

CHAPTER III.

Parenting

Good Parenting – Child Development – Controlled Behaviour – Social Interaction - Reasonableness – The Extended Family – Socializing the Child – Socialization - Language – Enunciating Properly - Communicating Skills – Dexterity – Guided Learning – Fathering – Discipline - Mothering – Child Development - Working Mothers.

Good parenting stimulates and develops the child's natural growth... the child will absorb, to an extent, the parents: social preferences and communication skills. It is clear that the higher the form, in matters of: aesthetic taste, appreciation of nature, levels of knowledge, controlled dexterity and social interaction, the better off the child is likely to be... This may not show itself in early life - but emerge later on. Children need to be happy and be at one with their environment – able to cope with their normal day to day life and to be socialized by feeling free, safe and accepted. This gives them confidence to accept different environments, unusual tasks, new relationships and greater challenges.

Children are born with brains that are structured [the organism's genes]. These direct innate [evolutionary], personal characteristics which have some effect on development and interpersonal relationships. This model is challenged by genes needing an external/internal stimulus, or signal, [prenatal-birth period] in order to influence bodily functions. There is still much work needed on the human genome before interventions are developed. However, the environment does affect behaviour > and changing behaviour patterns can change habits and traits. A child's behaviour is also in part determined by its bodily make-up – hereditary factors.

A child in a stressful situation naturally looks to its mother for safety. This attachment, first developed by breast feeding, creates a bonding which should be a natural response. If this bonding is not present it creates tension - affecting intellectual development. If this continues psychosomatic disorders may surface, and later still depression. The child's innate development, in normal circumstances, moves to forming relationships, and to deal with emotions.

It is argued that the level of social class determines acceptance or non-acceptance of education practices and the environment it finds itself in. The working class pursues a natural growth rate, whilst the upper class questioning limiting factors, seeks a higher growth rate. The former is non-stressful and unconflictual – the child grows at its own pace... The latter stressful and demanding – pushing forward – the child is urged to do more.

The range of complexities of individual differences in parenting is many and varied. Parents should agree to the direction they wish their child to take regarding good behaviour... to ensure social inclusion, in the wider sense – neighborhood, school, and out of school societies.

All individuals require both features for balance it is a question of when to apply which method - natural evolutionary growth or forced application. The latter is dissatisfied with the way things are – voices its displeasure... rather than the former who takes it on the chin – put up with mediocrity, and kōtōws to bullying.

A happy child does not lose its temper or throw tantrums. It is eager to learn and experience new things and will delight in building and shaping natural objects. They will soon show the parent how they can master a problem and show pleasure when a problem has been solved. Creating a happy atmosphere is the parent's chief goal knowing that more learning will be achieved by its formation.

Successful parenting requires some understanding of how their child is being affected by every day events, making sure the happy joyous things are repeated, to reinforce positive

accomplishments. Your caring, patient attitude, will achieve far more than giving into moments of frustration and abruptness. The act of doing things together is more important than tasks acted on alone, even if it is only for a limited period. Children like to show what they can do... your praise ensures a repeat performance not in a boastful way but proof of success.

Every task you perform, together with your child, teaches sharing, and those lighter moments in-between – playtimes, teach self-reliance. All teaching, training, playing need structure - to get the most out of them. Structure has a beginning – the introduction, a middle – the main task, and an end – completion. Each part has a form – the steps necessary to build a completed act, and each act becomes a guide to satisfaction. Job satisfaction leads to happiness, and a will to improve... steps that leads to self-reliance, self-control and motivation. One of the most important tasks for the parent is to ensure their child has confidence – promoting a good image of self... a concept which includes identity and self esteem.

Try to only involve your child in ‘achievable tasks’ that will result, with patience and persistence, in successful completion – ensuring a job well done warranting praise – which is your reward. Try not to allow tasks to be too complicated or too large so that they remain unfinished or shoddily done. There is no benefit in congratulations for poor, unfinished, work... so try to make sure it doesn’t happen. – be respectful of your child’s self-opinion. Be consistent and fair making sure your partner holds the same opinions as yourself regarding what is allowed and what is not.

Child Development

If a parent questions whether they are doing right thing or not, their solution should be compared to the subjects highest form - what is morally, physically and mentally best? There has to be a certain amount of risk taking - that offers the child a value of self preservation. Problem solving has to include an element of reaching out – to find a conclusion. Social interaction needs a degree of imagination – placing oneself into somebody else’s position – to make the best appreciation possible.

Young children’s development can be improved by structured stimulation – increasing levels of difficulty. This can be judged by the amount of physical activity and degree of concentration shown by the child. Learning language begins before the spoken word. Speech acquisition is promoted by activity from the parents, particularly the mother, and this must be continually stimulated. Introducing play individually and in a group involves the socialization through relationships.

Try and give your child a varied set of experiences inside and outside the home. The child must be encouraged to become self-reliant, confident and independent – allowed to be left to its own resources and take the initiative. Exploring new territory, using different shaped items, allowed to be noisy, all teach early responsibility and therefore continually encouraged. Children should be stimulated to be active and not lazy – find pleasure in completing a task by the reward it is given, even if it is just a slap on the back and told they’ve done well.

Children progress differently – even within the age range. A child born prematurely - a few days before expected, usually is more active than a child born late. This is not just because the premature child is lighter or that the late arrival is fatter it is a matter of reflexes – the activity of the early arrival. Other than sight the child’s primitive reflexes are begun inside the mother’s womb.

Teaching the child inferior tasks, teaching poor language skills and giving harmful experiences will not give the child a good start to its life. If you are going to take the trouble to have a child, have the expense, and engage in physical pain give your child a good start. Make sure you engage your partner by talking through this lifelong task you are taking on. If you take the right first steps and give it your best shot you will be recompensed many times over. Only the best is good enough. You

need to take control of yourself as much as controlling your child. No-one said bringing up a child is easy.

Pursuing tasks to be completed that are beyond the child's capabilities creates stress. If the child continually fails to live up to the parents expectations, if badgering and nagging is used to browbeat, show up and oppress psychological disturbance will be the result. Children should be given tasks that can be achieved by a limited amount of perseverance and dedication, only so far as to eventually achieve success... all completed tasks immediately praised, an extra effort rewarded by a daily treat.

The highest goal in all matters is to seek enlightenment – wisdom, to pursue what is beautiful and good... Sometimes, to pursue a higher level, it requires a different path – it is good because it develops an open mind. There are many different paths; the fact that you are seeking another way shows flexibility, and perseverance; that you are stopping or hesitating, to allow a chance to re-evaluate – to reform, approach the subject from another direction.

It is a proven fact that too much television or playing too long at computer games harms normal vision, physical fitness, mental capacity, question solving and structured learning; revert to solving the problem, or amusing yourself, by engaging in imaginative play.

Developing your child

Children are born with an accumulation of innate structures – programmed genes. These structures are developed through experiences. These experiences can be increased by stimuli – learning new tasks and changing the child's environment. The mother is the most important factor in the child's early life. It is through her that the baby learns attachment when feeding – bonding. Those children deprived of this natural bonding become detached – their development is slowed down – become aggressive, eventually depressed.

Controlled Behaviour

Controlled behaviour is essential for good social integration and the pursuit of excellence... it is also a means whereby mental and physical space is given to a problem, to allow a rational assessment of each and every action, rather than to plunge in and create waves.

In a child's early years, their store of experience, understanding, rationalization and knowledge has not been built up or shaped, they are but putty in the hands of the parent and educators. Putty unfortunately, if left too long, loses its plasticity - goes hard, eventually it will never be softened again but break up into little pieces. Human beings are the same. Parents should take advantage of the early stages to shape their child in the best way they can. To remove their child away from all those things which are harmful in mind and body? If they do that promoting good behaviour, tolerance, knowledge and a healthy body they are doing the best they can. No parent can say they do not know the difference or hide behind social indifference and the lowest common denominator, which is popular demand.

If you are trying your best to teach good behaviour and direct your child towards structured learning you would be setting back your achievements by allowing your child to play with a badly behaved neighbour's child or a neighbouring child who is playing outside all the time. You cannot allow yourself to be sidetracked or to take the easy path. Children need to be directed by a delicately controlling hand all the time; that is why the close period – birth-to-three, [or four], is essential time - to set the foundation for the future.

Most parents are keen to enroll their child in the local kindergarten or play school. There, the careers, or teachers, point the child in certain directions and introduce the start of structured learning, which builds up on the child's previous experiences.

The educators understand that not all children have similar capabilities... that damage can be done if the pressure on slow learners is forced... that is why it is so important to have sympathetic and patient teachers. For those children underachieving special learning situations should be planned with longer one-to-one tuition times, slotted in. This does not mean that the slow learner will not catch up, for that is far from the truth, what it does mean however is that greater care has to be taken.

It is in this training/learning environment that good habits introduced and reinforced that will stand the child in good stead and be a good basis for future educators to build. Most parents understand that it is this interaction – between child and tutor, based upon good positive experiences lasts forever if gently guided and nurtured.

One of the true indicators to good learning is activity. Children who are advanced in sitting and standing, constructive play and movement are generally advanced in speaking - repeating and answering. These should not be forced responses but gently coaxed and rewarded by your pleasure.

Reasonableness

The concept of reasonableness is not a shared one, nor is the concept static, for what is reasonable one moment is not at another. Knowing a bit more about your partner is a good thing, and talking through these variables does help – listening to each other's points of view is always beneficial, especially if the view alters a perspective.

The idea of a questionnaire seems like a good one. With that in mind I have set out some everyday problems to think about – to be taken as mental preparation, before filling-in the questionnaire. Neither the prompts nor the questionnaire have been devised as anything other than a helpful guide, and to offer a set of suggestions.

The Extended Family

If the family is the Nation's bedrock the extended family must be its core... this is the same in all societies? The family can be defined as a parent[s], guardian or responsible adult, plus a child. This is a social group. This nuclear group can be extended by a grandparent[s], relatives or friend, living in close proximity, or bound by frequent occasion – this is The Extended Family.

Parenting involves care, concern, security and guidance... these acts of love are bonding features begun when the child is first born and continue... go towards confidence building, and close association. All, in turn, provide a good foundation for education, to play its part - towards making a rounded, intelligent, individual child.

Socialization

To ensure a good start in life the parent should involve/include the child with everyday events and issues of the day and home... in a happy, responsive way... keeping the child close at all times – this is 'The Happy Partnership'. These early 'close period' days that should last for a period of at least four to five years. Babies respond to even tempered voices – particularly the mother's - lullabies, nursery rhymes, songs, and softly played music. Children thrive on being cuddled, stroked and held close. The mother is the closest, dearest and most longed for companion –mother's face, smell, and touch.

Increasingly parents return to work within shorter periods after the birth... they, and particularly the mother, are giving this most important period over to someone else... a time when the mother should be at home watching their child grow up. It does not take a psychologist or social worker to spell out the importance of this period. If you doubt their wisdom read any autobiography and you will appreciate how the role of the mother dominates the wellbeing of the child. Of course not all mothers are good and kind and some appreciate that their frustrations and weaknesses might interfere with their child's growth. You might say that in such a case the woman should not have had a child in the first place, but that would be unrealistic. People are not saints... children of such parents should be in the hands of someone who is prepared to spend time looking after them. Such mothers are rare, most understand that this early period, in a child's life, is more important than any other - it is an introduction into the child's immediate surroundings and wider world.

Socialization with siblings and members of the extended family are to be introduced gently - to build upon the *close period*... the parent keeping in attendance - to ensure safety. These are the child's first steps towards sharing - adapting and compensating for the actions of others - to enable the child 'to fit in' and become part of humanity.

The act of socialization is not just about the nuclear or extended family. It is about the child's connection to all other people. This is extremely important in life... it makes the individual able to communicate and relate to others not in a forced unnatural way but by being at ease, friendly and companionable. Naturally the first person to be related to is the child's mother, surrounding family, first friends - neighbours and playmates.

It is with these close companions that your child will grow up with. He will take on their language, culture, habits and social skills. It is for you to make sure your child is surrounded by children and adults whom you know he is safe with: that have good habits, kind thoughts and gentle spirits. Do not believe that by introducing your child to loud, rough, aggressive and unkind children your child will learn to stand up for himself. Shouting, screaming and pushing youngsters are upsetting and this is the last thing you want your child to copy. Do not allow your child to smother, clasp and pull other children to get their attention. It is by being 'a good playmate' those others will want to play and be friends with your child. It is also not by force, having your own way, demanding and seeking attention or by claiming the best and most popular toy.

It is the natural way of mother child touching, cooing, smiling that stimulates the child to kick out in pleasure. He will pucker up his face, shake his head and make faces trying to emulate your gestures... gurgling and crying out to copy your words and sounds.

You must be on hand to keep him safe removing dangerous objects guiding his play by emphasizing the importance of controlled movement; keeping him interested - giving him new challenges and experiences.

Keep up the daily routine of breast feeding, resting, playing, sleeping, and changing his nappy and eventual self feeding and potty training. You will be grateful that you stuck to the daily round that has evolved from his first few weeks. They will change quite naturally as each skill is extended taking just a little longer to perfect whilst you both relate to his changing world. You too will garner satisfaction from stroking his head as he feeds, washing him in his bath, patting him dry and cuddling him with a warm towel. Then you can sit together and watch the clouds pass by, the leaves fall from the tree and listen to the wood pigeons on the slatted roof.

Taking the child to a communal playground, and recreation ground, presents the larger society - outside the home. Swimming classes are a way to involve other children in a group activity that teaches a beneficial skill. This involves fun and games in a controlled setting. Both are an introduction to formal classes at school. Within these first five years the child is introduced into its society, coming safely into contact with others in a secure environment.

These are the most important years to instill self-worth so that the child is confident in its own abilities, not in a manner to better anyone, or to put someone down, but to become sufficiently confident they can cope with other children's behaviour – their peer's difficulties, successes, aggressiveness and pride. Teaching a child to accept these behavioural patterns in others is what socialization is all about and can only be done by the child being confident in its own abilities first, which is why the *close period* is so important. The unsocial behaviour in others needs careful explanation not to make the child feel superior but caring and concerned with another's plight, suffering and problems. Showing a caring attitude towards others is the mark of good behavior appreciated by all, exhibited by concern not nosiness - breaching another's privacy.

However, this is easier said than done. The parent needs to be open-minded/knowledgeable/caring to recognize another's anti-social mannerisms, vices, language and intent – to steer their child in such a way that they can appreciate there is another path - to make life enjoyable, successful and productive. This should not be done in a self satisfied way but with humility and concern.

If these guidelines are followed a successful start to a child's early life would be assured. However, a successful outcome relies upon the parent, to make each step fun, without any stress; this requires a great deal of forward planning and effort.

It is a relatively new understanding that fathers play a significant role in a child's early life. The authorities figure appears to reduce early sexual activity by both sexes, increases the age of first childbirth, improves standards of living, reduces family stress and increases school qualifications. In cases where the father is removed, there are a number of negative outcomes - the opposite of the list above.

Socialization has been defined as understanding the attitudes, values and behaviour patterns - so that an individual can fit into the society, group or workplace. Occupational identity affects young people greatly; they have to come to terms with so much in a short space of time.

There is a gradual work up to the young person's introduction to work, which starts in the home, school, and media. The young person hears from his parents about their work. With any luck he may try a part-time job, or be fitted into a work experience scheme. There he will observe others and hear their problems and worries. One of the greatest forces that motivate, direct, and acts as a sounding board, are his friends. Their values, aspirations, and experiences are important.

The young person's motivation maybe influenced by the wage he will get. Perhaps the jobs prestige amongst his friends, its advancement opportunities, and even security. His parents may have longer-term thoughts about the jobs pension, useful skills training and sick care arrangements.

What will have the longer-term influence will be the family is repeated values drummed in over a number of years. The importance of the jobs future worthwhileness - durability, the necessity to work hard and to obtain skills that can be passed on to other working arrangements.

There are two main forces that affect motivation: the intrinsic, which is concerned with creativity... one's interests, whether art or science based, self-directing and responsible. And ability based, whether practical and hands on

Language

Children copy adults, your behavior in action, word, and deed, has to be as perfect as possible. Your language should be quietly firm, unchallenging and fair, enunciating clearly and concisely, using a neutral intonation, applying good English, free from slang and sloppy phrasing. How could you possibly expect your child to talk well if you do not? Being able to spell the word enables a proper enunciation to be applied. This is important for the mother tongue and even more so if studying a foreign language.

One of the most upsetting events in anyone's life is not being liked - being ostracised and unwanted... This deprivation maybe caused by bad early socialization: the child refusing to share – not allowing another has to join in - being unfriendly, threatening, shouting, or too familiar. We all want our child to be liked, respected, valued, and wanted.

Whoever said parenting was easy. It requires time and effort, patience and fortitude. Knowing what is good parenting does help even though it is not always followed.

Before starting, a family discuss with your partner what you are going to do to ensure your child has a good start. Read about what psychologists know about human behaviour and follow their advice. You wanted your child so pass that feeling on and make him feel wanted, loved, secure and valued... he did not ask to be brought into this world.

Fathering

Past civilizations believed that men had the right to be head of the household or family, chief of the clan, tribe leader, king of state, and High King of the civilization or race. The law of hereditary – property, and land rights, were written in his name as a legal right.

Gradually this has changed. Muscular strength, leadership in battle, maker of laws and the divine rights of kings changed by Acts of Law and Equal Rights. The power of Education has complemented these changes in Law. Men have had their power stripped from them mainly by the change in property rights and the laws of divorce... Inheritance Tax has played a part too. As his powers have withered away – been taken and given up, men's control - power, and position, have grown weaker. In many respects, the power of the sexes is equal although concerning young children; women still maintain public regard for the 'mothering role'.

Men had greater social responsibility as the wage earner. He appended his signature to legal documents, could own property, was better educated and voted at elections. The eldest carried the name forward became 'head of the family'. His name appeared on the property title. What the father did and said was accepted as 'the way'. There were neither female apprentices nor trainees. Commerce and industry only employed men in positions of responsibility. When women were employed for menial tasks - as servants, maids, some labouring jobs, lesser office work and factory employment, their wage-rate was half that of men in similar positions. Fathers dictated moral standards and declared the family's social position... they were the backbone of that society's hierarchy, and tribal power.

Men's superior social position started to change with the industrial revolution – about the middle of the nineteenth century. A little later, the education of the masses ensured girls would receive some sort of education that would eventually prepare them for jobs that are more responsible. The Crimea War and the two Boar Wars exposed the population's poor health. Various considerations were made to correct this – better education and school meals. By the time these educational and welfare changes had raised the populations expectations and The First World War over [a period of ten years] women had shown they were capable of many jobs one time reserved for men. Although the mass unemployment of the twenties set back the advance of women, they quickly resumed their onetime position twenty years later – especially during the time of 'total war'. By the 1950s, it was expected that girls were to become employed. When starting a family they stopped full-time employment, many for good. A further twenty years it was expected that mothers resumed their work when their child reached the age of five - starting full-time education. This change in social structure only took fifty years – a generation, to alter what had an accepted social right been since Neolithic Man and beyond.

The role of men in the twenty-first century is now the weakest it has ever been. Paternal rights, familial ties, and the kingdom's hierarchy, once supreme, was now questioned, reduced, and stripped

away. Much of this power was to do with wealth – the control of money, to support the many by the few. Largely men have given up their powers by society's call for reasonableness, fairness, equality, and just rights. You might think that the power between men and women is now equal but that would not be so. Nevertheless, it is far closer than it has ever been and depends, on the circumstance. In business, it is still natural to address official documents to the male of the household. When a decision is required concerning children then the mother's opinion is paramount, especially concerning custody and maintaining the child's home.

Fathers play an important part in child development. It is little wonder that the good relationship of the father to the mother contributes to the pre-birth attachment of the child to its parents. This positive caring attitude, continues after birth by the father bathing, feeding and cradling, all of which contributes to 'close attachment', a period necessary to a good father-child association. Fathers should communicate through story telling, nursery play and conversation, to demonstrate care, understanding, and tolerance. It is about showing interest – that the child counts - is important to those around him. It is necessary to let the child know that it is wanted and needed. This generates, in the child, respect for the father, and stimulates the wish to please, which in turn reinforces stability and security. The father should never compare one child against the next. All these factors give lifelong support and contribute towards 'good growth'- giving disciplined, direction, and instruction.

Mothering

British society during the early nineteenth century considered girls to be future mothers. Mrs Beeton, 1837-1865, wrote books on household management, sanitary, medical and legal matters, to do with the home – was an authority on the role of women. The Forster Act of 1870, dealt with Education in Britain, which was the start to Britain's Educational needs. Girls well into the twentieth century were considered fitting only for a limited education to pass on information and learning to their children. It was thought by society that the habits and routines of the home – motherhood, was a natural, god given, evolutionary event, making expensive education, and training unnecessary, even, wasteful. What was needed was for the mother, close female relatives, midwives, and wet nurses, to pass on how to run a home and cater for children. For the better educated, there was Mrs Beeton.

Society, even in these liberated times, consider girls as future mothers, who else indeed! This suggests that women have as their chief interest the home, and all those things that go on in it. If this cannot be a statement for all a women's life then it certainly should be for that period before, during, and after the birth.

It was consider unnecessary - a waste of money, to educate girls who would not be able to use that extra knowledge. Either daughters were expected to marry or to stay at home and look after the elderly parents... it was not considered sensible or rational to pass on the property title or the bulk of the estate out of the family. The eldest son was expected to look after unmarried women and the married daughters were the property of their husbands relieving the estate of that drain upon its wealth. This state of affairs continued until the mid nineteenth century and even then hardly changes until well into the twentieth.

Women, particularly young mothers, were considered 'the gentle sex'. The act of pregnancy, carrying the child, breast feeding and nurturing thought natural, unselfish, pure; blessed by church and state. Society - men welcomed this state of affairs as unthreatening, subservient, and convenient. Therefore, they protected the image, defending the future generation. Many habits, routines, rules of law and social etiquette attached itself to this image of women. In many ways, it suited women to perpetuate this, when making a living required hard manual work. However, as soon as more jobs

became available that did not require strength but dexterity and orderliness women could see here was a chance to extend their horizons. This they have been doing ever since and it could be argued that society has benefited.

Women were considered homebuilders, bearers of the coming generation, and child rearers. If babies and young children required looking after it was natural for the state to look to women to do it. Custody of the young followed divorce laws and settlements, handing over the job to the separated mothers - who naturally needed paying.

The state has now elevated women to the role of child protectors – particularly of babies, pre-school children, and children in the ‘close period’ – under five, or birth to three. This custody can extend to children going to secondary schools – under fifteen. State education does not separate girls from boys but declares all children must be educated to the same level throughout school life – till eighteen, and beyond, if felt fitting.

Child Development

All childcare authorities consider the women’s role indispensable in nurturing which requires patience, time, and dedication. Nurturing is mainly accomplished through breast feeding, comforting, rocking and gently talking or singing achieved without fuss and bother with time and shared comfort. This mothering role is natural, considerate, and compassionate. It is an emotional and basic requirement of child development and helps shape future responses and wellbeing. This ‘close period’ lasts until the child starts school which is a loose period between the years three to five, depending on the individual. The point maybe decided by the local school authority, the number of school places available and, to a degree, parental choice – the ability to pay the school fee. It is recommended that the child in an introductory class should have a shorter school day, with frequent breaks and a middle rest period... for the first year, at least.

Working Mothers

It is perfectly clear that women in the workplace are essential. Society required it during moments of national crisis, since that time women have created for themselves a position of power.

It was ever clear that this would cause distress not only soaking up the number of work places that men and boys had previously filled but their absence from the home would disrupt the even tenor of life there.

There seems to be little point explaining why this is so or the effects this has on society. It is, as they say, ‘a done deal’. Society cannot have it both ways. Women have forever compared their life with those of their husband’s and children. They have seen the immediate rewards working for a living have given – the leisure activities, the personal possessions, and the freedom. They are not going to give them up. They would rather have their children later, not have so many, and pass their children’s care onto somebody else - even when it is demonstrated that this is detrimental.

The power that women have will change society yet again, governments will pander to their needs by forcing businesses to provide better kindergarten facilities, days off for sick child-leave, flexi-working hours, paid for home help, home place working, workplace facilities to look after their sick children, job sharing, and their days off work paid in full. If this continues, they will force businesses to limit the number of work positions available for women.