



RAR 82 – Michael Gurian

Dr. Gurian: Then he gets up and moves around. Well, that's actually good that means his brain is saying if I get up and move around I'm actually going to be able to process what you're reading to me and the story you're telling me even better. It's going to go even deeper into my brain because the parts of the brain that are becoming active can help filter that information. But if we get mad at him about that and we try to force him to sit that's a turn off. So a year from now he ain't gonna wanna be reading stories with us.

Sarah: Correct me if I'm wrong here but you're saying that for some kids moving around actually helps them listen and process better?

Dr. Gurian: Absolutely.

Sarah: You're listening to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that helps you make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.

Sarah: Hello, hello, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 82 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. I told you awhile ago that we would have an expert on the show soon to tell us about the importance of movement; that in fact, for many kids moving while they listen to you read aloud will actually help them listen and focus better. Well, today the day is here. Dr. Michael Gurian from the Gurian Institute is here. He stopped by the Read-Aloud Revival podcast to talk to us about that very thing as well as the challenges that the male and female brains present when it comes to reading and listening to books read aloud. We're diving into the science of it today and I'll tell you what, especially if you're a parent of boys you want to listen to this whole episode. We now offer full transcripts of

the Read-Aloud Revival podcasts so if you'd like a transcript of today's show just head to the Show Notes to grab that transcript for free. We'll also have links to Dr. Gurian's books and anything else we mention during today's program in the Show Notes as well. You can get those at ReadAloudRevival.com/82.

Dr. Michael Gurian is the New York Times best-selling author of 28 books published in 22 languages including some you're familiar with, I'm sure; *Saving Our Sons*, *The Wonder of Boys*, *The Wonder of Girls*, *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*, and *What Stories Does My Son Need*, among many others. He's a marriage and family counselor and provides keynotes and consulting throughout the world. You may have even heard him speak at one of the Great Homeschool Conventions over the last several years. For more than 30 years he's researched boys and girls brains and their development and he's joining us today to talk about his work, his books, and particularly, how we can use what he knows about the way boys' and girls' brains work to connect our kids with stories. So, I am so thrilled to have you here, Dr. Gurian, thank you so much for joining me.

Dr. Gurian: Oh, it's great to be with you, Sarah, thank you.

Sarah: So here at the Read-Aloud Revival we're all about books, of course. We're always talking about how to engage our kids with reading and we're heavy on the read alouds but we're also always encouraging our kids to be reading and trying to put really good books in their hands and help them cultivate their own reading lives. So I would love to talk with you a little bit about the challenges that come up with both boys and girls based on the way their brains work in their reading life. Can you think of things off the top of



your head that are most common stumbling blocks for boys and girls when it comes to their reading lives?

3:25 The Challenges of Kids' Reading Lives

Dr. Gurian: I think nowadays we find that the biggest stumbling block is that there's other things (normally screens) that are taking their time and we're not realizing as families, and even as schools, we're not realizing the brain development that's at stake with them being distracted away from reading toward these other things that are not really as good for their brain development. So I'd say now that's the biggest hindrance for kids, just kids- boys and girls in general, then when we break it down girls do tend naturally, there's a lot of brain reasons for it, they do tend naturally to use more words, what we call word production, so they tend to read more than boys do anyway, and then they tend to not be as specific about what they want to read. In other words they could like reading A, B, or C. Whereas guys have two disadvantages in getting them reading; one is their brains aren't as well set up on average to naturally gravitate to what we call word production, their brains produce less words, etc., so that's number one and then number two, boys can be very specific about what they want to read. For some boys they need a lot of pictures, obviously this depends on their age, they need more pictures, they need comic books or graphic novels. They're more pictorial and there's some brain reasons for that I can talk about, and then they may prefer non-fiction. Male brain, we don't have as many connectors between the parts of the brain that use words and the parts that are doing emotions and senses and so giving a boy a certain novel he may just

go, "Nah," it just doesn't hit him, but in that same novel it may hit a girl, she may love it. It doesn't hit him, so what we may need to do is target his reading on what his areas of interest are. It could be horses, or music, or technology – whatever it is – he often needs a target and boys tend to read more non-fiction because of that.

Sarah: That's really fascinating. I didn't realize that was actually a scientific thing. I know I've heard that so many parents tell me that they have boys who like to read their non-fiction books, I'm thinking particularly of books like by David Macaulay, the ones where how a castle was built or how the pyramids were built – things like that. Goodness, what's the *Dinotopia*?, just non-fiction books. I was curious to know ... I guess I've never taken it beyond that, just kind of wondered why boys are more attracted to non-fiction a lot of times than girls. But you're saying there's actually a reason for that.

6:06 'Different Brains'

Dr. Gurian: Oh yeah, absolutely. The male and female brain are so actually very different and for those people raising girls, *The Wonder of Girls* gives a lot of this, for those people raising boys, *Saving Our Sons* will give a lot of this brain research, and then for the teaching part, *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*, anyone who's teaching *Boys and Girls Learn Differently* and they all provide this brain science. And in short, this is condensing it very much, the male and the female brain differentiate in utero, they differentiate because the X and the Y chromosome and the markers there, so they differentiate while mom is carrying the baby, so the baby comes out not just with male and female body but male and female brain. And there are, of course, some exceptions but male



and female brain generally intersect with male and female body, 99.7% of cases, and so you've got a broad spectrum of that because you've got seven billion people on earth so there's no one male and one female, there's a lot of variety, but in general, because the male brain leans toward a right side development on spatial mechanicals and visual graphics, it doesn't do words on the right side, because of that you have a larger pool of males who just don't produce as many as words and who will intersect their word use with the stuff that they really are interested in. But girls are doing words on both sides of the brain, so they also have what we call visual graphic and spatial mechanicals on the right but they're using up a lot more room on the right for words, and they do words on the left, like guys do. So you've got two sides of the female brain doing words and connecting words to feelings, words to senses, words to mechanics, words to all of their interest areas, but with guys you only have being left or the front left, that's a big difference in word use and that's one of the primary reasons that literacy rates around the world, females dominate. And in our own test scores in the U.S. males are 10 points behind in reading and writing, what we call literacy, 10 points behind females. Females are about 2 or 3 points behind in math/science. So the huge gap really in education is this literacy gap. And the nature part of it, I'm a "nature, nurture and culture person" – I like to look at all three but the nature part of it is in the brain and so you have exceptions for males like me, I've written a lot of books, I started reading at four, my brain is really wired for word production, but I'm the one in five exception. You're going to have three or four out of the five guys who are going to really need us to target what they love to read in order to get them to read.

Sarah: That's so fascinating. So my husband is super intelligent, really smart guy, and I'm a writer so occasionally I'll hand him things and say, "Hey, could you read this over?" and he'll look at me and say, "There's just so many words." And I thought, 'Of course there are lots of words' but that made me laugh when you were talking just then because I really saw my very bright, very intelligent husband and his own affinity for visual images over words. So you said something a second ago I want to go back to, you said that boys will oftentimes prefer graphic novels and books with pictures. I know there are a lot of parents who worry about their children's affinity for graphic novels, can we talk about that? Is that something we should be worrying about? Is that something we should promote? What's your take on that?

9:41 Graphic Novels - Should We Worry?

Dr. Gurian: I wouldn't worry about it. The key is to get guys to read. And, remembering that the right side of the male brain does not do words, right? We're doing visual graphics and spatial mechanicals on the right so the visual graphic part is why guys are so invested in pictures and we need pictures, we need more graphics and pictures, and then the more male that brain is, you've got the 3.5 billion males in the world, some are like me who are very verbal but remember you have a lot that are more male-male, they're even more spatial mechanical, more visual graphic, and so if we're going to get them to read they may, all the way into adolescence, want those graphics to go along with the words and these will be the same guys who, when they were two, and we were reading aloud to them, we would realize they weren't remembering the



vocabulary unless we connected it to a picture and once we connected the grasshopper to a picture and pointed to the picture then the kid learned grasshopper, right, because he had the picture.

Sarah: Yes, yes!

Dr. Gurian: That's how that brain is set up and billions, really, billions of guys are set up that way so I would not worry about graphic novels unless there's content in them that you don't like. Even people will say they're violent, well, it's pretty much fantasy violence but then there are some that are just so misogynistic and mean, yeah, I wouldn't want my son reading that. But most graphic novels are stories that entrance the guy, and that's good, he's getting words.

Sarah: I love that, because I do think there is something of a stigma that a lot of families have against, we worry, I think. I think it's our good intentions but we worry that when we give our kids comic books, I know that my own son he really will read voraciously when it comes to *Calvin and Hobbs* and *Garfield* and all these comic books and he just loves them, and really, I think those books were instrumental to helping him become a child who could decode to becoming a kid who wants to pick up a book. So if we think through the books that we're reading, obviously considering the content that's within them, but considering that as a vehicle for helping them get into stories and get into books then there's nothing to worry about there, right?

Dr. Gurian: I don't think so. Some of it's developmental. People will worry; I have a 12 year old and he's reading graphic novels, does that mean he's not going to be able to read a lot of words as a lawyer or as a doctor, what people are projecting maybe he'll be, and that brain is

going to develop the whole reading all of that, it's going to be moving two, maybe three years later than a girl's brain. So sometimes we think that brain is a girl's brain and we don't realize that wow, these brains are setup differently and that guys are later in a lot of stuff. So he may by 17 actually be using a lot of words and not reading as many graphic novels. Maybe none by the time he's in college. Or he's reading some graphic novels but he's, of course, become a good lawyer or doctor or whatever, so we want to remember that a lot of this is developmental and if we keep them off of screens, the overuse of screens, and get them reading, whatever they want to read as early as possible, they're trajectory developmentally is probably going to be good. The thing to worry about would not be the graphic novels, again, unless the character content is bad, the thing to worry about would be that they're, by say 12, they're wanting to spend four hours in front of a screen ...

Sarah: Yep, yep.

Dr. Gurian: ... and none of that's Kindle, then that would be worrisome. Then if a kid is only reading the comics at 12, he's only reading the comics, not doing well in anything at school, and he's on screens, the problem isn't the books, the problem is the screens.

Sarah: So good. That's really, really helpful.

13:31 Considering Age-Based Book Lists

So then, I guess that leads me to a question, do you see a problem within age based booklists where they say these are good books for a 4th grader, because the way you're describing the brain of a boy or a the brain of a girl in let's say 4th or 5th grade makes me wonder if we



unnecessarily worry about our boys who may not be developmentally ready to tackle the same kind of books that our girls are at the same age.

Dr. Gurian: I think that as people look at all of this developmentally, until they go deeper into male/female brain it is often hard for people not to see reading through the lens of the more successful brain, so generally, that more successful brain is the one in five guys and the four out of five girls. So we see reading and the developmental markers for reading and we unconsciously use those people, most of them are girls and then some guys who are great readers, we use them. But when we get deep into this stuff, when we really get into it, when someone after someone reads *Saving Our Sons* or *Boys and Girls Learn Differently* they come out of it and then they start doing what I call Citizen Science where they start studying their own kids and from the perspective of this brain science then they make different standards. So then they say, “Well, wait a minute, I’m unconsciously thinking my 14 year old boy, let’s say, should be reading [this] way because my 14 year old girl did. Now I understand that his brain development may just be later.” And this could switch. There are some girls who are not good readers and some guys who are great readers. So of course that can switch, but statistically, we’re going to see this where until we get into it and do this science for ourselves, we’re applying a standard that may not be appropriate.

15:17 Looking at the Child in Front of You

Sarah: So then this is the benefit of parents who look at the child in front of them and say, “What do you need next?” instead of holding them up against some measuring stick that generalizes an

age or makes us feel like our child should be able to read at this level or this kind of book but instead just looking at our child and saying, “What do you need next? What’s the next stepping stone?”

Dr. Gurian: Yeah, really. Individualize this to the child. I have a book called *Nurture the Nature* and that’s actually my philosophy. There’s nature, nurture, and culture, they all apply to child-raising and nature’s a big part of it. And when we’re trying to figure out how we are to raise a kid, we’ve got to nurture that child’s nature. And so if that child, of course, is a really great reader by nature, then we’re nurturing that for sure. If that child is, by nature, developmentally in place A, we need to nurture toward place A. The culture may tell us something’s wrong with him or her, the culture may say A, B, or C, but we have to nurture the nature of this child. And, of course, if a parent feels like the nature of this child is a brain disorder or some kind of reading disorder, OK, that’s it’s own thing. Of course you’ve got to get help for that, got to go to professionals for that, but if we’re talking about the normally developing child without that issue, then our best bet, I think, is become a Citizen Science of this kid.

16:42 Stories Boys Need

Sarah: That’s so great. You wrote a book called *What Stories Does My Son Need?* It’s a guide to books and movies you’ve curated that specifically build character in boys with recommendations based on their age. I’d love to talk more about that book. (And hey, listeners, by the way, we will have a whole slew of Dr. Gurian’s books in the Show Notes of today’s episode, so if you head to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for this episode you’ll see a list with easy to click



links of Dr. Gurian’s books and this will be one of them.) But let’s talk a little bit more about *What Stories Does My Son Need?* Can you tell me how you chose those specific stories to include and the movies to include on that list?

Dr. Gurian: Well, what happened was the publisher of *The Wonder of Boys*, he/they came to me and said, “Hey, we want you to do this. There’s a lot of stuff out there about what girls should read let’s do one what boys should read” and so I was sort of at first, I was saying, “Hmmm... Well, I’ll just do this by instinct, I’ll interview guys, etc.” and I’m creating a list, right? And then I have a friend named Terry Trueman and he’s a young adult author, he won a Printz honor award for his book, *Stuck in Neutral* which is from the point of view of a seriously disabled boy and it became very popular and won awards and so on, and he’s a pal of mine actually, we’ve known each other for about four years, and I said, “So, Terry, so help me out here. You’re a young adult author you’re better qualified than I am.” So he and I got together over a period of a number of months, we read a lot of books, and of course, both of us had a lot of books in our brains anyway that we wanted to share, that we wanted boys to use, and then we specifically, so the subtitle is “Books and Movies that Build Character” so then we whittled it down to a hundred books and a hundred movies that some part of it builds good character. So it’s not just entertainment, it’s *Huckleberry Finn*, we’re studying that, boys are learning things from that. They’re learning things from, now, since the book has been published, obviously, there are other books now, like *Hunger Games*. I think that builds strong character. So there are things that we could have added, if we ever do a new one. But at that point we had 100 books and 100 movies

that we were convinced build character, then Terry and I built these discussion starters so that they can be very practically used; parents and kids can read the book and then talk about it.

19:02 How Parents Can Talk About Stories with Kids

Sarah: Actually, that was my next question so I’m glad you mentioned that because I’d love to talk with you about how parents can talk about stories with their kids. You focus so much on communicating with our kids and developing those really good, solid relationships with them.

Dr. Gurian: I’ll say a little bit about what impedes us sometimes and then a lot of other great stuff. The impeding stuff, I think, is with younger kids and boys specifically, what can impede us is that we are reading a story to the boy, and we feel like, oh, he’s not concentrating because he’s wiggling or fidgeting or wants to get up and move around.

Sarah: Yeah.

Dr. Gurian: That turns us off in a way and it makes the reading, the story-telling and so on, into a negative. But once we understand that guy’s brain we realize he has a very active cerebellum, there’s all this great stuff folks can learn about. So then we start saying, oh, wait a minute. It’s fun to cuddle with him, so he cuddles with me while we’re reading for 10 minutes, let’s say, but then he gets up and moves around. Well, that’s actually good that means his brain is saying if I get up and move around I’m actually going to be able to process what you’re reading to me and the story you’re telling me even better. It’s going to go even deeper into my brain because the parts of the brain that are becoming active can help filter that information. But if we get mad at



him about that and we try to force him to sit that's a turn off. So a year from now he ain't gonna wanna be reading stories with us because we have not understood the way his brain is acquiring those words and in understanding story-telling and being a part of that process. So for people with younger kids that's just one to really watch out for. Study that kid's nature, see how he best acquires information and hears stories and is part of story-telling. Generally, it's going to involve letting him move around if that's what he needs to do.

Sarah: Correct me if I'm wrong here but you're saying that for some kids moving around actually helps them listen and process better?

Dr. Gurian: Absolutely. Absolutely. When we work, the Gurian Institute, we have a group of folk and when we're training not just parents but when we're training preschools, people in kindergarten, even in the early elementary, we'll meet with these folks and the teachers will say, "I've got these however many kids it is, could be in a homeschool co-op, I've got these 10 kids I'm reading aloud and I've got all the girls, or almost all the girls, just sitting there rapt attention and I've got a couple of boys sitting there and then I've got these two or three boys they're wandering around. So I try to corral them. And those folks don't realize that, actually, the way those brains are set up, yes, he will hear more, acquire more, retain more, if he's moving around.

Sarah: That is so ... I love that you said that because that's been my hunch but I love to hear it from you! I love to hear it with good solid research because I've noticed that in my own 12 year old son actually, and I know that it's a concern a lot of parents have – my kid wants to move around, is he really paying attention, I can't tell if he's listening, or she's listening (depending

on who's the one that's most wiggly), so that's really, really helpful.

Dr. Gurian: Well, one doesn't want to say, well, every time he's moving around it's good. Again, it's always nurture the nature, study this child. Every once in a while a kid's being a behavior problem, etc. so that can absolutely happen. But most of the time I find that there's some very wiggly girls, that's how they're built and that's great, I actually have one, one of my daughter's (my kids are grown now) but one of them was much more wiggly than the other so certainly you have it with girls. And, mainly guys who we just don't get their brains, we just don't understand it. And once we understand it, it's so liberating. We have fewer discipline problems, we're not as mad at these boys as much, and they're just getting smarter because they're hearing more stories.

Sarah: Yeah, that's right.

OK, so I've interrupted you but you said that was one thing that impedes us. What's something else?

22:50 Tell More Stories

Dr. Gurian: Well, on the plus side, in terms of strategies and that beautiful love that happens when parents and kids tell stories, and read stories, one thing is I would love to see parents tell more stories, not even that they're being read, but parents tell more stories about themselves, their lives, grandparents, uncles, aunts, everybody be telling stories to kids because the oral and written story-telling actually are united in the brain. The brain wants to hear stories as much as it wants to read stories. And so I just think story-telling from elders to youngsters is absolutely great. I also think that at a certain age, that all the way along, both moms and dads and



grandmas and grandpas, everyone ought to be doing as much as they can to read to kids and then at a certain point we want to remember that guys, it will happen 9, 10, 11, 12, somewhere in there, guys are starting to need a lot more male influence and a connection between males, fathers/elder men, and life. And now, stories we need to convince dads of this, we have to help dads understand this, and get them to be telling more stories, get them to be suggesting certain books to their sons. Is this all good for daughters? Of course it is. I did it with my daughters but my daughters are going to develop and they're going to generally like to read books a lot but 12, 13, 14 we're going to start losing guys from the story-telling so that's why I love to see more males involved even if just once a month, "This was my favorite book at your age, here," and just hand it to him.

24:36 'What is a Man and How Can I Become One?'

Sarah: So this is fascinating to me. So is then connected with that, sort of, drive for a boy around 12-14 answering that question of what is a man and how can I become one? So they need to see men, then passing on that love of stories and desire to read in order to realize that that's a part of becoming what they want to be. Is that sort of what you're saying?

Dr. Gurian: Yeah. And I see, being the word guy, the guy who loves words and writes stories, I see story-telling (I mean, I have to confess that) I see story-telling and I see reading stories, both fiction and non-fiction, I see it as really good for brain development and I also know, as you've just indicated, that I argue in my books that the question, as soon as puberty hits, and as the kid is aware that he is in puberty, that he's moving

from boy to man, that that is the biggest question he's asking internally: what is a man, how do I become a man? That's what he's asking. He may not voice it because it's unconscious for him but that's what he's asking. So women, obviously moms, can do a lot to help him but at a certain point dads and men are needed. So dads and men are going to instinctively get involved, of course, they will, but I'd love to see them get even more involved in the story-telling and book reading part of it. In part, because, the guy (the son) is going to unconsciously grab from that, 'oh, part of being a man is telling this story, telling my stories, telling stories' which is going to be great in his relationship with his spouse later (good communication) and then also that part of becoming a man is making sure to be very literate and now, at a certain point, by 14 or 15 maybe he's into two or three really big things, maybe it's sports. So now Dad's not going to force him to read *Jane Eyre* even if Dad liked *Jane Eyre* this boy may not like *Jane Eyre* but still should be giving him, "OK, you're into sports, here's a biography of Stephen Curry. What do you think of reading this biography? And if you want I'll read it to." Or, "I've read it already, once you've read chapter one I'd love to talk to you about it" and this can be done with a novel, certainly too. This is great for guys because fathers and sons when they communicate differently than mothers and sons, very often fathers and sons need something to be communicating about.

Sarah: I do a lot more of the reading aloud in our home that my husband does but the books that he has read aloud to our kids, I find that he's a lot more driven to do it when they're just books that interest him. So he'll read *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen or *My Side of the Mountain* or *Banner in the Sky*, those kinds of books. And something



about him reading to the kids, and I love it when I see online I see people sharing pictures of dad reading to the kids- there's something there, I can't really put my finger on it except that I think you've described here more the technical research side of why that is so moving to me as a mother when I see my husband or when I see another man nurturing that side of his parenting with his kids, it's really beautiful.

Dr. Gurian: It is beautiful. You're absolutely right. And we ought to do it more and more and more and I think your insight is so correct that ultimately dads are very busy, they're going to read what they want to hear themselves read, right? Again, when the kids are young, of course, whatever, but at a certain point they're going to want to read what interests them and that is absolutely great because the child will unconsciously, if not consciously, will sense "Oh, so this is something interesting to Dad" so that in itself is really neat and also, at a certain point, "Oh, so men kind of think that way. So when he talks to me about reading *Hatchet* that's kind of how guys think" and it's really good, it's good, obviously for boys to understand how men think because they're becoming men and to try to acquire all of that wisdom, they can, and it's great for girls because they're going to be relating to men so it's great for them to hear what it is that gets the father interested in rather than someone saying, "No, you should only read to your child at [this] age, [this] book." That is not correct.

29:03 Helping Kids Fall In Love with Reading

Sarah: So you had mentioned that it's really important, especially when it comes to our sons to help them find books that interest them, that maybe have pictures or visual stimulation in

them, is there a way that you'd suggest us helping our boys? Here's the thing, I know that some of us have daughters too that are harder to sort of nurture that love of reading and then we have the kids who just love reading, no matter what. But for our listeners who have sons who are particularly reluctant readers or hesitant readers or maybe they just aren't gravitating toward books in their own free time, we've already talked about screens, and of course we know if the screens are an option, actually I bet you'll like this, Dr. Gurian, I talked to Dr. Daniel Willingham – are you familiar with his work at all? He wrote the book called, *Raising Kids Who Read*.

Dr. Gurian: Oh yeah.

Sarah: And he had talked about how books are like watermelon, delicious and sweet and his kids love watermelon and they're quite happy to eat watermelon but if he was to say you can have this slice of watermelon or this ice cream cone or this candy bar they'd probably reach for the ice cream or the candy bar. And he had said if we always have screens on the table as an option our kids are going to choose the screens so there have to be certain times of day where screens are not an option and instead that frees our kids up to choose to eat the watermelon, or to read the books. So if we've already removed the screens as a perpetual option in our home, do you have any other tactics for helping our kids fall in love with reading, particularly our boys who may be resistant to that?

Dr. Gurian: The two things, the other thing that might get in their way, that they're very physical, that they really don't want to sit. So a strategy I like for that, let's say they're very sports oriented, find mom, dad, whoever's organizing this, find the thing that they're most interested in, or the two or



three things they're most interested in and just say to them, "OK, so we're going to have an hour of reading time, that's part of our family, that's what we're going to do, so go ahead and pick a book or something, even a thick magazine, something that involves [this field]." So I have to make something up, so I'll say (let's say they're into football seeing as it's football season), "Then here, go find it." If he says "Oh, I can't find it," then you're already prepared, "Oh well, actually I've got one right here."

Sarah: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Gurian: And let's say it's the biography of the football player, Larry Fitzgerald...

Sarah: OK.

Dr. Gurian: Or, since we're in the northwest, it would be one of our Seahawks players, Phil [**]

Sarah: Yeah.

Dr. Gurian: So, "Oh, I've got it right here," and so then, there it is. And now this son is saying ... Oh, by the way, I'm bracketing out that he has a reading disorder. If he has a reading disorder or a learning disorder, then we've got to remember that the best advice will come from the person working with us, helping him with that this disorder, it won't come from me or you. That's got to be about connecting him with someone who will help him with that disorder. But if he doesn't have a learning disorder or reading disorder then his resistance we may have to break down over a month or two and just keep pummeling him with this. "OK, this is our hour (or half hour) reading time. Got you a biography on what you enjoy. This is what you've got to do. This is part of our family." And then, a few weeks later or a month later, we will probably start seeing change because he'll be like, "Oh well,

pretty interesting. And then I get to talk to my Dad or my friends or my Mom about this. That's pretty fun, I've got something to talk about that I enjoy." And then it gets integrated in. But it could take a few weeks or a month or two.

Sarah: So one of the strategies I've used in my own home to spur my kids on to read when they maybe haven't been quite as interested in reading on their own is I'll make them a reading shelf, and this will be part of our homeschool, although if you don't homeschool you could certainly do this as well. What I would do is I would put six to eight books on a shelf that I'm pretty sure that child would be interested in and I'll tell my child, "You have to read these by the end of the year," or maybe "Everyday during our quiet reading time you're just going to read from one of these books" and then let them choose whatever book they want from that shelf. So it's sort of like a smaller selection of options but I've actually curated them according to my kid's interest to make it very likely that they'll be good, delightful reading experiences. So I could see this working really well with what you're saying. If you have a sports oriented son filling a shelf with five or seven books that are sports related biographies or fiction that's based on sports and letting your child choose from there, then they get the option of not being assigned a particular book by mom but getting to the freedom of being able to read from there but you've actually taken a little time to make sure that those are probably going to be enjoyable reading experiences.

Dr. Gurian: Absolutely. Absolutely a great bid and choice, as we all know, giving choices is great when we can do it.



34:15 Saving Our Sons

Sarah: We're almost out of time but I don't want to go without asking you about your newest book. Can you tell us a little bit about *Saving Our Sons*?

Dr. Gurian: So, *Saving Our Sons* just came out right now in 2017 and there are two big reasons why I wanted to write it; one was that I had not written a book on raising boys in about 10 years and so the research has gotten even more robust, there's just so much incredible stuff that we learn even 10 years later about male brain, about neuroscience, and then the practical strategies, because not just me but our growing Institute Team we have 150 trainers so we're always honing these strategies that we're teaching people. So that was one reason, capture it all up, get all the research and all this new stuff in there so that people could have it now in a way that's fresh and real for them in 2017 and that includes dealing with technology stuff because even in 10 years technology has changed a lot and become, actually, not only more helpful to boys and girls but it's become more dangerous so I wanted to give all the newest research, 2017 research, on technology. Then the second reason I wrote it was because in 30 years of advocating for both boys and girls, I've written books on both, but particularly now for boys, 30 years of advocating for boys, in communities I've discovered as people have, I think, sensed unconsciously that it's very difficult to advocate for boys that we've got some politics in the way and we're seeing boys fail constantly and the government is not helping us. I've spoken for Congress and given information to the White House for the United Nations. Everyone's trying their best but the model they work out of is about a 50 year old model and it does not really understand the boys

of today and the amount of depression and anxiety and violence and just listlessness, aimlessness, loneliness, guys who are not being able to get jobs at 25, 30, 35. So, I have, the book's mainly a parenting book obviously, and I think very helpful to parents, but I do have a chapter in there where I try to inspire everyone now in 2017 to battle in their neighborhoods for boys and I give them the practical strategies that we've found working in neighborhoods, in the grassroots, and then say, "OK, try this, because this we have found works in the grassroots. It may not work at the highest levels of government (they're still stuck) but grassroots can change and here's how we have seen the grassroots changed." So that's the second reason that I wrote *Saving Our Sons*.

Sarah: That's fantastic. Especially, because our listeners to this podcast, we're all very, very interested, of course, in our own boys and that's as grassroots as it gets, right? Right in our own homes and seeing what we can do for our own kids. I appreciate this so much. We're going to have links to so many of your books in the Show Notes. Listeners, make sure you head to ReadAloudRevival.com and look for this episode so you don't miss them. And Dr. Gurian, I'm going to have to have you back, I think, there's more questions I want to ask you but we'll save them for another time. I so appreciate the time you've shared with me today. Thank you so much for carving out some time for us.

Dr. Gurian: Oh thank you. Thanks for what you're doing and I'll see you soon.

37:35 Let The Kids Speak

Now, it's time for Let the Kids Speak. This is my favorite part of the podcast where kids tell us



about their favorite stories that have been read aloud to them.

Child1: [Mom: what's your name?] Evie. [Mom: how old are you?] 2. [Mom: where are you from?] From Arkansas. [Mom: from Arkansas. What's your favorite book?] *Peter Rabbit*. [Mom: what do you like about it?] Mommy reads it. [Mom: what's your favorite part?] He gets the radish. [Mom: when he eats the radishes?] Yes.

Child2: Hi, my name is Mateo. I'm 9 years old and I live in San Antonio, Texas, and my favorite book is *Little Wilder* by Raymond Arroyo. My favorite part is when they are in the second chamber where Simon puts his hands on his face and leaves hand marks because he gets scorched.

Child3: Hi, my name is Lucas and my favorite book is *Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi. My favorite part is when Pinocchio finds his father, the next day he becomes a real boy. I am from San Antonio, Texas.

Child4: Hi, my name is Sophia. I live in San Antonio, Texas and I'm 13 years old. My favorite book is *Waking Rose* by Regina Doman. My favorite part is when Rose and her college puts on the Shakespeare play of King Lear.

Child5: Hello, my name is Claire and I'm Texas, Fort Worth, and my favorite book is *By the Great Horn Spoon!* because the captain on the ship says, "Hold your hats, Ladies and Gentleman." I like that part because it's really funny.

Child6: Hello, my name is Bridgette and I'm from Fort Worth, Texas. My favorite book is *The Penderwicks* and my favorite character is Batty because she understands dog language.

Child7: Hello, my name is Aniston. I'm from Indiana. I'm 5 years old and my favorite book is

The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe and I like about it because I like when Aslan comes back and breathes on the statue and it becomes like the animal thingy again instead of a statue anymore because the White Witch turned it into statue from *Chronicles of Narnia*.

Child8: [Mom: what's your name?] Eden. [Mom: how old are you?] 3. [Mom: and where are you from?] Indiana. [Mom: Indiana. And what is your favorite book?] *Little Red Riding Hood*. [Mom: *Little Red Riding Hood* from Grimm's Fairy Tales?] Yeah. [Mom: why?] Because I like it and I love you.

Child9: My name's Jenna, I'm 6 years old. I live in Colorado and my favorite book is *Magic Tree House, Night of the Ninjas* and it's good because it's about ninjas.

Child10: Hi, my name is Ella and I'm 6 years old. My favorite books are the *Magic Tree House series*. It's about these two kids named Jack and Annie and they go on wonderful adventures.

Sarah: Thank you kids. I love those messages. I always love to hear the books that you are enjoying. Well, that's a wrap on episode 82. Remember, if you'd like the transcript or to get your hands on some of Dr. Gurian's books you can do that by going to the Show Notes at ReadAloudRevival.com/82. This is the end of Season 11 of the Read-Aloud Revival. We have an awesome Season 12 planned for you. It's getting started in January so we're taking a little break for the Christmas holidays and then we'll be back in the New Year with some amazing episodes. We've been planning these for a while and I'm excited about them, so you don't want to miss out on those. Don't forget, if you haven't grabbed our Gift Guide we have 20 great gift ideas for young readers, you can grab those at

ReadAloudRevival.com/80 because we did the mini episode on those, episode 80. So, after you're done listening to this episode, scroll up in your podcast app and listen to that episode if you missed it, or go to ReadAloudRevival.com/80 and go right to the Gift Guide itself. 2018's going to be an awesome year here at Read-Aloud Revival. We want to make 2018 the best year you've ever had when it comes to making meaningful and lasting connections with your kids and we are all in on helping you do that. So, thank you so much for listening. Remember to sign up for the email list, if you haven't done it, that's at ReadAloudRevival.com, just pop your email in on the page there because that's where you get the first word when a new podcast drops, when we have a great new booklist, or something else that will help you make those wonderful connections with your kids through books. We'll be back soon. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas holiday and I hope your holidays are a time where you can make some meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books. See you soon.