

Nature Was My Ritalin

Sustainable Living – Richard Louv
Pathways #43, page 52



Talking Points

- ❖ Richard Louv opens with the question “Could the increase in diagnosis and treatment of ADHD have to do with the fact that we took the calming effects of nature away from kids in the first place?”
- ❖ In December of last year, *The New York Times* ran a major front page report. It seems “The rate of diagnosis and drug prescriptions may have more to do with the force of advertising and other manipulations than with the real extent of the disorder.” (52)
- ❖ Did you know that “ADHD is now the second-most-frequent long-term diagnosis made in school-age children—a close second only to asthma”? (52)
- ❖ Dr. Keith Conners, a psychologist and a leader in the decades-long fight to legitimize ADHD, said, “The numbers make it look like an epidemic. Well, it’s not. It’s preposterous. This is a concoction to justify the giving out of medication at unprecedented and unjustifiable levels.” What do you think about this statement coming from someone who truly believe in the disorder?
- ❖ Parents seem to have different views on the medication, some feel grateful for them and others feel pressured to medicate. Are these medications just being used as “smart pills” in today’s competitive academic atmosphere with no regards to the dangerous side-effects?
- ❖ Why not think about prevention and alternative treatments rather than jumping to medication?
- ❖ Richard Louv tells us that “In a series of studies, they found that green outdoor spaces foster creative play, improve children’s access to positive adult interaction—and relieve the symptoms of attention-deficit disorders. The greener the setting, the more the relief.”
- ❖ Even if the increase in medication does reflect a real epidemic, the pills aren’t addressing the root cause. How about toxins in our food, air and water? Digital distractions? Sedentary lifestyles? An educational system that values test scores and “good behavior” over running at recess?
- ❖ The advertisements for ADHD medications read like a horoscope, broad enough to ring true for just about everyone. “Children: “May climb or run excessively, have trouble staying seated.” Teens: “May lose things such as homework and schoolwork, make careless mistakes and fail to complete task.” And adults? “May feel restless and impatient, like they’re always ‘on the go,’

always need to be busy after work or on vacation.”” (53) (Adults, does this sound like parenthood?)

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

The New York Times “The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder” (the article Rickard Louv refers to) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/15/health/the-selling-of-attention-deficit-disorder.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0