CAROL GILLIGAN INTERVIEW
MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Carol Gilligan
Psychologist
6/9/2011
Interviewed by Betsy West
Total Running Time: 1 hour, 12 minutes and 45 seconds

START TC: 00:00:00:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:
Makers: Women Who Make America
Kunhardt Film Foundation

ON SCREEN TEXT:
Carol Gilligan
Psychologist

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BETSY WEST:
Can you just tell me a little about your family, your upbringing, what your early years were like?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

I grew up in New York first of all. I grew up on the Upper West Side of New York. My parents were first-generation Americans. Their parents had been immigrants from Europe at the end of the 19th century. My mother's father had started out- At the age of 16, his village in Russia sent him to the US to avoid conscription into the army.

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And he sold shoelaces on the street in the Bowery, and then he ended up with a furniture store, and he and my grandmother had six children and so forth. And I just have to tell you, when I was invited to the White House when Clinton was president, and I walked through the gate, and I felt my grandparents behind me. My father's parents were Hungarian who worked in the sweatshops. My mother's father who had started his peddling.

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And I just got chills. I thought, that's amazing, if they could see that in two generations, here, I was, you know, invited to the White house. I come from a family that lived the quintessential American story. My father went to college on a New York State Regents scholarship, and then he went to law school at night. And so for my parents, this was—'cause they are now no longer living—this was the land of opportunity.

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I mean, this was an amazing- they were part of that story. So I grew up on the Upper West Side. I was an only child. Born after the Depression, so later in my

parents' life and marriage, and I think the other thing that's significant is I grew up during the Holocaust. And members of my father's family who were in, still in Hungary, I mean they didn't survive, but my parents were very active in helping refugees from Europe.

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My father took a refugee from Poland into his law firm, and my mother helped refugees from Vienna set up bakery shops on the Upper West Side. So that part of history was very much part of my childhood. And, what else can I tell you? I start my new book with a story about my childhood, that was a story I had heard over, my mother would tell it when I was growing up. And what I hadn't seen until recently, was that that was a story that was very connected with the work I did so many years later,-

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-without any sense of why these issues of voice and resistance were so compelling to me.

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BETSY WEST:
Yeah, so tell me the story.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
So, well, I was 2 and a half, and my mother who was a very forward looking woman interested in the latest developments and invested in raising her

child, took me to Clara Thompson, the psychoanalyst, Summer Institute at- that was held at Vassar College to… for parents of young children to learn about child development. And the, the whole thing was organized with the best of intentions, but it was located here in American society and it was organized like a *kibbutz*,-

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-in the sense that the parents lived in one dormitory and the children lived in another. So I remember loving the nursery school and my teacher, I actually remember her name which is extraordinary.

ON SCREEN TEXT:
Carol Gilligan With Her Mother

CAROL GILLIGAN:
But when it came to bed time I wanted my mother, not some *metapelet* as you would say in a *kibbutz*, to put me to sleep. So, I was a child who cried and cried, and I learned that if you cry long enough and loud enough,-

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-like Joshua with his trumpet at Jericho, walls can come tumbling down. So there- an exception. My mother was summoned, and she was allowed to come every night to put me to sleep, and sing me to sleep, which is what she always did. So what I learned at a very young age, although I don't know what level I processed this into, was the power of voice and the power of resistance.

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I mean instead of- My mother, a lot of her friends, also took their children you know to Vassar, to that institute, and I was the one who protested, so it struck me- And I didn't see this, honestly, until a couple of years ago. I thought, "Oh, these themes of voice and resistance, the importance of having a voice, of having one's voice listened to, and resisting a kind of resignation to something that made no sense—those things were part of my early childhood."

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BETSY WEST:
What about- You've written so much about pre-adolescent girls, what about yourself as a young girl? What were you like? Do you remember?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Oh, I do. I do remember. And you know, that was the work that actually, it followed *In A Different Voice* and because the one girl in *In A Different Voice*, 11 year old Amy, her voice was so arresting. It had been to me, obviously, because I wrote about her, but to many women readers too. Because it was a voice that made a lot of sense that we knew, and yet had learned to dismiss or discount or disparage. And when I started this work on girls development,-

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ON SCREEN TEXT:
Carol Gilligan As A Child

CAROL GILLIGAN:
-I was following girls from age 6 to 17. And I remember just viscerally, it was like a pristine experience. Proust dips the madeleine in tea, and he, he, all of a sudden, remembers a whole part of his childhood. Well, when I was working with girls, I organized a writing outing and theater club for girls, because I wanted them to, I wanted to in a sense, encourage their voices when they were very much out in the world.

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And go to the world with them, and either do writing and theater exercises. So I remember we went to the beach one day at Plum Island. It's an island off, off Boston's north shore. And the girls, they were 11 and they started running, and without thinking I found myself running in a way I hadn't- that I remember that, "Oh, that's how I used to move so freely in my body."

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With no- Just like running, like the wind. And then there was a time we were doing theater exercises, we were working indoors. And the girls they were, they didn't second-think everything they were going to say. Their voices sort of came out of their bodies like a fountain, and I remember suddenly hearing my voice and I thought, "Wait a minute, who's voice is that?"

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I know this voice. That's my voice. But it's not a voice I have heard for a long time in myself. And then I- That's when I realized that, what I was discovering girls was both familiar and surprising to me. It was a voice I knew, and yet a voice I hadn't remembered, and then I started reading novels written by women, kind of coming of age novels.

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Toni Morrison, *In This Country*, now Jamaica Kincaid. *Member of The Wedding. To Kill a Mockingbird*. And then across cultures, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* set in Rhodesia, which is before it became whatever, Zimbabwe, I guess. And I mean, across cultures, and then Euripides play about Iphigenia, and I realized that voice, that voice has been heard by artists for centuries.

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But it wasn't being described by psychologists. So I can remember- Also, why I became such a lover of novels, why I was a reader of literature, I was finding in fiction. I'll give you a good example. *Jane Eyre*. At the beginning of Charlotte Bronte's novel, these novels written by women, they start all the time not at birth, but with a 9, 10 or 11 year old girl. So, Jane is 10 at the beginning of the novel.

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And her Aunt Reed calls her a liar, and she says to her Aunt Reed, "If I were a liar I would say that I love you, when I do not." And it's like that's the voice. And you can just, just listening to that, you know why everybody says, "Shh, don't say that. You shouldn't say it. Tell her you love her." And so you start to

hear girls saying, "I love you," and of course, underneath there's the voice of how they really feel.

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BETSY WEST:
So when you say the voice, you mean the voice of truth. A true voice…

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
A voice that's connected to your thoughts and feelings, a voice that's not disassociated from what you really think and feel. For example, a woman said to me one day, I asked her one of these hypothetical moral dilemmas that psychologists use. You know, "Should a man steal a drug, da, da, da." She looked at me, and maybe it was something about me, or something about that day, or the connection between us, because she says, "Would you like to know what I think or would like to know what I really think?"

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I was interested in the voice of "what I really think" and I was fascinated by the sense of, that there were two voices. The voice of what I really think and the voice of what I think. And I was fascinated where- How did this happen? How did we, or at least many women, learn to think in a way that differed from how we really thought? And then, I think *In A Different Voice* came right into that opening for women.

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And it was like, “Oh, that’s what I’ve always really thought. You mean you can say that? Because what I really thought was also quote, ‘wrong or crazy or bad or stupid.’ So I learned how I was supposed to see things and what I was supposed to say. “

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BETSY WEST:
Going back a little bit to your childhood, I’m wondering- I mean, it sounds like you were doted on in some ways. Only child with older parents and, you know-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Oh absolutely, I mean and not only that, but I mean you can add, it's like adding another. My father’s father lived with us for most of my childhood because my father’s mother had died shortly after I was born. So I was doted on not only by two loving parents, but also by a third, my grandfather, who as my father said late in life, “He couldn’t take his eyes off you.” So I grew up in that kind of a very loving home, but also a house that encouraged me-

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For example, when I told you the story about myself at 2, my mother liked it that I resisted, because later she thought that experiment made no sense. And she had been sort of cowed into thinking, “Well, they must know, they’re

psychoanalysts." But she loved that spirit in me. It sort of- she worried about it a little, but she always encouraged it.

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BETSY WEST:
And what about their ideas about what girls should be doing in life, and the world…

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
My father's view was, you as a human being had an obligation to sort of utilize your talents to the fullest and presume, for the good of society too. I mean, my parents were very much of that tradition of—and maybe too because they felt they had had so much opportunity—that you need to use your abilities to benefit other people in the world at large. I was nothing but encouraged by them.

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BETSY WEST:
What about in the rest of the world when you were a kid? Did you ever feel like, "Oh gee, wish I were a boy here," or "I'm being treated differently," or did you have that sense at all?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

You know, it's funny, I didn't. I was very athletic as a girl, and so… But this was when I was a teenager. I went to music camp one summer because I also was into music and dance. And I remember there was a baseball team, and I was allowed to play on the boy's team so I was like the secret weapon on the boy's team. I would come up to bat and presumably just discombobulate the other boys on the other side.

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Here's another thing which is my mother's friends, many of whom had 1 or 2 children late. She was of the generation that I think we don't usually talk about. I mean, I was born in the mid 1930s and so, when we would go on vacation in the summer because I was an only child, my parents would always go with somebody else who had children so I would have someone to play with. And my mother's friends, as it happened, had boys, so I grew up playing with boys. I learned how to fish and blaze trails, and my life wasn't divided into sort of girls and boys.

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ON SCREEN TEXT:

Carol Gilligan

1940s

CAROL GILLIGAN:

And I do remember, I mean personally, just when I hit adolescence, having arguments with my mother who suddenly would- wanted to tell me, "Look, there's a whole new set of rules," that have just gone into place. And as a girl, I remember, I used to, in the summer, sleep in the same room with my friend Peter who had a house in the Adirondacks, the one I went fishing with and everything.

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And then one year my mother said, "No you can't." And Peter and I looked at her and we thought, "Why can't we? We've always slept in the same room." And she said, "You'll understand when you get older." So then we set up walkie talkies between our rooms. So I do remember something coming in, and then having a lot of arguments with my mother. I remember saying explicitly to her, "I don't want to play a game with boys," 'cause they were always my friends. And I always had very close girl friends too. So I don't think my world was divided in that way.

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BETSY WEST:

Tell me about what kind of student you were, and was there a time when you thought, "Hey, I might become a scholar. I might really…"

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

You know, that's really an interesting question. I was always a good student. And I once said to my youngest son when he was in high school, and had a sort of, I would say, mixed relationship with school. If he liked the teacher, he would do well, otherwise- And I said to him, I said, "I'm going to tell you something. You would be amazed how much freedom you can buy yourself by getting straight A's." I said, "Everybody gets off your back."

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And years later, he came to me and he said, "You're right." And I was always a very good student. School was not hard for me, but when I really—and I had some wonderful teachers all along the way—but when I really got invested in school was when I went to Swarthmore, and I just experienced a kind of education and a kind of teaching that, it really absolutely changed my life.

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Now the interesting thing is the question of, "What did I want to do when I grew up," was not, somehow, a question I thought about a lot. And somebody recently said to me I had a sort of empirical attitude of "I'll see and I'll see what happens" and, because I remember I applied after college for a fellowship to go to England and study Shakespeare and fellowships to study political psychology in this country, and my attitude was I'll see what happens.

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I almost got the Marshall Scholarship, I would have gone to England. And I got the Woodrow Wilson, so I went to Harvard. And that was how I did that, but what I would have said if you said what did I want to be—and this I think

has to do with being an only child—is I would have said to you, I want- when I grow up, I want to be a mother.

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BETSY WEST:
So let's talk about the journey that led you to write *In A Different Voice*. How did you get launched on this?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Actually it's interesting because that wasn't my intention. And I had always been a good writer in the sense, but I didn't write, I wrote for school. I won a prize for a book review contest in Hebrew school once and I wrote- I like to write. But I didn't think of myself as really a writer. And so I had- When I finished graduate school in psychology,-

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-I had been very put off by the field for reasons that, now in retrospect I can understand, but the voice of psychology just didn't ring true to me. And since I had grown up—I mean not grown up—but I had been an English major in college, so my view of the human condition was shaped by Shakespeare and Tolstoy and Faulkner and Virginia Woolf and Joyce.

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And so to me, these very kind of "father was distant, mother was cold" or something like that, it's like, "What?" There's this, "Who were these people?"

So when I finished my graduate degree, by then I was married and I had two children. When I was writing my dissertation, I became involved in the civil rights movement and I was involved in registering voters.

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And it's so funny to tell one's life story backwards, because you think—and I was going to write about voice, because I had a two year old and we were living in Cleveland. Jim, my husband, was going to med school. And I would go with my two year old in the summer—it must have been '62—through the Hough area, which was the African American community of Cleveland, knocking on people's doors and because I had a child in a stroller, people said come into their kitchens. It was the back screen door.

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So I would sit with them and talk about the importance of having a voice, meaning: having a vote. And so that's what I was doing, and then I joined a performing modern dance company in that African American community. It was called "Interracial" at the time. So when I go back to Harvard, 'cause Jim is doing his residency there, now I have 3 children. And I'm looking for part-time teaching.

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And I am very fortunate because I am offered a job with Erik Erikson to teach, and then with Lawrence Kohlberg, and their work is very interesting to me, both of them. But I'm not interested in an academic career. It's just not what I'm looking for. I have a part-time teaching job which earns a little money, because my husband is a resident and was an intern, and I have 3 little

children. So the only- I start getting interested in a question that comes out of my literary background which is,-

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-it's one thing to ask people in some abstract sense about their identity or how they would solve moral problems, it's another thing if you have to live with the- if you have to make a choice and live with the consequences. And I noticed—and this is what you were referring to about men—that the men in my section that I was leading of Larry Kohlberg's course would be outspoken about the, the injustice of the Vietnam Wars, of course, on moral and political choice.

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These were preppy guys and, what was this, late 60s, early 70s, so you can imagine, the range, all of them. And then we start talking about the draft and the ethics of draft resistance, they suddenly became silent, and I thought, "What's going on here?" That was a decision they would actually face when they were seniors. And I realized that when it came to the draft, they knew, according to-

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-you're supposed to make moral decisions on the grounds of eternal moral principles, Kantian imperatives, the Golden Rule and so forth. But their concerns about whether or not they were going to resist the draft or even whether they thought they should, were also involved with: how would it affect their families, how would it affect relationships that they were invested in, that they had feelings about. And these young guys knew that if they

talked about emotions and relationships, they would sound like women and be scored at stage 3, instead of 5 or 6.

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And so, they had enough integrity to basically say nothing. So I thought, "Ah," I'm interested now in interviewing people who are not talking about these things in the abstract, but talking about choices that they're making and they're going to live with the consequences. So, I was going to interview these guys when they were seniors and facing the draft. And President Nixon ends the draft.

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See, I would never have done this if I was trying to get tenured or because it's too risky. And anyway, I had my PhD and I wasn't interested in, I thought, teaching. So, then the same year the supreme court legalizes abortions in Roe v. Wade. So, another decision where people come to a public place, and have to decide, which road am I going to take? 'Cause you can't both resist the draft and be in the- It's like, have a baby and have the abortion.

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So I found myself listening to women. And I remember my friend Dora came over one afternoon, and I said to her, "Dora, I understand why psychologists—meaning Freud and Erikson and Piaget and Kohlberg, these were the people whose work I was teaching—why there have so much trouble understanding women, 'cause women are framing the problem differently." Not all women, not all the time, but I was hearing how women were starting from a premise that peoples' lives are connected.

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Instead of separate, which was the premise of identity in moral theory. And probably the crucial thing is she said to me, "That's interesting, you should write about it." Otherwise I would have thought, "Who's interested in that?" So I sat at my kitchen table. I was staying home with my kids this year 'cause we moved from one suburb of Boston to another. And I put something, a piece of paper in my typewriter, and it's the first thing I wrote that was not for school, and it was called *In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and Morality.*

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And then it was- When I wrote the book, it was called *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, because it was about the dissonance between the voices of psychological theory and the voices of women. And the whole book, it was about if-

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Then I discovered that all these theorists, Freud, Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, and all their followers and so forth, were proceeding on the assumption that man is the measure of human, so they were studying boys and men, or imagining boys and men and writing about humans. So men were human and women were different, and then the question was, were women better or worse? Which was a sort of ridiculous question, 'cause the whole discussion struck me as ridiculous.

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So I said, what happens if you bring women's voices into the human conversation? And *In a Different Voice,* the answer is the voice of the conversation changes, meaning it changes the voice, it changes the resonances, it changes the ways of hearing humans, men and women, and it also changes what men and women will say.

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So it was the inclusion of women in what had been called the human conversation, which was a conversation in which women were only marginally present if at all, that changed the voice of the conversation. That was the argument of my book. Now at that point, I get absolutely captivated by research. I even discovered something I had no idea- I had been teaching this work without really seeing the omission of women, only knowing that I had to-

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If I wanted to teach, I was teaching human development, and I was teaching about mothers and young children, and I knew that I had to memorize what Piaget said or Freud said or Erikson, because if I drew on my own experience I would get it wrong. And the absurdity of this then began to come home to me, and of course it was in the 70s and it was in the height of second wave feminism. And I mean it was an amazing time.

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BETSY WEST:

You had this… radical insight into an entire field of study.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Yeah and because it's morality, it goes across. It's ethics, it's philosophy, it's law, it's psychology, it's literature, it was like offering a new… acoustic.

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BETSY WEST:
And how did your male colleagues react to it?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Well, they had a very interesting reaction. I think that- I personally was, I was not a particularly threatening person to them. I had grown up… with my father and his father, I liked educated, interesting men. Both Erikson and Kohlberg were- I taught with them, they were friends and they thought I was bright. I had done very well in school, I was attractive- I wasn't after anything.

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So Larry Kohlberg wrote this very, very fulsome, generous endorsement of *In A Different Voice*, saying it had helped him understand parts of his data, meaning from women, that he hadn't been able to make sense of. That went across the field of psychology. And… Erikson liked the book until, but here was the point, and I think it's still where the argument is,-

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-it was like, "Yes, this is extremely interesting work and… I can hear what you hear and so forth, and you write well and so forth… but you are not expecting me to change my theory, are you?" And my answer was, "Actually, yes. I have a problem, Erik Eriksson, with saying, 'Here are the 8 stages of the life cycle, and for women it's slightly different.'-

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-It's like, but women are half the population? What do you mean, 'Here is my theory and- but women don't quite fit this theory?'" And for Kohlberg, "I have this theory, but women fall mostly at the third stage, and there's no woman who reaches the highest stage, only…" And so, I used to teach with Larry Kohlberg around that difference, because he thought you could incorporate a care voice as an alternate path through his stages, and I-

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BETSY WEST:
I have to tell you, I don't even understand what his stages are. I mean, I've seen the moral development about-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
No, no, right-

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BETSY WEST:

-And I'm sorry just to ask you to-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Oh, well, I mean, but the point is not to single out him because they all had their stages. Freud has his stages; there was the oral stage, and then the anal stage and then, what was it, the Oedipal stage. But the Oedipal thing didn't quite fit girls because you were supposed to identify with your same sex parent, and distance yourself from your other sex parent? So the little boy was to identify with his father.

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But it wasn't the same because everyone started out… basically inside their mother. So you couldn't just parallel- There was this road of development and it was- All of them were finding it very hard to put girls on the road. So the question was… And then, would you have to change your description of the path, or the paths, if you started from the realization that men are not a representative sample of humans?

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And white men are certainly not- and you know, it's like, would you have to do something different? But then, it got into, but the good woman is selfless, so she would never ask to have someone change their theory just for her, or people like her, and that was the sticking point. And so, I was friends with Larry Kohlberg till the end of his life, also with Erik Erikson,-

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-and… the issue, and I think it's the central issue of *In a Different Voice*, which is if you say the different voices is women's voices then, you could call the book 'in another voice' or 'in a woman's voice,' which is not what I called it. It's *In a Different Voice*, you're saying that bringing women's voices into the human conversation gives voice to aspects of human experience that previously had not been spoken about or seen. And that changes the paradigm.

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BETSY WEST:
What aspects?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Well particularly that we live in relationship with others. That we are basically, responsive relational beings, and that to lose the- And now it's an amazing time for me, because this evidence is pouring in from neuroscience and from evolutionary anthropology. For example, the neuroscientists find that our brains, our nervous systems are wired to connect thought and emotion, and if we separate thought from emotion, we lose our ability to navigate the human world.

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We can solve mathematical puzzles but we can't think inductively. Now the different voice that was heard as a woman's voice, and was heard as a lesser

voice was a voice that didn't separate reason from emotion 'cause it was quote "too emotional." And then the idea that without a- to talk about the self as separate. Well, we are porous beings.

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We pick up on a kind of visceral level the environment we live in. If you study children, I mean, they read the human world around them. For example, a five year old boy says to his mother, "Mama," he says, "Why do you smile when you're sad?" So he sees her smiling, but he picks up the emotional tone of her sadness.

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So this is, this is how we are composed as humans. So to create a self that is somehow impervious to the, to the what… to the relational climate around. Who doesn't walk into a room and register what's going on with people or, walk into a kitchen at night and know that someone's upset, or that kind of thing.

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Something has happened to that human being to separate them from their humanity. So what had been called development, I began to say, it has some of the characteristics of trauma. And we have naturalized trauma and called it development, and seen basically, I mean- So that raised a whole different set of questions, which then became questions of the next phase of my research.

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BETSY WEST:

Just to skip to this a little bit. You talked a little bit about Amy, tell me about Amy.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

In a Different Voice is a book filled with women's voices. It contrasts women's voices with the voice of psychological theory. And there are two children in the book, only two. I think there are two others who have like a cameo, like a 2 second appearance, like a clip in a film. But the two children who are quoted at length are Amy and Jake. They are 11 year olds and they were part of a study that chose children who…

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I had started interviewing Harvard students, so I decided to do a life cycle study to go back and pick children at like 8 and 11 and 14, who were very bright children and doing well, so it would be conceivable they would end up at college like Harvard or something like that. And Amy and Jake were two sixth-graders. From a school around Boston. And it's interesting because they both had done extremely well.

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Amy went, she ended up- She was interviewed at 11 and then again at 15, as was Jake. Amy went to Stanford. Jake went to Harvard. You could say, we were pretty good at predicting.

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BETSY WEST:
Are you still in touch?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
I have seen them recently, but I didn't continue the study past that point. But they are both, they are fabulous kids, and what I was interested in is, all of psychology gears us to kind of click right into what Jake is saying. We understand him and he's absolutely charming. I mean he's just, he's such a winning child.

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What is he saying, hee asked to describe himself. He says, "I have a good life," and then he says, "and I'm tall for my age." So you have an 11 year old boy. And with Amy it's like she's, she's off the grid. You can't place her responses. They are, on one hand- She makes one of the most extraordinary comments. She is 11.

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She is asked if you ever had to deal with a situation where you have had to make a decision, and you didn't know what you should do. She said, "Yes, I don't know whether I should go to camp this summer or spend the summer at home. And if I go to camp, even if I have a miserable time at camp, I'll never know if it would have been better if I had stayed home." She says, "So you have to choose but you'll never know." Now, I think most adults struggle to come to that understanding of choice.

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Do you know what I mean? And here is this 11 year old saying it. You couldn't place her on psychological scales. I mean it was, it was off the map.

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BETSY WEST:
And it turned out the scales were the problem?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
The question was, was Amy the problem or, that was… and it turns out that the scales were the problem. And so, the reason *In a Different Voice* had such a huge impact is it said, "We're telling false stories about ourselves. We are using false measurement. We are perpetuating a view of ourselves and here I mean, men and women. That is at odds with what, first of all, we know within ourselves to be true about ourselves,-

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-and this false story is perpetuating many of the problems that we face collectively at increasingly, urgently, at this moment in history, which is our, really, inability to take care of our planet, our children, and in general, our health, our…" So, it was like opening a window and seeing the possibility that if we could, within ourselves, we have the seeds of transformation.

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BETSY WEST:
You've described your work as unsettling.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Deeply unsettling. First of all, it was very deeply unsettling for psychologists who- And I mean I could write about this because I knew these people. These were intelligent, educated, sensitive men. Complicated, yes, but so are we all. And I had been teaching this- And the fact that psychologists, 'cause they were by no means alone, there was almost like a kind of public witnessing of, "Oh, yes, when I wrote my article, I didn't include my data on women because I couldn't really make sense of it-

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-and yes, I don't think I even mentioned that in the article. So everything I wrote about achievement or this or this… was based on my data on men. How could we have missed something so obvious?" And I thought it was an incredible demonstration of how culture blinds us to the obvious. So it's a way of seeing that's so pervasive. It's like it goes from one horizon to another. That you can't see what you're not seeing which is right in front of your eyes.

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Like a book that's called *The Psychological World of the Teen-Ager*, with the subtitle "a study of 175 normal adolescent boys," is not a psychological study of the teenager. It's a psychological study of 175 boys. Do you know what I mean? So it's, it was…

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BETSY WEST:
It seems obvious, doesn't it?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Once- Well, that's what my book did. It showed something that- with the most interesting thing that it showed is that this hadn't been seen. And then it was very interesting, because men hadn't seen the omission of women, even though most men were- they had lived with mothers, sisters, you know whatever, or seen that as a problem. And women were not seeing the omission of ourselves.

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We were excusing, like, "Well, it's ok. He was just studying men and doing this, but there really was no problem and it was really fine." And that was the response that really had to be looked at. Why was it fine? And I think even to this day, I think the issue- that these are very, very live issues.

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BETSY WEST:
Tell me about the reception to the book. What did you expected, and what happened?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

Oh, what I expected? It was a book that I wrote completely for myself. I didn't write with any- I wasn't looking for advancement in academia. I was trying to make sense of something that I was in the middle of. And it circulated, at first, like *samizdat*, as a kind of underground thing. I gave it to some friends and students and they would Xerox it because these were in the days before computers and send it to their friends.

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And it had a circulation. One of the students was on the Harvard Ed Review and he said, "Can I take it to the Ed Review?" And I thought, "Sure I don't- Why not?" So he takes it to the Ed Review, and a week later, or two weeks or whatever, I get a letter back saying, "Rejected. We don't know what this is." And that gets my back up, I think, you don't know what this is. I said, I'll add headings. So I add headings and send it back, and this time they accept it.

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Then we have a fight about the style. It's not a social science style. It's not written in a passive voice, "the data show, da, da…" as is well known or something. So I said but it's called *In a Different Voice*, you can't write Faulkner's novels in Hemingway's prose. And I honestly think by then, they were tired of dealing with me. So they say, "Look, okay, we're going to publish it." And it becomes a citation classic. That is one of the most cited articles ever published. Their best selling reprint.

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So then, Harvard Press offers me a book contract, and with minimal advance and so forth, and they publish 3000 copies. And I thought the people- my mother would read it and the people who worked on my corridor, and it never occurred to me- And then I remember the sales rep of the press taking me to lunch about 3 months after the book comes out.

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And we're sitting there waiting for coffee, and he asks the question that's clearly on his mind, "Why is this book selling?" And I realize that people whose voices had been dismissed felt heard. I mean it was… It had come as a revelation to me, to realize that a voice I had learned to kind of hold back or suppress in myself,-

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-because it would sound wishy-washy or not be what was expected, the voice of what I think rather than the voice of what I really, the voice of what I really think, not what I have learned how to think about morality or the self or so forth… and I had reframed that voice and showed it that it had a logic to it and it made sense and it, in fact, as Amy's voice, if you were, in fact, dying of cancer,-

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-you would be less invested in your husband doing something heroic that would then leave you, maybe, with no money, all alone, and everything else, but he'd get a high score on a test of moral development, then figuring out some way that would actually deal with the situation. So that's really- her voice rang, that voice rang true. And then it was over. And the key thing, the

key thing in *In a Different Voice* was in the early 1970s, in the aftermath of Roe v. Wade, in the height of feminism,-

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-more and more women were coming to question the equation of feminine goodness with selflessness, and to hear rendering one's self selfless as morally problematic. Because what it signaled was an abdication of voice and an evasion of responsibility in relationships. And you could see, one could see, I could see the perfect circle.

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If men had separate selves and would just speak for themselves, and women were selfless and were to listen to and basically echo men's voices, you had this perfect circle that was being enforced by morality, because the woman who spoke for herself was a bad woman. And the man who actually listened to others, meaning women, was on a lower stage of moral development. So, it was like shining a very bright light on something that was there but… or looking from an angle that I happened-

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At that moment in history, in the place where I was at that time, to see something, and say, and write about it. And what was amazing to me was to find out the extent to which I was not alone. And that was an amazing experience.

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BETSY WEST:

Talk to me about that. I mean, is it… most scholars don't have the experience of the kind of reception that you got for this book. As you said, it was an amazing… what was it like to have, suddenly be getting all this…

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

Well, what it was like, first of all, is something that I had thought- I mean this was, for many women, a very common experience. It was not just with my book. It was when as women friends, and we women started talking with each other in different ways, so that what I thought of as just my problem, or just my experience, was in fact experiences that resonated with other women's experiences.

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So I had thought, I was alone in having a problem with psychology, and then I- So many women said, "That's just what I thought, but thank you for writing it." And I said, "Well, I was just trying to make sense of it." But I remember at that time, I would hear women students ask a question, and I would hear myself saying to them, "That's a great question, but it's not what we're talking about here."

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And then I had to, started wondering, "Who is this 'we' and what are we talking about?" So, *In a Different Voice* was to change the 'we' and shift the conversation.

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BETSY WEST:
Suddenly, you're being interviewed all over the place, your book is being highlighted on the cover of magazines… Tell me a little bit about the reception of the book as it moved out into popular culture.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
I think, I think you have to go back and recreate that time because in the 1970s, which was really the resurgence of the women's movement, both in terms of… all of the campaigns for women's rights, and for fair pay, and women not having to ask their husbands to get a credit card. And in the academic world, it was suddenly noticing that what had been called history was men's history,-

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-and what was called psychology was men's psychology, et cetera. So, there was this reclamation, it was like the Renaissance almost. Of suddenly discovering women's diaries, women's novels, and then this exploration. Let's fill in this missing stretch of psychological history of women's psychology. So two things.

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One is, what we all used to say to each other at that time, meaning all the women doing that reclamation was, we're all doing pieces of one work. So I didn't feel like I stood out or I was alone. I felt like I was part of a very, very

large, very important process. And the commitment that women's history shouldn't be buried again, that each generational thing.

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At the same time, and here I mean, I have a background of being in the civil rights movement. I would say radical social action, of really being invested in social change. Toward democracy, toward justice, toward a careful, not a careless society. And when I was teaching as a young instructor at the University of Chicago, very part-time, my first teaching job, and grades began to be used as a basis of deciding who would go to Vietnam.

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I was among, and I think something of a ringleader, in the protests and said, "If grades are going to be used to decide who's drafted and who doesn't get draft, exemptions, we are not turning in our grades." So I was very much- And I had opposed atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, and I was part of the anti-war movement. And this was something that I believed passionately in.

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That we, meaning men and women, were telling false stories about ourselves. I mean false in their representation of who we are as humans, falsely gendered stories. And in that false story, women were ideally said to be without a voice, and we were supposed to maintain relationships by having no voice. Well, that's psychologically incoherent.

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If you have no voice, if you are not present, who is in the relationship? So there was- The work wasn't about me, is the fact, to put it that way.

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BETSY WEST:
I'm just wondering what those media years were like? To have, to be on that kind of a stage, to be a spokesperson for this.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Well, first I'm saying, I was a spokesperson for something I passionately believed in. And I felt I had done this research that had really led to this discovery that a voice that had been called basically undeveloped or deficient was in fact a different voice. And I have this background in literature, I could explicate this voice. Here is the logic of this voice, and actually it makes a lot of sense.

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And, then to discover the psychologists. I mean, this was a methodological error of the hugest proportion. As any first year graduate student knows, men are not a sample of humans, and yet that's what was going on across the field. So I was very gripped in the substance of what I was doing. I also want to say I am a very private person. I am a writer. I mean basically, it's in some ways,-

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-it's like I'm a writer who wandered into psychology and listened. And listened sort of with the ear of the novelist, because I have a good ear for the,

the resonant quote, the thing that stands out, that resonates. Like Amy's voice. I pick Amy's voice out and write about her, or Jake. "Moral dilemmas are like math problems with humans." I hear things and I remember. I listen.

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And, but I also am very protective of that part of myself. And I know, I think I did… I used… my children as a reason why I had to maintain this very private life. So I would go away for the summer when- soon as school went out and we would go, we went to Martha's Vineyard, we went to the beach, and I just went with my kids and lived there. I would say quote, "like an ordinary person."

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But I was much more comfortable there, than in this sort of limelight. Except I so, I felt so strongly about the importance of speaking out. And when I realized that what I had written was encouraging other women to speak and validating other women's perceptions- And also I have been, men were saying to me, "You have explained my marriage. I realized I didn't understand what my wife was saying," or something like that.

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Then I thought, "Ok, I'll go out with this." But I was always afraid of losing something by doing that, by getting into, or finding myself always at stage 1 of the conversation. Whereas to me this had been a huge opening and I wanted to go further, so it was a mixed thing for me. Really a mixed thing.

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BETSY WEST:
In addition to becoming this surprise best seller and putting you on this stage, your work had some concrete results and you took some action based on that work. Can you tell me about that a little bit?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Well, first of all *In A Different Voice* had concrete results because it made it impossible for anyone to study men and write about humans. You could no longer write a book called *The Seasons of a Man's Life,* "stages of adult development," or at least someone was going to say to you, "Hey." So that was the first thing. And then there was, it started a whole discussion about, what do we mean by morality? Is it really just me with my principles, or does it mean, can I do this thing of I'm going to put myself in your shoes,-

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-Or do I really have to learn your language and find out what your shoes feel like to you? Is it an activity of relationship rather than a kind of mind game that I can play? And that started a huge discussion through ethics and so forth.

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BETSY WEST:
And what about, I'm thinking specifically, I'm actually trying to get you to say it, "take your girl's…"

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Ok, now that's where I wanted to go but, where the work had- I think, what's the phrase, where the rubber hit the road… was with the girls' work. And I'll tell you why- and it was the most revelatory work that I did. It was the ten years of research that followed *In A Different Voice* that took place in a range of schools and after school settings with all kinds of girls and involved women as well.

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BETSY WEST:
You were studying young girls.

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
I was filling in a missing part of development. The editor of *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* in 1980, Joseph Adelson, very distinguished psychologist at Michigan, asked a leading feminist scholar, Anne Petersen, to write a chapter for his handbook on female adolescence. Well, by now, I think, "So, what's the rest of the book about?" But anyway, she goes and surveys the literature, comes back and tells him there is not enough material on adolescent girls to warrant even a single chapter.

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And he writes adolescent girls haven't been studied. Now that means psychologists have never observed the process of coming of age through the eyes of girls. So I'm filling in that missing stretch of psychological history. It's the most revelatory research I've ever done because first of all, what strikes me is the hardiness of girls in the middle school years, 6, 7, 8, 9 year old girls. Everybody knows this.

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It's like if you live in New England. It's like hardy mums, the things that resist the frost. The boys are having speech problems, attention problems, learning problems, they can't read, they can't sit still, and the girls are doing just fine. So this strong… what is it, like a frank and fearless voice of girls, were having a discussion. One of these discussions you have with children. Is it ever good to tell a lie?

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An 11 year old from an urban public school says, "My house is wallpapered with lies." And I went to her house to get a permission slip signed and I saw what she was talking about. So you start looking at the world through the eyes of girls and if they think you're going to listen, you start to see what they see. I mean, a wonderful story, I go with a group of 11 year olds to the Boston Fine Arts museum,-

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-and I say to them, "We're going to be investigative reporters. Our assignment is to find out how women appear in this museum." Without missing a beat, Emma says, "Naked." It's like, "Woah." And then, I asked the girls to write a

conversation with one of the women in the museum. And she chooses a headless armless Greek statue, and weaves into this, conventions of polite childhood conversations, "hello," "how are you."

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Her two burning questions to this statute, "are you cold," and "would you like some clothes." This is an 11 year old. The statue's response is, "I have no money." So Emma says, "I know a place where they give away clothes. It's right around the corner," and she ends her conversation with she and the statue leaving the museum. Now, you start with that, and you see these are girls who are not showing signs of depression.

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There is not much eating disorder, I mean there is no- These girls are really doing well, often doing extremely well.

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BETSY WEST:
And then what happened?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
And then what happens is suddenly as they move into adolescence, right on top of that knowing, starts coming the phrase, "I don't know. I don't know. You know? You know?" Who knows what, what can you say, what can you know… and girls start showing signs of depression. Up until then, boys have been

more often depressed than girls. Suddenly, the rate of depression markedly increases among girls, along with eating disorders, ranging from anorexia to obesity, bulimia, and cutting in other forms of destructive behavior.

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And girls' resilience is at heightened risk, like boys were earlier. So I say- most of the field is saying, "Oh, it's hormones." Well, it's not hormones, studies find it has nothing to do with the age of hormones particularly. It's socialization, that implies that girls are passive victims of this… I say, it's initiation.

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ON SCREEN TEXT:
Carol Gilligan With Girl Scouts Troop

CAROL GILLIGAN:
Nobody was talking about initiation, but what I was seeing was the initiation of girls into a culture, into a society, into a world, where the price of being in relationship with others, being loved and accepted by others, doing well in school, being one of those girls who we like to be with, was to silence what one 16 year old called "the voice that stands up for what I believe in."

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And as she said, "The voice that stands up for what I believe in has been buried deep inside me." She says at 16. Buried, not lost. So then I think, "Wow, so here is where the trouble starts." The depression, the self-silencing, the

eating disorders, the problem, the fact that girls who are very good students—because of course, they are always saying what they are supposed to say, they read the human world—but they are not somehow doing that very brilliant original work.

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And I think, here is a moment that you could, for intervention- where you could prevent a lot of trouble, including the consequences of depressed mothers and all sorts of things. So I was like, join girls' healthy resistance, to an initiation that involves a loss of voice and a sacrifice of relationship, meaning real connection of themselves, not only with other people, but with their work.

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So I would find 12 year olds telling me they were writing two papers, the one they wanted to write and the one that got the A. And the one they wanted to write was the brilliant paper. It was the new angle, like on the hero story. And the one that got the A was how the teacher saw the hero story.

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BETSY WEST:
So, as a result of what you've discovered about this-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:

Well, let me just say what I saw, was here is an initiation where human development or healthy psychological development was coming into, was colliding with the replication of a patriarchal society and culture.

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BETSY WEST:
What age are we talking about?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
11, 12, 13 for girls, and to move into the young womanhood where suddenly there's this division made between good girls and bad girls. The girls we want to be with, and the girls, those other girls who are too- it's always 'too.' Too loud, too angry, too something, too much in some sense. And I thought- and that's being marked by signs of psychological distress.

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It's like if you were in the body, the body was coming into an unhealthy environment and was suddenly, you were seeing the signs of sickness. So I said this is happening to girls in adolescence, what's happening to boys between 5 and 7?

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BETSY WEST:

Can we, before we go to the boys, can I get you to the girls… because you were talking so much about… the moral imperative to put your beliefs into action. You actually did do something-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Because what I realized then, what I discovered from my own experience, first of all I saw how, by providing some resonance, some amplification around girls' voices, the voices of the 9, 10, 11 year olds, it's like it woke up a voice in women. I started a project called "women teaching girls, girls teaching women," and where were women in relationship to girls. As girls were looking at women directly, and saying, "Do you know?"

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I mean, "If I say what I know, do you notice too?" I mean, there's a wonderful example—Anne Frank—it's a passage she edits out of her diary. She asks her mother, she is exploring her body, "What is that stub of a thing for?" And the mother says, "I don't know," and Anne doesn't believe her. So I would see this effect of girls on women, and then women on girls. And almost as if there was a silent pact sometimes,-

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-where women would say to girls, "If you don't say what you see me doing, I won't say what I see you doing." And it was women and girls accommodating to patriarchy. So for example, an 11 year old says to her mother, "I am angry at you because when you and daddy argue, you always give in." The mother

says, “I was so humiliated, so ashamed,” meaning that her daughter saw this. So now, she’s got her daughter’s sort of voice.

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So when a teacher, she capitulates to her co-homeroom teacher, and she says, “I relate to him, like I relate to my husband,” and she realizes all the girls are watching her. The teacher had said there’s a new rule at lunch, nobody can leave until everyone is finished. She said, “I didn't agree but I didn't say anything.” And then at lunch two days lantern, some girls come late from orchestra and she says to the others, “You may be excused,” and they start to walk out and one of them turns and says, “Good for you, Mrs. Miller. We are proud of you.”

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So the minute that women become aware that girls are watching, and actually reading accurately their accommodation to the structures, basically of a world that privileges masculine qualities and also privileges men, it’s like girls want women to speak with them about this. And if women can’t listen to girls without beginning to interrogate some of the compromises that in one way or another all women have made, in terms of perpetuating the system as it is.

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So here was a huge moment of interruption, and I felt I could take my stand on healthy psychological development. That’s what I was advocating. Less depression, less eating disorders, less cutting and all of this kind of thing, less all the troubles that that then leads to. Let’s join the healthy resistance. Let’s

connect girls with women, and also fathers of girls saying, "I don't want her to lose this."

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That's what I went- And I thought I can do this in any community. I can go in and amplify the girls' voices and start this process, but I don't' know how to take it to the next level. So then I went to Marie Wilson of the Ms. Foundation, and I said, "Hey don't you take this to the next level?" And that's what led to "Take Our Daughters to Work." And I think that the intention of "Take Our Daughters to Work"-

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-was also to take that voice of the 11 year old, with women into the workplace, so that also girls could see what women were doing, and women and girls could speak about it, because one of the most powerful stories that came out of that was a story Marie used to tell about a woman. She was a high executive somewhere, and doing whatever she did. And the girl asked her if that was her dream to do that, and she said actually her dream was to be a singer, and the girl asked her to sing a song. And she starts to sing.

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And so, when you start to see in the life cycle, there is the potential for that transformation. It's in our midst. To bring us back to a voice that we have silenced within ourselves, and to raise questions which is, "Why are we perpetuating structures that carry with them, not only a huge psychological cost but a huge political cost?" Because if people aren't speaking from their

experience, then you really don't have a functioning democracy. What you have is you know a lot of dissociation.

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BETSY WEST:
Tell me about "Take Our Daughters to Work Day," did you go? What was it like?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
I didn't go 'cause I didn't have a daughter. I have sons, three sons. The title of my latest book is *Joining the Resistance*. What I did was I joined the healthy resistance, first in girls, and in women, to losing basic human capacities. The capacity for responsiveness to be present, to have a voice, to live in a relationship.

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I joined and I was, again, became involved in really basically developing, educating the resistance. By doing writing and theater work with girls. By doing these workshops "women teaching girls, girls teaching women." By starting with my colleague in the theater, Kristin Linklater, an all women's theater company called The Company of Women, that we performed all-women plays, Shakespeare plays and trained in connection with companies of girls.

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I went out into the world with a lot of projects that were really inspired by the implications of this research, which is- it was as though, if you had discovered a way of preventing a disease. I mean, this was psychological suffering that I was seeing. And I saw, there is a way of preventing it, and also if the voice had been buried and not lost then, it's recoverable. You can retrieve that voice.

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BETSY WEST:
Educationally, has there been a change?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Huge change. There are all kinds of programs for girls all over the country. Not only the country, in different parts of the world. Where there were theater programs for girls, there were organizations, for example, mother daughter reading groups. A friend of mine's daughter does that with her young daughter. A book club of mothers and their daughters just entering adolescence, and… The work was picked up in amazingly innovative ways by a lot of people in local settings,-

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-so it wasn't like, I was designing something that everybody was then going to do, but you could- It was an insight that said, "If I knew this, I have to act on

this. I can no longer just passively watch." And you could see what girls were dealing with and it wasn't just their problem, or their family, or their mother.

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They were up against something that was culturally sanctioned and socially enforced. And you can ask a group of women, "Remember 7th grade," and everybody shudders. Or you can ask men, "Do you remember when you were 5 or 6, and suddenly it was important that boys don't cry and the superhero stuff."

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BETSY WEST:
Now there has been some backlash, I mean-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
How, how could there not be backlash? I think, it's so interesting to me because this work so touched a nerve, it so exposed something, that in fact people could see for themselves in their children, in their community. I love doing this kind of research because basically I say, "Don't trust me. There are girls in your community. Listen to them. Really start to have a real conversation with them. Be interested in what they know and you'll hear the same thing. Just read a bunch of novels. And the same with little boys."

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BETSY WEST:
Why do you think that a lot of younger women… see the word "feminism" as a kind of dirty word? I mean, what's going on-

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
Oh, I think it's very clear and I think again, I mean you know, there are people who, who control what media, whatever- They write about feminism as though, first of all feminism is anti men, is a battle of women versus men. Or that feminism means being a lesbian. So these women are saying, "Oh, I'm not anti men, and I'm not lesbian."

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So, you could say that, that would be ok. But actually what is feminism, my understanding of feminism is, feminism is not an issue of women or of men. It's not a battle between women and men, it's not women versus men. It's one of the great liberation movements in human history. It's the movement to free democracy from patriarchy. It's patriarchy which is the gendered order.

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It's an order of domination. Democracy is based on the premise that of equal voice, that everyone should have a voice that's listened to in their own terms and in their own right and heard. If you have equal voice, you can deal with conflict in relationships so… I wrote about an ethic of caring, ethic of voice in relationship. It's a democratic ethic. Feminism is guided by that. It's a very different feminist ethic of care though,-

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-from the feminine one that says the good woman cares for others, listens to them. This is the one Virginia Woolfe wrote about, "the angel in the house." You have to strangle her if you're going to write.

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BETSY WEST:
You've written a lot, you've done a lot. A lot of things have happened as a result of things you've written and actions you've taken. What accomplishment are you most proud of?

01:10:34:00

CAROL GILLIGAN:
Writing the novel *Kyra*. It was my dream to write a novel. I left… when I left Harvard and came to New York, it was to sort of dare myself to try, even without knowing whether I could succeed. And the fact that I wrote this novel and it was published and I… it just, it changed my world, and I'm writing another novel now, along with a play and an opera and so forth.

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BETSY WEST:
What's been the best advice that you've ever received?

01:11:02:00

CAROL GILLIGAN:
Trust what you know. Listen to yourself.

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BETSY WEST:
Who said that to you?

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CAROL GILLIGAN:
The first person who said it was my mother who said, "Darling, you know, you need to pay attention to yourself," and then every single person afterward who echoed that, which have been many, many women friends, and therapists, and just… Every time somebody says, "Trust what you know. Trust what you know from experience.

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Listen to your body. Listen to what you know inside yourself. Don't just dismiss that. It's always helpful, it's always helpful.

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BETSY WEST:
And what would you say to a young woman? What's your advice to younger women?

01:11:54:00

CAROL GILLIGAN:

Oh. In a sense, take the trouble, take the time to discover what are your real passions, what are your own questions, what are your own dreams, and then take the risk of actually pursuing them, knowing that any creative work carries with it the possibility of failure. And that that's not the end of the world.

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But you'll- What I said to myself, when I was going to write my novel, is… I didn't know if I could do it, but I knew if I tried and then I couldn't, I would be all right with myself. But if I never tried, I would always wonder. So take the risk of pursuing your own dream.

END TC: 01:12:45:00