

Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us Study Guide

**Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us by Robert Hare
(psychologist)**

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Plot Summary

Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the The Psychopaths Among Us was first published in 1993 and was written by Dr. Robert Hare. Hare is a world renowned psychologist. Prior to his research and book, there were not a lot of procedures available to identify psychopaths. Many personality tests have been used, but Hare found them inconsistent and unreliable. Thus, Hare has developed, and in this book introduces, the Psychopathy Checklist.

In Hare's early career, he worked in a prison and had his first personal experience with a psychopath named Ray. Hare worked as a psychologist at the prison and was eager to develop relationships with inmates so that he could effectively rehabilitate them. Ray was Hare's very first patient and for the eight months that Hare worked with him, Ray repeatedly manipulated and used Dr. Hare. Hare uses his own experiences, antidotes from others, as well as interviews from notorious serial killers to warn readers about what psychopaths are like and how they operate.

The Psychopathy Checklist is a very important and much utilized tool in the mental health field. Hare breaks down the Checklist into the following categories: Emotional/Interpersonal (glib and superficial, egocentric and grandiose, lack of remorse or guilt, lack of empathy, deceitful and manipulative, shallow emotions) and Social Deviance (impulsive, poor behavior, need for excitement, lack of responsibility, early behavior problems, adult antisocial behavior). Hare warns that no one should use the checklist to diagnose themselves or others. In order to use it correctly, a person has to be meticulously trained. Several times, he warns the reader that they must be properly trained in order to use the checklist.

Hare realizes that his book may frighten people into thinking that there is nothing that can be done. While there is not yet treatment for psychopaths, there are ways to protect oneself. Hare provides the reader with ways to protect themselves against psychopaths. The most important tip he gives is to know who you are dealing with and once you know what the person is, try not to be taken in by them. Next, immediately seek out advice and counselling from a skilled psychologist, psychiatrist, or clinician. One can also keep their guard up in certain situations and know themselves. Psychopaths will try to feed on any fears and flaws that one may have.



Introduction, The Problem, pg 1-7

Introduction, The Problem, pg 1-7 Summary and Analysis

Several years before the publication of this book, Richard Hare and two graduate students conducted an experiment in which they used a biomedical recorder to monitor electrical activity of the brain on a group of adult men of varied races. The monitoring was done while the men performed a language task. Some of the brain recordings were very odd.

Hare reveals that the book will talk about psychopathy—a disorder that has been a mystery to many psychiatrists and clinicians for many years. At the publication of this book, at least 2 million psychopaths live in the United States. Many people encounter psychopaths or have them very present in their lives but never know. Psychopathy is shaped by flagrant criminal violence, remorselessness, and lack of emotion. They live among us and charm us with their impressive lies.

Some of history's most calculating and gruesome serial killers were psychopaths. Hare lists them as: John Gacy (murdered 32 young men and boys and buried them in his house); Jeffery MacDonald (a physician who murdered his wife and two children); Kenneth Bianchi (one of the Hillside Stranglers who raped and killed a dozen women in Los Angeles); Diane Downs (shot her own children so that she could attract other men).

These cases help researchers know that psychopathy does in fact exist. While these cases help us to study psychopathy, there are psychopaths among us who do not go on serial rampages but cause horrible things to happen in our lives. To understand psychopathy, Hare wants to establish a way for psychopaths to be identified. If psychopaths cannot be identified, then other people will not be doomed to be their victims.



Chapter 1, Experiencing the Psychopath, pg 8-20

Chapter 1, Experiencing the Psychopath, pg 8-20 Summary and Analysis

Hare opens the first chapter with a description of Ray, a prison inmate he counsels after receiving his graduate degree in psychology. The only job Hare can find is working in a maximum security prison. He has no training prior to starting the job. Ray is Hare's very first patient. He enters Hare's office stating that he needs to talk. Hare, excited to begin work with a new patient, lets his guard down as Ray enters the room. As Ray crosses the room, he pulls a knife on Hare. While smiling and waving the knife at Hare, Ray explains that he will not use the knife on Hare, but instead on a member of a rival gang. Hare realizes that Ray is trying to manipulate him. If he reports the incident, Ray will tell the other inmates that he is not trustworthy. If he does not report it, then he will be violating a serious prison rule. Hare decides to not report the incident and luckily for him, not one is stabbed, but Hare is caught in Ray's trap. He has shown that he will break prison rules to build a relationship with inmates.

For the eight months that Hare works with Ray, he continually manipulates him and makes his life miserable. He leads Hare to believe he is interested in cooking. To appease him, Hare decides to recommend Ray to be transferred to work in the kitchens. To his dismay, Ray begins making alcohol and selling it inside the prison. After that, he tries to convince Hare to allow him to work in the prison auto shop. Reluctantly, Hare finally agrees.

Ray continuously misleads Hare as he does other prison staff. He almost convinces Hare to get his father to offer Ray a job with his roof contracting company. When Hare finally refuses, Ray threatens him. A few months later, Hare and his wife take a trip in their newly fixed up car. The car was worked on by the prison auto shop—where Ray had been employed. While on the trip Hare's brakes completely stop working. Hare finds it hard to believe that it is simply a coincidence.

After receiving his PHD and getting his first job at the University of British Columbia, Hare helps his fellow professors register students before the beginning of classes. To his surprise, he hears someone mention his name a few seats down. The student claims to have been Hare's research assistant. Hare is shocked to find that Ray is the one spouting lies. Hare breaks into Ray's story-telling, fully expecting to throw him off of his game. Instead of being shocked, Ray warmly says hello to Hare and jumps right back into his conversation.

What gives Ray the ability to lie without any second thoughts? He simply disregards what is reality



for his own false stories. To Hare, Ray's story is now amusing. However, he is one of the lucky ones. So many other people have been severely taken advantage of.

Next, Hare explains the story of Elsa and Dan. Elsa meets Dan in a laundromat in London. She has just gotten over a messy divorce and needs to clear her head with travel. She is very lonely. Dan comes out of nowhere and sympathizes with her loneliness. Immediately, they begin spending a lot of time together. Pretty soon, Dan is living with Elsa, but she has never seen his home and he never talks about his family. He disappears for days and becomes enraged if Elsa questions where he has been. She asks him to get her some ice cream one night and Dan blows up at her. He calls her names and then storms out. She never sees him again.

Hare closes the chapter with a description of two twins—Alice and Ariel. Ariel is a kind child, great pupil and successful adult. Her sister, Alice on the other hand, becomes truant and sexually active very early on in adolescence. She drains her parents emotionally and financially with drug and alcohol rehab programs as well as her latest schemes. When the girls are growing up, Alice treats her sister especially cruelly. Her parents vow to never let her spend a night in jail, but the crimes Alice commits cause them to spend a tremendous amount of money on bail. Hare asks if Alice is crazy or just born bad?



Chapter 2, Focusing the Picture, pg 21-32

Chapter 2, Focusing the Picture, pg 21-32 Summary and Analysis

Should the treatment of a psychopaths be left up to mental health practitioners or the correctional systems? Is psychopathy a mental illness or is it people who wish to break the rules even when they know they are wrong?

Hare says that psychopaths are not out of their mind or wits. Their behavior is a result of choices that they conscientiously make. Hare points out that most of the time psychopaths and serial killers are thought to be mentally insane. He stresses that not all serial killers are psychopaths, some are insane.

Terminology is also what confuses people. The word psychopath is often confused with the words psychotic and sociopath. Sociopath and psychopath can be used interchangeably, but psychopaths are not psychotic. Antisocial personality disorder is the term that refers to both psychopathy and sociopathy. It refers "primarily to a cluster of criminal and antisocial behaviors."

The history of psychopathy is not very developed. World War II also caused researchers to question psychopathy. How could so many people be involved in so many mass killings and gruesome acts and not feel any remorse? In 1941, *The Mask of Sanity* was written by Hervey Cleckley. In the book, Cleckley pleads for people to recognize the social problems of psychopaths. In his case studies he describes people who display exceptional charm and speak shrewdly. They lack personal values and have a very superficial understanding of most emotions.



Chapter 3, The Profile: Feelings and Relationships , pg 33-56

Chapter 3, The Profile: Feelings and Relationships , pg 33-56 Summary and Analysis

Here, Hare introduces one of his main themes of the entire book. The Psychopathy Checklist provides a detailed picture of the disordered personality of a psychopath. Hare breaks down the Checklist into the following categories: Emotional/Interpersonal (glib and superficial, egocentric and grandiose, lack of remorse or guilt, lack of empathy, deceitful and manipulative, shallow emotions) and Social Deviance (impulsive, poor behavior, need for excitement, lack of responsibility, early behavior problems, adult antisocial behavior). Hare warns that no one should use the checklist to diagnose themselves or others. In order to use it correctly, a person has to be meticulously trained.

Hare then begins to explain the key symptoms of psychopathy. Psychopaths are often glib and superficial, meaning they will be witty and articulate. They will shower a person with compliments that mean nothing so that they may manipulate a meeting. They will lie about who they know or subjects they are educated on. Psychopaths hardly skip a beat if they are found out to be liars, they continue with their stories. They have so much confidence that they lack the fear of being found out.

Secondly he talks about the egocentric and grandiose characteristics. Psychopaths seem to have an enlarged view of themselves and an even larger ego. They feel a sense of self-entitlement and self-worth that allows them to think they should take or have whatever they want. Psychopaths love to brag and seem cocky and domineering.

Psychopaths rarely feel remorse or guilt for crimes they have committed. Whether they killed, raped, or stole they do not feel guilty for the damage they have caused. Hare points out the most psychopaths learn how to "verbalize" remorse. In prisons, psychopathic inmates learn that they must show they have thought about their actions and see that they were wrong to commit. Thus psychopaths become experts in faking their sorrow.

A lack of empathy is an "inability to construct a mental and emotional facsimile of another person." Therefore, the feelings of others are lost on psychopaths. In an interview with a rapist, Hare discovered that the man could simply not put himself in the place of his victim. To psychopaths, other people are things to be used and then tossed to the side. People are weak and vulnerable. Due to those flaws, their basic rights are triumphed by the psychopath's desires.

As previously discussed, one of the most well known characteristics of a psychopath is that of lying and manipulation. Psychopaths are very proud of their ability to lie. While



some people get the idea that psychopaths do not realize they are lying, this is not true. Psychopaths know what they are doing and do not care if they get caught in their lies. Lastly, psychopaths have a very small capacity (if any) to understand and feel emotion. Most of the psychopaths that Hare has encountered claim to have intense emotional feelings, but really cannot. The emotions that psychopaths feel are so basic and shallow that they appear to be primitive.

Chapter 4, The Lifestyles, pg 57-70

Chapter 4, The Lifestyles, pg 57-70 Summary and Analysis

The other important part of the Psychopathy Checklist is that of the psychopath's lifestyle. This further helps to create a comprehensive picture.

Hare asserts that psychopaths are very impulsive. They do not give much thought to actions before they perform them. Gary Gilmore, a murderer from Texas, told authorities that it was futile to try and figure out why he committed his killings. He admits to not planning anything. His murders were without reason. He only committed them to vent rage he was feeling. Along with not planning, psychopaths frequently change their plans with little thought. They do not think about the future and prefer to be drifters and nomads.

Most people have behavior controls that keep them from "blowing their lids" or watching our actions. Psychopaths have been proven not to have these controls. Thus, many psychopaths are extremely short tempered and hot headed. It does not take much for them to lose control or lose their heads. As a result they will act out in violence and aggression towards others. Often after inflicting the physical or emotional pain on another, the psychopath will refuse to admit or acknowledge what they have done.

Psychopaths are also always craving excitement and hate monotony. Using drugs and piloting large money schemes are both examples of endorphin boosting activities that psychopaths like to participate in. They hate the repetitiveness that life can bring, so this causes them to move from place to place and shift in and out of different societies and groups.

Because psychopaths are so concerned with themselves, they feel a lack of responsibility towards others. Commitments mean very little to psychopaths and they will not let a promise to someone else stop them from seeking their own pleasure. Diane Downs often left her young children alone unsupervised for hours at a time. She was more concerned with courting new lovers than her own children. She saw them as possessions, not human beings that she was supposed to care for. She was completely indifferent to their emotional needs, let alone their needs for survival.

As Hare will touch on later in the book, many psychopaths have behavioral problems from an early age. A psychopathic child may come from a wealthy, caring, or well-adjusted family and begin to steal, lie, cheat, take drugs, and have sex as early as 10 or 12 years old. Psychopathic killers such as Jeffrey Dahmer, began killing animals as a young boy. He stunned classmates with his actions. Many psychopaths that exhibit this behavior will recall their killings of animals with much description and even some enjoyment. When not assaulting cats and dogs, young psychopaths may inflict pain on other children, whether it is a sibling or classmate. One mother told Hare of an incident



in which her young son tried to smother his infant baby sister and also attracted the baby with scissors. Due to manipulation, neighbors and parents might not realize what has been going on until it is too late.

Lastly, psychopaths carry on their antisocial behavior into adulthood. Psychopaths make their own rules. To them, following rules set by society is very inconvenient. Eventually, many of their actions lead to breaking the laws because they choose not to follow them. However, Hare also points out that psychopaths do not always end up in jail. Many times, they are on the "shady side of the law." Meaning that they are involved in questionable business practices, child abuse, and phony stock promotions. Their actions are unethical and immoral.

Hare wants the reader to understand that not all criminals are psychopaths and vice versa. Although there are psychopaths in the prison populations, it is important to look at the entire picture. This is why an individual must fit the complete profile of the Psychopathy Checklist.



Chapter 5, Internal Controls: The Missing Piece, pg 71-82

Chapter 5, Internal Controls: The Missing Piece, pg 71-82 Summary and Analysis

Elyse met Jeffery one day at the beach. At the time, she was working at a day care center and Jeffery started to meet her during her breaks. They saw each other everyday and he continually talked about his big plans and new schemes. One day while the couple was at lunch, Jeffery was arrested. Even while in jail, he constantly contacted Elyse and wanted to remain in control of her. He sent letters and spoke of his love and deep feelings for her. Elyse was so taken by him that she sent him money and anything else he asked for while he was in jail. After eight months, Jeffery was released. Elyse continued to try to help him. She was still blinded by him even when he propositioned one of her roommates and crawled into another's bed while she was sleeping. Elyse's parents finally stepped in and insisted that they get help. The psychiatrist that Elyse and Jeffery saw was completely taken in. Seeing this made Elyse finally wake up. She told Jeffery the relationship was over. He began to threaten her and insist that he would never let her go and kill her if he had to. Elyse tried moving to throw him off, but Jeffery found her and attacked her. It would have been worse, but Elyse's brother was luckily visiting and stopped Jeffery from doing more damage.

After her experience with Jeffery, Elyse became a student of Hare's. Although she is trained in identifying psychopaths, she still cannot understand why or how psychopaths can so easily bend and break the rules. Hare insists that socialization is a very hard process for some people. It teaches young children how things are done. It tells them what is and is not acceptable. It also contributes to the formation of people's conscience. The conscience (also known as inner voice) regulates our behavior in the absence of external controls. So even if there is a not law for something, our "inner policeman" will tell us that something is wrong.

In psychopaths like Jeffery, however, the social experiences that are supposed to shape our inner voice, never quite take control. In many children, punishment will produce links between social taboos and feelings on anxiety. Breaking the rules causes a physical response, something that is hard for psychopaths to feel. Research has proven that the inner voice plays a large role in regulating behavior. Thus, psychopaths have little capacity to picture the consequences of their behavior. Psychopaths see the immediate awards or gratification they will gain by a certain behavior, not the long term. Thus, psychopaths like Jeffery see victims like Elyse as the means to self gratification, urgent needs (such as money), and recreation.

Hare wants it to be clear that psychopaths are not robots. They do feel. However, their lack of emotional depth allows them more liberties with their actions and behaviors. They then choose behaviors that normal people would never display. Psychopaths are

not haunted by their choices or concerned with how the choices will affect their self worth.



Chapter 6, Crime: The Logical Choice, 83-101

Chapter 6, Crime: The Logical Choice, 83-101 Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Hare describes that not all criminals are psychopaths. There can be a lot of factors that influence someone to begin a life of crime. First of all, many criminals have some sort of liaison and connection with a group that causes them to have some kind of moral code. Although this may not be as strict as the moral code that the rest of society lives by, criminals might have a "honor among thieves" code that they follow. This is one fact that separates them from psychopaths. Being a criminal does not mean that a person is "completely without conscience."

As stated before, most criminals had external experiences that made them into criminals. Some criminals learn to commit crimes (a parent or sibling instituted it in their lives), while other have been exposed to early sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. This cycle of crime is completed when the abused becomes the abuser. Other people break laws because of some intense need—they have become addicted to drugs or steal to make money because they have no other skills. Negative social factors are what have caused them to turn to a life of crime. Psychopaths on the other hand show no loyalty to any groups. They will partner up to commit a crime if it will help them, but will easily sell out a partner.

What is the most disturbing about psychopaths is that they are most likely to be involved with cold-blooded violent, aggressive crimes. They have no problem with physically injuring someone. Once Gilmore was in prison, he became known as hammersmith. One of his friends had been beaten by another in prison. To get back at the inmate who had beat his friend, Gilmore walked up to him and slammed a hammer into his head. Gilmore bragged about the incident repeatedly, always thrilled to elaborate on that he had done.

Close to the time of the books publication, Hare did a test among a group of men that were in a treatment group for beating their wives. 25% of the booked scored high on the Psychopathy Checklist. The repeated abusers prove that psychopaths are very resistant to change. Furthermore the fact that the men are in a treatment group does not mean they will be rehabilitated. Instead, their battered wives will think their husbands are changing, and not leave them. They are missing an opportunity to get out of the relationship. Psychopaths are three times more likely to re-commit a violent crime. This is why it is extremely important to identify psychopathic sexual predators so that they are not paroled and are not able to commit crimes again.



Chapter 7, White Collar Psychopaths, pg 102-123

Chapter 7, White Collar Psychopaths, pg 102-123 Summary and Analysis

In 1987, Hare was contacted by a lawyer who had read an article by Hare. The lawyer was prosecuting John Grambling, Jr. who with the help of an accomplice, conned many banks into handing over millions of dollars. Without a gun, the two men walked away with 36.5 million dollars. They impressed people with their appearances and finessed bank owners with their charms.

Grambling claims that he is not a con-artist. He is in fact a "financial architect" and a "feeling person." These comments were lies. Grambling was a scam artist and con-man who was fired from several financial jobs. His wife feared for herself and her children. She could not stand when people called his crimes only "white collar" crimes. They were just as bad as violent crimes, just in a different way.

Grambling is an example of a man who could easily gain the trust of others. Certain vocations and positions automatically garner our trust. For example, doctors, lawyers, counselors, and teachers generally gain our trust because of their jobs. People are very willing to "give over" to people in these positions. When psychopaths are the occupants of these jobs, it is not good for others. Brad, a lawyer from a good family, took several million dollars from several clients' trust funds in order to cover some financial problems. Brad never intended to give the money back, and is instead living "the life." Brad's troubles were not new. He exhibited violence when he sexually assaulted his twelve year old cousin. Because of his actions, his family lost friends, respect, and a significant amount of money.

The thought that psychopaths can be people we trust with important information is very scary. More disturbing, are psychopaths that become psychiatrists and psychologists. Most common are clinicians who use their positions to take advantage of a patient sexually. This causes patients to become angry with the system and to shrink back into themselves. Sometimes people are used by their own parents sexually and emotionally. This is perhaps the worst transgression. Parents and other relatives are thought to be safe and trustworthy, but are not always.

They put on a face of normalcy and are the people that most victims are taken in by. Hare calls these people, sub criminal psychopaths, the people that most of us need to watch out for. They may not kill anyone, but can cause us a lot of emotional, financial, physical, and irreversible stress and damage. Hare stresses that it is important to understand that these people are everywhere. While this is a bleak thought, it seems important to warn the reader about what is lurking out there.



Chapter 8, Words from an Overcoat Pocket, pg 124-143

Chapter 8, Words from an Overcoat Pocket, pg 124-143 Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Hare approaches the subject of psychopaths' speech. Apparently, psychopaths often use speech to smooth talk and cajole not only glib people, but everyone. As Hare has explained in past chapters, he and his students, who have had extensive experience with psychopaths, are often still conned by them even when they know they are dealing with a psychopath.

Hare points out that frequently, a psychopath will use contradictory statements in order to convince people and escape detection of lies. To illustrate his point, he offers examples of several psychopaths' quotes. "When asked if he had ever committed a violent offense, a man serving time for theft answered, "No, but I once had to kill someone." Hare explains that these statements are blatant lies. These words are the end product of a very complicated mental process.

Hare explains that in most people, two sides of the brain have different specialized functions. The left hemisphere processes information analytically and sequentially, while the right side processes information as a whole. It plays a more important role in processing images and emotional experiences. This allows the brain to operate efficiently. Sometimes the two hemispheres compete and cause disorders such as stuttering and dyslexia. Hare also says that research has proven that psychopaths have bilateral language processes occurring. Hare says that this cannot be the only reason that psychopaths lie.

He goes on to insist that many psychopaths use "hollow words." This means that they constantly think of words to describe their feelings, but do not at all actually feel an emotional connection to the words. They may tell someone that they love them, but only say the words because it is expected. Another example Hare gives is that a colorblind person knows to stop at a red light, because it is the top light on a signal. They cannot see the color, but learn ways of compensating for the problem. Psychopaths also do this. They will wait for cues from other people around them to learn how to react with "emotion."

Hare also insists that psychopaths have the ability to compartmentalize their minds and thoughts into little boxes. They can then take their thoughts and organize them in a variety of different ways. The output is like Scrabble. These packages are small and devoid of emotional feeling. However, while most skilled liars keep a thin line of truth, psychopaths become so involved with their stories that they cannot keep their facts straight. Their misplaced facts and words are more a result of a lack of caring or laziness. They do not care if their story is truthful or not. Psychopaths continually



deceive people because of their seeming normalcy. The oddities of their speech are often very hard to catch.

Finally, Hare points out that so far, research has proven that psychopaths are not insane. They consciously choose antisocial behavior. They understand the intellectual rules of society, but simply refuse to follow them.



Chapter 9, Flies in the Web, pg 144-154

Chapter 9, Flies in the Web, pg 144-154 Summary and Analysis

Hare opens this chapter by describing an all too common scenario. A police officer stops a woman because she has been speeding and is in violation of the law. When he asks for her license and registration, the attractive young woman gets out of the car to speak with the officer. She proceeds to flirt with him and use her body language to distract the police officer. The police officer is so blinded by the woman's charm that he does not follow procedure and lets the woman off with a warning.

While many people use their charms to their advantage, psychopaths use their charms as an opportunity to feed on others. To them, social exchanges are opportunities to manipulate without remorse.

Hare says that psychopaths are big proponents of theatrical displays. They dress well, tell large, complicated stories, engage in shallow interactions, exaggerated facial movements, eye contact, and hand gestures. This makes people watch the show instead of focusing on exactly what is said. Psychopaths intrude on our personal space and completely distract others from understanding their contrived stories.

Hare also emphasizes that psychopaths will find any weak spots a person might have and exploit them to the fullest extent. Williams Bradford, a psychopathic teacher, explained he never stalked attractive women. He only went after ones that were lonely and insecure. He could sense their neediness and fear and play to the weakness. The exploitation of the lonely is often used by psychopaths. A student of Hare's put a Personal Ad in a local paper's classified section. Several inmates answered the letter, one of whom was a psychopath that the student had studied. In his letters, the man described loving relationships and his desire to watch sunsets with someone else. This blatantly contradicted the inmate's past history of violence and abuse towards both women and men. This man was simply determined to feed off of someone else's weakness.

Due to the distractions and manipulative nature of psychopaths, often there are people attracted to them. Hare gives examples of serial psychopathic killers who receive letters and build cult followings during their stays in prison. He thinks that these admirers have their own psychological hang-ups.

Victims involved with psychopaths often try to distort reality. They cannot believe that they are being taken advantage of by someone they have allowed into their lives. For example, a woman that was routinely beaten by her husband, thought his violence was an expression of manliness and virility. Women who are eager to fulfill feminine gender roles believe that if they try to be a better, more devoted wife and mother, their wayward husbands will eventually reform his ways. These women continually blame themselves

for their husbands' indiscretions, violence, and ill treatment. They provide a very comfortable life for male psychopaths.



Chapter 10, The Roots of the Problem, pg 155-179

Chapter 10, The Roots of the Problem, pg 155-179 Summary and Analysis

In this chapter, Hare explains the idea of children being psychopaths. He explores the book *The Bad Seed*. The story is about Christine Penmark, a mother who feels extremely guilty for bringing a child psychopath into the world. Hare insists that real parents are faced with this problem. Parents stand by helplessly as they realize they have very few options for their child's treatment.

Hare does point out that many people cannot think of young children as cold, heartless psychopaths, but insists that the personality disorder becomes evident at a very early age. Research has proven that psychopathy does not suddenly occur in adulthood. These children are more aggressive, difficult, willful, and deceitful than other children. Some other characteristics of a halt in childhood development occurs in the following behaviors: repetitive lying and manipulation without remorse, vandalism, very early experimentation with sex, a pattern of killing or torturing animals. Some of these behaviors are exhibited by many children so not all of them mean that a child will become a psychopath.

There are several disruptive Behavior Disorders. Hare explains that attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder is developmentally inappropriate degrees of inattention, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity. Conduct Disorder is a persistent pattern of conduct in which the basic rights of others and major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated. Lastly, Oppositional defiant disorder is a pattern of negative, hostile, and defiant behavior without the serious violations of the basic rights of others that are seen in conduct disorder.

Hare wants the reader to know that he does not think it is easy to label a child a psychopath. Labels can be very harmful. For instance, if a child is misdiagnosed as a psychopath, they might try to live up the label they have been given. This can cause them to act out and become violent or hostile. Hare stresses while labelling young people can be distressing, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that psychopathy starts early in life.

So if psychopathy starts early in life, what matters more? Nature (biological factors) or Nurture (environmental factors)? As far as biological factors are concerned, research has shown that there is a biological basis for temperament. A study showed that psychopaths' brains may mature at a rate slower than other people's. There are similarities in EEG (recorded brain waves) of normal adolescents and adult psychopaths. These are clearly seen in psychopathic characteristics of egocentricity, impulsiveness, and selfishness. Finally, Hare says that no evidence has been found

linking psychopathy to early environmental or social factors. Hare thinks that psychopathy develops through an interplay between biological and environmental factors.



Chapter 11, The Ethics of Labeling, pg 180-191

Chapter 11, The Ethics of Labeling, pg 180-191 Summary and Analysis

Hare wants the reader to understand that the only way patients can be treated is to correctly identify who is a psychopath. This is the reason why Hare and his colleagues took the time to invent the Psychopathy Checklist. This checklist finally gives clinicians and practitioners a credible procedure for evaluating someone they may assume is a psychopath. That way scientific data and observations are used instead of personal opinions.

Hare says that many parole boards choose to parole criminals based off of a single opinion. Sometimes criminals end up right back in jail because they commit a crime days after being paroled. Why were these criminals let out? Hare insists that it is because the inmates were assessed by one clinician whom they may have just met. As stated in previous chapters, psychopaths are experts at fooling everyone, even clinicians, researchers, and psychologists have been fooled by psychopaths. Furthermore, parole boards are much more likely to be comprised of politicians and appointees who have no background dealing with psychological disorders. This further hurts the evaluation and allows these criminals to go free.

Labeling or not labeling someone a psychopath is especially important. In the prison system, being labeled a psychopath will stop you from being released on parole. This is good if you are in fact a psychopath, but terrible if you are not. If you are not a psychopath but labeled so, you will not have a chance in society. This also works the other way around. Someone who is a psychopath may not be diagnosed as such, and upon release could go on a violent killing spree.



Chapter 12, Can Anything Be Done?, pg 192-206

Chapter 12, Can Anything Be Done?, pg 192-206 Summary and Analysis

In this chapter Hare addresses why there seems to be no solution for psychopathy. One main problem is that psychopaths do not want to be cured. Often people with other psychological disorders seek out treatment. Psychopaths do not generally feel this way and are pushed into therapy. They are satisfied with themselves, their lives, and how they mistreat and use people to get ahead. Hare points out that psychopaths are not fragile people. Once they finally get into treatment (as adults) they have firmly formed a lot of the attitudes and behaviors that make them so antisocial. If a psychopath finds his or herself in therapy, they will most likely simply go through the motions.

In many ways, Hare suggests that therapy may worsen a psychopath. This is because they will also try to dominate the group by playing head games and analyzing other patients and the therapist, thus drawing attention away from themselves. Psychopaths also use the information and education they receive in rehabilitation programs and prison libraries to learn more about how to fool authorities and other people to think they are something they are not.

Hare explains that he is not excited when people tell him stories of reformed psychopaths. Sometimes Psychopaths who have reached middle age suddenly stop displaying psychopathic tendencies. Hare is wary of this because these cases do not take into account important components. Firstly, was the treated individual actually a psychopath? It is hard to know because of the misdiagnosing that occurs. Secondly, did the family member who reports the cure really see an improvement, or just become accustomed to the psychopath's behavior?

So far Hare has not really offered any solutions to the question of "What can be done?" Hare suggests that a new program may need to be developed. Instead of trying to instill empathy in them, they should be taught to adjust their behaviors and whims to fit into society's social code. The program should use strict supervision with tight control over participants. Strict guidelines and consequences should be imposed for patients who do not follow rules. Also, he agrees that the evidence seems depressing, but we can develop something to protect ourselves from the psychopath.



Chapter 13, A Survival Guide, pg 207-218

Chapter 13, A Survival Guide, pg 207-218 Summary and Analysis

By this point in the book, Hare understands that the predicament of the psychopath can be very depressing for people. Therefore, he uses the entire chapter to outline how we can survive coming in contact with a psychopath.

Hare first suggests that in order to protect yourself you must know what you are dealing with, try not to be influenced by the show the psychopath may put on, enter new relationships with your guard up, and know yourself.

The first point Hare makes is very obvious. Throughout the book he has showed the reader that even trained clinicians and psychiatrists are manipulated and "taken in" by psychopaths. While it is going to be hard to identify one, a lay person should try their hardest to recognize behaviors that are on the Psychopathy Checklist and protect themselves.

As Hare mentions earlier in the book, psychopaths are pros at getting people to watch the "show" they put on. They use severe eye contact, large hand gestures, over exaggerated facial movements, fast talking, and elaborate stories to distract us from what is really going on. Hare also warns that people should always be cautious when entering new relationships. Watch out for someone who gets too close too soon, uses too much flattery, has too many stories about financial plans and schemes and social status. Make sure to double check new acquaintances' references and histories.

Hare also reminds the reader that certain places, like singles bars, cruises, resorts, and social clubs are breeding grounds for psychopaths. They can sense lonely people and will go after them.

Lastly, Hare asserts that you should know yourself. As stated earlier, psychopaths sense fear or flaws in people's characters very easily. They will exploit the flaws for their own gain. Hare suggests that the reader be honest with themselves when addressing their shortcomings because it will be the only way to combat a psychopath.

While Hare does give some tips, his narrative has repeatedly told the reader that combating psychopaths is difficult. If someone is taken in, it is very important to remember not to blame themselves. They should also seek professional advice and help as soon as possible. The victim should also recognize that they have been victimized. Many times, the psychopath will claim the role of victim so that all eyes are on him or her. Those around them forget about their own needs and tend to cater to the psychopath.

If all else fails, Hare thinks it is time to cut the losses and get out of the relationship. While this may be easier with new friends, a girl/boy friend, or a spouse than one's child, it is important for the victim to realize what they must do to get their lives back in order.



Epilogue, pg 219-220

Epilogue, pg 219-220 Summary and Analysis

Hare insists that the mystery of the psychopath is still far from being solved. He thinks that the most effective way to handle psychopaths is to prevent the damage they cause before it even happens. This way, victims are not hurt, massive amounts of money are not spent for prosecution, court proceedings, rehabilitation, and parole programs that will not work.

Hare ends the book by saying that psychopaths must be socialized, not re-socialized. They never wanted to play by society's rules in the first place. In order for this to happen, early intervention and tremendous amounts of research must be done.



Characters

Robert D. Hare

The entire book is told from the perspective of Robert D. Hare, a Canadian psychologist and researcher of psychopathy. Hare has decided to write this book to shed light on the many psychopaths that live among all of us from day to day. Hare does this by using evidence from case studies, stories passed on to him, and notorious serial killers. Hare's narrative is great to read because he is very humble. He admits to being taken in by psychopaths, which makes him extremely likable to the reader.

Hare has two main purposes in the book. He wants to introduce readers to the Psychopathy Checklist, a tool used to measure and evaluate whether someone is a psychopath or not. Hare believes that if people begin to correctly identify psychopaths, a treatment can be developed for them. It will also stop others from being mislabeled as psychopaths. Hare does not use psychological jargon or hefty words. He wants everyone to understand his message as well as the graveness of the problem.

Hare's second purpose is to teach people how to protect themselves against becoming victims of a psychopath. He warns the reader that they should first and foremost protect themselves, receive professional help (by talking to a doctor or support groups), avoid power struggles, and if nothing else works, to cut ties with the psychopath.

John Gacy

John Gacy was a Chicago businessman and serial killer who posed as a clown and killed 33 boys and young men. Gacy lured the boys to his home or kidnapped them while they were in town. At one point, one of Gacy's victims attempted to escape from Gacy's home when a few policemen visited. Gacy talked the police men into believing that the teenage boy was his lover and that they had had a quarrel. The policemen believed Gacy and did not help the boy.

Many court psychologists and psychiatrists have had much trouble diagnosing Gacy. His manipulations and loose associations led some to think he was a schizophrenic as well as crazy. Other psychologists felt he simply liked to lie. Gacy could not remember the truth (and did not care to) because he chose to try and manipulate and lie to everyone. Psychopaths continually deceive people because of their seeming normalcy. The oddities of their speech are often very hard to catch.

Jeffery MacDonald

Jeffery MacDonald was a physician who murdered his wife and children in 1970. He claimed that people on drugs had actually done the crime.



Kenneth Bianchi

Bianchi was one of the Hillside Stranglers. This was a group of men who raped, tortured and murdered a dozen women in Los Angeles in the 1970s.

Diane Downs

Diane Downs shot and killed her three children. Downs attempted to make it seem as though someone else killed her children in order to look like a victim. She later confessed to the murders, but still felt as though she was the victim because she felt she could not attract men while having children.

Ted Bundy

Bundy was known as the All American serial killer. He was very handsome and also responsible for over a dozen young women's deaths.

Ray

Ray was one of Hare's first patients when he got his very first job out of grad school. Ray was a classic example of a psychopath. He manipulated Hare into getting him different jobs in the prison as well as a job with his father. When Hare finally saw what was happening and refused to continue helping Ray, Ray threatened him.

After earning his PHD, Hare was sent to teach at a University in Canada. To his surprise, he was reunited with Ray, who was claiming to have been a student and intern of Hare's. Hare was shocked to see Ray and hear the lies he had been telling. When he attempted to throw him off his guard, Ray did not flinch. Ray's lack of caring about the truth, violent outbursts, and manipulative personality are all characteristics of psychopathy.

Elsa and Dan

Elsa was "taken in" by Dan. As a traveler in London, Elsa was very lonely. Dan, was attracted to her weakness and loneliness. He charmed her, and started to spend a lot of time with her. Pretty soon, Dan was using Elsa for money and shelter while refusing to answer her questions about his whereabouts and actions. Eventually, Dan blew up at her and moved on.

Alice and Ariel

Alice and Ariel are two twin sisters that could not be more opposite. Ariel is a successful lawyer and extremely intelligent. She was always an overachiever and great student.



Alice on the other hand is a criminal and drug addict. She began exhibiting aggressive and violent behavior at a young age, and has been a financial and emotional drain on her family. The study of twins helps to bring up the question of whether psychopaths were born crazy or just plain bad.

John Grambling

Grambling's case study is an example of white collar crime. With the help of an accomplice, Grambling conned many banks into handing over millions of dollars. Without a gun, the two men walked away with 36.5 million dollars. They impressed people with their appearances and finessed bank owners with their charms. Grambling is an example how psychopaths with societal connections and friends can con people without violence.



Objects/Places

Psychopathy Checklist

A tool that Hare developed in order to diagnose someone as a Psychopath. Hare breaks down the Checklist into the following categories: Emotional/Interpersonal (glib and superficial, egocentric and grandiose, lack of remorse or guilt, lack of empathy, deceitful and manipulative, shallow emotions) and Social Deviance (impulsive, poor behavior, need for excitement, lack of responsibility, early behavior problems, adult antisocial behavior).

DSM

DSM stands for Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. It is a handbook that lists different mental disorders

Antisocial Personality Disorder

Antisocial personality disorder is the term that refers to both psychopathy and sociopathy. It refers "primarily to a cluster of criminal and antisocial behaviors."

Sociopathy

Psychopathy is often referred to as Sociopathy.

The Mask of Sanity

A book written by Hervey Cleckley in 1941. It was one of the first books to explore psychopathy.

Small Sacrifices

A book by Ann Rule that details the life of Diane Downs.

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Hare explains this as developmentally inappropriate degrees of inattention, impulsiveness, and hyperactivity.



Conduct Disorder

Hare defines this as a persistent pattern of conduct in which the basic rights of others and major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Hare says that this is a pattern of negative, hostile, and defiant behavior without the serious violations of the basic rights of others that are seen in conduct disorder.

Dr. Death

Refers to James Grigson who testified in many cases against defendants claiming that they were psychopaths.

Themes

Identifying a Psychopath

This is perhaps the most important theme in the entire book. Hare spends over half of the book emphasizing the importance of correct diagnoses and evaluation of psychopathy. The development and evolution of the Psychopathy Checklist is the first step in finding a scientific, valid tool in which to measure psychopathy.

The Psychopathy Checklist incorporates the following criteria for identifying a Psychopath: glib and superficial, egocentric and grandiose, lack of empathy, lack of remorse or guilt, deceitful and manipulative, shallow emotions, impulsive, poor behavior controls, need for excitement, lack of responsibility, early behavior problems, and adult antisocial behavior.

Some of the characteristics that Hare outlines are very interesting because they seem like "normal" social behaviors that many people experience at one point in their life. For example, there might be a young teenage boy who in early adolescence displays behaviors of juvenile delinquency, but is able to be rehabilitated. He may have committed crimes but he never tortured small animals or committed violence without remorse or felt a lack of emotions. Hare repeatedly emphasizes the importance of using the checklist correctly. It is not simply a framework that can be used to help shape one's opinion. It is a procedure that must be followed.

Now that Hare and other clinicians have a tool to use, Hare feels as though they have come a little bit closer to identifying psychopaths. Correct evaluation will lead to a fewer number of people being correctly labeled or not labeled psychopaths, which is also a problem that is seen in our justice system. This further proves that Hare's obsession to design and clarify the Psychopathy Checklist is a valid one. As he points out, a criminal labeled a psychopath who is not one has little hope of being rehabilitated because they will mostly likely not be put up for parole. They might become depressed or sink deeper into behavior and try to "live up to the label" they have been given. True psychopaths that have learned to bend the system and feed on others' weaknesses are not labeled psychopaths and allowed back out into the world. As our prisons and mental institutions begin to overflow, this cycle must end so that treatment and rehabilitation can begin.

Victims of Psychopaths

Another interesting topic that Hare explores is the lives of victims of psychopaths. He points out that sometimes victims are family members (especially parents and siblings) who are at a loss for options. They are the people who may have noticed that there was some sort of disorder with their family member from a very young age. It is especially hard to be a parent and deal with a child who is a psychopath. The parent feels a duty



to care and treat their child, but has no idea what to do when their child is threatening others, exhibiting violence, and committing horrible acts with little remorse or care.

Hare also examines the phenomenon that sometime develops when psychopathic serial killers are sent to jail. For some reason, cult followings spring up. After being captured and held in prison, notorious killers like Ted Bundy and Bambi Bembenek developed followings. In Bembenek's case, letters from admirers and fans poured into the prison where she was held. After her escape attempt, supporters threw parties to celebrate her release. How do cold-blooded killers garner support like this? Hare explains that many people who fall for these psychopaths have their own psychological hang-ups.

Although these people think they are devoting themselves to a cause (saving someone from death row, pining over a trapped lover they can never have), they are simply victims succumbing to the mind numbing charm of the psychopath.

Lastly, Hare emphasizes that anyone can be taken in by a psychopath. For example, he and his researchers have had years of experience with psychopaths, but are still fooled by them in interviews as well as everyday life. This may not make Hare's readers feel any more comfortable about their own vulnerability to a psychopath, but further communicates to them that psychopaths are manipulative and dangerous.

Treatment for Psychopaths

While Hare does emphasize that a treatment must be found, he cannot advise on the exact treatment of the psychopath. He devotes page upon page to the identification and victims of psychopaths, but cannot really state a treatment that should be enforced. While the reader understands that the main points and themes of the book are to address the Psychopathy Checklist and learn how to identify psychopaths, the end of the book arrives with a let down.

The reader is told how to protect themselves from psychopaths. While not a great answer, it does offer some help while Hare and other researchers work to develop a treatment for psychopaths. He warns the reader that they should first and foremost protect themselves, receive professional help (by talking to a doctor or support groups), avoid power struggles, and if nothing else works, cut ties with the psychopath.

To his credit, Hare does suggest the type of treatment plan that must be developed. He thinks that it must include early intervention (most likely when the psychopath is young). There must also be very strict rules and punishments for misbehavior. The key is to socialize people who have never been socialized, not to re-socialize them.

Style

Perspective

The book is told through the perspective of Dr. Robert D Hare, a psychologist who has studied psychopathy for over twenty years. He uses a first person narrative to speak about his own personal experiences with psychopaths and his research. Dr. Hare also includes many antidotes from friends, patients, and people who have written to him. Hare also recalls many case studies and stories about famous psychopathic killers. While Hare did not directly get to interview these notorious killers, he has done a lot of research on their cases and cites very reputable sources that have directly interviewed or had experiences with the killers. While Hare is delivering the information second hand, the reader still feels as though Hare is informed.

Hare's case studies and experiences with psychopaths are eye opening and humbling for him. His explanation of how to find the psychopaths lurking among us is shocking. Hare does not maintain a high horse. He explains that even trained professionals are taken in by the manipulative and conniving nature of psychopaths. He recounts several stories in which he is taken advantage of. This allows the reader to relate to Hare, even if he is a very educated, highly recognized psychologist and researcher.

Tone

To Hare's credit, he tries his best to stay away from psychological jargon. This is not a book geared toward other psychologists, and thus the tone is not pompous or scholarly. It seems to be more focused on warning lay people about the threat of psychopaths. When Hare is clarifying the difference between different psychological terms, he takes his time and makes sure that the reader truly understands what he is talking about.

It is also helpful that the Psychopathy Checklist is in easy terms and very easy to follow. Hare also explains each particular section of the checklist. He also stresses that it is important for people to be thoroughly trained in how to use the checklist. Even skilled clinicians and psychologists use the checklist in the wrong way. Hare wants the reader to understand that while some people do display the same characteristics that are in the checklist, they are not necessarily psychopaths.

Hare's narrative also has a warning tone to it. He is very concerned about the welfare of our society and prison systems. He wants readers, both educated and not educated in psychology, to be aware of signs so that everyone can work together to recognize the problem. Psychopaths are so powerful and manipulative that they must be combated together.

Structure

The structure of the book is very easy to follow. Each chapter has an over-arching theme. Inside the chapter, Hare labels sections to talk about "mini themes" inside the chapter. Hare can then break down each of his points. This was especially helpful in the chapters that describe the characteristics of the Psychopathy Checklist. A reader might not have exactly understood what being glib was. Hare does not want the reader to feel left out, no matter what their level of education or experience, so he devotes time to explaining.

Throughout the novel, there are different anecdotes, often separated from the stories told in the flow of the narrative. For example there is text on the page, but then a box highlighted in gray. The gray box is a separate story, usually related to the subject matter, but does not flow with the narrative that surrounds it. Depending on the reader, this could break the flow of the narrator. The reader might not know if they should continue to read the narrative or switch to the anecdote. It might be a little confusing for some readers.



Quotes

"I would have been quite comfortable remaining in my academic ivory tower, having esoteric discussions with other researchers and writing technical books and articles," (Introduction, Introduction: The Problem, p. xi).

"What is his psychological makeup, gave Ray the power to override reality, apparently without compunction or concern?" (Chapter 1, Experiencing the Psychopath, p. 14).

"Psychopaths are not disoriented or out of touch with reality, nor do they experience the delusions, hallucinations, or intense subjective distress that characterize other mental disorders," (Chapter 2, Focusing the Picture, p. 22).

"The Psychopathy Checklist lets us discuss psychopaths with little risk that we are describing simple social deviance or criminality, or that we are mislabeling people who have nothing more in common than that they have broken the law," (Chapter 3, The Profile: Feelings and Relationships, p. 33).

"The other facet, described in this chapter, and comprised of the remaining symptoms in the Psychopathy Checklist, is a chronically unstable and aimless lifestyle marked by causal and flagrant violations of social norms and expectations," (Chapter 4, The Profile: Lifestyle, p. 57).

"Psychopaths consider the rules and expectations of society inconvenient and reasonable, impediments to the behavioral expression of their inclinations and wishes," (Chapter 4, The Profile: Lifestyle, p. 67).

"But there is something else about the speech of psychopaths that is equally puzzling: their frequent use of contradictory and logically inconsistent statements that usually escape detection," (Chapter 8, Words From an Overcoat Pocket, p. 124).

"Psychological denial is an important mechanism for screening out painful knowledge from conscious awareness, but it can also blind is to the truths that are obvious to others," (Chapter 9, Flies in the Web, p. 152).

"Diagnoses yield sticky labels, faulty predictions based on inaccurate diagnoses can result in confusion and disaster," (Chapter 11, The Ethics of Labeling, p. 190).

"We have to learn how to socialize them, not resocialize them. And this will require serious efforts at research and early intervention," (Epilogue, p. 220).

"The truth is, the personality structure of the psychopath spells trouble for the rest of us," (Chapter 6, Crime: The Logical Choice, p. 87).

"The short answer is, it is difficult to penetrate their mask of normalcy. The oddities in their speech are often too subtle for the casual observer to detect, and they put on a good show," (Chapter 8, Words from an Overcoat Pocket, p. 143).



Topics for Discussion

Do you think that Hare's Psychopathy Checklist is a valid tool for evaluating psychopathy? Why or why not?

Does Hare exaggerate the presence of psychopaths among us?

What do you think about Hare's tone throughout the book? Is it appropriate for his audience?

Does Hare do a good job of interlacing his experiences, other people's antidotes, and interviews into the narrative? Did you like the structure of the novel? Did it flow? Why or why not?

Hare uses the entire book to discuss the Psychopathy Checklist and identifying psychopaths, but does not talk much about treatment. Did you think the end of the book was a let down?

Are the tips Hare gives to protect yourself against psychopaths helpful? Do you think they are simply common sense?

What characteristics from the Psychopathy Checklist do you think normal people exhibit often?

What do you think about Hare's argument for nature vs nurture? Are biological or environmental factors equal in developing a psychopath, or does one have more weight?