

## Have you or your Partner attended Boarding School?

Consider the hidden and highly damaging effects of 'Boarding School Syndrome'.

Does the information below describe you or your partner?

- Are you struggling with your relationship?
- Is your partner continuously frustrated with your behaviour?
- Do you find relationships hard to sustain?
- Find it difficult to express yourself emotionally?
- Yearn for but resist intimacy?
- Feel an inner suppressed 'rage'?
- Find yourself always busy and your partner complaining you're not at home enough?
- Working long hours, seeking validation through work achievement?
- Hoard food/money/ belongings?
- Suffer low self-esteem?

Boarding schools provide a privileged educational experience with often excellent facilities to develop 'Leaders, Managers and Problem Solvers'. However, for many it also becomes the most (hidden) emotionally crippling experience due to the damaging psychological effects of the early separation from home and deprivation of parental love. Problems only become apparent when the adopted strategies, to have survived the experience, break down and you find yourself in a problematic relationship and unable to cope.

Many people are sent away to Boarding School before they are emotionally able to cope from aged 4 to 13years old. How old were you?

- This affects their ability to trust others.
- They suffer acute distress 'home sickness', like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- Have to 'instantly' cope and manage themselves without normal family support.
- Feel undue pressure to succeed / achieve, to please and feel loved by their parents.
- Are grateful for the 'privileged' experience and feel guilt if not achieving success.
- Build fear/ resentment of authority figures and become rebellious or over conforming.
- Find security and employment in very 'Institutionalised' or 'Alternative' settings.

The effect of being separated from your parents at an early age for weeks/months at a time can have a traumatic impact on you. Finding that you have no family support when you're distressed means you very quickly develop ways of self-managing requiring the shutting down of your normal emotional responses and coping in a pragmatic way. This soon develops into a 'Strategic Survival Personality' where you are able to externally appear as 'I'm ok' and to 'get on' with your peers, suppressing and ignoring your emotional distress, as to do otherwise is dangerous, invoking judgement / criticism and bullying. Over several years of Boarding School this becomes a 'normal' way of relating that stunts your ability to make healthy emotional relationships. To supplement your survival you learn to exude an articulate, charming, manipulative and confident exterior to enable you to keep safe, be liked and successful in the very competitive environment of your experience.

This will transfer with you into your adulthood when you venture out into the grown up world of relationships and love. The yearning to be 'wanted and loved' to make up for what you have 'lost' in the intervening years will be strong but hidden. The external confident you, articulate and charming attributes, become an attractive prospect to those seeking a suitable partner. However your partner will not be able to make up for your loss, this will create an imbalance of 'need' in your relationship, be it demonstrated through sex, work, money or other expectations leading to conflict and eventual breakdown in your relationship.

You can get help and support by contacting Paul and making an appointment to explore how your Boarding School experience affected you, your partner and relationship. Paul is a 'Boarding School Survivor' and has had support to enable his own recovery. He has also undertaken specialist psychotherapy training with Nick Duffell, and with his own knowledge and experience provides you with psychotherapy enabling you to recover from the damaging affects of 'Boarding School Syndrome'. More information can be found at [www.boardingconcern.co.uk](http://www.boardingconcern.co.uk) Thanks to Nick Duffell, author of the seminal book 'The Making of Them' and Joy Schavarién for their research and pioneering work in this unacknowledged and neglected field of trauma. Colin Luke's stunning film about boys boarding school survival is now on UTube: "The Making of Them" Part 1 of 5 (UK1994) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aatlB-yc7nQ> also for girls boarding "Leaving Home at 8" (2010) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3ln6-sy3Bk> directed by Charles Russell for C4 TV's The Cutting Edge series.