

BOX 7.1

Lykken provided the following example of a child who demonstrated fearlessness. The letter was written by the mother of a teenage daughter in response to an article Lykken wrote for a popular magazine:

Your article on fearlessness was very informative. I was able to identify with many of the traits. However, being thirty-six and a single parent of three children, I have managed to backpack on the “edge” without breaking my neck. I have a 14-year-old daughter who seems to be almost fearless to anything in her environment. She jumps out second-story windows. When she was in first grade, I came home from work one afternoon and found her hanging by her fingers from our upstairs

window. I “calmly” asked her what she was doing. She replied that she was “getting refreshed.” Later, she stated that she did things like that when she needed a lift—that she was bored and it made her feel better. Nancy is bright, witty, attractive, charismatic, and meets people easily. She tends to choose friends who are offbeat, antisocial, and into dope, alcohol, etc. During her month’s visit here with me, she stole money from my purse, my bank card, etc., etc.¹⁰¹

THINK ABOUT IT:

How would you explain the link between this girl’s “fearlessness” and her criminal behavior?