

## FOREWORD BY LINDA ALBERT • • • • •

My deepest passion is to inspire teachers and parents to be the best mentors possible. I have spent over 30 years developing *Cooperative Discipline*, a positive and practical approach for teachers to mentor youth to achieve their potential, develop constructive social skills, and succeed academically. I believe all youth – no matter what their background or current level of functioning – have the potential for developing good character and for becoming responsible and contributing citizens of the twenty-first century.

While all children face developmental pressures, I have become increasingly aware of the unique challenges many boys face as they struggle to belong in our complex digital age. Whether you consider school achievement, social behaviour, or emotional and health-related issues, the predicament of many boys is apparent.

How bewildering it must be for boys to be bombarded with so many mixed messages: be tough but sensitive, strong but vulnerable, cool but receptive. While some boys have wonderful and caring adult role models to help them navigate these minefields, many are without and are floundering with macho images that can hinder learning.

Isn't it time we investigated our assumptions about boys and learning? How do we engage boys in a vigorous inquiry-based education and maintain positive connections and appropriate expectations when they get off track? To what degree are boys visual-spatial learners struggling in primarily auditory-sequential learning environments?

The *Boy Smarts Action Study Guide* skillfully shows us how to collectively respond to these and a multitude of quandaries associated with boys and learning. While respecting the needs of girls and avoiding quick-fix solutions, this book persuades readers to delve beyond a *boys will be boys* mentality to better understand boys and their schooling.

One of the great strengths of this book is that it will challenge you to clarify your biases, while prompting you to get on with developing a realistic action plan that respects the varied needs of boys. Indeed, this guide dares us all to courageously find solutions rather than accentuate problems.

No one is in a better position to write this book than Barry MacDonald, who combines his intensive training in Adlerian psychology with practical experience as a teacher, expert workshop facilitator, school district coordinator, school and family counsellor, and parent. How fortunate that Barry has taken the time to share his wisdom with all who want to be more effective educators and parents.

*Boy Smarts – Mentoring Boys for Success at School* and this accompanying guide, *Boy Smarts Action Study Guide*, are stimulating, thought provoking, and optimistic. I only wish I had had the benefit of Barry's insight through participation in a *Boy Smarts Action Study* group when my 2 sons were young.

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