

BEYOND YOUR HORIZON: HOW TO GROW BEYOND THE LIMITS OF YOUR UPBRINGING**Michael Burns**mgbpub@swbell.net**ABSTRACT**

The background of upbringing sets the basis of individual identity, values, and world perception but it may as well form invisible boundaries limiting the self development. This article discusses the ways in which people can overcome these boundaries to apply the knowledge of psychology, philosophy, education, creativity and lived experience. It is based on the studies in family resilience (Walsh, 2003), self-awareness in parenting (Siegel and Hartzell, 2013) and creativity in childhood (Vygotsky, 2004) in arguing that resilience and imagination play central roles in personal growth. The stories of development and change (Falzon, 2024; Schinnar, 2019) can show how education, a narrative, and self-reflection allow people to make their horizons wider. Moreover, cultural critique (James, 2013), hermeneutics (Grondin, 2011), and technology (Kurzweil, 2005; Cascone, 2017) have also motivated works that outline the importance of breaking inherited cognitive and cultural boundaries to create new development opportunities. These findings indicate that going beyond upbringing does not imply denying the past but reconstructing it and enlarging it in a more holistic picture of self. Resilience, openness and creativity enable people to expand their horizons and develop new opportunities to thrive.

Keywords

Upbringing; Family resilience; Expanding horizons; Personal growth; Transformation; Resilience; Education; Creativity; Hermeneutics; Self-awareness; Cultural narratives; Technology and human limits; Authentic living.

INTRODUCTION

We all inherit a map of the world long before we learn how to navigate it. Family traditions, cultural expectations, and community norms silently shape what we perceive as "normal," "true," and "right." Michael G. Burns, in *Beyond Your Horizon*, describes this inheritance as both a foundation and a limitation. While it provides stability, it can also confine us to narrow ways of seeing and being. The critical moment arises when this inherited map no longer leads us where we want to go--when the pull of growth demands that we look beyond the familiar horizon. Research confirms that upbringing plays a decisive role in shaping identity and resilience. Walsh (2003) argues that families serve as the primary system for transmitting values, beliefs, and coping strategies. Resilient families encourage adaptability, while rigid family patterns often impose limits on exploration and self-expression. Siegel and Hartzell (2013) extend this insight, showing that parents who cultivate self-awareness model openness for their children, equipping them with tools to thrive beyond restrictive frameworks. Yet, as Hartung (2011) observes, cultural narratives of growing up often reinforce conformity, subtly discouraging individuals from questioning inherited assumptions.

The pathway to expansion lies in creativity, education, and openness. Vygotsky (2004) emphasizes that imagination in childhood is not a frivolous activity but a foundation for envisioning realities beyond what is given. Gardner (2012) supports this by highlighting how books allow individuals to encounter diverse experiences, broadening horizons one story at a time. Schinnar's (2019) personal academic journey demonstrates how sustained learning and reflection can dismantle inherited blind spots and lead to deeper self-understanding.

Yet, growth rarely comes without discomfort. Burns insists that genuine transformation requires leaning into uncertainty--listening to different perspectives, confronting biases, and questioning long-held traditions. Falzon's (2024) narratives of healing confirm this, showing how individuals who embraced vulnerability and tension were able to reconstruct their lives with greater clarity and freedom. These stories align with James' (2013) reflections on sport and identity, where transcending cultural and colonial constraints required courage, resilience, and a willingness to imagine life differently.

Taken together, these insights reveal that transcending one's upbringing is not about rejecting the past but reinterpreting it. Growth emerges through a balance of resilience and discomfort, imagination and openness, tradition and reconstruction. As Sousanis (2015) suggests in *Unflattening*, true expansion requires breaking linear

ways of seeing and embracing multiple dimensions of understanding. In this light, to move beyond one's horizon is not to abandon the map we inherited but to redraw it--turning boundaries into gateways and limitations into starting points for authentic living.

Bringing up and Development of Identity.

Upbringing is the basis of personal identity; it passes on values, beliefs and coping mechanisms across the generations. Walsh (2003) emphasizes the role that family systems play in the development of resiliency through the creation of flexibility or use of rigid patterns that suppress development. Likewise, Siegel and Hartzell (2013) state that parent self-consciousness has a direct impact on the openness of children to new views, which create various avenues of flexibility or constraint in the adult life. These insights underscore the major point made by Burns (Beyond Your Horizon): that we have inherited maps, which are stabilizing and constraining, and need to use conscious awareness to decide what to bring with us and what to shed.

Learning and Horizon broadening.

Formal and informal education is very important in transforming inherited ideas. Vygotsky (2004) also highlights imagination as a critical role in the development of children, and places it as the foundational basis of imagining worlds outside of one's immediate situation. Gardner (2012) builds on this argument by explaining how books and stories open people up to experiences they would not have had due to their cultural and family background, expanding their empathetic and understanding abilities. In Schinnar (2019), the author is able to give a personal experience of how lifelong learning and reflection can help break the established barriers and support the idea that education is a bridge towards self-realization and individual freedom.

Discomfort and Growth

Advancement can be painful, and challenging established traditions and cultural norms might be uncomfortable not only to the individual, but also to the community. Burns stipulates that transformation requires the need to accept uncertainty, break the preconceived notions and interact with various views. To evidence the point that discomfort is not only a side-effect but a driving force of personal growth, Falzon (2024) presents real-life examples of people who have gone through challenging truths and vulnerabilities and have turned them into the staple food of the personal development. This goes in line with how James (2013) examined the issue of identity as it relates to sport, where one had to overcome cultural and colonial restrictions through resilience, adaptability, and readiness to confront a conflict.

Thinking and Making.

Creativity offers a way of reconstructing personal past and envisioning the possibilities. Sousanis (2015) presents a new notion of unflattening, that is, linear thinking is also questioned by accepting multidimensional perspectives. Such an opinion strengthens the notion that growth is not the matter of leaving the past behind, but re-organising it into other, broader, forms of meaning. In another way, Burns defines creativity as a vital means of re-plotting the existing inherited map of life, whereby people can see past the constructs created by up-bringing and convention.

Synthesis of Themes

The literature is in agreement on the fact that going beyond the upbringing entails a balance of strength and unease, which is cultivated by education and imagination. Families and traditions provide a basis of identity (Walsh, 2003; Siegel and Hartzell, 2013), but education and imagination (Vygotsky, 2004; Gardner, 2012) bring the opportunities outside the bounds of inheritance. Discomfort (Burns; Falzon, 2024) and creativity (Sousanis, 2015) are the drivers that can make a person grow so that they can rebuild the meaning without leaving their roots behind. These studies collectively offer a multidimensional approach to the study of how individuals broaden their horizons through a combination of psychological resilience, cultural criticism and creative reinterpretation. *iterature Review*

Growth and Development of Identity.

Education is the point of origin of personal identity, and values, beliefs, and strategies of coping are passed on through education. As pointed out by Walsh (2003), family systems influence resilience by creating flexibility or placing strict structures which inhibit development. On the same note, Siegel and Hartzell (2013): they state that parental self-awareness has a direct impact on how children will be willing to new perspectives and this opens doors to either flexibility or constraints in the adult life. These findings highlight the main point of Burns (Beyond Your Horizon) that the stability and scope of our inherited maps are stabilizing, but limiting, and must be consciously reflected on to decide which elements to bring with them and which to leave behind.

Education and Horizons Extension.

Formal and informal education is very vital in changing inherited views. According to Vygotsky (2004), imagination is a vital role in child development over which he says imagination forms the foundation of the ability

to imagine realities outside the immediate environment. Gardner (2012) takes the argument further, showing how books and stories open up a world to a person that is not only unfamiliar, but also outside of their cultural and familial scope, expanding their ability to empathize and comprehend. Schinnar (2019) tells a personal story of how it is possible to overcome inherited constraints with the help of lifelong learning and exploration, which supports the idea that education is an agency to self-discover and be free in their life.

Discomfort and Growth

Growth frequently comes with pain, with challenging the traditions and cultural practices that people have been used to may be uncomfortable to both the individual and the community. According to Burns, transformation requires the acceptance of uncertainty, the questioning of assumptions, and interaction with different views. Falzon (2024) gives life examples of people who have undergone personal healing through their engagement with challenging realities and vulnerability and proves that discomfort is not only a byproduct of growth but the driving force behind it. This is similar to how James (2013) examines the concept of identity in sport where crossing cultural and colonial boundaries meant that it took resilience, adaptability, and readiness to confront conflict.

Imaginative and Innovative ideas.

Creativity is one way to redefine oneself in the past and consider possibilities. Sousanis (2015) presents the notion of unflattening, which prevents the linear approach to thinking by promoting the multidimensional perspectives. The concept is solidified by this view that growth does not mean to abandon the past but reorganize it into novel, broader types of meanings. Another way that Burns describes creativity is its existence as an essential instrument of redefining the received map of life, that allows people to perceive beyond the framework created by upbringing and custom.

Synthesis of Themes

The literature in general implies that one has to walk a fine line between strength and pain, cultivated by education and imagination. A sense of identity is built on a bedrock of family and traditions (Walsh, 2003; Siegel and Hartzell, 2013), but education and imagination (Vygotsky, 2004; Gardner, 2012) allow opportunities to transcend inherited constraints. Uneasiness (Burns; Falzon, 2024) and creativity (Sousanis, 2015) serve as driving forces that launch a person into development and enable him or her to rebuild meaning without sacrificing his or her origins. Collectively, these works create a multidimensional approach to comprehend the way through which people extend their horizons, which is a mixture of psychological fortitude, cultural criticism, and creative redefinition.

METHODOLOGY

This article employs a **thematic integrative approach**, combining insights from psychology, education, philosophy, cultural studies, and personal narratives to explore how individuals can grow beyond the limits of their upbringing. Rather than conducting empirical research, the study synthesizes existing scholarship, autobiographical accounts, and theoretical frameworks to develop a comprehensive perspective on personal transformation.

First, psychological and family resilience research was examined to understand how upbringing shapes identity and adaptation. Walsh's (2003) framework of family resilience and Siegel and Hartzell's (2013) exploration of self-aware parenting were used to identify the ways early environments both support and constrain growth. These sources provide the foundational lens for evaluating the influence of upbringing.

Second, educational and developmental theories were integrated to highlight pathways of expansion. Vygotsky's (2004) work on imagination in childhood, alongside Grondin's (2011) hermeneutic emphasis on learning from others, offers theoretical grounding for the role of creativity and openness in moving beyond inherited boundaries. Gardner's (2012) reflections on reading as a tool for broadening horizons and Schinnar's (2019) personal academic journey illustrate the lived application of these principles.

Third, narratives of transformation were analyzed as qualitative evidence of growth beyond upbringing. Falzon's (2024) collection of personal stories and Burns' *Beyond Your Horizon* provide real-world examples of resilience, discomfort, and authentic reconstruction. These accounts were considered alongside James' (2013) cultural critique in *Beyond a Boundary* and Long's (1965) exploration of expanding philosophical horizons, demonstrating how individuals from diverse contexts navigate inherited limitations.

Finally, works addressing creativity, technology, and future horizons (Cascone, 2017; Sousanis, 2015; Kurzweil, 2005; Meadows & Randers, 2012) were incorporated to situate the discussion in contemporary and forward-looking contexts. These sources underscore that transcending upbringing is not only a personal act but also one shaped by cultural innovation and technological change.

Through this multi-disciplinary synthesis, the methodology reflects a **hermeneutic-interpretive framework** (Grondin, 2011), where meaning is constructed by weaving together diverse perspectives. This allows for both a scholarly grounding and an accessible, reflective narrative that mirrors the journey of expanding one's horizon

Table: Key Literature on Transcending Upbringing and Expanding Horizons

| Theme | Author(s) | Key Ideas / Findings | Contribution to Study |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Upbringing and Identity Formation | Walsh (2003) | Family resilience frameworks; adaptability vs. rigidity in transmitting coping mechanisms. | Explains how upbringing provides both stability and potential limitations that must be transcended. |
| | Siegel & Hartzell (2013) | Parental self-awareness influences children's openness and flexibility. | Connects self-awareness with inherited worldview and its impact on later growth. |
| Education and Expansion of Horizons | Vygotsky (2004) | Imagination as foundational for envisioning realities beyond immediate context. | Positions education as a tool for transcending upbringing through imaginative growth. |
| | Gardner (2012) | Books and stories as sources of new experiences and empathy. | Shows how narratives and exposure to diverse perspectives expand personal horizons. |
| | Schinnar (2019) | Personal narrative of dismantling inherited limitations through learning and reflection. | Provides experiential evidence of education as liberation from upbringing. |
| Discomfort and Growth | Burns (<i>Beyond Your Horizon</i>) | Transformation requires discomfort, questioning tradition, and embracing uncertainty. | Frames discomfort as a necessary catalyst for transcending inherited maps. |
| | Falzon (2024) | Case studies of healing through confronting vulnerability and difficult truths. | Demonstrates real-life examples of discomfort leading to growth and resilience. |
| | James (2013) | Identity and resilience in sport, shaped by colonial and cultural constraints. | Illustrates how resilience and conflict foster new identity formation beyond upbringing. |
| Creativity and New Ways of Seeing | Sousanis (2015) | <i>Unflattening</i> —rethinking linear knowledge by embracing multidimensional perspectives. | Positions creativity as a strategy for reinterpreting and reconstructing identity. |
| | Burns (<i>Beyond Your Horizon</i>) | Creativity as a tool to redraw inherited life maps. | Links creativity with the power to transcend tradition and upbringing. |

RESULTS

The thematic analysis showed that there are five interrelated pathways toward exceeding the boundaries of upbringing, which are resilience, discomfort, creativity, education, and contextual horizons. These factors do not act independently of each other, but rather are combined into a multidimensional growth process.

Resilience as Foundation

The fundamental ability that helps people to redefine inherited structures turned out to be resilience. According to Walsh (2003), families are seen as adaptive systems which determine coping strategies, and Siegel and Hartzell (2013) assert that parental self-awareness leads to flexibility in children. The two depict how resilience brings stability as well as allows change.

Discomfort as Catalyst

The factor of discomfort was always pointed out as the catalyst of the change. *Beyond Your Horizon* by Burns shows that when the certainty one has had is challenged, growth starts to take place. This is strengthened by Falzon (2024) who demonstrates how weakness results in recovery and growth. Hartung (2011) further writes that cultural conformity tends to silence growth and individuals need to tilt towards being uncomfortable in order to free themselves.

Creativity and Imagination

Vygotsky (2004) maintained that imagination helps one to go beyond current conditions. Gardner (2012) demonstrated that reading builds empathy and expands the thinking process, whereas Sousanis (2015) called to switch the focus in thinking to the multidimensional creativity. Taken together, these pieces of writing bring into focus creativity as a means of re-writing existing maps of upbringing which have been inherited.

Education and Openness

Education is a twofold process because it is a process of self-reflection and exposure to difference. Grondin (2011) referred to learning as hermeneutic openness and Schinnar (2019) demonstrated how higher education can break the inherited boundaries. These results affirm education as a means of legitimate interaction with new ideas and self.

Technological Horizons, Cultural, and Historical.

Other contexts, broader than upbringing, influence post-upbringing growth as well. James (2013) examined the impact of the colonial and cultural pasts on identity, and Long (1965) focused on the growth of spirituality. Cascone (2017) demonstrated how failure enables innovation in digital culture, Kurzweil (2005) predicted the future technological perspectives, and Meadows and Randers (2012) forecasted the ecological excesses. Marit (2020) and King (2022) also emphasize the concepts such as mindfulness and visionary living as the means to re-think the horizons of the modern world.

Synthesis

The combination of the results indicates that transcending upbringing does not entail the denial of the past, but rather the reconstruction into the broader and more genuine horizon. Growth demands stability to re-shape inherited patterns, bravery to confront uneasiness, creativity to envision options, educational openness and cultural and technological sensitivity.

Table: Pathways to Growth Beyond Upbringing

| Pathway | Key References | Main Insights | Contribution to Growth |
|--|---|---|--|
| Resilience | Walsh (2003); Siegel & Hartzell (2013) | Families provide stability but also adaptability; parental awareness fosters flexibility. | Builds foundation for reframing inherited frameworks. |
| Discomfort | Burns (<i>Beyond Your Horizon</i>); Falzon (2024); Hartung (2011) | Growth requires tension, vulnerability, and challenging conformity. | Acts as catalyst for transformation. |
| Creativity & Imagination | Vygotsky (2004); Gardner (2012); Sousanis (2015) | Imagination and multidimensional thinking expand perspectives. | Provides tools for redrawing inherited maps. |
| Education & Openness | Grondin (2011); Schinnar (2019) | Learning as hermeneutic dialogue; higher education as dismantling inherited limits. | Encourages openness to difference and critical self-reflection. |
| Cultural, Historical & Technological Horizons | James (2013); Long (1965); Cascone (2017); Kurzweil (2005); Meadows & Randers (2012); Marit (2020); King (2022) | Identity shaped by history, culture, spirituality, technology, and ecology. | Expands horizons beyond individual upbringing to global and future contexts. |

DISCUSSION

The results of this paper indicate that overcoming the confines of upbringing is a multi-dimensional process which is based on resilience, discomfort, creativity, education and cultural awareness. Discussing those themes, one can understand that personal change does not mean denying the past but acquiring new views and opinions easily. Instead, it is a critical re-pattern of inherited values, stories and practices. This is also consistent with the way that Burns frames horizons not as a boundary but as an invitation to development.

6.1 Implications on personal development.

Psychologically, Walsh (2003) points out that resilience makes the individual able to adjust and transform challenges in life to find a base on which transformation can be made. In the same vein, Siegel and Hartzell (2013) demonstrate mindful parenting prepares a person with reflective abilities that are transferred into a grown-up life where they are able to navigate internalized ways of thinking. These observations confirm the argument that personal identity is influenced, but not determined by upbringing. The notion of growth takes place when people embrace the concept of self-awareness and make an intentional move to go outside of their routines, which is supported by the idea of Burns that people have to lean into discomfort instead of shrink into inherited comfort zones.

6.2 Educational Insights

Education is a changing factor in this process. Vygotsky (2004) shows that learning can be developed in the social context in which people are guided to go beyond their zone of proximal development. This is done through a process complemented by Gardner (2012) focus on the multiple intelligences which depict how imagination and varied approaches to learning create creativity. Schinnar (2019) adds to this argument by demonstrating how the educational practices that are based on openness and critical inquiry enable people to reevaluate the cultural assumptions. Education, in this respect, acts as a bridge, preparing people with not only knowledge, but also with the instruments of interpretation to expand over the boundaries of their bringing up.

6.3 Cultural Narratives: Constraints and Freedom.

Cultural stories are the restraints and facilitators of change. Hartung (2011) points out the constraints of conformity pressures in the context of growth, whereas James (2013) and Long (1965) explain how alternative ways of reinterpreting cultural and historical narratives could become the seeds of new possibilities. The tales that Falzon (2024) shares also demonstrate that the unease with established norms tends to be a stimuli to innovative deviations. Culture therefore gives the map as well as the friction that people need to rehearse the map to change it in such a way that widens their horizons.

In the 21st century, globalization and technological developments have driven significant advancements in improvement and progress within the hospitality sector.

6.4 Creativity, Technology, and Innovation

It has moved towards 21st-century globalization and technological advancement that have enhanced tremendous improvement and progress in the hospitality industry.

Innovation is one of the major growth avenues after being brought up. As demonstrated by Sousanis (2015), unflattering views results in people being able to see and envision the world in non-linear forms, whereas Cascone (2017) suggests that failure is a creative force. These lessons indicate that creativity is not the process of leaving something behind, but rather of redefining it in a new way. The possibilities and dangers of broadening horizons are also depicted in technological stories. The vision of accelerating change by Kurzweil (2005) demonstrates the opportunities of human creativity to grow exponentially, whereas Meadows and Randers (2012) also worry that growth should not lose sight of ecological and systemic boundaries. Collectively, these pieces underscore the fact that individual and cultural development is to be based on innovation, but sustainability.

6.5 Toward a Practical Roadmap

The synthesis of these findings implies that there are three practices that are interrelated in the process of traveling beyond upbringing. To begin with, developing empathy and self-awareness helps people to re-tell inherited narratives in a compassionate and not dismissive manner. Second, embracing the uncomfortable aspects of life is a sure way not to get stuck in the comfort zone that the inheritance will provide. Third, interacting with differences, education, cultural dialogue, and creative experimentation broadens the horizons in genuine and sustainable fashions.

After all, growth after upbringing does not mean breaking the connections with the past but it is a process of rebuilding identity by communicating with it. The metaphor of the horizon by Burns summarizes this process: the horizon never stands still, but constantly moves on inviting people to broaden their perspective with the help of resilience, discomfort, creativity, and openness.

CONCLUSION

The paper has examined the ways through which people can expand beyond their childhood experiences through inclusion of resilience, discomfort, creativity, education, and cultural awareness. The results indicate that although upbringing gives the original map of identity, it does not narrow the horizons of a person. Instead, it provides resources as well as limitations that when critically utilized are opportunities to change.

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Resilience, which Walsh (2003) focuses on, is the basis of adaptation and reinterpretation of life experience whereas discomfort, as is stressed in the tales of Burns and Falzon, acts as a form of catalysis. The possibilities of seeing and living differently are augmented through creativity and imagination, which are supported by Vygotsky (2004), Gardner (2012), and Sousanis (2015). Learning, according to Schinnar (2019) and Grondin (2011), offers the interpretive instruments to challenge the inherited assumptions and develop openness. The cultural, historical, and technological lenses, including James (2013) and Kurzweil (2005), remind us that change takes place in broader contexts, which not only challenge and facilitate growth.

The integration of these lessons shows that overcoming upbringing is not dismissing one of the past but is creating a new meaning of the dialogue between the past and the present. It takes growth in the direction of being uncomfortable, developing empathy, and listening to different points of view, which is balanced between creativity and ecological and cultural sustainability.

After all, the image of the horizon provides the potent insight: the horizons are not any stable boundaries but call to widen. The horizon is not the conclusion but the start of a bigger journey as Burns puts it. The question is then not whether we can be able to stretch beyond the confines of our upbringing, but whether we are prepared to indulge in the strength, imagination, and receptiveness that we need to be able to push our boundaries ever greater.

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