

CHAPTER ONE

A DIFFICULT JOB

This is true because raising children is not a science, it is an art. What does this mean? In science we deal with cause and effect relationships. The work of a scientist is to discover the cause for what happens around him, that he can put in a simple formula, such as $A+B=C$. When silver nitrate is added to sodium chloride the result is silver chloride and sodium nitrate. This will happen every time these two chemicals are added to each other no matter when and where this is done, or who does it.

Trying to establish this kind of relationship in dealing with living things we find it extremely difficult, almost impossible. Scientists found that the situation is much more complicated than that when they are dealing with simple chemicals. The presence of life introduces many unknown dimensions into the situation, that it becomes impossible to link a given cause with a given result.

An example that we are all familiar with is the case of smoking and lung cancer. Scientists would love to establish a cause and effect relationship in this case. To do this theoretically they have to have two identical groups of people, then allow one group to smoke for few years, and prohibit the other group from smoking. To establish a cause and effect relationship, we have to find all the first group developing cancer while non in the second group will.

Let me point out the difficulties in this ideal design. First, nobody can get two identical groups of people even if he used identical twins. Identical twins are identical when they are born. But once they begin to grow and interact with the environment, they begin to differ from each other in ideas, attitudes, preferences, decisions, etc... Even their bodies will be different as they make their different choices in what they eat and consume, and also in the other factors that effect their bodies such as exercise, rest, and the like.

This difficulty alone would destroy the possibility of establishing a cause and effect relationship. But there is a second difficulty, which is that we will never see all members of a given group respond the same way to a set of conditions. In this case, we find that some of the

first group will develop cancer while others do not. We may also find some of the second group develop the disease. When this happens we cannot say that we have established a cause and effect relationship. So we cannot say that smoking + lung tissue = cancer.

This is exactly what happens in education $A + B$ will never be always C . It could be C , D , E , F or G . So in education, and all human sciences such as medicine, psychology, biology, we find ourselves talking about correlations. A correlation is a mathematical concept, which quantifies the possibilities of a certain effect happening if a given cause is applied. If there is no relationship the correlation will be zero. But if there is one, then the higher the number the more the possibility of the result happening. So a correlation of 0.2 tells us that the result is not very likely to happen when the cause is present. But a correlation of 0.7 tells us that the possibilities in this case are much higher. There is no correlation of 1.00, because this means that the relationship is perfect, which means that it is a cause and effect relationship.

In education we find this situation, which means that there is no magic formulas for treating children. We find only correlations and tendencies,

and no guarantees, or certainties. What may work with one may not work with another, even if they are brothers or sisters. This is what makes books on raising children useless in many cases. I am not saying that we should throw them away. I am saying that we should be aware of their limitations. They provide for us a general guide, which should be modified by parents to suit their particular child. But parents usually fail to do that and follow the recommendations that these books make to the letter, as if they were the bible.

In the rest of this book, I will state my beliefs about human behavior and how it should be applied in raising children. Someone may say, aren't you doing the same thing that you condemned the books for? Will you be providing another set of general guidelines. The answer is yes and no. Yes, I will be giving a set of general guidelines. But there are two differences between these and those you find in the books. The first is that I will not ask you to follow those blindly. I will warn you that you should modify them in light of your knowledge of your child. The other difference is that these guidelines are written with

some knowledge as an educator, father, grandfather, and a lot of experiences observing many children.

CHAPTER TWO

LEARNING: SOME BASIC FACTS

It may be useful at the beginning to state some facts about children. These will hopefully serve as guideposts, that we have to keep reminding ourselves of, as we become busy raising our children.

1) It is all a process of learning:

When we talk about raising children, we are talking about a list of behaviors, which we would like to see our children adopt. Since none of these behaviors are inherited, although the tendency to adopt some of them or not may be inherited, we can put all of them under the heading of learned behavior. The fact is that children need guidance. Not only guidance but also good guidance. This is evident in those children who received very little guidance and consequently developed with their innate tendencies more or less intact. They have developed into selfish, egocentric, lazy individuals who care only about themselves, and do not have

any concern for others, and whose behavior is only guided by what is good for them, regardless of its effect on others.

Every child is born with a number of needs that seek satisfaction. God put them in each one of us as our tools for survival. These are oriented toward self-preservation, and do not include any concern for others. The overarching goal of raising our children is to insert with those selfish tendencies that we are born with, the idea that there are other people living on this planet beside ourselves. And the fact that good people are concerned with the welfare of others as well as their own.

The bottom line here is that parents should become knowledgeable about how learning takes place and be guided by this knowledge as they raise their children.

Before we can talk about the conditions, which enhance learning and those that hinder it, we have to talk first about the major types of learning. There are essentially three kinds of learning; learning by choice, learning by indoctrination, and learning by brainwashing.

Learning by brainwashing:

This is the kind of learning that happens when those in charge of the learning process use brainwashing techniques to develop certain attitudes and modes of behavior, which will help them to totally control their subjects, and ensure that they can use them to accomplish their selfish goals. It is obvious that the learner here has no desire to learn what he is learning, but he is more or less forced to learn it by extreme measures, such as fear, bodily harm, pain, and extreme stress. The result is that the person's brain is wiped clean of almost all-previous learning, and then he acquires those, which his tormentors want him to learn. Dictators used this method and evil people who wanted no ideas besides their own to surface or exist. Adolf Hitler brainwashed a whole nation and convinced them that they are superior to all the other nations of the world. Needless to say that no respectable person will endorse or recommend this type of learning for our children.

Learning by indoctrination:

This type of learning has one similarity with learning by brainwashing. This is the fact that the

child here too, does not choose to learn what he is learning. An important difference is that, in brainwashing the learner is forced to learn what he is learning, while in indoctrination the learnings are slipped into his brain by a subtle process, similar to osmosis. He is led gently into learning certain learnings not motivated by fear, but motivated by the desire to copy what those around him have learned.

They do this by a process that can be called total immersion. The longer and the more intense the immersion, the faster and stronger this kind of learning happens. To accomplish this, they surround the child with an atmosphere loaded with what they want him to learn. So, for instance if they want him to learn to love people who are different from him, in the color of their skin, or in the shape of their eyes, or in their clothes, or their customs and traditions. They structure the school environment in such a way that it reflects this attitude in many ways. So, they make available to him several books about other peoples, books that promote respect for them, and point out their good qualities, and that advocate that differences between peoples is one of the things that make life more interesting. These books tell stories about the positive aspects of those people, and never mention any negatives about

them. They show films and listen to cassette recording about them.

They may ask few of them to visit the school, if they are nearby. They may also have a play that the children do, in which people of different nations are portrayed in a positive way. They may have an exhibit in which articles of clothes, and other objects from those nations are displayed, and some of their native costumes and food are displayed and shared. This is how indoctrination works. One of the strong components of indoctrination is that those around the child, especially the adults, display whatever behavior they want the learner to learn. Some recommend that they have also to verbalize their behavior, to make it clear to the child what they are doing.

This type of learning is widely used to inculcate children especially while they are young, with some of the basic attitudes that adults feel are extremely important. This is also one of the favorite techniques used more by totalitarian countries, than by democratic countries. But it is a legitimate way of helping children learn some of the essentials, and to develop some sound habits, without much difficulty. It is recommended for use before the child grows up and becomes critical of some of the things that we ask him to learn.

Learning by choice:

This is the type of learning, which prevails in our schools and universities. It happens when the learner is exposed to the material that we want him to learn. In this case he and his teachers are aware of this. In other words we are telling him that we want him to learn this or that, and he chooses to learn it or not. This is conscious learning as contrasted with the unconscious learning that happens in the other two types. This is the type of learning, which is plagued by all kinds of problems, which we are going to deal with in the rest of this book.

What is learning?:

Before we can talk about the factors that affect learning, we have to define what we mean by learning. Simply stated, learning is a change that happens to the learner. This is to say that the person who enters in the experience, which we call learning, will come out of it a different person. The difference may be small, and insignificant, and may

be large and very significant. But no person goes in and comes out of even one learning experience exactly the same person who went in.

Levels of learning:

When we talk about levels of learning we are saying that not all learnings are equal. Some are more important and more desirable than others. When we say learning is a change in the learner, we have to follow that by asking what kind of change? We find that the change can happen in what people KNOW, or/ and in what they BELIEVE, or/ and in what they DO. These are the three levels of learning.

Changing what people know:

This happens when the learner knows a new fact. We have to say that he has learned something on the cognitive level. The number of items that people learn in this category is usually great, and surpasses the items in the other levels of learning. Generally speaking these learnings do not affect the behavior of the learner, but remain isolated and unused, and eventually evaporate and disappear because of the lack of use. How many of those facts every one of

us has learned during those long years, which we spent in school? Hundreds, maybe thousands of bits of information, which we crammed in our brains and studied spending long hours, only to forget them later. This is the lowest level of learning.

Changing what people believe:

Out of the thousands of facts that we learn on the first level, few are elevated to the level of beliefs. It is rather a known fact that we know much more than what we believe. Why some facts remain at the level of knowledge while others are elevated to the level of beliefs, varies from individual to another. There are many factors that can influence that process. Among these are the atmosphere, which surrounds the child, the example given by others especially his parents, his teachers, and the adults with whom he has frequent contacts. Also what the mass media tell him, what his peers believe in, just to mention a few. We don't need to point out the importance of beliefs in the life of people. They are the precursors for many if not all the decisions that any person makes. We can say that beliefs are the basis on which the person builds his choices, his habits, and by and large his character.

There is no need to point out that good beliefs are crucial for a good person. This becomes more important if we realize that it is not easy for someone who believes in destructive or antisocial beliefs to change them, no matter how many evidence we provide him with. This is why parents have to watch their children in the early years of their lives, to guard against adopting harmful beliefs, and try to correct them if they observe that they have adopted any of those. It is much easier to correct them immediately, than to wait. Because the longer you wait, the more difficult it will be for that correction to be accepted by the child.

Changing what people do:

This is the highest level of learning, and what education is supposed to do. If this does not happen, all what we do, all our efforts, all our advice, all our talks, all our patience will have to be considered wasted efforts. Parents and teachers should not be interested in anything else. Their ultimate goal should be to see their children behave the way they envisioned as they tried to bring them up. The change in behavior happens when some of the beliefs become so strong that they trigger a change in what the person does.

An example may help us understand the relationship between the three levels of learning. If we take a topic like smoking. There are not many people who do not know that smoking is dangerous to one's life. If any person does not know the specifics about what exactly smoking does to the human body, everybody knows that it is harmful. How many of these believe this? Fewer people. Among those who say they believe, are many who did not stop smoking. Why? Because their belief is not strong enough to overcome their desire to smoke. When you ask some of them, why do you insist on doing what you know will hurt you? You get answers like, I know it hurts me, but I would rather die early after I have enjoyed life rather to live longer while I did not enjoy it

Facts about Learning;

1. *Motivation:*

It is a known fact that the best learning happens when the child WANTS to learn what he is supposed to learn. We are not saying that this is the only way people learn. We mentioned before that

brainwashing, and indoctrination can produce learning. But are these the best ways to bring up children in a democratic society, which values freedom, and promotes equality among people, and teaches tolerance and even love to its people? Are these the ways to raise children who are supposed to think for themselves, make intelligent decisions, and participate in the democratic process? Besides the fact that those means use methods that violate the very principles that we believe in, such as the dignity of man, and the equal worth of individuals regardless of the color of their skin, their religion, or ethnic origin. But also the learnings learned under those methods (more so in the case of brainwashing) are dropped and rejected as soon as the influence of those who enforced them, are weakened or disappears.

Going back to the importance of motivation, we can say without any reservations that motivation is the most important single factor that affects the education of our children. All the other factors are secondary to motivation in importance. We can even say that its absence is responsible for the problems, which are destroying our schools today. Almost all of our problems in education will disappear if we solved the problem of motivation. If the children are not motivated to learn, they simply

will not learn. They can pretend, they study not because they want to learn, but because they want to pass the exams that we force them to take, in order to prove to us that they have learned what they are supposed to learn.

When they are forced to learn things that they find uninteresting, they hate school, and seek reasons not to attend, some refuse to go, some go and decide to disrupt the process by creating problems, some cheat on exams, and some attack other students or their teachers. Even those who study the material that we give them and pass our tests, forget most of what they have learned because they acquired it for the purpose of passing the exam. Once this is done, they do not need it anymore, and as a result they forget it. There have been hundreds of attempts to improve education. None of them made any significant difference in what children learned, because they were tried in the absence of motivation. This is why they made no difference in what the children learned.

So if parents or teachers want the child to learn a new word, a new fact, a new concept, or a new attitude, they have to ask themselves how can I make the child eager to learn what I want him to

learn. Unfortunately there is no formula for motivating children, for the simple reason that children are different, and what motivates one may not motivate another. But in the rest of this paper as we speak about specific factors, we will point out those which will help in motivating children.

To summarize what we said so far, we can say that parents have to avoid pressuring their children to learn something by ramming it through their throats, and try to motivate them to learn what they think they should learn. Second, they should try to make their children learn what they learn on the third level of learning, so what is learned makes a difference in their lives.

2. The age of the learner:

It is often said that childhood is the golden age for learning. Experience shows us that this is true. The reasons for this are many. First, is the fact that motivating children is much easier than motivating adults. To get an adult excited about something is more difficult than getting a child excited about the same thing. Second, the number of beliefs, convictions, habits, and prejudices that a child has is always less than those which adults have. Any one of these may be a hurdle in the way of accepting

new learnings that may conflict with those already learned. Third, is the fact that learning requires a degree of flexibility and a degree of readiness in the nervous system to carry a series of messages back and forth to, and from the brain, several times before learning happens. It is known that the child's nervous system is more open and ready for those transfers than that of adults. Fourth, children are more humble than adults. When someone is willing to learn something, he is admitting that he needs it. This requires a degree of humility, which we do not find in many adults. It is a rare adult who is willing to admit that he needs to learn, something that we find in abundance in children.

The conclusion is that if parents want to help their children learn something important, they better do it while they are still young, because they will have a much more difficult time to do it when they are older.

3. The formation of habits:

Habits are the mechanism by which human beings and many animals follow a certain learning without spending energy, effort, or time learning it over again. It is the most efficient way of reducing some of our concerns into routines that happen

almost automatically, and thus, reserving our attention and energy to the new situations. They are behaviors that become so engraved in our nervous system that happen with almost no conscious effort on our part. As we grow older, the number of our habits increases, to the extent that we find they cover most of our behavior. This is why they are very important in raising our children, and this is why Parents should try to help their children adopt good habits.

For children to adopt good habits, they have to go through the following steps. First they have to be properly motivated to learn something. This means that the learner is convinced that what he is going to learn is important to him. When he learns whatever he is learning, he has to learn it on the highest level i.e.. It will change his behavior. When his behavior happens day in and day out without regrets or regression, it becomes a habit. If it is said that people are walking bundles of habits, we cannot disagree. But there is a world of difference between a bundle of good habits and a bundle of bad habits.

Good and bad habits:

As we think of which habits are good and which are bad, we find ourselves thinking about the three

levels of maturity.

a) The first level includes those behaviors, which help the person maintain his well being. He will do those things that will benefit him physically, mentally, and psychologically, and refrains from those that will hurt him in any way. This is regarded as the lowest level of desirable learnings. To the dismay of parents, this does not always happen. Every day we observe people doing things that they KNOW are bad, and will hurt them. As we observe animals, we do not find this. And we ask, if making the right decision as to what will benefit us or hurt us, depends on our intelligence, then why do we do it, while animals do not? May be some think that those people who do that are less intelligent than those who do not. This is not the case, because we find among those who insist on hurting themselves many with superior intelligence.

When we notice that, we wonder whether human intelligence is a curse or a blessing. This is a very interesting question, but this is not the place to deal with it. The fascinating fact is that even though God has endowed man with a superior intelligence yet he does not use it properly. In most cases, we find him driven by his desires, which are emotional in nature. Even if his intelligence tells him that he shouldn't,

he refuses to listen and does what his emotions tell him. After that he uses his intelligence to rationalize to himself or to others the soundness of his behavior.

As we wonder why is this happening while it makes no sense, we have to remind ourselves that there is somebody who is constantly suggesting to us what to do with our lives. He is so clever and crafty, that none of us has been able to escape his influence. What happens from man is the strongest proof that evil is rampant in the world simply because the prince of this world is still on the loose. He only suggests to us to do those things that appeal to our flesh and not to our brains.

b) The second level is that in which man does not only do what benefits him, and refrains from what hurts him. He goes another step. While on the first level, he does not have any concern for others, at this level we find him weighing his behavior by two measures. The first whether it is good for him or not. The second is whether it is bad for anybody else or not. If the answer is yes, he does not do it. Inherent in this is a respect for others, and an assumption that they have the same rights that he gave himself.

So in considering a given course of action, he

stops to think about any possible effects that it could have on others. This behavior was mentioned by our Lord in the sermon on the mount, when He said, "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Mt7: 12). What Jesus was saying is that this simple act of looking for the effect of your behavior on others is the best summation of all that the Bible tells us to do. If every man and woman on this planet took this as their personal guide, we will have no problems to deal with. We will be living in heaven not on earth. Those who follow this can be considered socially mature or true Christians.

c) The third level is a much higher level of social maturity. On this level, the person does not only refrain from those behaviors, which hurt others, but he also does things which benefit them.

There are two levels under this one. In the first, the person does things that would benefit others so long as it does not hurt him. On the higher level he does it whether it will hurt him or not. This is a person who lives to help others, sacrificing his own comfort, and welfare. He is selfless, humble, and loving. He is like the candle that burns so others can see. This is the highest level that anybody can reach.

Our lord mentioned it in the same sermon when He said, "If anyone would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well, and if any one forces you to go with him one mile go with him two miles." (Mt5: 40).

4. Learning is difficult:

This is one of the most important facts about learning. But many adults forget what it was like when **THEY** were learning, and consequently have no or little patience when they see children struggling to learn something. This often results in criticizing the child for his failure, and/or insulting him and his ability to learn. These behaviors have a very negative impact on the child, and his learning in the future. Parents have to control their anger when they see their children fail. After all, they are doing their best. They have to train themselves to accept their mistakes and failures, especially when they are young.

One of the reasons behind parent's criticism is that they either compare their achievement with their own when they were young, or with that of other children. Both comparisons are unfair. When they compare their children with themselves, they

do not take in consideration that the circumstances and the dynamics that affected their learning were drastically different from today's. Beside this the parents' recall of their achievement is almost always inflated.

These make us like those who are comparing apples with oranges. When parents compare their children's achievement with those of their friends and peers, they tell you now we are not comparing apples with oranges, but apples with apples. This is true. But they forgot another fact that makes this comparison also inappropriate. This fact is that children are different. Their interests are different, their native abilities are different, and a lot of other factors that affect their learning are different from one child to the other. So, parents have to give their children easy tasks especially in the early years, to maximize their chances for success. They have to prepare themselves for their failures. Even then they have to refrain from criticizing them, because their young and tender egos cannot cope with this. We will talk about the reason behind this later, when we talk about the self-concept, and its importance in our lives, especially children.

5. The self- concept and its importance:

What do we mean by "self- concept"? Simply put, it is one's idea about himself. It is the answer to the important question, which we often ask ourselves; what kind of person am I? The answer to this question has a strong effect on people's behavior, to the extent that few years ago a new school in psychology was built around that concept. Its major theme was that the most important need, which we are born with is the need to enhance ourselves. The driving force behind that is attaining a positive self- concept.

Even without this school of psychology, it does not take much effort to realize the importance of that concept in the lives of people. We can attest to this fact from our observations of others, and even of ourselves. When people feel good about themselves, when they believe that they are good, they feel confident and in most cases perform well. In other words they behave in a way that confirms their goodness. But those who do not feel good about themselves and believe that they are bad, they lack in confidence and usually fail in whatever task they are undertaking. They behave according to their self-concept.

The next question is where do people get their self- concept? How does it form? Is it something we are born with, or is it something that we acquire? It

seems that when a child is born, he has no self-concept. As he begins to receive stimuli from the environment, he begins to form his self-concept. The first component of this complex concept is his feeling that he is an individual separate from his mother. This happens as a result of gradually discovering his body. In the beginning he is not convinced that he can exist away from his mother. This is one of the reasons why he cries and gets upset when he does not see her. But gradually he discovers that he could, and begins to enjoy his independence. As he begins to interact with those around him, he tries to assert his personality. He tries to feed himself, accept or reject food; later on he tries to select what he wears, etc. He is trying to tell himself that he is a person just like those around him, and he is capable of doing things just as they do. In all these steps there are responses from those around him especially his mother. If the responses are reasonable, mild and not too much emotion accompanies them, he will begin to form the first crude idea about himself. He will feel that he is capable. More important, if he is allowed to experiment, and the reaction to his messiness is not harsh, he will be happy, and this will reaffirm his feeling that he is loved.

But if the opposite happens, he will feel that he

is not capable, and that he is not loved. Between these two definite answers many children cannot answer this question to themselves one way or the other at this stage because their parents particularly the mother is giving them mixed signals. So, in the best interest of our children, we need to keep this in mind. We cannot emphasize enough that the smallest thing that we do here can be magnified and interpreted one way or the other by the child who is super sensitive and very insecure at this stage.

Next to the mother, the father and then the brothers and the sisters have also an impact on the formation of the self- concept of the child. So, the child should be surrounded with an atmosphere, which tells him that he is a good child. Does this mean that we have to accept all his behaviors; the good and the bad? The answer is NO. As we mentioned before the child has to be loved by those around him. And if he is loved and feels that love, we can tell him in a way that does not upset him that what he is doing is unacceptable. We don't need to yell or scream at him, because this will be translated by the child as the lack of love. We can tell him in the language that he understands that we don't approve of what he is doing. May be a gesture, or a slight frown will be enough in such situations. Another consideration that we have to keep in mind

is that we have to be realistic in our expectations.

Some parents get ahead of the child and expect him to perform on a higher level than he is capable of. This high standard makes the parents see many more mistakes that their children make, than if their standards were more realistic. So, to begin with, let us make the situations in which our children learn, at a level that will keep their mistakes at a minimum. In those areas which they make mistakes that should be corrected, we have to show our disapproval of what they did, as clear as possible. Children need that; they have to receive a clear signal that what they did is **WRONG**.

The second thing that we have to do is to show our love. This means that the child will not lose our love when he commits a mistake. The third thing is that when we begin to verbalize our discontent with his mistakes, we have to condemn the act and not the child. We never call a child bad, or stupid, or one of the many select adjectives that some parents use often with their children.

In the beginning, the child will only have one self- concept; is he a good child or not? But as his experiences increase, he begins to form other self-concepts. So, if he is involved in relationships with other children, and cast in the role of a friend. He will begin forming a new self- concept; is he a good

friend or not? When he participates in simple games, he begins to form yet another self- concept, is he a good player or not? When a sister or a brother is born in the family, he will acquire a new role; that of a brother or a sister, and he will begin to form another self concept; is he a good brother/sister or not?

These are just a few examples of the many other self concepts that he will form as his activities spread and give him new roles. Few of the important self concepts which the child is going to form in the future are his concept as a student, as a driver, an employee, a husband, a father/mother. We don't need to reiterate here that we have to help him form a positive self concept in as many areas as we can. One of the questions that people ask when they hear this is, how about if we failed in some of those self concepts, and the child acquired a negative self concept?

The answer to this is, despite the fact that the ideal picture is that of a person who has a positive self concept in all areas, the reality is different. We find that every child will form a negative concept in one or more areas. But this should not disturb us if those areas are not important. So if the child thinks that he is bad in playing cards, or in putting together picture puzzles,

or in playing baseball that is not serious. But if he feels inadequate as a son, friend, or a brother, or any other area that is important, we say that this is serious. Here we have to help him to change that negative self- concept.

Let me emphasize here that the most important self concept is the first one which is "Am I a good person or not?" This is formed during the first five or six years of his life. This is one of the reasons why some psychologists say that those years are the most important years in the life of any individual. As a testimony to the importance of that first self- concept, we observe that those who fail to form a positive self- concept will have more negative self- concepts in other areas than those who did not fail. Not only that but their negative self- concepts will be in more of the areas that we consider important. We don't need to point out that the older the child, the more difficult it will be for him to change his self concept, either way. In other words, it will be very difficult for a child who has a positive self- concept to change it to a negative one, and vice versa.

6. Learning through experience:

As we take a look at the methods used in helping

children learn, we find that by and large they fall under two categories. The first and the most frequently used method is someone TELLING you whatever you are supposed to learn. The second is when the learner is guided but not told what he is to learn, and given a chance to discover and/ or experience what he is learning. They call the first "Bookish knowledge", and the second "Hands on experience". Everyone knows that the second approach is more effective than the first. It has been said that "Telling is not teaching and listening is not learning". Those who tried to teach children can tell you from experience that the first method produces learnings that are not effective in changing the learner's behavior. It produces knowledge, but does not produce beliefs or convictions, while the second method produces many of these. And these as mentioned before are the only things that can change people's behavior.

The example often given about the difference between the two methods is that of teaching someone to swim by giving him a series of lectures about swimming, or giving him a book about swimming to study. The result is that no matter how complete the lectures are and how well written the book is, the child will never learn how to swim from memorizing every single detail in the lectures or the

book. Someone will say that swimming is a skill and there is no way anybody can learn how to swim by reading or being lectured about it. He has to DO it. This is obviously true. But how many are those learnings which we try to teach by telling, which are similar to swimming, and which we still try to teach by telling. Let me give you few examples. When we talk about raising our children, we are talking about helping them to learn honesty, fairness, being helpful, respecting other people's property, having concern for others, just to mention a few. How many of these can we help our children learn by lecturing them? Obviously none. We are not interested in making our children knowledgeable about Christian virtues; we want them to practice them. So, we have to allow them to experience what honesty is and what dishonesty means. They have to be surrounded with it, and to live it, observing the rewards that it brings, and the pain that dishonesty causes.

Besides those Christian virtues, there are many other skills, that children need to learn by practicing, such as motor skills including throwing, catching, jumping, getting dressed, combing one's hair, and the like. Some parents interfere when they see their children trying to learn some of these

skills. Behind this interference is a heavy dose of worrying about what might happen. Let me give you few examples to clarify what I mean. If you wondered in a place, which has children, you will certainly come across many of these examples.

You will see what I saw several times. Many times I observed mothers with their three or four year old boys in a park. The boy stands on a rock, which is about two feet high, and calls on his mother to witness his great jump, something that every child at this age is excited about. In nine times out of ten the mother screams at him "don't jump". The result is either he does not, or he does. If he does, he is yelled at more, and probably slapped with a punishment. The mother by trying to prevent him does not realize that she is depriving him of a valuable experience, which he needs to learn how to jump.

It is obvious that the mother in this situation is not thinking about that. She is thinking about the possible consequences of jumping. Of course we all have to foresee the possible consequences of what our children will attempt to do. But we don't have to exaggerate those possibilities, to the extent that we prevent them from trying anything because of a risk that does not exist, or is a remote possibility. The mother in this example certainly thought that her

son will break his leg if he jumped. This is a remote possibility.

What will happen may be a scraped knee, or a soiled pant, and these are small prices that we have to pay so our children will learn those skills that they need, and develop the positive self-image that these skills will produce. Another example is that of the mother who insists on combing her son's hair before he goes to school. We can see this happening until the son is four years, but to continue to do this until he is ten or eleven is a bit too much. Again the mother here is worried about the result if the child did it himself, so she does it for him.

Once I asked a mother in a situation like that, and who was combing her daughter's hair who was in high school. When I asked her why. "She said, because she does a terrible job, and I DON'T WANT TO BE CRITICIZED when people see her so messy." Here the mother was concerned about herself, and she overlooked the fact that this way her daughter will never learn how to comb her hair. Then I asked, "and when do you think your daughter will learn how to comb her hair?" She looked at me and said nothing.

These parents are not aware of the fact that what they are doing is overprotecting their children, and by doing this they are robbing them from valuable

opportunities to learn certain tasks which are important to learn. And when this happens they become more confident in facing other tasks in the future. We have also to be aware of the possible consequences of such behavior on the relationships between the over protected child and his parents. In such situations, we find that some children accept their parent's interference, and succumb to it.

The result is a weak person who will get used to his parents making most of his decisions for him, and who becomes more and more dependent on them. But we also find many children who reject their parent's control and rebel against them. The result is a break in the ties between them and their parents, and a rebellious breaking away from many of the restrictions which were put on their behavior by their parents. In many cases this break away is so strong and so complete, that the life of the child takes an opposite track from that which his parents intended. What a loss! If the parents only knew that this will happen, they would have never overprotected their children that way.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHILD

After talking about the important process of learning and few of the aspects connected with it, which we consider to be the first variable in raising our children. We ought to look at the second variable, which is the child himself. We look at him, because he is the one who will make the decisions every time we want to teach him something, whether he will learn it or not.

This is essential for us as parents so we will be able to understand those factors that he will introduce and contribute when he is faced with a structured situation designed by his parents to maximize his chances for making the right decision. Before we talk about the characteristics of children let me repeat again that children differ considerably in the degree to which they have these general characteristics. Parents reading these notes should adjust whatever recommendations are made in connection to these characteristics according to the degree that that characteristic is found in their child.

It is interesting to note that many of these characteristics even though they are supposed to belong only to children, and should change as they grow up, yet we observe them in many adults. This is one of the strongest indications of their universality, and their influence on human behavior, and an indication that despite our efforts to change them, many refuse to grow up, and keep them into their adult life.

1. Children are not empty slates:

They are not blank pieces of paper that we can write on whatever we want. This was one of the many wrong assumptions that many held before modern psychology began to reveal the true nature of children. Children, when they are born are born with a number of attributes or potentials, which are designed to help them survive the many challenges that the environment will throw at them. Psychologists used to call these instincts. Now they call them needs. The name is not as important as our recognition of those potentials.

What are they? And how do they affect the child's behavior. As these potentials unfold, they develop into patterns of behavior, which are by and

large not learned, but are almost universal to the extent that many believe that they are written in the child's genes when he is born. Similar ones do exist in every new living organism whether it is an animal or a plant. The important difference between these potentials as they exist in the lower forms of life and man, is the fact that the differences between the members of a given species are less as we go down the scale. So the differences between human children when they are born are the highest among all living things, while the differences between the members of say a bacterium such as E. Coli are very small or non-existing. This is why we can predict with a high degree of success the behavior of many lower forms of life, while we cannot do the same with human behavior.

Going back to our questions about these potentials or needs, we ask what are they, and how many are we born with? Psychologists differ in their number. But most agree on few, which are seen by all as extremely important in shaping our future. In the following pages we are going to talk about these and try to point out how they can be channeled toward the good of the individual and society, and how they can be lead astray, to produce an individual who does not care about anything or anybody but himself.

The need for love:

This includes the need to love and to be loved. Love seems to be the most important of those needs to human beings. Religion emphasizes this fact when it teaches that God is love. Throughout history religious leaders have talked about love as the ultimate commandment that man has to follow if he has any hope of becoming good. The Old Testament teaches that we "Should love God, with all our heart, our soul, our strength" (Deut. 6:4). Our Lord described it as the first and most important commandment in the Old Testament. World philosophers and thinkers have all realized the importance of love in our lives, and made strong recommendations to that effect.

More recently, it was discovered that love could help in healing many diseases. Scientists have shown the effect that love even that of animals has on the rate and speed of recovery of patients. They reported that those who received the love of a relative or even a pet more often than others healed faster than those who did not. The universality of the importance of love in our lives has been amply demonstrated. Also the catastrophic effects of hate have also been amply demonstrated. The high

correlation between hate and various diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular problems, neurotic disorders, prove beyond any doubt that as love is beneficial to our health and well being, hate is detrimental to those who harbor it.

This is why God put in every child a need to love and to be loved. For the majority of children the need is adequately met during the first several years of their lives. This is the result of another potential that God put in all human beings, a potential that remains more or less dormant in all of us until we have children. I am talking about the love that parents feel for their children from the time they are born. This love is stronger in the mother than in the father. Mother's love for her child was mentioned by God when He said, "If the mother forgets her child, I will not forget you".

We have to remember that we have to show our love to our children. Parents find this easy in the beginning, because when the children are young they are lovable. Parents smother them with love. A strong component of that love is the physical contacts between the child and those who love him. These contacts are important in convincing children that we really love them. Some parents stop doing that when their children grow up. This is a big

mistake; because no matter how old we are we always need assurances that we are loved. Even the society tells us not to forget to do that. A sticker that we often see today tells it in a very direct way. It says "Have you hugged your kids today?" Another consideration in responding to this need in our children that we do not only want to satisfy it, but we need to say it. This is important to their psychological well-being.

But in the process we hope to teach them that love does not only mean taking, but it also means giving. I say this because the first interpretation of love that the newborn has is taking, simply because he is only in a position to receive and not in a position to give. On top of this, his selfishness at this stage will mitigate against any idea that love can be giving. But we want the child to learn to give not only to take. So, how can we do that? We do that by example. We share with the child and we tell him what we are doing. And we ask him to share, and encourage him by rewarding him when he does.

As we watch children growing, we find that their parents, and almost everybody else readily love them. They are cute, cuddly, dependent, and helpless. They do not do anything to upset anybody. So, parents and those around them take care of them with pleasure. But as they grow older, and begin to

make demands, and choices, which in many cases are not the ones made by their parents, conflicts begin to appear.

When these conflicts happen, they do not happen at the same time or to the same degree in all children. Some children will have more and begin earlier than others. Parents during this period have to use their judgment as whether to interfere or not. A good guiding principle is that we have to try to make the child continue to feel that we still love him. So it may be a good idea to accept those behaviors, which are not important, and try to correct those which are important.

Behind this strategy are two reasons. The first is that by doing that, we are avoiding frustrating the child to the extent that he begins to doubt our love. The second is to make our interferences at a minimum, because if we do not, and we interfered with many of his behaviors, our interference will lose some of its effectiveness. If we say to the child "No" twenty times every day, soon he will not even hear it when we say it.

Two questions are often asked here. The first is which behaviors are we to consider important and should be corrected and which ones are not important and because of this, tolerated. This is a question in which the value system of the parents

will have an effect. Some parents accept it when their children jump on the furniture, while others object to it vehemently. Some parents tolerate it when their children make a mess, while others do not.

The rule that we should use in making our decision should be the following. If the behavior is a step toward learning something useful either to the child or somebody else we do not interfere. If it is the opposite or it is neither will lead to something good, or bad, we will not interfere with it, and let it pass. Using this approach we can say that jumping on the furniture is unacceptable, because there is nothing good to be gained from this, except may be learning to have no regard for our surrounding, and no respect for the property of others. But making a mess while the child is feeding himself can be tolerated, because it is a necessary step in learning how to eat.

The second question is if we want to correct a given behavior what should we do? Here we are talking about discipline. And because this is a very important topic in raising children we are going to treat it may be in many places. This is the beginning.

Disciplining our children:

Before talking about it, we have to define what we mean by discipline. Some interpret it as punishing the child, including inflicting bodily harm on him. This is one component of discipline but it involves much more than that. Discipline is providing the child with the parameters for his behavior. It is telling him in the plainest and clearest language that we can muster, which behaviors are allowed and which are not. This is of vital importance to the child. Some people believe that as the child needs love he also needs discipline.

A child with no discipline is a child who is at a loss as to what he is supposed to do and what he is not supposed to do. He is confused, but in the absence of directions from the parents or adults around him, he continues to do whatever he wants. Without anybody telling him whether his behavior is acceptable or not, he becomes an extremely self centered individual, whose desires reign supreme in directing his behavior, and who cannot stand any criticism or tolerate anybody standing in the way of his desires.

Such a person cannot tolerate any restrictions that any authority imposes on him. He has no respect for the laws neither of God nor of man. I don't need to elaborate further on what he can do

and what he cannot do. In a nutshell he is an individual who does what he pleases at the time and location that he chooses. This makes all of us in favor of discipline. But it is not an easy thing to do. It has to be done with great care, because it could deteriorate and hurt the child's chances of becoming a good individual. For the discipline to be successful it has to meet certain conditions.

The first of these conditions is that it has to be reasonable, consistent and rational. What do we mean by that? By reasonable we mean that when we decide which behaviors are desirable, and which are not, we have to do this in the context of today's world. So we do not adopt outmoded ideas such as "Children should be seen but not heard" or that respect of parents means that children don't talk when the father is there, or even come close to him.

The second thing that we have to remind parents of is that discipline must be consistent. This means that it does not change from day to day. What is considered good today will be still good tomorrow, the next week, and the next year. Also what is considered good for the child is good for his parents, and what is considered bad for the child is also bad for the parents. Another important aspect here is for the two parents to have the same value system. So those behaviors that are labeled wrong

are considered wrong by both. And those behaviors that are labeled good are considered good by both.

The third quality of good discipline is that it has to be rational. By this we mean that there is a reason behind it, so it will make sense to the child. It is a known fact that after two or three years children begin to ask us for the reason behind our commands to them. Parents used to either ignore that or simply tell them that the reason is that they said so. This, we later discovered, does not wash with children. They do not accept that, and often dismiss it as another indication that their parents are not reasonable. So we have to be prepared when our child asks us "Why?" to answer him telling him something that he can understand, and help him to judge us as reasonable and fair. Some say that we cannot do that because children do not understand what we are talking about. This is true when our children are very young. So when we see a two-year toddler headed toward the street, we are not going to reason with him and tell him that there are cars and other hazards in the street. We are simply going to grab him and that is it. When this happens, the child will not understand what we are doing, and he may think that we are crazy to grab him in such manner and deprive him of going into that interesting place. This does not mean that we will

do this with him when he grows up. Because when he does, he will want to know the rationale behind our do's and don'ts. That rationale better makes sense to him. Because if it doesn't he will simply ignore it.

So far we talked about setting rules for children's behavior, in which we make clear to them what is acceptable and what is not. Discipline does not end here. It has to deal with the question, what should we do if the child chose not to abide by our rules? This is one of the most important questions that face parents, for which there is no pet answer. We all know and agree that this calls for some action from the parents. But what is it? There are different views. Not only because there are different schools of psychology, but also because of the fact that children are different, and what may work with some will not necessarily work with others.

Here we are talking about punishment. There are differences among educators as to the kind of punishment that should be used, its severity, and its timing. But it seems that everybody agrees that punishment is one of the important components of discipline. Punishment does not have to be corporal, even though sometimes it may be the only language that the child understands. Let me state what I think about punishment. Very early in the life of the child

sometimes we have to show our displeasure when he does something that we disapprove. This form of punishment is probably the first indication that the child receives that tells him that he did something unacceptable to those whom he cares about.

We have to warn parents that extreme responses such as yelling or screaming are not recommended, because they may produce more harm than good. The child will be shocked and feel betrayed. How often do we do that? Depends on our judgment whether what the child did could lead to a serious damage to him or to someone else, or could develop into a bad habit that would be difficult to change in the future. Our hope here is the importance of the parent's approval in the eyes of the child, and his attempts to please them. We think that this form of punishment can be used roughly until the beginning of the third year.

After that other forms of punishment can be introduced. During the first two years, the child forms the beginning of a personality. He has an idea about what his parents will accept and what they will not accept. But he also has some ideas of his own that he wants to try and see how much he can get away with. He sees himself as a member of the family, who has equal rights with everybody else. He has broken the ties with his mother, and became

independent. Also he has a strong inquisitive mind and many parts of the environment are interesting.

So he begins exploring, something that the adults around him seem not to approve of, for reasons he cannot see. I don't need to elaborate on this, because we are all familiar with it. So what do we do? Many parents take away everything that has some value, and hide it away. This is not the ideal way to deal with the situation. This is depriving the child of valuable experiences, and also frustrates him, because he is denied something that he wants. Not only that but he does not understand the reason. I recommend allowing the child to handle most of those so-called expensive and breakable things under supervision. So we give him the object and make sure that this happens in an area that will protect the object if it is dropped. When this happens the child is happy, and we did not risk anything except being with the child while he explores the treasures that we have.

No matter how patient we are, and how much we try to avoid conflicts with our two or three years old, we will be confronted with situations when we have to punish the child. His selfishness, stubbornness, and lack of reasoning ability put us on a collision course with him for the next three or four years. We have to ask ourselves what is the most

effective punishment that will work with my child. For some a stern look is enough, for others a verbal warning is plenty, but for others corporal punishment may be necessary.

Here the recommendation is to use the threat of punishment before you actually use it. And in the rare cases of using it, it has to be reasonable, and administered without emotion. If it is, the child will feel that he is not loved anymore. Other forms of punishment, which are acceptable, are depriving the child of something that he loves. This could be a television program, a toy that he loves, and an activity that he likes. Some parents send their children to their rooms as a punishment. Some say that we should not use something that is supposed to give the child pleasure, to punish him. As a substitute we can use another area in the house, which is neutral as a place for the offending child. The punishment here is that we are isolating the child and depriving him from any contacts with the rest of the family, from which he derives some pleasure.

Let us remember that the purpose of all punishments is to make the child change an unacceptable behavior, and abandon it permanently. Sometimes this does not happen, when the child does not feel that we are fair, or the punishment was

too excessive, or if the child does not feel that we love him.

Let me make this absolutely clear. If discipline is not combined with a strong dose of love, it will be detrimental to the child, and to our relationship with him. So the child even while being punished must remain sure that we love him, and that we hate what he is doing, and not him. A child who is severely punished feels that he is not loved. When parents hear that they are surprised, and say that children should not question their parent's love. They should know that we love them. They forget that a child under punishment does not see any sign of love. He often sees a father or a mother in a state of rage and anger punishing him. This is not the picture of a loving parent. Most children when punished have a difficult time separating their parent's rejection of their behavior from their rejection of them.

This reminds me of a movie which I saw about forty years ago. It was called, "Good bye Mr. Chips" This was the story of a teacher whose name was Mr. Chips, who dedicated his life to teaching children. He became a teacher at the age of twenty-one, and spent the next thirty nine years of his life teaching primary grades in a private school. The movie shows him teaching a difficult group of boys the last year of his long career. He was a successful

teacher. He believed that children should be disciplined, when they make a mistake. And he loved his students with a true and Christian love. His love was reflected in many of his behaviors. He was kind, he never shouted or yelled at them, and when one of them made a mistake, he never talked to him in front of his friends, but talked to him alone. He gave them gifts on various occasions, and invited them and their parents to his house. Even when he disciplined them, he showed his love. The way he did this, was to speak to the offender emphasizing the effect of his behavior on others. He did this with the first, the second, and the third offense. After this if the child refused to listen, he had to be punished. His punishment was to deprive the child of some of his privileges. He used to repeat this a couple of times. If all this fails, he decides to administer physical punishment. In the movie, they showed him doing this with a great degree of success.

But one of the boys did not respond and Mr. Chips had to be more patient with him, pleading with him to stop his aggressive behavior. But he continued to bully and hit other boys. So, finally he decided that it is time to administer physical punishment. He stretched the boy across his lap, with his face down, giving him swats on his behind.

As the boy began crying, Mr. Chips was also crying. The offending child was deeply touched with his teachers love for him, and became one of the best boys in the class. And when Mr. Chips was ready to retire, this boy headed the effort to arrange for him a farewell party. So love and discipline are the secret formula for treating children at any age.

A final word about discipline is that it should diminish, as the child grows older. The application of discipline is done primarily to make the child strongly aware of the fact that there are behaviors, which are acceptable, and others, which are unacceptable. If this is done with the above qualifications, the child's chances of adopting the acceptable behaviors and refraining from the unacceptable ones are excellent. So, by the time the child becomes a pre teenager he will have absorbed most of what his parents have been trying to instill in him. Will every child who is exposed to this do that? The answer is no. The reasons are not easy to speculate about. May be the parents did not follow all the above recommendations. They may have administered severe punishments, which are too harsh and not equal to the offense. They may have not shown enough love, or provide adequate and convincing rationale. Some of the reasons come from outside the home. It may be the strong effect

of a friend, or a group to which the child belongs.

2. The need to belong:

Man is a gregarious creature. He cannot live alone, and one of his most devastating problems is loneliness. This is why he always seeks the company of others. Some may think that loneliness is the physical absence of human company. This is in itself very difficult to endure. But its presence does not always guarantee that loneliness is gone. Many people feel alone even if they are in a crowd, or if they do not have anything in common with the people around them. If one does not have something to share with the group, he feels isolated. You ask why then many of the early fathers of the church left the world and went deep in the wilderness, and lived away from everybody. Didn't they fear loneliness? They probably did not. They felt the presence of God, and since they had many things in common with Him, they never felt lonely.

These are not ordinary people, but ordinary people need each other. This is why people need to belong, and why our children need to belong. Someone may say that this is easy to accomplish since almost every new born is born in a family to

which he belongs. This is true, and the sense of belonging begins to form in the child as he feels the love and acceptance from the members of his family. He will feel that he is an important part of the family, and that it is HIS family. But this does not always happen.

Some children do not feel loved; some feel that their parents prefer their brothers or sisters. There are many reasons why some children feel they do not belong to their families. Some of them feel this very early in their lives, before they go to school, and some feel it during their adolescent years. It goes without saying that when this estrangement happens early, it will have a stronger effect on the child. Because at that young age he will be more receptive to any ideas even if it is detrimental to him. This is the price that he has to pay to be accepted by whatever group he happens to stumble on and wanted to join. We cannot exaggerate the devastating effects on our children when they look outside their family and their church for a group that will accept them.

When they do find one, they will soon discover that they almost have to give up their identity if they wanted to continue to be members of the group. To begin with, they have to obey the leaders of the group. In many cases they find themselves who

refused to obey their parents, obeying harsher and more dictatorial people. They also have to adopt the group's values, language, dress, and other habits that often put them on a collision course with their families, relatives, and sometimes against society itself. I don't need to go in more details to convince you of the catastrophic consequences of belonging to one of these groups on our children.

Parents have to think about this before it happens. If they treat their children with love, and a consistent rational discipline, they can be optimistic that they will not join one of those evil peer groups. We have to be aware also that even the most adjusted children will need to join outside groups. This is the way they learn their social skills, and how to relate to others. They will most probably select those groups whose values do not conflict with theirs. This is why civic organizations, and churches try to form healthy groups to which teenagers and others can belong.

3. The need to succeed:

The old proverb says, "Nothing succeeds like success". This is true. Nothing uplifts man's spirit and makes him feel good about himself like success. Man is a goal-seeking creature. He makes choices as

to what he wants to do every minute of his life. He decides to pursue certain goals, and proceeds to reach them. Some of those goals are close and can be achieved in a short time, such as deciding to go for a walk, or to dine out, or to read. There are many short-term goals in the life of everyone of us. And when they are achieved we feel good. But some goals are far away. These are usually the more important ones. The ones that need long range planning, a lot of thinking, preparations, and a sustained effort and interest, if we are to achieve them.

Man needs to succeed in both. This success becomes essential to the positive self-concept that we mentioned before. This is why parents have to make sure that their children succeed in whatever they are doing. This is why they should not use adult standards in judging children's behavior, or work. So when a three-year old boy shares his toy with his younger sister, we applaud him, and praise his behavior. When we do that we are not only telling him that his behavior is acceptable, but also that it is good, and that he succeeded in what he did. This will encourage him to repeat his sharing. We bend backward to approve the positive things that he does to make him feel successful. "Accentuate the positive" psychologists tell us. It will work

wonders with our children, for the simple reason that failure is so devastating to their young and fragile egos, that we cannot risk that.

But we cannot continue to do that, because they have to learn to accept failure, as a part of life that nobody can avoid. We begin to do that when we notice that the child has developed a relatively strong positive self-concept to the extent that he can take some criticism. Let us not forget that we need to tell the child which of his behaviors is acceptable, and which is unacceptable. So if we tell him that everything is all right, to make him feel successful, he will never identify the perimeters of his behavior. Also too much success leads to pride, and arrogance. Arrogant children resist any change suggested by adults, and resent any criticism leveled at their behavior by anyone.

So success is important, but failure is also important. Failure tones down the arrogance and gives the child a much-needed experience in the ability to handle failure. Failure is also an excellent way to learn. In order to know the correct answer to a problem, we have to know the incorrect. Before we can write well, we have to go through writing bad. While failure may be too devastating to those with a weak and shaky self- concept, it becomes a strong motive for the relatively confident person to

try again until he succeeds. Those children whom we call "street-wise" are those children who were on their own from a relatively young age. This is why they were exposed to the good and bad in society very early in their lives. They undoubtedly had many failures before they became successful in dealing with their problems. They learned from those failures, which hardened them and gave them the wisdom after many years of experiencing both success and failure.

To summarize, we can say that parents have to begin by surrounding the child with easy tasks, which he is capable of doing. They have to praise his behavior, and applaud his success. As the child builds an adequate self-concept, they have to decide when to begin telling him that he is wrong. While encouragement should continue in the things that are not right or wrong, such as his drawings, paintings, and writing (in the beginning), or singing. He has to be told very early that he is wrong if he hit his sister, especially if in doing so, he is successful in getting back his toy.

This will add a very important caveat to the meaning of success, that success is not only accomplishing one's goals, but if this is done at the expense of somebody else it is not considered success. Parents also have to explain to the child

when he fails, that everyone fails once in a while, that it is not the worst thing in the world. And that worse than failure is the inability to bounce back and try again. Another difficulty that we run into in this area is the fact that it is very difficult to admit to one's failures. And if we do, we would like to blame it on something else, and not on any mistake that we have made. Admitting a mistake, is probably one of the hardest things for mankind. Parents can help their children a great deal if they admit that they made a mistake, when they do. It will be very helpful if they apologized for it even to their children.

4. The need to be independent:

When the child is born, he is completely dependent on his mother for almost all his needs. She loves him, feeds him, cleans him, shelters him, and carries him from one place to another. The child enjoys his dependence and because of it develops a strong love for his mother. As he begins to crawl, we observe him moving away from his mother. This is his first step toward independence. But we also see him stop and look back to make sure that his mother is still there. He wants his independence but does not want to lose his relationship with his

mother. This is probably the first conflict that the child faces in his life. How does he deal with it? And how can we help him deal with it?

We have to realize that the child has to develop his independence because it is the only way for him to develop a separate identity from that of his mother. And because we know that his reluctance is due to his fear of losing his mother's love. Then if we want him to be successful when he is testing the waters of independence, his mother has to encourage him, while continuing to show him her love. A child who is sure of his parents love will continue to seek his independence with success. This does not always happen, because some mothers refuse to let go, and resent it when their children get married, or move away and get a place of their own. Some continue to interfere in their life and try to control them, and keep them dependent on them.

We do not need to point out that those mothers are selfish mothers whose behavior can end in a tragedy for them or for their children, the least of which is a strained or severed relationship with their children. The problem of independence, which develops at a relatively young age, flares up in the teen years, when the child is approaching adulthood (more about this later). Our difficulty in dealing with our children at any age is that they are not

convinced that we really love them. If we make this one of our priorities in dealing with them, we will have much less problems when we attempt to direct or correct their behavior.

We have to remember that our love should be demonstrated in concrete signs and words that are repeated to the child every chance we get. When the child is sure that we love him, he will accept our suggestions more willingly. We also have to remember that our suggestions have to be tailor made for the kind of child we know our child to be. We expect him to obey. But if he does not, we have to be forceful. And this forcefulness has to be stronger when the child is young (say about five or six on until twelve or thirteen). We have to tell them in a calm but firm voice that good children do not do that, and since he is a good child he is not supposed to do it.

Some children may think that they are entitled to make their own decisions since this is THEIR life. Some even say that to their parents. This may not happen often with the children who are sure about their parent's love. But if they are not, and expressed their objection, the parents have to tell them that God gave them the grave responsibility of bringing up their children, and that this is their divine right given to them by none other than God himself.

Even after the children move away and have an independent life, parents will continue to have the right to advise them about the decisions that they think are wrong, even though they do not have any power to make them follow their advice. It is very important for the children in the age range that we mentioned before to obey their parents. Of course we prefer obedience based on understanding because it is more effective. But when the child is too young to understand he has to obey. This is important because it is the proper behavior from a loving child toward his loving parents. Jesus many times said to the people if you love me keep my commandments. It also saves us much energy and effort in raising our children and it is a good preparation for them to obey God, because He asks his children to obey him without thinking too much about what he is asking them to do.

Many parents report that it is almost impossible to get children to obey. They throw up their arms in despair and declare that they tried every approach but failed. First we have to be aware of the fact that this is a common problem that every parent meets. Of course some are more successful than others in solving this problem but all have met the problem. It is a universal problem because it is caused by the existence of few common characteristics in the

children at that stage of their growth. They are selfish, want to be independent, and they are functioning on the level of pleasure and pain, which means that they do those things that will bring them pleasure and avoid those which bring them pain.

As we mentioned several times before that establishing a loving relationship between the child and his parents is of the utmost importance. And when we say this we mean that it is important for the child to love his parents, as it is important for the parents to love their children. This is particularly important in solving this problem. The reason for this is that until the child is about six or seven, he values his parent's approval, and tries to avoid upsetting them. This is one of the strongest motives to obey them.

Banking on that, parents can be successful in making their children obey them, just by showing their disapproval of their behavior. It will also be helpful if the parents practiced what they are preaching, and show the child that they refrain from the behaviors that they ask him to refrain from, and do the same things that they are asking him to do. They also have to clarify to him that they do this because it is the right behavior. Another source of help here is the life of our Lord when he was on earth. The Bible tells us that he was obedient to his

(parents). So, here is God who created everything including his parents did not find it offensive to obey them.

Another reason for children's disobedience is their laziness. They share this with adults. It seems that everybody to a degree is not willing to spend too much effort doing something that he does not like. This speaks tons for the importance of motivation in shaping people's behavior. When motivation is not there, people apologize, they cut corners, and if they do it, they do it grudgingly, with boredom and the lack of interest so obvious to anybody who is watching. So your son, who grudgingly takes the garbage out, would walk miles if you decide to take him to a movie. The same son, who does not have time to do a chore for his mother, will find time to go through those endless music exercises if he wants to be a musician. Parents can deal with that by rewarding their children when they do those chores. Rewards should not be always of a material nature. We can use praise, a smile, a pat on the back, or an encouraging word. All these will go a long way in rewarding him for what he did. If the parents are active and not lazy, this will help the situation also.

One phenomenon connected with both

independence and laziness, is the lack of neatness and organization, which we all observe in our children. It is a rare parent who does not complain about this when the subject comes up. This is one of the problems that are universal, yet there are no definite answers, as to what causes it, or how to deal with it. Here we have to guess. The first possible reason is that this way children are asserting their independence, which they value dearly. They may also be announcing to their parents that they are lazy, and consequently, please don't ask us to do anything for you. Another guess would be that while living with their parents who were very organized, they had to be organized, which they became under pressure. So when they leave home, they become messy, feeling that this is one of the ways to celebrate their independence. Another possibility is that very early in their life they became disorganized and their parents did not try to correct them. They must have felt that that behavior is acceptable.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOME INTERESTING FACTS

We mentioned before that children and adults have few characteristics in common. These can be of help to us in understanding our children's behavior, even if we know that these characteristics are not found in all of us to the same degree.

1. Children are selfish:

This is one of the strongest characteristics of all children. Selfishness has a vital function in maintaining the life of the child. It is one of the tools that the child is born with and which will help him to live in a world in which he has to compete with others for almost everything that he needs to survive. Some ask what do you mean by selfishness? Is it love of one's self? If it is, what is wrong with that? They even say that this kind of love is essential and healthy. They tell you that God

himself said, "Love your neighbor as yourself", which means that you have to love yourself first before you can love your neighbor. Psychologists tell us that any person who does not love himself is a candidate for few mental diseases That may result in unexpected evil actions such as killing rampages and committing suicide. Selfishness goes beyond self-love. It is an exaggerated and unusually strong self-love, coupled with a lack of love or concern for others. But when selfishness is tempered by a love and concern for others, it becomes a healthy attribute, which is essential for good behavior. This is what we as parents try to help the child accomplish. The question here is, how do we do that?

There are few things that we can do. First we need to change the concept of love from taking to giving. The example that the parents give here is of great importance in changing our children's behavior from enjoying taking to enjoying giving. We can also invoke the example of our Lord who taught us that giving love is the kind of love that God has for all of us. We can also reward acts of sacrifice when our children show them. Society, outside of religion greatly values and rewards sacrifice, and giving others the credit for one's success. We can use that also to impress our

children with the value of being a giving and sacrificing member of society.

2. Children are lazy:

We mentioned that before but there is no harm in emphasizing it again. Some people hesitate to accept this, since accepting it implies the admission that they too are lazy. Nobody wants to admit that. But it may be useful for us to recognize our shortcomings than to ignore them.

Here we can say that the example given by the parents is one of the best ways we can teach our children to learn how to defy their natural tendency to shy away from doing what they should do. And as we mentioned before if the task before the child is desirable to him, either because he likes it, or because doing it will please his parents; laziness will be no problem.

Also praising the child for his active participation in any effort will encourage him to develop this useful attitude in the future.

3. Children refuse to admit their mistakes :

It seems that this is one of the most difficult

things for human beings to do. You see this every day. You see it in men and women, in children and adults, in blacks and whites, in rich and poor. Its universality is amazing. There are degrees in this common phenomenon. Children usually are less abstinent about admitting their mistakes. When they do it, they do it because of their fear of punishment. But when adults do it, they do it out of arrogance and pride. We don't need to point out that if people learned to admit their mistakes, the world would be a much happier place to live in. How many homes are broken because of this? How many divorces happen? How many children are estranged from their parents? How many crimes are committed? How many tragedies happen as a result of this weakness that we all suffer from to a certain degree? It is a rare person who readily admits that he was wrong, and that he made a mistake. It takes a great deal of courage and humility for an adult to admit that. But if parents made a practice of admitting their mistakes in front of their children, these will not find it that difficult when it is their turn to do it. The good example given to their children is one of the most potent factors in shaping their behavior.

Even God emphasized this in His many

messages throughout the Bible. The concept of repentance, which implies confessing one's sins, is one of the most important concepts in man's relationship with His creator.

The Bible has hundreds of verses that communicate that. But none is more known or more powerful than the one in our Lord's Prayer that says, "and forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us".

4. Children hate to be told what to do:

This is another quality that children and adults share. This quality is found in every human being. But while we all have it, yet it is not of universal strength. Some individuals have it stronger than others. These are those who automatically reject the suggestions or corrections of others, and then begin to search for reasons to use as their rationale for doing that. Needless to say that these people are very difficult to change their behavior. One of the reasons this happens is that they do not see their mistakes, and consequently they see no need to change, or to accept anything from anybody, no matter what his his relationship with them, his expertise, or his authority in the area of conflict.

Another reason behind their behavior is that they

are psychologically insecure. They do not have a healthy and strong self-concept. So, they try to assert their personality by resenting anybody's interference in their affairs. As far as adults are concerned there is very little that anybody can do about that. These people are going to stay like that for the rest of their lives no matter what people say. They will not change unless they see a vision or a revelation from heaven. But as far as children are concerned, we have a chance of modifying that behavior, so the rejection does not happen automatically, but will happen after giving some consideration to what is proposed. If this happens there is some hope that some of those proposals will be accepted. It is important for parents to make their proposals in the form of suggestions rather than orders. When the child is young, there is no harm in giving him few orders. But as we mentioned before these have to be made in firm tones but not in angry, or threatening tones. As the child gets older we have to refrain from ordering him gradually, especially if we observe that generally speaking he is a good child.

It is also good to know that if the child was properly brought up during the first five or six years of his life, our struggle with him to meet our expectations will be much less, than would be the

case if he was not. Another way we can influence our children in this area, is for the parents to listen to some of their children's suggestions, as they get older. This goes a long way toward establishing solid and warm relationships between them and their children.

Which qualities do we want to see in our children?

After talking about the process of learning and the forces that are at play in the child, and how we can help him direct those forces in the right direction, it is appropriate to ask what direction? All that we have to do is to select those behaviors that we think are desirable and try to get our children to adopt them. I am not going to dwell on this point, because I feel that all the parents for whom this is written have adopted the Christian values as their own. They will have no difficulty in deciding which ones they want their children to have.

To briefly summarize those qualities, I would emphasize the following:

1. Loving god, with all the heart, all the soul, all the mind and thanking Him for all His wonderful gifts; by praying to Him at least

two times every day.

2. Loving the members of the family, our friends, and our neighbors, and expressing our love for all the above in terms of our behavior toward them.

3. Obeying God's commandments, which include faithfulness to Him, recognizing our mistakes, and admitting them. Also not getting involved in the big ones; such as killing, worshipping modern idols, committing adultery, coveting, and being committed to honesty, and purity.

Last but not least, honoring his parents, loving them, obeying them, and appreciating all their efforts in bringing him and taking care of him.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOME COMMON MISTAKES AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

1. The problems connected with food:

Eating is one of those innate characteristics, which every human being is born with. It has a very important function in our survival. Healthy people enjoy eating and this is why they do it over and over. If it was an activity that brings pain and suffering people would have avoided it. This is why it had to be enjoyable. When we ask is it enjoyable for all? The answer is NO. Some parents especially mothers have perfected a technique for changing this pleasant and enjoyable behavior into a nightmare and a battle ground between them and their children.

How do they do that? They do it easily. It begins when the child begins to select his food. He does this by rejecting certain foods and accepting others. If his selection is roughly according to what the mother thinks is a proper diet, there is no problem.

But most of the time, his preferences are not. When this happens a problem begins to show its ugly face. A problem, if not handled properly could ruin the relationship between the child and his mother, and at the same time may result in the child adopting an unhealthy attitude toward food. The first thing that happens here is that the child is ordered to eat certain foods which are judged by his mother as healthy, and is deprived of certain others which are thought to be less healthy, or downright harmful.

In this confrontation, we have to realize that the mother controls the action. She is the one who provides the food for the child, and without her help the child simply will have nothing to eat. The action begins when the mother tries to get the child to eat something that he has rejected. She cajoles him to eat, but he refuses. He does not say anything, because he is not talking yet, but he can refuse to open his mouth, or to spit the food if she forces it into his mouth. Sometimes he uses his hands to knock down the container or the spoon carrying the food, and sometimes he screams declaring that he is rebelling against her attempt to ram something down his throat against his will. If the child is capable of walking, he runs away, but the persistent mother follows him from room to room with a spoon full of food. What a sight!

What is the result? Either the child succeeds in refusing to eat, or he is persuaded to eat it. In both cases eating which is supposed to be an enjoyable activity becomes an area of conflict, and the food which is supposed to bring people joy, brings them pain, and as a result they hate it. How can we handle this situation? The answer is by not letting things reach this stage. First, we have to realize that it is normal for a child to choose his food. Some children do it early, when they are eight or nine months old. Most of them at this age prefer their mother's milk over anything else. This is normal. But the mother knowing that she would like to wean the child as early as possible begins giving him outside food. The child does not welcome this. The advice here is not to try to wean the child too early.

Children, who are deprived of their mother's milk early in their lives, are more prone than others to have problems later. The reason may be an early physical separation from the mother, which as we mentioned before, is very important for the psychological well being of the child. Second when we begin introducing an outside food, we have to begin gradually, and try to introduce foods, which are as close to mother's milk as possible. Some mothers begin by trying to give the child a solid or semi solid food. The possibilities of the child

accepting this are slim at best. It is also helpful to offer the child at the beginning a wide variety of different foods with different tastes, in an attempt to recognize which foods he likes and which he dislikes. There is nothing wrong with trying to get the child to like something that he had rejected before. The reason is that liking food is a matter of habit. And when the child rejects a certain food that we know is very useful to him, we can try again. But we have to watch the child and see if he is strongly against it that we stop trying after few attempts.

As the child grows and begins feeding himself, he will continue to select the food that he eats. In the majority of cases he does this on the basis of the appearance of the food. This is why he refuses to eat many of the adult foods presented to him. He thinks based on an evaluation of its appearance either that he will like it or that he will not. Here we think that the way to abort this process that may result in rejecting many kinds of food, which are crucial to his health, is to suggest firmly to the child that he has to try any food that we offer before rejecting it. This way he is exposed to many foods that he will miss otherwise. He most probably will insist that he does not like what we made him taste. But we have to do this few times with every food, before we

agree with him and refrain from offering it to him again. An important factor is the attitudes of the mother and the father toward that food. In many cases when they display a positive attitude toward it, the child changes his opinion about it. It will also help if older brothers and sisters show a liking for that food.

In some cases the food problem becomes so complicated that the child eats very little. This is likely to happen if the early food problems, which we talked about were not handled properly. When things get to this stage in which, food becomes an area of confrontation between the child and his parents, we have to fall back on the fact that by nature food is appealing. In this case a schedule is set up for meals, and the whole family tries to participate in it. At the designated time food is put on the table, and family members are invited to come. If the child refused to come, he is told that there will be no food available to anybody (him included) before the next meal. If he insists that he is not hungry, fine. But he will not be allowed any food until the time of the next meal. The child will get hungry, and if he skipped one or two meals, he will eat when food is put on the table, no matter what it is.

2. Problems connected with sleep:

Sleep is another area of the child's life, which is supposed to be enjoyable, and which can develop into another area of confrontation between the child and his parents, and instead of bringing the child joy, could bring him suffering, and pain.

Sleep is not a problem for the newly born. He sleeps most of the time. But as he begins to grow, he sleeps less. Some of his waking hours may happen at inconvenient time for the mother. But this is mostly tolerated because of his young age. This stage ends as the child settles down to a sleeping schedule, which coincides with that of his mother. The next problem happens when the child is around two to three years old. He is beginning to share in the social life of the family, which he enjoys. Suddenly, while no one else is going to bed, he is ordered to sleep. The parents aware of the time children need to renew their energy, order the child to go to his room and sleep. The child does not understand why. He simply does not see our rationale behind the order. He recalls that sleep used to come to him while he was on his mother's lap, enjoying the feel of her body, and the warmth that informed him that she loves him. What happened to change all that? He asks himself, but finds no

answer.

Most children are confused and refuse to obey. They sometimes whine, or cry, or claim that they are sick to get out of it, to no avail. The only response that they may get is silence or worse, yelling from one of the parents (usually the father). The child begins to feel that sleep is an area of conflict between him and his parents. The most likely results in the majority of children are a strained relationship between them and their parents, and a hatred for sleep, something that they used to enjoy. What is the solution? The solution is to avoid making sleep a big issue in the life of the child. Let him enjoy himself by staying up late especially when he has not yet begun going to school. Let him go to sleep on his mother's lap being cuddled and loved.

This way he will continue to love to sleep. As he begins to go to school, we have to explain to him the importance of sleep in meeting the rigors of a school day. We can also be good examples for him, by going ourselves to bed early during the weekdays when we have to work. If the child has good relationships with his parents, and he trusts them, he will likely obey, because it makes sense to him, and after all his parents are also doing it.

Some parents set up a fixed time for their

children to go to bed, which they announce ahead of time. There are few points that need to be made here. First, this needs to be flexible, so if the child has no school the next day, the time may be pushed back an hour or more as the circumstances warrant. We don't want sleep to deprive the child of any legitimate pleasure such as having fun with his grandparents if he can stay late. This makes sleep an undesirable alternative, something we have to avoid. Second, the time has to be realistic in terms of its enforceability. It is useless and even harmful to the influence of the parents if they keep telling their children that eight o'clock is the time they have to go to bed, and then allow them to stay up until later. Parents have to be firm in insisting on going through with their announcements. Nobody wins when they don't do that. There is a famous saying that dramatizes this that says, "if you told your child that you are going to kill him if he did something, and he did it, you have to kill him".

Third, the child should not be rewarded, when he does something good, by letting him stay up later than usual. Also he should not be punished by asking him to go to bed, because this will make him hate sleep.

3. Problems related to telling the truth:

Telling the truth is one of the virtues, which every parent wants his children to adopt. But the reality, which we see is different. Many children tell lies. Some change and end up telling the truth as adults, while some refuse to change, and continue to tell lies for the rest of their lives. Some cannot stop lying to the extent that they continue to tell lies even if they get hurt by it, and are therefore recognized as pathological liars. They simply cannot tell the truth, no matter what the consequences are. When somebody asks: Is this normal? Are children liars by nature? The answer is No. It is not in our nature. People lie for a variety of reasons. They do either to escape blame, embarrassment, punishment or to obtain a benefit or a reward. Sometimes people lie or exaggerate for a stronger effect on their listeners. These are those who just love sensationalism and since many of what happens around us is not always that way, they lie to give it the sensationalism that they adore.

Going back to children, we ask where do they get the idea of lying and why do they adopt it? As we said before the child is not born a liar. He gets the idea from the environment in which he is brought up. He either gets it at home, or/and from outside. The schools, the friends, the relatives, are

good sources. In other words the child absorbs it from those around him. Needless to say that the home is the place with the strongest influence on the child in this area. If the parents and the brothers and sisters lie it will be very difficult for the child not to pick it and internalize it, and incorporate it in his value system. This is why we have to be very careful not to tell any lies at home.

I am saying this because some parents defend themselves by claiming that the lies that they tell are "white lies". They say that these are the lies that will harm nobody, nor do they bring any benefits to anybody. So, if this is the case what is the point of telling them? Some others define white lies as those, which are designed to save someone from being punished for something he did. This is also inappropriate. We have to remind our children that lying for any reason is wrong, and that if someone did something wrong, he should be ready to meet the consequences of what he did. We can also remind them by what Jesus said about telling lies, and how He called Satan the father of lies. We also as parents have to expose lies in our children's talk. We must not accept their lies, even if they are harmless.

Another phenomenon related to lying is

swearing. We have to insist that swearing is an unacceptable behavior, telling our children that Jesus told us not to swear, and that our yes should be a simple yes, and our no, a simple no.

4. Problems related to getting along with each other:

One of the important behaviors which, we love our children to have is to be able to get along with others. This includes many components. It includes tolerating others, stopping being selfish, and jealous, and the ability to compromise when our desires conflict with those of others. It also includes to stop hating, and even loving others, and the ability to sacrifice our comfort and even happiness for their sake. These may be considered steps in developing one's social skills. What happens in this area in the world of children, is disturbing to many, to say the least. Children are notorious for showing their hostility to other children, fighting with them for the slightest reasons, even if they are supposed to be good friends. This is expected when they are young, four or five years.

The explanation is simple, that at this age they are selfish and ready to fight with anybody who deprives them of anything they consider theirs. This is normal. The problem gets complicated when there

is jealousy between them. When a child of two gets a new brother or a sister, he is no more the sole recipient of his mother's love. She pays more attention to the new baby. The older child sees this baby as the one responsible for the lack of the mother's interest in him. He will show signs of withdrawal, or rebellion. Aggressiveness is one of the results of such a situation, and this is why he begins to pick fights with any other child. We recommend that the parents should try hard to make him feel that they still love him, and that their love has not been affected by the arrival of the new baby.

When children fight, some parents try to find who is the guilty party, and punish him. This is not always easy to do. In most cases, both are at fault. It takes two to fight. So parents should announce that if a conflict happened between two children, and it was not resolved, the two will be considered guilty, and will be punished accordingly. By showing the children how to solve conflicts in a mature way, the parents will be teaching their children some of the ways this can happen. One of the devastating events for the security and the psychological well being of our children is observing their parents fighting. Conflicts can happen and observed by children, because these are going to happen. The important

part here is how do we resolve these conflicts amicably. This will do wonders for our children in teaching them how to deal with similar situations in their lives, but if parents fail to do that, the children on top of missing that, will feel very insecure and threatened.

5. Problems related to learning about certain topics:

As we mentioned before, childhood is the golden age for learning. This is why children are always full of questions about all kinds of things. This is a healthy sign that they are interested, and intelligent. Children's questions should be welcomed and answered as correctly as possible. I am saying this because some parents are bothered by their children's questions especially if they are in an area, which is not comfortable to them, as the case in those questions that deal with sex. Before we deal with these, let me say few words about questions in general. We should not discourage our children from asking us about anything they want. Because if we did, they will begin to lose their faith in us and in our ability to provide them with the answers they seek.

This lack of faith can expand to cover our ability

to solve their problems. This can affect their love for us, and can drive them away from us, and to seek help from other people. There is also the possibility that those whom they seek will misinform them. And some of this may adversely affect them one-way or the other. Then some parents believe that their children will not be satisfied with anything less than the full truth, which is not always easy to say. This is not true. Children will be seeking the full truth if they have the sophistication and the knowledge, but they don't. The answer that they expect is an answer they will be able to understand. This is the answer that we are supposed to give. This is why sometimes we have to simplify the facts so the child will understand what we are saying. How to simplify a fact, is something that is left for the parent and his ingenuity in coming up with something which is not totally wrong nor totally true, but which will satisfy the child when he hears it.

An example may explain what I mean by this. This actually happened to me when I came to this country. after a few weeks, I was visiting an elementary school in Ocala Florida, together with my advisor who was a professor of education. He was there to observe few student teachers. The first

student was teaching in fifth grade. She was teaching something about the solar system. Suddenly one of the children asked Dr. Bingham, why don't the stars fall on us since they are not tied to anything? Dr. Bingham looked at me and said, "Mr. Boulos, here is a question for you". I was about to faint, but realized that he wanted to test my ability to simplify a complex concept to a fifth grader.

I hummed and hawed for few seconds thinking of a way out of this very uncomfortable situation. Finally I asked if they have a piece of string and a weight that can be tied. When they brought them, and with all eyes fixed on me, I tied the weight to the string, and began whirling them in a circular movement above my head. Then I asked the boy who asked the question, why doesn't the weight fall? He answered because it is moving. Then I asked, so if I stop whirling it, will it fall? He said, yes. And when I did, the weight fell into my hand. The student was satisfied and Dr. Bingham was happy that his doctoral student was able to do something that many seasoned teachers could not do, and also he did it on the spur of the moment, without any preparation. He was impressed and I was relieved.

6. Sex education:

This is one of the problems, that face every parent, and which has not been successfully solved, despite the many books, articles, and programs, which deal with it. Parents begin to feel the problem, when their four or five year old child asks the traditional question where the new baby his mother came back from the hospital with, came from. The parent panics and begins to mumble something. But in most instances nothing understandable comes out, and the child is not given an answer. Some parents give unbelievable answers such as, we found him in the garbage can, or that the stork dropped him, which may satisfy the child temporarily. But such answers may produce unhealthy attitudes in the mind of the child, or to say the least, incorrect ones. He may think that he too arrived the same way.

What will this do to his self- concept? We do not know. One of the results, as we mentioned before could be a diminished confidence in the parents as sources of correct information. The parents should not be shocked when their children ask that question. To them it is not a sex question, it is a

scientific question. An answer that the baby came from mom's tummy is quite adequate for the five year old, and will satisfy his curiosity. When the parents prepare the child for the arrival of the new baby, answering his questions with as much accuracy as possible, they will not be surprised by an unexpected question when the baby arrives.

The next crisis will be felt when the child becomes a teenager. He will begin to feel attraction toward the other sex. At the same time, he will notice big changes in himself and others of the same age. There will be anxieties, doubts, and many questions that swirl in his mind. There will be also tensions between him, and his friends, and also between him and his parents. He will have worries, and conflicts, and uncertainties. He will feel that there are many new demands and tasks, which he is not equal to. This is one of the most difficult periods in anybody's life. If there is peace and love between the teenager and his parents, things will be much easier for him, during this critical period in his development. But most children confront it while they are estranged from their parents. And this makes it worse. So, as parents we have to try hard to keep our relationships with them on the positive side.

Another task that parents seldom live up to is their duty to provide their children with the correct information about sex. The child has to have the correct knowledge about this important area of his life. This is the only way we can help him to develop the right attitudes toward it. It is not an exaggeration to say that forming the wrong attitudes in this area will result in a very impressive list of wrong and sometimes bizarre behaviors in people. So it is imperative to see that our children get the right information about sex. The earlier this information is given, the better off for everyone concerned. The reason is that when the child is ten or eleven he will not have the full physical aspects of puberty, and will be better equipped to receive the information with more objectivity.

Another problem is who is the one who is to provide the teenager with this important information. The parents feeling inadequate to do it try to push it on the school. The schools claim that teachers do a lot, and try to assign the task to the parents. The ideal situation is for the parents to begin the task, and do whatever they could, and for the school to continue. If this is to succeed, the school and the home should keep in touch with each other, to coordinate their efforts and alert each other

to potential problems. This way our children will go through adolescence with a minimum of problems, and a maximum of adjustments.

Before we leave this topic, we have to mention that many parents are upset when they find their young children engage in a sexual behavior many years before the teen years. This is more frequent in boys than girls, because in boys the sex organ is the only place in which sexual pleasure is concentrated, while in girls the pleasure is defused in many places. So, some boys as early as the age of eight masturbate. What should the parents do?

Some parents think that this is the beginning of an obsession with sex that will ruin their child's personality, and try to interfere by sternly and seriously asking the child to stop. Many warn the child in very strong words that what he is doing will hurt him physically, or even mentally. Then they add that it is a sin. All this is going to scare the child, and make him feel guilty. Will it make him stop? It is doubtful. Obviously this is not the way to deal with the situation. If the boy is few years before adolescence we should neglect the whole matter, because what is happening here is not the result of a strong sexual desire, but the result of imitating some of the older boys, or experimenting or trying to

satisfy his curiosity. If it is, this behavior will eventually stop. But if we interfered and made a big issue out of it, it will not go away easily. But if the child is an adolescent, any sexual behavior will be the normal result of the hormones, which his body produces and no matter how strongly we condemn them, the teenager will continue to do them.

So, it is useless to try to make him stop what he is doing. If we realize that and refrained from interfering, the child will relinquish it and move on to other behaviors. He may begin dating; he may begin flirting, or engaging in sex acts. What do we do in this situation? We recommend dating under the supervision of a concerned adult. We recommend that they do that in a healthy atmosphere, which the church can provide. There are also other civic organizations, which can provide a similar atmosphere, where young men and women can mix with each other and learn how to deal with each other. Let us remember that a good sex education would make these problems less severe and will help the child to adjust to the new tasks and roles that adulthood will thrust upon him.

6. Tantrums:

This is one of the behaviors that nobody accepts, or tolerates; yet it is not uncommon. Some children throw tantrums for a variety of reasons. Some do it because they have been trying to get something and their parents refused to give it to them. The child may have tried different means such as whining, or crying, and found that nothing worked. So, he resorts to throwing a tantrum, as a final and desperate effort to get what he wants. The child may feel that he lost his privileged position and that he has been neglected, and so decided to resort to an extreme measure such as throwing a tantrum to attract attention to himself.

There may be other reasons such as jealousy, or a low self -esteem. The parents should try to identify the reason behind the behavior. They may or may not be able to do that. But the thing that they have to do, and do it successfully is not to give in and give the child what he wants. If the child is successful in getting what he wants in this situation, he will continue to do it. Needless to say that such a child will not be successful in curbing any of his needs and would develop an attitude that he can accomplish anything by following a similar technique, as an adult.

My comments on the latest trends

As I mentioned in the introduction to this edition, a new book written by Dr. Bill Sears has influenced millions around the world and made them question some of the tested means in raising our children. This book, which is called “ the baby Book” was published in 18 languages and sold 1.5 million copies. And because the author is an M.D. it has been perceived by many as the new bible for raising our children.

The three basic tenets of the book are breastfeeding, co-sleeping, and baby wearing. Underlying these is a warning that it is a crime if the child is left crying for any length of time; even a few seconds. Let us deal with these one at a time.

First the warning about crying. Dr. Sears says, “ Every baby whimper is a cry for help, and no infant should be left to cry”.

He claims that crying will damage the brain, which the medical profession denies vehemently. On the contrary some say that crying strengthens the lungs and the vocal cords. Then there is another side to this problem. What are the psychological implications of this recommendation? There is the danger that the child will soon feel that crying is his best way of getting anything that he wants; whether it was allowed or not. This flies in the face of discipline, during which we try to teach the child that there are limits to what he is allowed. This is our basic training that would help him live in the world without expecting it to grant him all his wishes whether they are legitimate or not. What Dr. Sears recommends is a prescription for a spoiled child that will live miserably in a world that not as permissive as his parents.

The first tenet is breastfeeding.

The book recommends that it is of paramount importance for the physical and the psychological wellbeing of the child. It encourages mothers to continue with it even into toddlerhood. This may

extend until the age of three or four. As we examine this we find that mother's milk is far superior to any other milk or formula that we can offer to our children. All are agreed that breastfeeding is better for the baby. But to extend it to the age suggested by Dr. Sears is mostly judged as harmful. There are few reasons for that verdict. First; it will decrease the amount of the other foods that the growing child needs for his physical growth. Second it will extend his dependence on his mother, when all the other capabilities, which he has acquired lately such as walking, talking, and reasoning are there to give him a chance to break away from his mother and become independent. This child who is permitted to cling to his mother's breast will continue to feel that he is still a baby at this stage. This is something that we do not recommend. It may even affect his self-concept and hinder his development into a confident adult.

The second is co-sleeping.

This is one of the topics that the so-called "Old School" has dealt with and clearly recommended

that it is a no no. Children should not be allowed to sleep with their parents after two or three months. Some even advocate that this should happen from the very beginning. The medical community quotes statistics about the number of babies killed who sleep with their parents as they are suffocated when their parents move while asleep. The book recommends that it is acceptable for the child to sleep in his basinet or a portable bed so long as it is next to his mother's.

The issue here is what is this going to affect the child psychologically. In my opinion it will definitely hurt him. It will strengthen his feelings of dependence on his mother, and postpone his breakaway to become an independent person. He may also be exposed to episodes that can complicate his understanding of life, as he perceives it. He may observe his parents fighting, or making love, something that may confuse, and disturb him at this age.

The third is baby wearing.

This emphasizes that the love that parents have for their children has to be expressed by physical contact. Nobody can disagree with this. All child psychologists acknowledge that because the baby at the beginning cannot perceive his parents' love in any other way, it becomes imperative that he should receive it in the form of physical contact. They point to many experiments done with monkeys that prove beyond doubt that physical contact between baby monkeys and their parents was essential to their psychological well being in the future.

Dr. Sears mistake becomes more obvious when he says, " the more time babies spend in their mother's arms the better the chances that they will be well adjusted children". This means that there is a quantitative relationship between these two variables. When one increases the other does too. This made many mothers who read this feel anxious that any time they spend away from their children will have life long negative consequences on them.

The theory and practice behind this tenet are correct but Dr. sears has as in breastfeeding been guilty of

pushing them to the extreme. Exaggeration can reverse whatever we are doing to the opposite. Even love if pushed to the extreme becomes an obsession, which can force people to commit all kinds of crimes even against whom they love, and in the process also hurt themselves.