

Assassination Generation



VIDEO GAMES, AGGRESSION,
AND THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF KILLING

—
LT. COL. DAVE GROSSMAN
AUTHOR OF *ON KILLING*

Assassination Generation: Video Games, Aggression, and the Psychology of Killing

Dave Grossman, Kristine Paulsen, Katie Miserany

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The author of the 400,000-copy bestseller *On Killing* reveals how violent video games have ushered in a new era of mass homicide--and what we must do about it.

Paducah, Kentucky, 1997: a 14-year-old boy shoots eight students in a prayer circle at his school. *Littleton, Colorado, 1999*: two high school seniors kill a teacher, twelve other students, and then themselves. *Utoya, Norway, 2011*: a political extremist shoots and kills sixty-nine participants in a youth summer camp. *Newtown, Connecticut, 2012*: a troubled 20-year-old man kills 20 children and six adults at the elementary school he once attended.

What links these and other horrific acts of mass murder? A young person's obsession with video games that teach to kill.

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, who in his perennial bestseller *On Killing* revealed that most of us are not "natural born killers" - and who has spent decades training soldiers, police, and others who keep us secure to overcome the intrinsic human resistance to harming others and to use firearms responsibly when necessary - turns a laser focus on the threat posed to our society by violent video games.

Drawing on crime statistics, cutting-edge social research, and scientific studies of the teenage brain, Col. Grossman shows how video games that depict antisocial, misanthropic, casually savage behavior can warp the mind - with potentially deadly results. His book will become the focus of a new national conversation about video games and the epidemic of mass murders that they have unleashed.

Assassination Generation: Video Games, Aggression, and the Psychology of Killing Details

Date : Published November 15th 2016 by Little, Brown and Company

ISBN : 9780316265935

Author : Dave Grossman , Kristine Paulsen , Katie Miserany

Format : Hardcover 272 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Psychology, Contemporary, Reference, Research



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Psychology of Killing Dave Grossman , Kristine Paulsen , Katie Miserany

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Dian Valencic says

A must read!

Every parent, educator, needs to read this book!! I would not have believed the effects of these games . But unfortunately We are dealing with this first hand. These are not the computer games of 20 years ago. And back then the internet was not readily available. This is today's epidemic. The plus in this book is the steps that can be taken to address this issue.

Jennifer says

I feel bad giving this book such a low rating as I really enjoyed the author's previous books On Killing and On Combat. Working in the field of mental health I understand the concern for video games and violence, but this could have been a chapter in a book as it felt really repetitive. I guess it might be interesting and/or provide some insight for parents.

Mary Loucks-Cummings says

Every. Parent. Needs. To. Read. This. Book.

In our media-, electronics-, death-obsessed culture, we have got to get a handle on things before it gets even worse, and the first step is restricting children's access to violent video games (in addition to access to violent movies and TV... followed by limiting their screen time to a reasonable amount). I was surprised by how readable this text was, given all the statistics and studies within the pages. The indisputable, scientific evidence between interaction with violent media and violence acted out in real life will astound, and quite frankly, sicken, you.

P.S. I have a hunch for the reason this book's average rating isn't better: many of the "1" ratings are from people who never actually read the book, but only read the subtitle and got offended because they themselves are gamers. Boo-hoo.

Heather says

4 stars for the topic, 3/3.5 for the book in general. I think the topic is important and appreciated all the research and studies included, and the author's efforts to bring attention to this matter. That being said, the

book felt a bit repetitive (maybe due to all the research included?). I'm glad I read it (also glad when I finished it). Also, some of the things that pass for "entertainment" in our society are pretty appalling.

Kris says

I picked this up after hearing it mentioned on a radio program immediately following the most recent school shooting in Florida. I'm so aghast at the frequency of these shootings -- acts of extreme violence that have never occurred in the history of humanity. And I'm looking for answers. How is that anyone can walk into a school and just shoot people dead? The author presents interesting facts, of which I haven't seen publicized anywhere else in these days following the shooting. While the author does seem biased against the media, I have to admit that the only mention I've seen of video game violence in popular discourse is a brief reference to one study that showed no connection between acts of violence and violent video game playing. There is no one easy answer to this modern social horror. But I think we as a society need to look clearly at the facts and at our knowledge of brain development....how can these violent video games NOT be affecting the brains of the people who play them? How can they NOT be sensitizing the players to horrific acts of violence? How can anyone find it FUN to simulate rape... cold blooded murder ... bloody, gory acts against innocent people? And how can anyone make a living designing such games? And live with themselves? Are they feeling any guilt at all with the increase in violent acts in recent decades?

I did wish the author had not been so pro-gun. The other side of this issue is the ease with which anyone can purchase an automatic weapon. I am certainly not against people being able to arm and defend themselves, but I see no need for anyone to so easily access an automatic or semiautomatic weapon.

While this book did not provide any straightforward answers, it was a reminder of the ongoing problem of our society's increasing casual attitude toward violence. How sad to live in a world where this is accepted. And even defended and glorified and rewarded.

Drew says

Definitely eye-opening and will influence my (theoretical) parenting strategies, but I do wish he had a stronger grasp of statistical and scientific reasoning. It's fine when he sticks to recapping the peer-reviewed research, but when he draws his own conclusions they're often specious, which is a shame because he had plenty without them.

Randy says

Big on assertions, small on support.

R.K. Byers says

don't know if I'd attribute THAT much evil to video games.

Nancy says

I won this in a Goodreads giveaway.

This book does a convincing study on the connection between violent video games and violence in society. More need to read this and admit the connection exists and act to reduce the advertising and glorifying of these games.

Peter Harrington says

I gave this book three stars because it simply states the obvious; children or even adults who watch violent movies or play violent video games will be more aggressive. But, it took over 200 pages to state the obvious over and over and over and over again. The book would have been better if it was an insert into another book and kept at about 20 pages. I don't like giving this Author such a low rating because his other works are five stars!

Reggie Carlisle says

The book provides solid statistics and makes a good argument for intervention and regulation of the video game industry as it relates to young people. The biggest problem I had with it is that it was very heavy handed. I would have appreciated the opportunity to review the evidence and make my own decision without being told (repeatedly) the conclusion I should draw from the information presented.

Tiago says

Let's take a moment of silence for this amazing book description. Let's see if I get this... A Colonel wrote a book about a social phenomenon using scientific data? Seems legit enough in my opinion. I haven't read this because over the years I've read hundreds of scientific articles about violence and video games and I seriously doubt I'll learn something new. Also, the book description says it all. When I started reading scientific articles about this phenomenon I thought that video games contributed to violence. I was amazed when I started reading the conclusions of those studies. The link between violence (especially murder) and video games is residual. There's no solid data that proves that you're more prone to violence if you play video games. The scientific literature about violence, delinquency, etc, etc, doesn't even qualify playing video games as a risk factor to engage in those kind of behaviors. PLUS, "the epidemic of mass murders that they have unleashed."??? Sorry but you're talking about what? For something to be qualified as an epidemic it needs to spread and have an huge representation... where is that representation? Because some residual cases happened? And please, it's not because in ONE case sixty people died that we must call a mass murder an "video game killing epidemic spree". Seriously what is this? Are video games the new MORAL PANIC? Is this a tentative to spread fake data around to see if people get scared? Seriously it amazes me! What's next? Maybe write a follow up book about how gangsta rap spread an epidemic of mass murders?? Ice Cube sang about that...maybe it would be an awesome idea! Or how about one book about how driving a car contributes to an epidemic of beatings? For the sake of science, in your next book, leave science alone. Because there are

millions of people that don't know what the scientific literature finds. And then, those people believe in what others write, even if they twist stuff up.

Fredrick Danysh says

With the rise of mass killings since 1975 it is easy to blame guns [which the author suggests is not the real reason] instead citing studies that youth are being desensitized to violence and death by video games and other sources that teach and applaud violence. I recommend this study to parents, educators, entertainers, political leaders, and all media personnel. As both a retired teacher and retired United States Marine, I find Assassination Generation thought provoking. This was a free advance read copy through Goodreads.com.

Annaliese says

I just recently returned from vacation and so I apologize for the insane amount of updates I will be adding to Goodreads. Assassination Generation was one of the few non-fiction books that I brought up with me because I was really interested in it. I've never been much of a violent video gamer. . . my days were filled with "Who Wants to be a Millionaire Kids Edition", "Pacman", and "Diner Dash". However, many of my friends play games that the author here would consider "violent", and I have to admit, I have wondered how violent video games affect people, especially kids.

The information was there, although I have to admit some of the studies were pretty old. It was an interesting read, although I would've liked to see the author address some of the arguments from the other side, maybe even have a few rebuttals. It was a nice read, but I'm still not completely convinced that video games = violent behavior.

Linsey Adair says

Because we live in a world that is far beyond that of our own childhoods, we must understand what was set in motion decades ago that touch pieces of how-the-world-works that I would never have thought to think about.

Do you have children? Do they play video games? Are you aware of the content, the rating systems, the standards, the marketing methods? Do your children have friends? Are they gamers?

I am PRO video games. I believe they can improve critical thinking, hand-eye coordination, problem solving skills, and overall imagination. But I grew up loving Mario. My chores were done, time was spent outside, homework was finished.

This book tackles the psychology behind first person shooters and ultra-violent games specifically, but it also featured studies showing academic, behavioral, and social improvements in children when limiting gameplay or "detoxing" from them for even three days.

How addicted was I to Candy Crush and Farmville? How anxious am I when I leave my phone in another room? This adult could do with a detox, too.

If you have children in your life, read this book. Do recommend.
