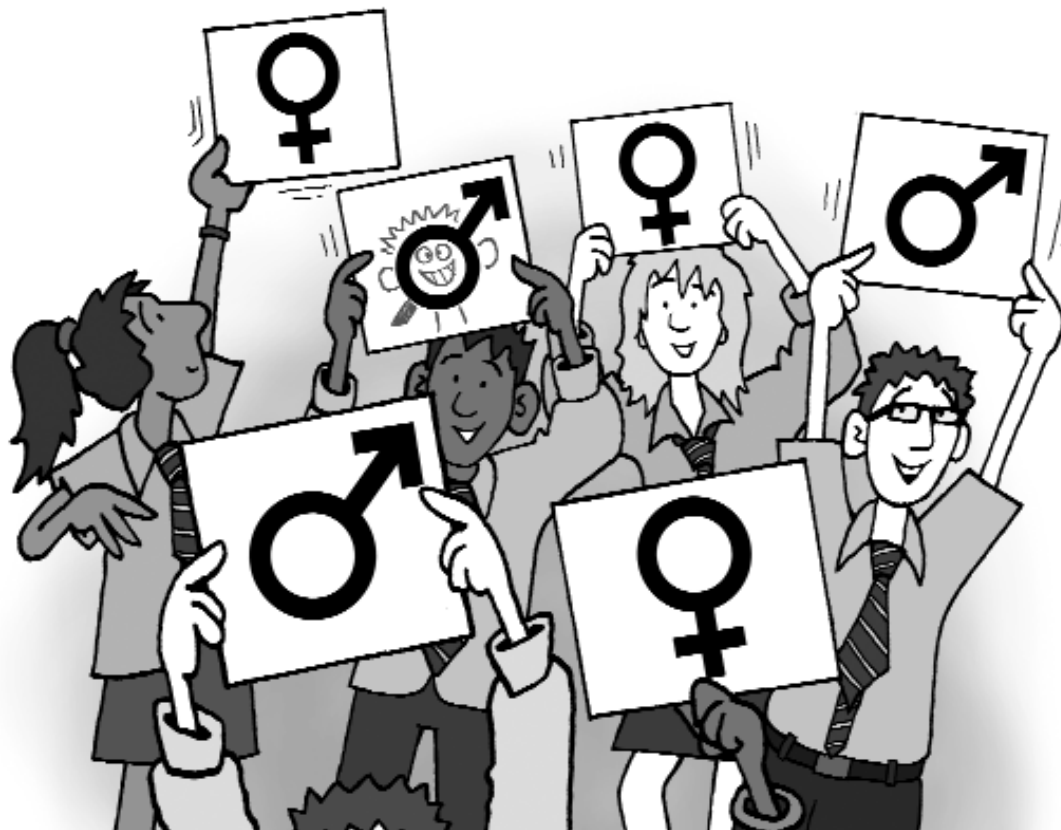


# **BOYS, GIRLS & LEARNING**

## **Pocketbook**









**By Ian Smith**

Cartoons:  
Phil Hailstone

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## Foreword

Most of the literature over the past ten years and more has focused on 'the problem with boys'. The papers have been full of stories about boys falling behind girls in academic achievement, even in so called boy-friendly subjects.

The fact that boys are slower to develop impulse control than girls, find sitting still difficult, and tend to develop language skills later than girls can make them more vulnerable than girls. It has led to a plethora of books about bringing the best out of boys and even to suggestions that boys should start school later than girls.

But focusing on boys as being a problem does not help boys. And it can take the attention away from girls, whose problems in school can be less obvious.

That's why this book focuses on using the same strategies in different ways to motivate boys and girls.



**Gender,  
Motivation  
and Learning**



**Connecting  
with Boys  
and Girls**



**Being in  
Control for  
Boys and Girls**



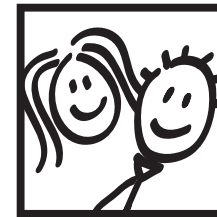
**Involving Boys  
and Girls in  
their Learning**



**Giving Boys and  
Girls Effective  
Feedback**



**Separate or  
Together?**

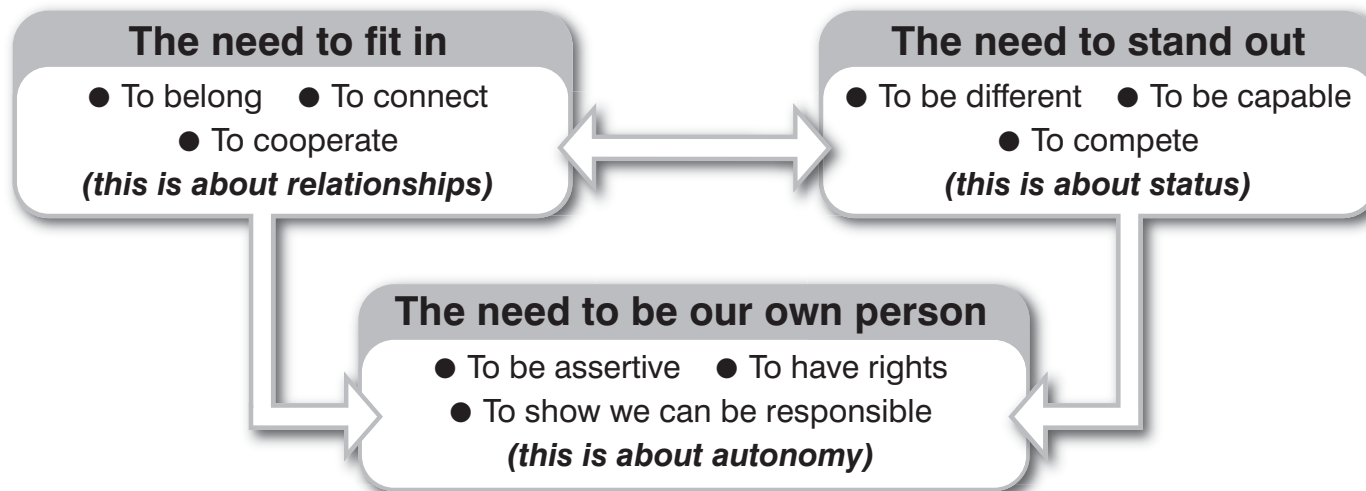


# **Gender, Motivation and Learning**

## Boys and girls have same basic needs



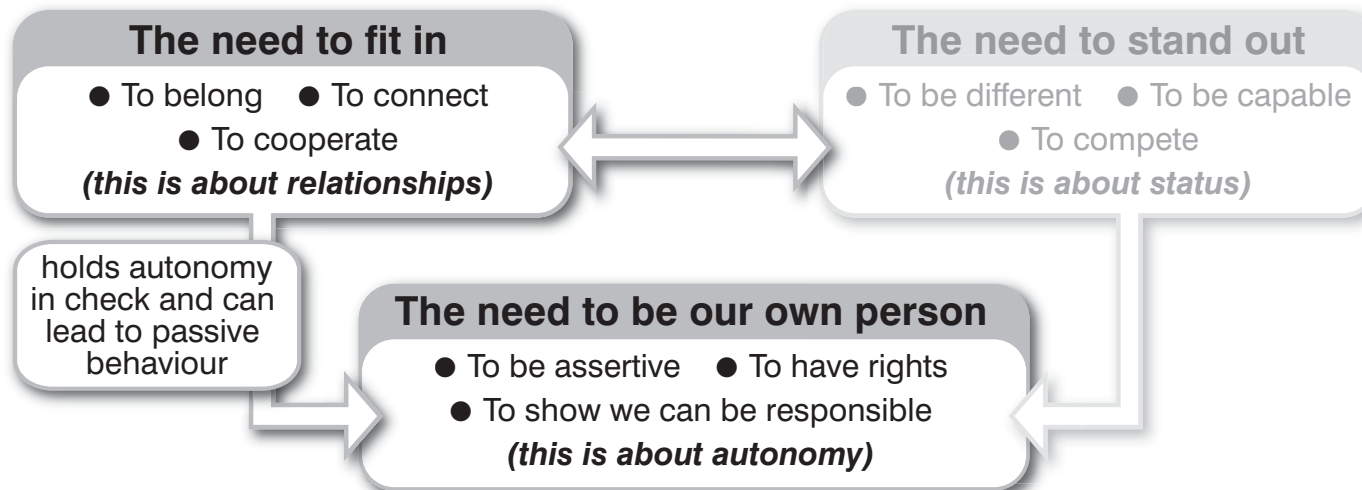
All of us – girls and boys, men and women – have the same basic psychological needs. Our motivation comes from our desire to have these needs met. Over the centuries we have become clearer about what these needs are. We now recognise that human beings have three separate, but inter-connected needs.



# Girls tend to have a stronger need than boys to belong



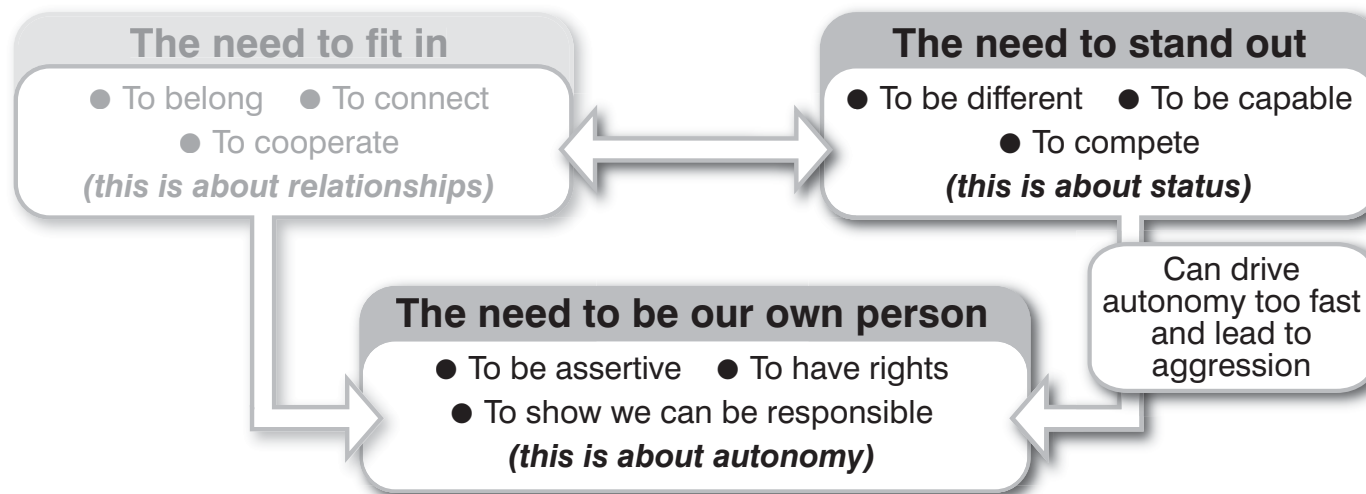
In our society girls have been socialised **to put their need to fit in before their need to stand out**. This can reinforce stereotypical views and hold girls' autonomy in check, leading to girls putting other people's needs before their own and to being passive, pleasing others at their own expense.



# Boys tend to have a stronger need than girls to stand out



In our society boys have been socialised to **put their need to stand out before their need to fit in**. This can reinforce stereotypical views and drive boys to seek autonomy too fast and lead to aggressive and even violent behaviour.



# Being your own person



All young people have a strong need to be their own person. This is what psychologists call autonomy and it is about socialisation. It is about feeling able to fit in and stand out. It is not about independence. It is not about being your own person at the expense of others. It is about having rights and responsibilities, about being trusted and trustworthy. It is about asserting your rights and respecting the rights of others. It is essential in a democratic society.

This need for autonomy applies equally strongly to boys and girls. Where it is not met it can lead to a range of negative reactions: apathy, acquiescence or anger. These not only get in the way of learning but undermine relationships.

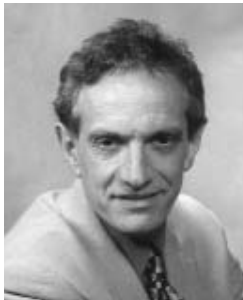
## The need to be our own person

- To be assertive
  - To have rights
  - To show we can be responsible
- (this is about autonomy)*



## About the author

### Ian Smith



Ian is one of Scotland's foremost educators. He founded Learning Unlimited, which was dubbed '*Scotland's most successful teacher development agency*' by the Times Educational Supplement, Scotland and was taken over recently by Cambridge Education.

Ian has worked in Scottish education for almost 35 years as a secondary teacher and in various posts at national level. He has written a range of publications for teachers on various aspects of motivation, assessment and learning which are now available through Cambridge Education. His *Assessment & Learning Pocketbook* is available from [www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk](http://www.teacherspocketbooks.co.uk)

Best known for running interactive seminars and workshops with large groups of teachers on learning and teaching methodologies, Ian has worked with over 45,000 of Scotland's teachers face-to-face and run workshops in the United States, China and Russia. He can be contacted at [www.learningunlimited.co.uk](http://www.learningunlimited.co.uk)