as friends. It seemed Carl had also returned to teasing Kenny in class.

These developments compelled me to introduce a new strategy, one I hoped would nudge the two boys back toward friendship and dialogue. The strangling incident suggested that the boys desperately wanted to communicate with each other, but that they still struggled to manage this through words. I thought puppets might help them communicate with each other and with me. At least coloring the paper sacks and making them into puppets would allow for a modest shared activity.

The pair session began quietly. When I attempted to review the previous week's session, Carl interrupted, lightheartedly saying, "Man, you want to talk too much. We want to *do* something." At this point I set aside my questions and pulled out markers and brown paper lunch sacks from my bag of gear. I began to make a puppet. Before I had a chance to ask them whether they wanted to join me, they were hard at work drawing. Immediately the conversation loosened and the boys began to talk as they drew.

As they worked on the puppets, we started talking about their teacher. Both described their ambivalent feelings about her. Carl said he had begun receiving fewer and fewer good grades in class, a fact that he attributed more to her capricious nature than his own "fooling around." Kenny's complaint was that she didn't defend him from attacks. He gave an example: One of the bullying girls was passing out Valentine cards that the students were to sign and send to U.S. soldiers abroad. Keisha wouldn't give Kenny the one he wanted. Kenny complained to Mrs. Ford, who he said didn't care.

- Mike: How did that make you feel?
 Kenny: Real bad. I told Mrs. Ford, and she just told me to go and sit down.
 Mike: Carl, how would you feel if that happened to you?
 Carl: Me? Nah, 'cause the other day we was reading and Kenny gave everybody a good book and he gave me this messed up book.
 Mike: Is that right? (I ask Kenny. He just smiles.)
 Carl: Yeah, and I didn't say nothing about it. I just said forget it.
 Kenny: I was just playing around.
 Mike: How do you know that he knew you were kidding? (No answer.) It doesn't sound to me like he knew you were kidding. Do you see how sometimes people don't know when you're kidding?
 Kenny: Yep.
 Mike: Do you think Carl knew you were kidding?
 Kenny: Nope.
 Mike: What do you think he might have felt when you gave him the bad book?
 Kenny: I dunno. How should I know?
 Mike: Think about it. How would you feel if somebody gave you the bad book?
 Kenny: Probably disappointed, and I'd want to beat them up.

In this, our first dialogue since the stranglehold, the theme of friendship did not emerge. Kenny may have decided to "play around" with Carl in class. He transferred his victim experience to Carl by withholding the good book, just as Keisha had done to him by withholding the card he wanted. As a result of Kenny "kicking the dog," Carl learned more about what Kenny's experience as a victim was like. Kenny also assumed Carl's affective experience as a bully, and felt the power Carl often claimed in their relationship. During the next two weeks Kenny began to act more assertively in the classroom, and appeared less depressed.

Cooperatively Engendering Affect: Criticizing Constructively

February 27

Just before this session's puppet show began, we talked about other boys who had asked to join our pair. I began to explain why this was not a good idea and that we agreed to work together all year. But I was cut off by Carl, who said openly that others shouldn't join "because I think we have 'stablished something between us." While Carl's statement could be interpreted many ways, I believed that for Kenny it was a signal that this would be a safe place to be that day.

This week we made puppets from socks, because the paper bag puppets they had used were torn. With their new puppets in hand, the boys crouched under one end of the table. At the other end I operated a video camera. Before they began, Carl wrote on the board "A play by the Two Dumb Stooze Brothers."

In one of the puppet shows that hour, there was a confluence of the themes brought up thus far in their relationship: Carl's ambivalence, friendship, school, and street life. The boys whispered to each other under the table, planning their first show. Speaking in whispers so low that only my tape recorder could pick them up, Carl directed the plot and their dialogue:

... That's you (Kenny) and this is gonna be a new kid. Then I'm gonna say "Kenny you know that kid over there? You can never, ever play with him again." You gonna say, "Why, them is my friends?" And I'm gonna say "Because friends never get along with me. I've never had a friend in my life before." Then say, "Because why?" And I'm gonna say, "Because they turn on you." And you say, "But them's good friends over there." "So what." Then you say, "But I'm the smartest kid in the class." And I'll say, "So what? I'm the dumbest kid in the class." Then you go, and the teacher is gonna call on me to report, and I'm gonna tell you, "If you get that answer right, I'm gonna kill you after school; if you get it wrong you could be with me." Okay?

Their puppets emerged from below the table, and the story started off and continued as planned. In the story, Carl was the new kid who tried to lure Kenny into skipping school. Kenny told his friends, John and Payne (played by Carl), he couldn't "hang out" with them anymore.

- Kenny: Payne, John (P&J), don't be mad, but I gotta tell you something. I can't play with you all no more.
 P&J(Carl): Why?

Kenny: Because my friend over there told me I can't play with no nerds.

P&J(Carl): But we ain't nerds. We're your friends.

Kenny: I know that, but I can't play with you no more. I guess this is it guys.

P&J(Carl): Okay.

From here Carl and Kenny went off and did bad things, both assuming Carl's social role as a "bad guy." They planned to "eat all the food they can, and then belch in those people's faces, smoke some cigarettes and some weed, and buy some eggs and bust 'em on some cars." Then Kenny changed his mind. He began acting independently of Carl's instructions, and their shared experience dissolved into two differentiated perspectives.

Kenny: Man, I want to go to school.

Carl: School!?! You never can go to school. Okay man, if you want to be cool, you gotta stay out of school.

Kenny: I like going to school. It's cold out here [on the streets].

Carl: Cold? In school it's warm, but out here, man, this is life! In school all you do is be smart. You should be dumb like me.

Kenny: All I know is that I'm going to school, so bye. (Kenny's puppet leaves)

Carl: Huh. That nerd. He's nothing but a stupid kid like the rest of them. Me, I know everything. He doesn't know nothing. He thinks he's smarter than me, but I sure am better. Kids out there, you want to be cool, stay with me. Don't go to school. Okay, be cool like me!

Carl, apparently caught off guard by Kenny's impromptu performance and surprise ending, decided to try again. Under the table he told (ordered) Kenny to be the bully, and that their mutual friend Payne, would show up and be shocked by how Kenny had changed. Both boys seemed to be trying to act like the other.

Carl: Kenny, my man, why did you get out of school yesterday so early. Did your mom come pick you up?

Kenny: Yes, and it's none of your business.

Carl: But I thought we were friends?

Kenny: I said, get off my case.

Carl: But you was never like this before. Why are you like this now?

Kenny: I said, one more question and I'm gonna kick your ass!

Carl: Kenny, you never swore like that before in your life.

(Payne enters the scene, played by Carl.)

Carl/P: Kenny, what's up? Let's go buy a lollipop and read some books?

Kenny: No, I don't like reading.

Carl/P: You used to love reading and math and all that stuff like that.

Kenny: That was the past; this is the future. Okay!

Carl/P: Kenny, let's go to my house and drink some milk and eat cookies.

At this point, Kenny could not resist the temptation. He caved in to cookies and milk. Once Kenny fell back into his old ways, Carl immediately reverted back to his assertive stance. He could not stand the idea that Kenny would go off with Payne as friends, even in the puppet show, as this probably tapped into one of his current concerns: keeping friends. Carl was determined to change Kenny back.

Carl: Yo, Kenny, don't go with that fool. What did I tell you about that. Huh!

Kenny: Uh, not to play with him?

Carl: That's right. If I see you playing with him, I'll. . .

Kenny: I got something to say to your face right now you *big bully!!!* Those are my friends, and you're not. They don't let me take drugs, and you do, so I don't want to be your friend no more. I'm gonna go with them.

Carl: Well, you can be like that fool.

Kenny: I ain't no fool. You are!! Kids, if you want to be cool, stay in school. Always! When you drop out of school, you never learn nothing. So pick up your books and go to school.

Subjectively Assuming Affect: Imitating Each Other

March 13

Mrs. Ford told me that over the past month Kenny had become somewhat rebellious in class, with both peers and teachers. In January and February, Kenny had been much more active in trying to make friends in school, even if his efforts were not always successful. Yet Kenny's acting up in class was progress over his withdrawal and sadness earlier in the year. At this same time, reports of Carl's cutting up in class had dropped dramatically. In February Carl decided to begin seeing a school-based tutor, in spite of his earlier refusal to seek help with his school work. No long after that his grades started to stabilize and the slowly to improve

Several months after working with Kenny, Carl's interest in school and grades surged.

*Engendering Affect Reciprocally:
Holding One's Own Ground*

March 20

The session began when I met the boys at the counseling room. I asked them what they did that day. In response, Kenny rapidly detailed his entire school day schedule. Carl said, "I do the same thing. But today I go see this lady who helps me with my work. She does like you—we talk about stuff." Kenny interrupted and said, "He's not that smart and needs help with his work." Carl's only response to this attack was to recant his earlier explanation: "No she doesn't, she doesn't help me with my work." The room became tense, and when the LEGO building Kenny was assembling collapsed, Carl took advantage of this opportunity to transfer his feelings of inferiority onto Kenny by saying, "Look at that. You're such a dummy!" Shortly thereafter, the theme of fighting came up in a discussion about a fight between a classmate and Kenny's cousin. The boys disagreed about the role each had played in this situation.

Kenny turned on Carl, saying, "You're lying, Carl. You always want to get me in trouble. Every day he keeps on messing with me and hitting me in class." Carl laughed, and said, "You're lying, Kenny." Infuriated, Kenny continued, "Carl said he wanted to beat me up 'cause I did all my work and he didn't do his." "Yes, I did too do my work!", shouted Carl, offended and angry. Kenny had hit a nerve, but Carl did not retaliate. "I don't want to fight you. Why would I want to fight you?" Carl asked. Kenny replied, "You always say you want to fight me." Then he asked Carl, "Why do you always say you want to beat me up?" "Have I ever said that I want to beat you up?" questioned Carl. "You know what I'm talking about, Carl." "Stop lying, Kenny." Kenny retorted: "*You big bully!*" This was the first time Kenny had called Carl a bully without the aid of a puppet.

The major success of this hour was how each was able to hold his own ground. Kenny was able to stand up to Carl in the sense that he did not let Carl influence his emotions negatively. Carl, on the other hand, finally allowed Kenny to maintain a different point of view. No bullying. No threats. Both were becoming different by assuming the dominant quality of the other's interpersonal orientation and its affective experience.

*Assuming Affect Reflectively: Getting Along
by Tolerating Difference*

May 18

When I went to pick up the boys from class for the session, I found Kenny and Carl in an argument, with two teachers looking on. Kenny was no longer timid. He stated clearly and loudly that Carl had been popping him with his watch band earlier that day, and had slugged him the day before. Carl did not deny that he slugged Kenny, but he maintained that he did so with Kenny's permission. Apparently in an attempt to lure friends and overcome his weakling image, Kenny invited several classmates to "trade slugs" in the gym.

Kenny told the teachers that Carl played too rough and that he did not want to trade slugs with Carl for that reason. Kenny said he had told Carl, but that Carl wouldn't listen. Then, in front of the teachers, Kenny assertively told Carl, "I don't want to play with you, you big bully!" I asked the boys to go to the office and wait for me there. Before going to meet them I wanted to patch things up with the teachers. Certainly, I thought, they would say that this was my fault, that I'd created a monster. Much to my surprise, both teachers congratulated me on my work. Kenny's teachers later said that this was the first time he had articulated his feelings and stood up for himself to a bullying student. "Kenny is so full of anger from being teased all year. The counseling has helped him get it outside himself and to start putting it where it belongs," she explained. The other teacher said she, too, had seen important growth in Kenny and Carl over the course of the year.

When I entered the counseling room, where the two boys were sitting in opposite corners, I suggested that we try to make sense of what just happened. Quickly Carl told of Kenny teasing him. Given Kenny's recent behavior in class I could see how that might be so, but I did not let Carl off the hook, and presented the opportunity for them to articulate the affective experiences they had shared during the year. Nothing came, so I continued to describe the pattern that had been developing, in which Kenny repeatedly gave Carl a taste of his own medicine. Carl agreed it was not so sweet. Simultaneously, both disclaimed any interest in being with the other. This allowed me to remind them of the earlier times when each had told me in pairs or in private of his interest in being friends with the other. I reminded them of their different expectations of how the other should be a friend, with Carl wanting Kenny to play rough and to help him with his work, and with Kenny wanting Carl to stand up for him and be his friend in a class where Kenny was the scapegoat. I mentioned the difficulties each had expressed at different

times in making and maintaining friends, and emphasized that their regular attendance in pairs suggested they really did want to develop a friendship.

I then suggested to them that we try to make the most of the one week we had left before summer. Both agreed. I asked them, given the problems they had with each other, what they could do to get along. Kenny said, "Not play around with Carl or get mad when he plays around with me." I agreed and added that he could also tell Carl what he was feeling, as he had done today and in recent sessions. Carl then said he needed to not play around so much with Kenny. Both boys left the session knowing what they needed to do to be a better friend to the other and with a better understanding of how the other often felt.

Reflecting on Patterns of Emotion-Making in the Pair

June 8

The teachers said that, during the previous week, there had been no problems between the two boys, nor were there subsequent problems through the end of the year. When we met, the boys were in good spirits and seemed to get along as well as they ever had. But these were clearly different boys than the two I had met in September. During the first half of the hour, I showed them a compilation tape of all of the sessions that I had videotaped. They had difficulty watching it: they squirmed in their chairs or started conversations at the particularly tense points in the show. Occasionally, they felt safe enough to articulate their discomfort and talk about the hard times they had together. After the show we went off campus for lunch. The boys bought one submarine sandwich with everything on it and shared it. We walked to a nearby pond where they ate their sandwiches and skipped rocks along the top of the water. When the hour was gone, we returned to school and entered just as the bell rang for them to change classes. I said good-bye to them and they ran off to class together.

The two boys remained together in pair counseling a second year with another counselor. The boys met each week and their relationship consolidated at a more mutual level. Both Kenny and Carl had many more friends in seventh grade than in the sixth. Some teachers even described Kenny as popular. Their grades and conduct improved enough that at the end of the year both boys were promoted a grade and reunited with their same-age peers. They skipped eighth grade and entered high school, where I am told they are doing just fine.

The Structure of Engendered and Assumed Affect

We describe engendered affect when we talk about the way a person feels as a result of an interaction with another, and the history of the relationship that led up to it. As counselors we ask, "What sort of affective experience may have occurred in an individual as a result of an interaction, and why?" And, "How might a similar emotional experience also been known by the other person?" Most importantly, engendered affect is assessed by the person's interpretation of how she and the other person feel as a result of their interaction.

Sometimes Kenny and Carl were aware of how and why they engendered affect in each other, and sometimes they were not. Frequently they became aware of the other's emotional perspective by experiencing it, often through retaliatory or imitated actions. However, the key to engendered affect is not that one person does to another exactly what was first done to him, but that he creates an affective experience in another that he has imagined or experienced; this can be done in many ways. For example, because Carl felt stupid in class when he thought other students, like Kenny, were smarter, it seemed Carl wanted to make Kenny aware of his own feelings of inferiority and incompetence; he did so by tapping into Kenny's emotional vulnerabilities. Carl pointed out those things that Kenny did not do well or that made him feel emotionally vulnerable.

The case study illustrates four (of the possible five) ways in which Kenny and Carl assumed positive affect in their relationship that can be organized in terms of the structure of psychosocial competence to which they correspond. These range from the physical aggression and self-satisfying behaviors that reflect egocentric self-interest, to the fostering of positive affect in others and constructive criticism, both of which require mature psychosocial competence and suggest high degrees of social interest.

An *egocentric perspective* typically begets self-satisfying behaviors that are non-verbal. Like the egocentric child, who satisfies himself impulsively through whatever means are available, Carl felt slighted at one point because Kenny did not remind him that their meeting date had changed. Carl's frustration led him to stage a mock strangulation of Kenny. He egocentrically assumed positive affect (power) by transferring his negative affect (frustration) to Kenny through physical intimidation.

When a child organizes his social world around his own clearly differentiated *subjective perspective*, he will use one-way strategies to assume positive affect or to transfer his affective experience to another. The child

who typically acts out roles and assumes their emotions without considering how such behavior may affect others (see Piaget, 1951; Kohlberg, 1969) may imitate others in order to assume the emotions he believes they feel.³ Kenny attempted to assume positive affect subjectively when he acted assertively with his peers by imitating Carl. Kenny also engendered affect, using his subjective perspective, when he treated Carl as Keisha treated him—often called kicking the dog—by withholding the nice book to engender his own feelings of powerlessness in Carl.

A child employing a *reflective social perspective* will often assume positive affect by using his awareness and understanding of others' perspectives, personality, and unique interests to negotiate his own emotion-making and get along with them. He may attempt to meet the needs of those involved, but remain focused primarily on his own need fulfillment, engaging in "posturing." Kenny was posturing during his first session with Carl when he decided to preserve an enjoyable game of *Monopoly* by tolerating Carl's cheating—he made a tacit bargain that he could feel good about.

A child may also stand up for himself in a way that produces positive affect (e.g., pride), such as seeing himself as a good or caring person because of his actions. Two examples of this are, first, when Carl sought out a tutor in order to become different and feel more competent in school; and second, when Kenny finally verbally defended who he was (a good student) and what he wanted (to stay in school) in order to feel good about himself. These attempts to assume affect by posturing were reflective, deliberate, and highly verbal. When reflectively organized, a child will also "behave" in more mature ways in order to please others and win their approval. Such posturing is common in pairs when the children vie for the counselor's attention.

People also engender affect by using their reflective capacity to coordinate social perspectives to tap into another's emotional vulnerabilities or current concern. Typically this is done as a way of ameliorating one's own pain or of elevating one's own status relative to another. It is like a shared experience where two children focus on a topic or issue, though the intention is usually for each person to feel better than the other or to achieve some emotional gain. Kenny and Carl were masters at striking each others' Achilles' heels.

A goal for pairs is to help the children apply a *mutual perspective* to their social negotiations by fostering positive experiences in themselves and others. If on January 15 Carl allowed Kenny to tackle him without retribution because he cared for Kenny, then he fostered mutual positive experiences. His later comment that "we have something special" suggests he may indeed have felt this way about their relationship, though many of his other behaviors suggest otherwise. Fostering positive affective

experience requires that the person care sincerely about others and about relationships, and that he genuinely wants to engender positive affect in others as well as assume positive affect himself.

A form of engendering affect *collaboratively* occurs when someone gives another person constructive criticism. True constructive criticism is characterized by the degree to which the offerer empathizes with the recipient and helps him integrate the material. One must constructively criticize with the intention of improving the relationship and for mutual benefit of both the self and the other. The closest Kenny and Carl got to this were their efforts to articulate their different perspectives during the puppet show. Most of the time, however, one boy criticized the other in order to shift the focus away from his own emotional vulnerabilities.

Many of the children seen in pairs routinely evoke negative emotional experiences in others, though they may not be aware of the effects of their actions beyond the immediate moment. Some may engender negative affect deliberately, others reactively. Most are blind to the deleterious effects of their actions on their social functioning. Through discussion of such processes, pair counseling may help a child foster a better understanding of how and why she affects others as she does.

Conclusion

This chapter described how Kenny and Carl came to better understand their personal struggles through affective communication with each other. Their initial conflict and confusion came from their clashing interpersonal styles. As these boys worked and played together over the course of a year, each came to understand the strengths and weaknesses of both boys' basic approach to dealing with conflict. Through these differentiations each constructed a more effective interpersonal style by integrating aspects of the other's behavior and affect.

Throughout our story, Kenny and Carl increasingly took on the other's role as bully or student. Each tried out the other's experience and gave the other a taste of his own medicine. Often they appeared to do this either to find out how the other person felt or to let the other know how he himself felt. But over time, as Kenny and Carl experimented with what each assumed was the other's affective experience—Kenny's as the successful student and Carl's the tough kid—each was able to articulate the other's experiences. First through their puppet shows, and later through engaging in new social activities, each boy integrated these separate experiences into new identities. Both became "cool-students" in their own unique way. This integration allowed them to resolve the

dysfunctional split between their two worlds and to begin to perform more successfully in school and with their peers.

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Notes

1. In this chapter the masculine pronoun will be used when referring to children in treatment and to those whose emotion-making is described. This is because the case includes two boys, whose therapist is also male. Feminine pronouns will be used to refer to counselors in general.
2. These notes were reported in an earlier manuscript (Karcher, 1990).
3. This is often called "displacement" (Freud, 1946), even though the emotions experienced in one relationship may not be transferred to another until much later in time.