

## Harvard Mastery Of Stress Study Proves

### Mom's and Dad's Love Makes All The Difference

The **HARVARD MASTERY OF STRESS STUDY** was begun in the early 1950s with 126 healthy male Harvard undergraduate students ( approximately **20 years old**). It was intended as a search for factors in a person's life that would help him deal with stress. It became a forty year search for long-term predictors of health.

Forty years later, in 1993, Dr. Linda Russek and Dr. Gary E. Schwartz, decided to focus upon 28 questions in the original study, that must have seemed irrelevant to the medical mind in the 1950s. The young men had been asked to rate their own perception as to how much they had been loved and cared for by their parents while growing up. The criteria given included such factors as the men's perception of **how loving, fair, just, and kind** the parents had been to them during their childhood and adolescence.

Drs. Russek and Schwartz wondered if these simple ratings of **perceived parental love** recorded in the early 1950s might have served as **predictors of the men's health** forty years later in 1993.

It took a lot of computer work. The information those young men provided in the early 1950s was compared to their then current, 1993 condition of health.

The men fell into three distinct groups:

1. Of those men in the 1950s who rated **both parents high** in love and caring,

**25%**, by 1993, had been diagnosed with some form of serious illness. The diseases included cancer, heart problems, high blood pressure, arthritis, and asthma.

2. Of those who rated one parent **high** in love and caring and one parent **low**,

**50%**, by 1993, had been diagnosed with some form of serious illness.

3. Of those who rated both parents **low** in terms of love and caring,

**87%**, by 1993, had been diagnosed with some form of serious illness.

The researchers found that these patterns of health were independent of family and genetic history of disease, independent of the death and divorce history of parents, and independent of the tobacco or alcohol history of the men themselves. None of these risk factors could explain the findings obtained.

In short, the study showed **the most accurate predictor of future health** was the **perception** these young men had of their parent's love and caring. Further, it turns out that those men who rated their parent high in love and caring proved also to be:

1. **More open** to receiving love, and
2. **More capable** of communicating love to others.

It would appear that **"Mom and Dad's love and caring makes all the difference."** And, **where is missing, a little help is needed.**