

74 pages 20,012 words

# **British Social Changes**

## **COURTING: MARRIAGE: CHILDREN: DIVORCE:**

### **1910-2010**

### **Setting the Scene**

All animals have a home, not just any old place, but a particular spot, which is familiar and well known, where the animal feels safe and can have its young... The nest or den is a refuge from attack – somewhere to lie up, and rest. Humans are equally drawn to such a place which they defend cherish and consider their own. This place is called home; it is cared for, protected and maintained. As with all human behaviour some people are particularly drawn to their home - their space, and busy themselves cleaning it, working in it; feeling most happy and relaxed when at home..., safe from the maddening world outside. In British society, prior to the First World War, ‘a women’s place was in the home’. This was expected and applied to all females, whatever their age, whether married or unmarried... This also applied to the handicapped, the old and infirm. Those women who could find domestic labour – as a servant - in another person’s home, did so. This was done to relieve the financial burden of the parents. The ‘home’ was not just associated with, ‘where one laid one’s head’; or keeping safe or lowering the drawbridge to keep out the enemy, but with raising a family, feeding it and nurturing the young. The birth-rate in 1876 was 36 per thousand. This figure declined in the next fifty years to 15. The death-rate in the thirties was just eleven per thousand per year. It was very noticeable between the wars that these figures were very different

from the turn of the century. Just before the Second World War nearly half of the population was aged between fifteen and forty-five. There was a worry then, as now - seventy years later, that there is a shortage of workers to support the elderly - as the death-rate declines. The relevance of marriage is being challenged by the consumer society and women's liberation. Men have lost their power and gained a competitive partner... now we will see 'who's worth it!'

The population in 1900 was around thirty-eight million when around five million women worked. A century later the population was nearly sixty million of who thirteen million were working women.

In Edwardian times, single men and women were introduced to each other - for them to become acquaintances. For this friendship to be carried further, it was normal behaviour for them to be introduced to each other's parents... The most important consideration for the parents - if the friendship was a serious attempt by the suitor - to advance his desire, was for the parents to be assured he could maintain their daughter - at least at the same social level. This courting etiquette continued up to WW1. Thereafter, working class young people took it upon themselves to decide for themselves. The middle and upper classes continued the previous courting behaviour. By the 1920s when land, farms, estates, and large houses were split up and sold off. This form of social courtship gradually died out, even for the aristocracy.

There have been over the years changes in the vows the couple make to each other when getting married. However, all religious and secular ceremonies uphold certain declarations. The main one being that they both promise to love each other forever... a Christian view would be that Christ died to save us all which is the greatest form of love. I am equally sure that all religions and civil authorities would be based on a similar promise. From a social point of view this creates stability... instills discipline, helps maintain cultural moral standards.

Life expectancy at the time of The Great Exhibition was just over forty years of age... this had increased by ten years by 1900... a further fifty years saw the increase to eighty. The average number of children in any one family in the second half of the twentieth century was two. The

most significant factor for this reduction is the age of the mother, which has risen to twenty-nine...

Until 1857 divorce was allowed only by private Act of Parliament. By 1872, is recorded there were about two hundred divorces granted annually. Nearly one hundred and fifty years later the trend has been upwards, to about 180,000 per annum... about 70% were first marriages affecting couples aged about forty years... granted to women for unreasonable behaviour, to the man, two years separation with consent. The reasons given for this continuing trend include: marrying at a young age, having pre-marital sex, and previous divorce. These depressing figures are pretty general - throughout the western world and English speaking countries.

The British society is solidly behind a heterosexual monogamous marriage, accepting sex before marriage. Living with one's partner is a growing trend, previously called 'a trial marriage' now increasingly referred to as 'cohabiting'. Sexual behaviour, procreation and family life now part of the school's curriculum, and within the syllabus, a reference to homosexuality.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Class Society

**Social Structure** – Relationships - Family Size – Social Class - Women's Suffrage – WWI – Factory Working - Education Increases Expectations – Social Domesticity – Owner Occupiers - Kinsey Report – Doctor Spock - Statement – Case Study – Questionnaire – Talking the Matter Through.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, just a generation before our period, 1910-2010, the relationship between parents and their children was one of intolerance. The

‘man of the household’, after his wife’s child bearing period, had numerous children – fifteen not being uncommon. The brake on even larger families was the early death of many babies and young children. The father was frequently held in awe; what he said was believed and what he ordered obeyed. Wives addressed their husbands not by using their Christian first names but by their title of Mr.

The houses of the many were small and the families large. The only way life could be made bearable was by discipline... this being the main difference between the decades, during this hundred year period. Ridged rules and laws - social, religious and household, were laid down for every facet of life... This was not to inhibit thought, which it did, but linked to behaviour – keeping one’s place, this being a method of suppression...; social behaviour was channeled and funneled, down a narrow path, which all social classes proudly maintained. Each social class, sect and division knew what to: eat, wear, play, perform, and worship.

It was possible to move within this structure, both up and down, and within each layer. This was generally brought about by a change affecting the family’s income. As soon as this change occurred the standard of living followed suit. An increase in income could be achieved by: entrepreneurship, education or inherited wealth. One or either of these projected the family upwards. Some of the causes why there was a fall of income: a split-up of the family’s estate, decline in the estates value, a poor marriage, resulting in a divorce, reduction in stock market values, bad investments, government taxes, gambling, drinking, poor health, war and loss of job. This directed the person downwards – to a lower social level.

## **Women’s Suffrage**

At the end of the nineteenth century opportunities became open for women working in cloth making factories, as secretaries, and as shop assistants. The liberalization of education enlarged the teaching profession. It was a slow business gaining political and social emancipation. The first country to offer women the vote was New Zealand in 1893 and the last, France, Italy and Japan in 1945.

By 1903 women's suffrage became a force to be reckoned with... By direct action demonstrations were arranged and campaigns held; the result: arrests were made and fines imposed. Gradually by keeping the campaign alive – in the news, the matter became a topic of conversation.

In Britain women had to leave the teaching profession and civil service when they became married. This gave women the choice of career or raising a family. In 1912 nurse Margaret Sanger began raising the issue of many adverse health effects caused by too frequent childbirths, abortions and miscarriages.

After WWI Marie Stopes, 1880 – 1958, published 'Married Love' in 1918 and three years later, 'Wise Parenthood'. The campaign for women's rights and 'Family Planning' was an enormous success eventually gathering momentum till Lady Sear's draft, sex anti-discrimination bill in 1973 which itself led to the 1975 British Sex Discrimination Act, 'Equal Pay for Equal Work'.

However, the First World War did more for the liberation of women than any other factor. It was their work during the war – which made their contribution indispensable, which gained the support of the country. There was no chance of the breach being plugged. Women became independent and liked it. No longer did they have to put up with dominance and derision. As their wages supported their husbands so the increase became indispensable. Standards began to raise expectations climbed and horizons

broadened. Large families became a thing of the past and certain sectors of society became women's preserves.

As the First World War got into its stride automation, and the conveyor belt system of mass production, became the norm. Every part of the armed services needed more materials and fighting machines. New trucks, tanks, guns, merchant ships and aero planes were invented and built. Women were an essential part of their production.

After the war transportation – the movement of freight became an indispensable part of an industrial society. The production lines that had turned out war materials were now converted to turning out the latest gadgets and household goods. There was more to buy and more money circulated by the increased working population.

To cope with the new machines, peacetime activities and the manufacture of consumer goods further and higher education had to keep pace - businesses had to engage new skills and handle new equipment. Colleges and Polytechnics devised courses for the new burgeoning technology. New materials had to be discovered and invented to build the latest machines. As mechanization developed cheaper products became available, as all aspects of society advanced so did the cause of women's liberation.

As the men returned from the war they naturally wanted their old jobs back. The unions assisted this to take place forcing women out of the factories and workshops. Heavy industry and factory workings now became preserves of the men. Building and construction work employed no women.

It was in white collar office jobs that women ousted men. Personal assistants, stenographers, secretaries, shorthand typists – typists of all descriptions, roneo-copyists, filing clerks and office juniors gave women employment, even in hard times. Hospitals

claimed another vast section of female workers as did shops and department stores. It was these women's wages that boosted their husband's earnings. It was this additional money which gave many families extra cash to invest in housing. Gradually, where at onetime, families rented these new build houses a different group of owner occupiers took possession. New housing estates were developed. All these new homes needed furnishing and household goods.

Women not at work had to deal with childrearing and running the home. Shopping and cooking, both required forward planning... tasks that were slotted in-between cleaning the home, washing the clothes, and ironing. Young children were taken to school and picked up; this started and finished every schooldays. Organizing children's play, extra curricular experiences, and out of school experiences had to be arranged, and paid for. Having a property of one's own made household chores more bearable giving a sense of positive feedback - doing something for oneself. But it never fully compensated for being paid, an action that demonstrated worthwhileness, and being wanted.

House building enjoyed a great boom at the turn of the century. Owner occupation was a complete change from the expectations of previous generations. Building Societies blossomed extending the loan period to twenty years. The housing boom just after the construction of the railway network in the late eighteen hundreds was now extended. New garden suburbs linked towns together filling in the spaces between the railway stations. Mass owner occupations quickly change the previous renting market. Smaller families allowed greater savings. The ten percent deposit on house purchase was now achievable - for the many.

The numbers of insured men continued to rise. Women peaked at three and a half million – a third of the figure for men.

Women were a quarter of the workforce and rising, as more became trained. The employment of women in full and part-time work did not alter the preconceived role of women – having their place within the home looking after the children. The numbers of men ‘domesticated’ were few and far between – men expected to be waited on - their meals ‘ready’ on time.

Once again it took another war, and the even greater necessity for women to go out to work, to administer and provide for ‘all out war’. This finally gave them a chance to say, ‘I can choose my own lifestyle’ something they could not do beforehand! A husband and wife began to share household chores. It was still a long way off before they could both focus on their careers.

The fifties families turned their backs on the old social order; they wanted a freer more libertarian world where women had the same opportunity as men - with equal pay and conditions.

### **Education: increased expectations.**

Men, who helped in the home, stayed close to the home and were happy maintaining the fabric of the home, were considered domesticated. Those men who preferred to stay away from the home: to find work, take part in a hobby or sport, join associations and institutions, occupations that drew them away from the home, were considered, undomesticated. Men who found joy in raising children, teaching home economics, attending those who were ill, remained close during confinement and birth, were considered ‘civilly domesticated’.

### **Social Domesticity**

To be domesticated is more to do with a feeling, rather than employment. It is also concerned with all those things which go on inside a house or dwelling – about the furnishings and contents – decoration and layout. In many respects it's to do with man's evolution, aestheticism and level of taste. For a man to be domesticated removes him from those that hunt, go to war or seek adventure. It can be said that society is becoming more domesticated as an evolutionary trend – becoming more civilized: the sexes, sharing responsibility, helping raise the children in a safe environment whilst engaging in 'household activity!'

### **Age of Childbearing**

According to National Statistics there were obvious changes in the number of births from the 1950s to 80s. This was attributed to the changes in the ages of mothers at childbirth. Women born in the 1940s had the lowest - they were those who contributed to the 60s baby boom. The graph shows that it was these women who had more children than those born in the 50s climbing back to 1920s levels. The decline of family size averages in this century is due as much too many women not having children as to smaller sized families. Since 1963 there has been a decline in the number of children born, although since 2003 there has been a slight increase. What has happened is that there are more births to older women – aged 40 and over. The average age of women giving birth is just over 29.

### **Kinsey Report**

The Kinsey Report, [Dr Alfred Kinsey 1894-1956, **Sexual Behaviour**, Revised 1998], was controversial, eventually became an accepted record of human behaviour; treating the taboo

subject with the correct statistical procedures. Dr Spock, [Dr Benjamin Spock, 1903-1998, **Children and Child Care**, Revised 1992] wrote these two best sellers which have not been bettered, on all aspects of Marriage and Children. Both these books are essential reading for all couples. Little has changed over the last few years to make his original thoughts irrelevant or out of date.

All couples should be aware of the Kinsey Report and its findings - particularly those of frequency - of intercourse. They point the finger at normal/average behaviour. It was not only a ground breaking statistical report but highly necessary - to form a basis in understanding. The figures may shock, excite, or fill you with fear, but whatever feeling they do generate, they are statistically proven.

The fertility rate for couples in 2008 was 1.97 a rise over the last seven years from 1.63. The last time it registered two was in 1973. The average age for women having a first child remains at 29.3. It can be expected that the fertility rate, long-term, suggest that it will continue to drop, including those of immigrant couples.

### **The positive aspects of a written statement.**

It might be considered rather mechanical and unromantic to agree to a written statement of intent before marriage. A list of expectations and goals to question each other on understandings and considerations. This seems to me to be a satisfactory way of covering all aspects of life together making sure there are no misconceptions and expectations, for we can all live in a romantic haze, but bills and children have to be considered.

This list of topics covered makes sure that each person knows what the other wants and needs and can highlight areas

that need explanation and dissecting which may reveal hidden hopes and fears.

All answers show a train of thought - indicate an individual's state of mind. It is then up to those who are involved to question themselves, to explore and expose differences. To find areas of agreement - to become more compatible - give a firmer footing for future decisions. The sooner these things are talked through the easier it is. Being open and frank is not being silly but sensible and saves embarrassment later when issues become almost too big to enter into discussion about. Being 'set in one's ways' is after all to be avoided - it limits advancement and discovery.

I do understand that some individuals, even if they are disappointed by their intended partner's answers, will continue with the marriage as an act of defiance. That does not predicate that the answered questionnaire is not valid, it remains a joint effort - made at a particular time and place in the relationship. If one or other changes their opinion - wishes to alter their answer, a revised agreement should be discussed and agreed upon. This ensures the altered position has been aired and it is then up to the couple to find an agreed compromise.

There are those who may believe they can alter their partner's opinions, hopes and desires over a period of time - by stealth, continually pressing the point or raising the issue. This may be achieved if the issue is relatively unimportant, but in the case of sexual matters and children this should never be done - will cause resentment and unhappiness.

This may all sound rather cold and clinical taking little regard for continuity and momentary desire. But that is the point, on the spot decisions are rarely good, or long lasting. There is a positive side to 'talking things through' and setting them down - to form an agreement.

**I have set out here a case study, to give a general overview of one particular couple's hopes & fears. Although it is general it does give firm foundation for discussion & comment:**

## **Case Study**

Janet and John met at university – they were on the same course, reading Sociology. After living in hall for their first year they set up camp together – in a shared flat. Their relationship blossomed... spending their vacation's together - including Christmas', in each other's family home.

Both sets of parents viewed the situation as 'the new way', recognizing that their child was in a stable relationship, which was proving beneficial - each young adult knuckling down to work - supporting each other. Both graduates were expected to obtain a good pass mark and go on to find suitable employment.

In their final year they decided to get married, putting off the day until they had each found a secure job and obtain an acceptable employment contract...

They explained all this to their parents. They were not alarmed, expecting this to happen, happy that their child was treating the matter seriously. The parents were sufficiently interested to contact each other introducing each other over the phone. They learned that the other's child had explained the matter, wishing to plan the big occasion, with their parent's approval.

Wanting their child to do as well as possible and not be diverted both sets of parents said that they would help to make a down payment on a car if they succeeded in obtaining a good mark, knowing that being mobile helps when job hunting.

The parents decided to speak to their child separately to offer help where they could with the arrangements, and to set out

some of the details all couples are faced with when contemplating marriage. Fortunately the parents were happy with their child's choice of partners and keen to ensure their child got off to a good start in married life.

Both sets of parents owned their own home, through mortgage repayments – loan and interest. Knowing how hard it was financially, when they first started - keeping up the Direct Debit payments, they were sufficiently concerned to explain how important it was to provide as large a deposit as possible.

The parents explained that running a car and saving for a deposit was going to be very difficult... that there would be times when cut backs might have to be made... putting some of their more elaborate plans on the back burner. The parents explained that some jobs are not as secure as others - make mortgage repayments difficult to guarantee. They painted a gruesome picture of the Debt Collector's or Bailiff's man calling, removing furniture to the tune of the sum owed. They went on to say that having a good name at the bank by keeping up regular savings, is important for future security... seeking deferred payments requires a good past record.

In the future when time needs to be taken off work to have a child or to get over some illness having a sympathetic Bank Manager is a relief. The parents emphasized, that they should become 'credit worthy' by keeping their bank accounts free from becoming overdrawn.

They went on to explain that it is not always possible to be a member of a health club, golf club or have an overseas holiday, as well as provide extras for a family. Eating out and giving parties might stretch the bank account too far. Their overdrawn accounts cause stress making you short tempered and snappy towards your children - who do not understand. After all, Janet and John hope to be dedicated parents and work hard - there

must be some enjoyment... and life after all cannot be perfect all the time!

Not all couples want to have children or a large family. The state of marriage is a commitment which is there to provide security for children. If you believe that private education is necessary for your child the fees are a big drain on the family's account. Not all children are blessed with good health and the possibility of having a child disfigured or disabled should be considered. Perhaps life insurance is a good thing after all? Many consider children necessary for a good marriage although having more than the average number may force you to move house to provide each with a bedroom.

Both Janet and John are adamant that they would not allow their children to eat meals in front of the television but to sit up properly at the dining room table, insisting too that mobile phones and recorders are switched off. They believe that children should have their tasks to do and to help with the clearing away and washing up. Before bed each child is questioned about their day making sure there are no unhappy incidents spoiling a happy environment. They both consider it important to listen to their children and to show affection and praise whenever possible.

## **Questionnaire**

Do you believe it is better to own your own home or to rent? Is it important for you to have children? Do you believe children make a marriage or would it be a disappointment if you only had children of one sex? Is sexual satisfaction important to you? How soon would you like children? Do you believe that it is right to spank your child if they perform badly, misbehave or do not stop shouting? Would you allow swearing in your house? Is your partner's happiness more important than possessions? If you

prefer house purchase rather than renting should the property be in your name, your partners, or jointly owned... will you make that commitment in a will. Would you live in an old farmhouse or modern villa, built in the country or in a town? If you insist on natural food cultivation without chemicals would you be prepared to grow your own? If children are sought are you prepared to relocate to a larger home, close to a school, or near a baby minder? Would you extend into the attic? Do you believe in selection for grammar schools or are comprehensive schools good for all. Perhaps you believe secondary modern schools are only fitting for a certain group in society. If your child requires special medical treatment, needing its own room, would you be prepared to move? Would you rather furnish the home before starting a family? If you can only afford to furnish the kitchen and bedroom how long would you wait to do the remainder - before starting a family? Would you have your parent live with you rather than rely upon the state to provide a home. If the house needs redecoration are you going to do it or would you call in someone else. How good are you at replacing a fuse? What style of furniture and décor do you prefer? Are your partner's tastes similar to your own? Would you say you and your partner are in the same social class? Do you and your partner enjoy similar music and film subjects or have a hobby, or sport preference. Which television programmers do you enjoy and are they compatible with your partners. It is said that having 'A Belief' leads to a more fulfilled life. Do you agree? Is it important to you to be married in church? If you lose a game does that make you keen to improve your skill or do you tend to give up. The ... Monarchy increases tourism Are you happy to provide the taxes to maintain the status quo? Do you believe a pet gives the home a comfortable feel? Do you think of the world's sustainability when you fill you car with petrol or diesel, or when

you put out the rubbish? Do you know about the Kingsley Report, or have read Dr Spock on Child Care. Do you pay your bills promptly or do you wait until the last moment. What do you think is more important, 'to keep to your word or give in to doubts'?

### **Talking the matter through**

Now that's over with perhaps we can talk through your answers. I hope you agree that it has been a worthwhile task; knowing some of your partner's hopes and fears and highlighting some of your own has been an important discovery.

There are some who believe they know their own minds - are sure in their opinions and feelings. Some are not so sure. There are those who believe they know what they want but cannot give voice to them - perhaps they are shy or retiring; and there are others who can never make a decision - because they can see so many conflicting issues - each problem a stumbling block to be overcome.

How infinitely more difficult it is to ask people about their sexual needs, and how those needs are going to be satisfied, especially considering such matters as physical, emotional and social variations in an changing environment. It's a wonder that any marriage remains constant. It is all these variables that make having some sort of contract or statement - outlining preferences, habits, hopes, our goal.

## CHAPTER II.

### The State of Marriage

**History of Marriage** – Social Control – Civil Marriage – Legal Contract – Marriage Vows – Compatibility – Cohabitation – Children of Cohabitors – Single Parents – Statistics – Fostering – Divorce – Nurturing – Child Centered – The Early Years – Social Workers – Custody – Pre and early Post Natal Development.

Prior to Christianity, marriage was a social controlling act to produce children, as much for the group, as the couple. Most were either arranged whilst others expected. It was not until much later that all weddings were performed ‘at the church door’, and then later still, the priest attended the ceremony... it took a further hundred years before the priest actually conducted the service. Marriage in the middle ages was mostly a practical affair with economic overtones. It took the French Revolution to introduce the compulsory civil marriage... leading towards a magistrate or civil official making the ceremony valid. If couples wanted a Religious weddings this came after the civil ceremony. Parents lost their influence over the marital choice by the middle of the nineteenth century. Marriage now is a legal contract – as a governmental institution and changes the personal and social status of the participants.

When I was fifteen, in 1950, a quarter of all future married couples met at the local dance hall. A further quarter met at some social event and fifteen per cent met at work. The vast majority admitted that they had been in love at the time of their marriage the remainder said they had not. A quarter of men and over half

of all women were virgins... a quarter married the person they had first had sexual relations with. Marriage continued to be sustained as the most popular state for at least the next thirty years. Thereafter cohabitation began to erode the figures.

## **Marriage**

Marriage is a very natural act. To be married shows: conformity, optimism, and faith... Society believes the act provides stability and a safe environment for children... which should be a shared desire - as well as a universal longing for happiness and contentment.

The marriage ceremony, church or civil, is a declaration of intent, before each other, each other's family, and wider society. This social act is prevalent throughout all societies... although the timing, preparedness and courting behavior differs... the union is entered into as a serious lifetime commitment.

The majority of couples – taking part in the act of courting or forming a partnership, still hope to get married eventually... believing that the state of marriage to be a culmination of all their hopes and desires. Marriage is therefore an end to casualness and frivolity - a start to greater responsibility, home building and possible parenthood... perpetuating the belief that marriage is the key to social stability.

Nursery rhymes, children's books, television programs, romantic novels, motion pictures, newspapers and magazines all speak of the marriage state: as a rite, a religious ceremony, an act of love, and a perspicuous act - to produce a new generation.

Taken from the Office for National Statistics for marriages the figures show there has been a quite rapid fall in the number of couples getting married. The plotted curve for all marriages, and first marriages, are almost identical. Of those marriages 67

per cent were civil marriages... showing a steady increase? Remarriages remain fairly consistent at just over a hundred thousand per annum. The graph shows a trend, that within ten years the curve for first marriages and remarriages will join... Even though these are depressing statistics individuals still believe the positive act something to strive for – perhaps as a romantic goal rather than an institutional necessity.

In England and Wales, in 2007, it was recorded the lowest number of marriages since 1895. The long term picture of marriage is one of decline.

## **Compatibility**

To help achieve a greater understanding about each other's hopes and fears prospective couples are encouraged to discuss their fill in a simple statement, in the form of a questionnaire. This joint statement is not a legal undertaking but to serve as a prompt to help. To that end I have set out some questions that prospective partners can consider which might make the task that much easier... the completed questionnaire can be kept as a reminder, and updated when necessary.

I accept that some couples may not want, or are unable to have, children. Fostering, caring or adopting can be a rewarding occupation - but equally demanding, making our questionnaire still relevant and worthwhile.

No one could possibly imagine individuals not altering their wants and needs over time – there are so many choices; unforeseen natural events, unsolicited outside influences, and unmasked personal fears. These variables mean that everyone has to be flexible and adapt... It is to what degree we hope to unearth, and to help catch those changes as they occur.

2009 was not only a year of an election but a statistic downward curve in children's stable home life. There are ample statistics and research projects which tell us of the dire consequences of divorce on children. There are so many options for parents, particularly for mothers, to seek personal fulfillment. Having latchkey children is bad enough but parking them out in the first critical years is a disaster. Although a few are parented at home by the father it is the mother who is mentally, naturally and socially more fitting to take on this close parenting roles. Divorce interrupts, interferes and upsets children's equilibrium; children drop out of school, become stressed, show distress symptoms, confront the law, and dabble with smoking and drugs. Their lives are not happy ones.

Without knowing intimately each and every case it is impossible to speculate what the damaged child would have been like had the parents not been divorced. There are as many types of parents as there are types of child. Within those numbers there are bound to be parents who are totally unfitting and those who have not bonded with their offspring. It is no good blaming individuals for the ills of society. The more individuals understand about relationships and parenting the better off they and society will be.

The most intelligent person, the lucky billionaire and the professor's son can all be equally bad parents. Its about due regard - which is about compassion, patience – having a low irritation rate, displaying care, being concerned, and responsible, giving off positive vibrations by being in control.

## **Cohabitation**

This is a relatively modern approach to test out a relationship. It is considered a reasonable pre-marriage trial

period. In reality cohabiting couples rarely stay together longer than a couple of years. It is seen as a stress free way to sleep with a partner without the binding act of promises before witnesses. It is clear that if couples had to suffer a very painful initiation ceremony before marriage, and later, a stringent financial penalty after - to end it, there would be fewer marriages.

Research figures show a trend towards cohabitation... the act of marriage to come later... present marriage statistics show a trend towards delayed parenting. Couples splitting up results in lone parenting, adding to the high numbers of young girls raising a child alone; and those losing custody, usually the male, living alone. The average age for couples getting married is rising... maintaining the partnership figures. The figures for cohabitating couples are rising too, as are the numbers for dependant children. Cohabitation figures are expected to double by 2021.

The trend is for cohabitation couples to take two years to decide whether or not to get married... eventually 60 per cent of them do, the remainders split up, within ten years... those, now single, engage once again in cohabitation, which lasts a further five years.

Statistics show that conventional marriage rates are falling and the birth rate dropping. Cohabitation, and lone parenting figures, are rising, and that all these figures, both rising and falling, are acting together – in unison... that one in six children will soon be experiencing life in a stepfamily. Slowly the figures for marriage are dropping...

These depressing figures make one wonder: 'if couples are any more committed to the state of marriage than previous ages,' even though there is ample evidence that the impact of divorce on children is of great concern. You might think that the rising age rate for first marriages would produce less family break up – that older couples would be more stable, committed and reliable.

The overwhelming belief is still, [the older the person the more they believe this to be so] that marriage is the most fitting place for having and raising children... Therefore, society is still capable of relying on the act of marriage to: 'offer all that it has ever done'. However, that the reality is not confirmed by the statistics does not change people's opinions. It follows therefore, that society's moral behaviour is weaker than its desires.

Reviewing these statistics it would seem that there must be a method whereby couples can embark upon marriage with a greater degree of sureness – that what they are doing is right and lasting - that their partner is the right one for them. As the divorce figures are almost seventy per cent, and steadily rising... they ought to take more care - in their choice of partner. It is how this can be done that I write this account and offer a suggestion...

## **Family Planning**

The aim of couples seeking to plan their family:

1. Judge an appropriate time when the female can have time off work.
2. Plan when there is sufficient capital saved to afford a reduction of income.
3. Choose a suitable period when the mother is fit and healthy.
4. Limit family size to accommodate the plans for private schooling.
5. Help overcome hereditary problems – give the new baby a better chance in life.
6. Improve environmental conditions – spacing out births.

7. Provide the correct equipment and furniture for the new birth.

All responsible couples give the above matters considerable thought. One or more of the list may not be accomplished - believing that by the time the child is born they will be in place. However hard up for cash or however well heeled - the parents are, they can choose the time and place. The latest contraception methods ensure this to be so and at the same time take care of proper reproductive health-care systems to support the mother. If the parents believe they should not copulate unless they are ready for a hoped for pregnancy that is their choice, they will have talked this through before marriage. It is of course imperative that all these questions and others are thoroughly discussed by the couple before embarking on marriage. That takes us back to my original premise that all couple should have a preconceived idea of each others hopes and fears in marriage.

Women want all the information they can possibly get about keeping control over what is happening to them, and to share in making decisions about having children with their partner. It is so important that she understands everything that is happening to her – to feel positive about the decisions made. Whether to have the baby at home and will all the necessary preparations are made on time. It is a stressful time.

After the birth the mother watches every movement of the baby. Listening to each intake of breath, every twitch and turn, whimper and cry... this is a special psychological process that should not be interfered with... the mother and child's flow of communication... theory both need nurturing together and separately. Loving support from your partner or someone close is all important.

The importance of ‘bonding’ is enormous. A warm, comfortable, loving environment is essential to make the mother feel secure – able to express her own emotions. Mothering grows with the realization of the enormity of the event ‘the act of birth’. Bonding is not just from the spiritual joy but from the pain of birth too. It is having the responsibility, commitment and maternal love to be you - to have given life... thereafter, continuing the bonding by breast feeding - to give strength and energy... an act which resonates throughout the mother’s whole body.

### **Children of Cohabiting Parents**

Statistics show that cohabiting couples who have children do not stay together longer because they are tied to ‘the family’, but the reverse – it drives them apart. It seems that the results of a pregnancy, in all its forms, weaken the sexual desires of both partners and diverts their energies. The long term vision – starting to form a family, doesn’t draw the couple together to complete their desires for: the woman temporally loses her sexual vulnerability and looks, and the man no longer becomes necessary to impregnate her. The pressure of withholding sexual advances and the thought of losing wealth, and employment opportunities - of his partner, creates emotional problems... and can promote his physical punishment of his female partner.

Statistics record that cohabiting couples experience greater strains on their relationship than married couples, and that children from cohabiting couples suffer from emotional problems as a result of insecurity. Households with step-parents are considered unsafe for young children of both sexes. In times of stress and unhappiness both couples can resort to physical punishment of the child.

In a cohabitating household the woman frequently comes off worse. The male quickly loses his emotional tie with the increasing strain associated with parenting and the household budget. Women with young children not only have less money to keep the household going but lose position in their previous employment pay structure. In many cases it comes down to exploitation as the male disappears out the door leaving the mother to provide care until the child is old enough to look after itself.

### **Single Parents**

Children from single parent homes suffer from the problems of the parent – the parents: concerns, loneliness, anxiety, strains, depression, anger and sadness. These negativities are passed on to the child in many different guises... the child suffers from doubts – feels annoyed at the lack of support – loses confidence and sometimes cannot account why they feel so alone. Natural growth becomes stunted and misshapen. It may take many years before the guilt, resentments and hatreds subside sufficiently to enable the child to make a commitment towards another person. As for the children of that child, they too take on some of the anger of the parent. In many cases the child cannot explain why the parent is angry or recount the details surrounding the original case. Over the years some minor upset is magnified out of all proportion, to become an enormous mountain..., in the past, a vendetta.

Time does take away or mask the original cause allowing some repair to be made, allowing the formation of a proper relationship... but underneath the fire still smolders ready to break out at a moments notice. It takes a great deal of personal happiness to make the person forgive completely – for their

positive thoughts to come to the fore. Unfortunately by that time others have become affected.

Grudges are harbored and hardships remembered... errors and slip-ups put down to the parent's single status. In later life there is an urge to seek out the missing parent to either confront them, explain the pain they caused, or ease the pain of separation.

Both the single parent and the child share the lack of the absent parent and whenever life becomes hard the absent parent gets the blame. This becomes a standard let out for all moments of stress and even if the absent parent did not cause the split-up in the first place they are made to feel, and shoulder, the blame.

The conventional married couple is a unit bound by vows of duty and honour – a union created - to secure a fit home for children. It takes regard for most eventualities including absence, illness or death of one of the partners. In some single parent homes, where a decision is made purposely to omit one parent the possibility of total collapse, disruption or mental bruising, of the child or children, is considerable. These results in one or more helpers, friends or relatives, being permanently affected. The children from such homes carry around an inbuilt insecurity.

### **Pre and Early Post Natal Development**

Pregnancy occurs two weeks after the prospective mother's period begins. The sperm travels along the fallopian tube uniting with the released mother's egg to fertilize – becoming a one-celled zygote. This zygote has number of chromosomes – half from the father and half from the mother determine sex and colour etc., still travels down the tube to the uterus, growing as it does so. This growth is now the multi-celled blast cyst having inner and outer cells. The inner the embryo and the outer the membrane sack which nourishes and protects the embryo. When the blast cyst reaches the uterus it burrows into the sidewall – the

uterine wall, to obtain nourishment. The placenta – the membrane sack, also begins to grow.

We now reach the beginning of the embryonic period when the brain, and other organs, begins to form. The embryo has three layers: The top the ectoderm, the middle the mesoderm, and outer the peripheral. The brain develops along with the other systems. From the fifth week the brain makes links to the main organs and makes connections - that relate to learning, knowledge and awareness.

The mother's diet, peace of mind, and settled state, is associated with her child's cognitive and neurological development - is part of the child's normal shaping of neurological connections in the early development of cognitive functioning. Neurological development of the child is firmly linked to a mother's healthy life style. A mother's depression, alcohol and nicotine intake, low education level, and negative lifestyle – including outside the home work levels, are significant factors of impaired cerebral development in the child.

The mother's happiness and well socialized state is transmitted to the unborn child. This is thought to start at the tenth week of pregnancy, or seventh week conception period. A calm voice, unhurried work level, and harmonious relationships with those around the mother are the beginning of the child's social skills. This continues through the pregnancy and birth, responding to others, engaging in discovering those things around him all the while the mother's bond to her child is reinforced... touching, cuddling, holding and stoking are all part of the process.

Continuing these positive features the child will enjoy playing whilst interacting with others. At first he will be possessive but in a short space of time will share and empathize with others, making friends.

You will become aware how fixed his attentions are and how direct his actions develop. His neurological understanding advances through visual perception, desires, beliefs, to making up imaginary situations – these stages are the basis of ‘The theory of mind development’.

The pregnant women’s diet is all important in the first two months. Put away all those pet hatreds for cabbage, sprouts and spinach. This is just what you should have for they are rich in folic acid. Whole grain bread, become accustomed to muesli, and do eat an apple a day. Try and eat natural unprocessed meals.

## 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 *kōtōwō* 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 psychologists 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. Father's 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.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Child rearing

**Equal Opportunities** – Close Period - Homosexuality – Maintaining Rules – Learning Experiences – Repetition - Playschool – Growth Patterns – Competition - Consumer Society – Child Welfare – Mental Stimulation – Cognitive Interaction – Motor Responses – Rewards – Learned Tasks.

Equal opportunities works on the shop floor and in offices. Sex is no longer the limiting factor it once was. All vacancies must be open to all if the education and previous training fits the job description.

Mothers are given the opportunity to return to work within a certain period – the job is kept open and payment made during time off. The close period for the child – considered by psychologists to be that time before full-time education, is now farmed out to childcare agencies and kindergarten. This reduces the child/mother bonding period, home socialization, and the first stages of language, intimacy, and closeness.

The part parents play in this century is one of sharing, so that each can focus on their own work and interests. Young children are organized to fit in. There is a general feeling that this variety and flexibility is helpful to the child, giving a more rounded view of life. Common sense tells use that this is not so. Children need security, a sense of belonging and routine... and

the longer this can be offered the better. Learning experiences are improved/internalized by self-discovery... repetition/rote thereafter cements the event or occasion.

## **Homosexuality**

In the past, it was thought that because women had a strong attachment to children - through maternal instincts, boys who had too much female involvement/contact would develop homosexual instincts.

This is not so, a person's sexuality is driven by desire – ‘a mental process’, and, where the person develops that desire – ‘their environment’.

As it is unclear exactly what makes one person male and the other female. Genitalia are the simplest form of identification; however, it is hormone levels, and gene regulation, which are the true factors... Environment allows opportunity, encouragement, and acceptance.

Parents are conditioned when we are told before, or just after birth, the gender of our child. They then clothe, refer, educate and socialize, the child, to that belief... never once giving a moment's thought that this might not be true... The child, youth, or adult, goes along with that idea not knowing any different.

At some stage the individual will question that assumption, some imagining, or liking to think they are being ‘with it’... then becoming depressed and oppressed by developing thoughts until accepting the tendency. It is up to the individual to do what they are most happy with doing as long as they are not hurting anyone else or endangering their own mental or physical wellbeing. Gradually, by personal acceptance of their libido, the person

becomes more comfortable. Whether straight or gay we all have to do that.

### **Maintaining rules**

Do not expect others to take over your job and put right your deficiencies. Thankfully, we have the means to find out about most things easily and simply. Never compare your child detrimentally to another. Never say they are not wanted, and certainly, not ever wanted. Do not be violent, shout, or deny them food... but give them space, a kindly word, and the company of others. If you are firm, right from birth - maintaining simple social rules and correct behaviour patterns, it will set the correct tone for a sound and happier later life.

The first set of rules are laid down as early as possible in the baby's life - in the close period; they are to do with times for: waking, feeding, burping, cuddling, nappy changing, bathing, settling down, being in the fresh air, enjoying the motion of the pram, sleeping etc... these quite structured rules - to do with everyday habits, will transfer - to more social rules involving: singing, reciting, playing music, reading, language, play-sharing, etc., these social skills follow on through the rest of the child's life - to adulthood - to form a regimen for life... to ensure: correct: bodily function, social behaviour, and mental exercise.

It's a lot easier maintaining your rules from the start rather than effect change later on. Try to make your home a haven of calm; you do not have to shout to be heard. The most important action you can show your child is that you care about everything they do. By this positive action, the child will have a regard for you and show you respect. Try to be a paragon of virtue and your child will love you for it. Make your language and facial expressions positive - praising, congratulating, smiling, clapping,

and raising a cheer. If your child misbehaves, it is generally because they have seen someone else do it, distract the child from errors, and seek to extract from the child the correct behaviour, at every occasion, by outlining preferred options.

## **Playschool**

Schools for babies and toddlers are a feature of today's society... sometimes used as a 'baby minder' for the working mother. Parents believe that such institutions provide socialization and learning – teach the child how to relate with its peers; give a head start in learning the 3Rs, and provide an arena for simple inculcating everyday skills.

There is absolutely no doubt that such places can advance scholastic and instructional skills. Children are competitive; they can be aggressive and frequently unkind. However closely guarded, superintended, and controlled, these human characteristics are exhibited daily... and do affect others.

It is not always evident that these characteristics are exhibited or have adverse effects. That they do is well known... and not obvious to the parent until much later... usually when it is too late.

## **Psychomotor Responses**

A mother's maternal function in pregnancy is an important director of early fetal brain development. This is an important period of brain development of the offspring. The adage 'you are what you eat' is a significant factor in healthy living. This is even more important when pregnant. A good healthy mixed diet is essential if a fetus is to have the best start in life. There are a number of studies that have shown that a mother's thyroid

function during early gestation is connected to impaired fetal brain development. Make sure your baby gets the best treatment from you.

### **A child's growth pattern**

1. What a caring parent wants is a child born physically and mentally well – appearing and functioning normally at birth, according to prescribed norms – this includes suckling, movement and crying.
2. Within days, parents look carefully for movement in all limbs, and soon after, sensory responses. Once again the search is for natural responses something all mothers are attunes with.
3. Crying - turns to other sounds, attempts at recognisable sounds, language... attention seeking.
4. From birth, socialization is carried forward by the mother – responding, talking, touching, recognition, smell and sound.
5. Sitting up, crawling, bottom-shuffling... drinking from a beaker, self-feeding... assisted standing... then unassisted... finally climbing and walking. Scribbling, recognizing colours, filling in shapes, building structures.
6. Recognisable sounds turn into copying the mother - repetition of familiar single syllable words – singing nursery tunes/lullabies, numbers... repeating the alphabet as a song... handing and fetching, pointing, identifying nominated/named items. Gradually words are joined and talking begins. Playing games that require counting, sharing out items, allotting familiar toys.
7. Starting to wash and dress. Repeating common sentences about eating, the weather, going for a walk, the countryside, going to bed. Asking questions, eliciting answers. Engaging in conversation.

8. First attempts at reading – pointing... following the formed words, breaking down words into sounds, forming the mouth – making the sound.
9. Unassisted reading and copy-writing.
10. Adding, subtraction, dividing and multiplication.

## **Consumer Society**

Women now work full-time, except for brief periods – final weeks of child bearing, giving birth, weaning, and the close period – up to kindergarten or Introductory Class, until retirement. The additional wealth has altered their position in society, changed the pattern of home life, and altered social class structures and realigned women's role and status in society.

## **Child Welfare**

If a couple, or single person, decides to have a baby and cannot afford to look after it they are being irresponsible. Welfare payments should not be offered to any person who declares they want, desire, need or deserve a child. Society should only allot facilities to those parents who have demonstrated they are settled, are mature, have, or will have, the necessary finances to maintain a child...

Any person who gives birth to a child who cannot be maintained should have their parents fined or a charge placed on their property - sufficient to pay for maintenance.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Family

**Matrimonial Acts** – Royal Commission – Reform Acts - Irretrievable Marriage Breakdown – Unreasonable Behaviour – Separation – Divorce - Child Custody – Family Discussions – Social Workers Report – A Clean Break – Divorce - The No Fault Rule – Divorce – Impact of Divorce – Resentfulness – Characteristics – Relocation – Public Health - Conclusion – Trends...

The passing of the Legal Aid Act in 1949 allowed the possibility of divorce. By the middle fifties there were about 25,000 divorces a year. Of those divorced three quarters remarried. Of the women married over seven hundred in every thousand went up the aisle. The average number of children per family was 2.3. The extended family group which persisted longest was mainly in the country, not the industrial towns. It was the professional family which split to form the nuclear family unit. The consumer society was born even though women remained in the home. Women were having fewer babies and some went out to work. Sharing the household chores began to take hold, particularly on the new nuclear families.

At the time of the Festival of Great Britain there were nearly eleven hundred thousand single men and women in the UK. Ten years later that figure hardly changed. The following ten years saw figures showing far more men – twelve hundred thousand to just over eleven for women. The statistics show that between the ages of twenty to twenty-four there were over twice as many women of that age group getting married. It was an age of early marriages.

Further statistics show that divorce reached a peak a couple of years after I was first married. Looking back I was not aware of the figures or change in the law and practice. Even though

these figures were available conversations at work did not follow the advent of legal aid in 1949, to make comment.

In 1950 I was an apprentice in a printing factory. My job as a lithographic artist had changed little from the practices a hundred years before. The journeymen's social and political outlook, at home and in the works-studio, was very similar to those held between the two world wars – in the twenties. There was no talk of marriage, sex, children or divorce. They never mentioned the changing role of men in society or the advance of women's liberation.

However, it is true that Americanism was rife. What was happening there - seen through the news-reel camera, and drama on the cinema screen, was copied here. In both countries divorce was rampant... fifty per cent of all marriages were ending in divorce, and single parenthood was increasing.

A Royal Commission was set up, the same year as The Festival of Great Britain. It was charged with the task of suggesting a change in the law, from that, contained in the Matrimonial Act nearly a quarter of a century before, which permitted divorce only on the grounds of fault – evidence of adultery, cruelty, and desertion, of three or more years. It was thought that perhaps divorce should be possible when a marriage was irretrievably broken, after a period of time?

The Commission identified some changes in society – that people's lives were changing relative to the structure, proclaiming that it wasn't popular disbelief or disavowance of moral codes. In the end the commission was thought of as weak and ineffectual.

Later, newspapers asserted that family life was doomed. It was put down to: better education, higher standards of living and women's liberation... All these three were bound up in the emancipation of women and seen as a social problem and indeed a modern crisis. The general view was that the marriage vows

were not being taken seriously – that there was no social slur attached to the act of divorce. It was summed up, describing it as an age that ‘lacked stability’. Presumably, the newspapers were as much looking at the industrial scene as the social one. Once convention had been undermined it was not likely to be propped up. In the 1960s Judges and Registrars were allowing liberal interpretations.

### **Irretrievable Breakdown in Marriage**

The Divorce Reform Act 1969 allowed ‘irretrievable breakdown’ as grounds for divorce but it was still evidenced to one of the three causes – adultery, desertion and cruelty - known as the ‘behaviour ground’. It was in fact a lessening of control – agreeing to permissive legislation, to allow a more satisfactory state of family affairs by replacing an unsuccessful union.

In this 1980s view of marriage, and subsequent divorce, the children were declared by Social Workers and Family Liaison Officers as ‘of chief concern’. This was not wholly true; they were in fact, ‘bit’ players. The Legal Administrators saw the parent’s happiness as ‘of paramount importance’, and this was mainly to do with the parent’s financial wellbeing.

### **Child Custody**

The mother almost always claimed and received the children’s custody... this happened whether they were fitting or not... the woman received Society’s blessing, because she ‘carried the child and nurtured it’ - was better able - and more suited by nature, to look after her own children.

Men were advised not to bother to seek custody because they were thought, ‘highly unlikely to receive it’ – even though

they might well be more able. In most cases of divorce the guilty or injured male had to leave the family home to bring about some sort of stability and good will. It was rare for the wife to agree to sell the family home to share the proceeds so that both could start again. In many cases after the sale there might be very little left... the value depended on how long the marriage had lasted - for time to build up the collateral.

This had long term detrimental effects on the husband's financial state. The house, his main source of collateral - likely to form financial stability in old age and provide a pension, was given away for a percentage [usually twenty-per cent]. This never compensated for all the intervening years of struggle nor did it take into account the furniture, furnishings white goods and fittings. It was highly unlikely that his financial stability would ever be recouped... even over time...

## **Family Discussions**

Young children of separating couples were asked if they understood what was happening. Any child over sixteen was considered an adult - could leave the family home if they so desired. The eldest child under sixteen was the main arbiter... asked, 'who do you wish to stay with your father or mother?' In the event the child refused to answer, for whatever reason, the mother was given preference. Unless there was a positive unambiguous preference towards the father - by the majority of the younger children, the mother kept custody. At no time was the family drawn into a discussion to arrive at a sensible and fair conclusion giving all the family a chance to make their opinions known. For the nation to support first wives who had no work became very costly. Women with children not only did not remarry but if they did divorce soon came about.

## **Social Workers**

When deciding on custody Social Workers were generally biased in favour of the mother. Mothers used unpleasant rows, unreasonable behaviour, or an impending assault, as reasons why they should be given protection, custody, and a safe home. Any form of mediation was looked on with hostility because the sample of opinion was too small. The Social Workers did not consult wide enough to form a true opinion. This was as much a fault of lack of resource as experience. Family neighbours, friends, relations and work colleagues needed to be consulted to form a complete picture. But above all the social worker had to have an open mind and be receptive and flexible, of opinion as well as decision... this was lacking; searching for and issuing fault frowned on, considered an anathema.

## **A Clean-Break**

By 1980 it was considered fitting after legal separation had been decreed that 'a clean break' ordered - the assets divided - the wife took up work to support the family whilst continuing to live in the home and look after the school children. The ex-father's portion of the Estate's assets was to be paid when the youngest child reached eighteen, or left full-time education. A clean break was considered a method whereby both parents were happily provided for. In reality it had to be unfair on one or other, or both, of the parties. It needed a great deal of financial planning to survive without becoming financially crippled.

The numbers of divorcing couples lead to a social change – a cultural shift; mothers of young children went to work, new relationships tried, family security was threatened, young mothers

‘put themselves about’, child carers abound, kindergartens opened, child welfare suffered and television watching and video games playing took the place of family get together, and family eating patterns changed. Parenthood took the place of mother or fatherhood. Young mothers lost the art of nurturing and close parenting. There was too much to do, and to think about!

The now separated fathers searched to find another partner. They found being on their own lonely and disquieting. Visiting their old home to take out the child brought back too many unhappy memories. The blame culture took on a new meaning for now they felt unwanted and cast aside... seeing a lack of moral duty, permissiveness and behavioral laxity, which historically the father demanded and controlled – as master of the home.

The application for divorce started a process that began with gathering the factual information together, leading to consultations, and a period of time to give space for reflection. Any form of meeting- get-together, or mediation, was used to help form cooperation, opinion and agreement... to include discussions about children’s education and financial provision – holiday cover, the resumption of work and pension provision. Another period of time was allowed to pass for further reflection.

## **Divorce**

The divorce trend rises - and has done so since 1910, and the marriage trend declines... Lone parenting and cohabitation have both been on the rise... The national shortage of foster parents worries local authorities. It is a worrying state of affairs.

At least fifty percent of all children are from divorced couples and women are more likely to have a number of divorces rather than men – 90% retaining custody of their children.

Divorce is expensive, immediately there is less money available... This supports the fear that it is this group – lone parents, suffers most from poverty; the reality is that a high percentage of divorced women receive no child support.

It has been recognized: women adjust quicker to the experience of divorce and register less long-term stress symptoms; are less shy about asking and receiving support; move on to new relationships in a shorter space of time than men; and that working women, whether married or lone parenting, who place their child in kindergartens, during the close period, experience a greater feeling of guilt than men.

Men, react badly to the upset of divorce. They feel lost without the intimacy of women that is close. Suffer immediately: losing income, independence, power, confidence and pride... trying to recount their lost wives giving in to past disagreements. If they fail they quickly become sexually involved again, trying to regain something that has been lost. Those who give support - accepting the situation whilst taking over some of the wife's responsibilities, devote themselves losing a degree of self esteem and sexual confidence.

The effects of divorce on children are mixed. It depends on the age of the child: where in the birth hierarchy they are situated - which relates to the length and quality of their relationship to each of their parents; the build up to the separation of the parents, and eventual divorce; the effects separation and divorce has on the parents - that dictates the amount of quality time they can spend on each child; the sex of the child.

Young boys become vindictive, angry and hurt, losing concentration, motivation and energy. Young girls not only lose concentration become depressed, unfocused, and lack confidence... lose their appetite, have disturbed sleep patterns and suffer from headaches.

By far the greatest problem for family counsellors' is 'trying to describe to the parents how their actions are going to affect their children's lives forever!' It is all very well having the parents accept their errors, many years down the line - the damage by that time has been done. It is the child's initial shaping by 'good parenting', which will stand both the child and its parents in good stead. At the core of that good parenting is discipline - by the child knowing 'what is right and wrong' behaviour? Society should exhibit and channel good behaviour in its workings, which unfortunately it conspicuously fails to do. So that in the end the parent has to be, even more, insistent upon good ethical behaviour prescribed in religious texts.

### **The No-Fault Debate**

It was considered sensible to accept the application of divorce as enough proof that a marriage was irretrievably broken down, and that any question of why it had broken down and when was immaterial. If the application and acceptance of the divorce produced satisfaction and happiness for all parties, including any children, then that was a reasonable assumption. Unfortunately that was far from the truth. There must be very few divorces that occur when all the parties are happy especially where children are concerned.

Fixing the blame might require a lot of detective work. But if blame can be laid at the door of one or other, or indeed both, it makes a simple conclusion so much easier to arrive at. Responsibility and culpability does focus the mind. The object is to make people stop and think - that if they continue they will be the loser, which is only fair and just. It is not a case of preventing bad marriages or making a farce, less of a joke - or being reasonable and true. It is to allow both parties to move on.

Glossing over irresponsibility, lack of commitment and blameworthiness is unreasonable and does lead to non-closure and injustice. It is also true that it is sometimes impossible to point the finger at one or other, both being at fault, each accepting they had both made mistakes.

Allotting blame directs society towards acceptable behaviour... Discovering the truth gives credence to a higher code. Society should fix moral stand points; irresponsible behaviour should be exposed for both set standards. Married couples should stand solidly behind vows made... for lifetime commitments support responsible and resolute behaviour. Fathers can then get on and provide security searching out the job market to give longer lasting work opportunities. Mothers can provide proper nurturing of young children and be at home, when the children return from school. The children will benefit from a more stable home life, safe in the knowledge that their parents are behind their every thought, word and deed... so the family can go forward and plan years ahead.

A set of 'marriage statements', mutually listed and agreed upon, can save many disagreements later on. The subjects can be complicated and far reaching; the object being to cover as many hopes and fears each partner holds. There is no reason why a statement cannot be updated as and when further subjects are pin pointed. If society upholds a set of rules by giving rewards – a tax allowance, then it should legislate to punish deviant behaviour by the guilty party. If these rules are clear couples will be far more questioning and want to know how strongly each is prepared to be committed to their vows. In the event of a marriage breaking down the statement can be produced to give the court guidance.

Divorce harms everyone especially the non guilty party and the children. It does so in every way, both before and after the event. To think otherwise is not facing the truth. Now that we are

committed to giving a reason why the marriage has failed and naming who is not abiding by their vows and promises we can seek a way forward.

The family needs to be housed, the equal ‘division of assets’ legally drawn up and enforced - to give each partner a dwelling - with their own front door. Either party then can decide whether to sell separately, at some future date. Here are four methods:

1. The house split, to form a maisonette: build a new permanent set of external steps, by, breaking through the external wall - at an upper level; create a new entrance – to form an upstairs flat. A new top floor kitchen designed, creating a self contained dwelling space.

2. By retaining the existing front door, create a lobby - by studding. Cut out two entrances, one to the existing stairs, and the other to the existing ground floor rooms. Build a new ground-floor, bathroom extension.

3. Retain the existing front door to service a new ground floor flat. Open up a second front door in the outer wall to access the existing staircase, create a new studded partition - to isolate the stairs. Build on a new ground-floor bathroom extension.

4. Build a new front porch, to act as an entrance lobby - to access a ground floor, and upper floor, flat. Cut out a new front door next to the existing. Partition off the inside to form two entrances, build a new kitchen to the top floor flat and a new bathroom extension to the lower – ground floor flat.

This arrangement allows the children to be accommodated by either parent when convenient. This form of parental stewardship allows shared parenting across households, giving the children a chance to thrive whilst giving both partners the chance to live a private life.

There would need a lifting of various planning restrictions and planning approval – to allow such divisions, giving each flat its own main services. Any such division agreed by legally splitting the deeds, the lifting of restrictive covenants, and the preparation of new titles.

### **The Impact of Divorce**

The splitting up of parents and the home causes an immediate drop in income. Keeping both homes places a great burden on both parents this naturally affects the less important financial considerations – extra curricular activities, meals out, frequent hair dressing, holidays, pocket money and hobbies. If the mother is not working very quickly this becomes essential to maintain the standard of living.

The children's involvement with its departed parent strains the relationship with both parents. However well intentioned at some point there is a comparison of life styles and income. The children try to be non confrontational and fit into the new arrangement but unexpected happenings – colds, injuries, school activities and diary obligations tend to get in the way. If one or either parents take on stepchildren there is always a degree of comparison – the parent gives extra consideration and treats to strike up a friendly atmosphere. Giving everyone the space to become adjusted to the new arrangement is essential. This does not necessarily mean each child has their own room, although that is to be preferred, but it does mean, more consideration has

to be made. Children are pretty alive to playing one parent off against another to procure extra pocket money or treats. Emotional blackmail is even more undermining and upsetting especially as the child gets older. Gradually the relationship falls apart and each party tucks their resentments further back in their consciousness until such times when it raises its head again – in times of stress.

There is absolutely no doubt that parents are only too well aware that what they are doing is wrong. That they are acting out their own weaknesses and faults. The children's well being is the most important consideration and nothing should come before it. However, we are dealing with human being who cannot rise above their own selfishness and feel they must come first in all things. There is a certain amount of wanting the status quo to continue to give everyone a chance to review this new situation which might evolve to suggest a better way out - where all will be satisfied. That is an almost impossible hope. As soon as the innocent party is confronted with their partners changed desires the marriage is all but over. From that moment on any attempt to recover lost ground is tripped up by the slightest reversal – telephone call, mail card, child's ill-considered remark and neighbour's nosiness. Later on in life the guilty party finally accepts they were at fault which unfortunately might make them feel better but the hurt lives on with their children.

## **Resentfulness**

All human beings are resentful. It is a simple statement to make, but true. It maybe that you, as the eldest, are expected to look after your siblings, or you may be the second son and see all the effort being directed towards your elder brother or that you are being compared to that little horror in the next road. The list

is endless... in normal circumstances these comparisons and gripes are easily absorbed and masked by everyday events.

There has been much written on letting such feelings go, to look on the positive side, whatever that is, or that you should not feel guilty. Such thoughts really do not cast aside, cover over or correct the hurt. Time too doesn't always prove to be the healer. What is needed is a more lighthearted view of the instance which has caused the bad memory. It is amazing how even the most applauded; endowed and blessed person can hold grudges, usually based on perceived lack of attention and support in their early stages of life. Some individuals are loath to grant concessions for another's humanity – weaknesses and tardy behaviour... as if they are perfect or not capable of a similar weakness.

Age grants knowledge and experience. No-one is perfect and we all suffer from ill chosen words false promises and forgotten dates. Having children guarantees that you are going to be in the firing line and that at moments of stress and anger you are going to get it in the neck. Although this is of little comfort in time everyone comes to the conclusion that ones parents were not so bad after all. Hopefully that realization comes about sooner rather than later and that you are still alive to see the day when it does!

### **Meek and Mild, Strong or Aggressive.**

I wonder what type of human being you want your child to grow up to be. You may have visions of great statesmen, a motor racing star, golfer or tennis player; perhaps a beauty queen, pop singer or other celebrity. Would you admit to any or none, but want a happy and full-filled adult confident in its own ability appreciating the world about and the sky above?

Like all parents you want the best for your child and at first you have the confidence, strength and fortitude to make that dream come true. Unfortunately you are only human and wake up to reality. The world is not a simple place paving the way for you and yours but caters for many others all clamoring for a slice of the action!

Many parents consider that they should introduce their child to the sports field to keep them fit and healthy able to cope with success and failure; integrated with fellow team members achieving a similar goal all pulling together eventually becoming friends for life.

Children need a common goal that has at the end a reward. Achieving that prize accords attention and respect. Sports whether on the field, track or field requires coordination, quick reactions and strength. We know that practice makes perfection and practice needs dedication. Both of these goals stand us all in good stead.

Physical fitness makes a person confident, makes people alert and aware of all about them; reduces illnesses and prevents depression.

However, like all human endeavors care must be taken to see that too much emphasis is not laid on having to win, for not everyone can stand on the rostrum, there has always to be a loser and if you keep on losing you could give up and admit failure.

So the wise parent keeps a wary eye on their child's chances of success, channeling their offspring to a particular skill where they can succeed and become fulfilled. There is much to commend teaching craft skills that teach survival; constructing toys and games that need knowledge of operating hand tools and everyday materials. Having knowledge of the local fauna and flora – being able to recognize wild flowers and being able to identify a particular beetle. Joining a local rambling club or natural history

or geographical group is a good way to advance knowledge of the local wild life and terrain. Climbing, walking, exploring and map reading are all good outdoor pastimes.

You do not have to be the toughest nor the most aggressive to have a fine circle of friends. But you do have to be interesting, knowledgeable and alert. Being the most popular child on the block because you are thoughtful, kind and considerate is a fine goal and you will most certainly have a far more fulfilled life. To be fit and healthy in mind and body is the aim... that you are able to become complete - as a happy individual, is the prize.

## **Relocation**

Increasingly parents are of mixed nationalities. In the event of the family being split-up - through separation or divorce, one or more children may wish to live with either one of the parents - who live abroad. In the normal course of events, it is frowned on for families to be split, if it is possible to keep them together; in this instance, it maybe more sensible to allow the children to live apart. In most custody arrangements, particularly in the past, it was though more in keeping for the younger children to live with their mother. Fortunately, it is becoming recognized that past practices were often at fault - that fathers were, in many cases, far better custodians. Now it is believe that young children many be better served by living with their custodian abroad - in the parent's home country. As with many family disputes - involving children, the sensible course of action is not always the one chosen. But as a rule, it is far better to keep all options open and not allow either parent to believe one arrangement is for life. Situations change, opinions differ, and people forget. Keeping up a line of communication must be the right course of action...

## **Public Health**

Social Engineering refers to ‘the active manipulation of individuals, by national and local government agencies, to improve their education and training; this generally focuses on the poor, underprivileged and handicapped – to raise their expectations and social class level. All education and training establishments set out to accomplish this goal.

Social engineering’s prime aim is to change society: to improve the chances of women, to actively recruit more comprehensive students into Oxbridge, to achieve at least five good ‘O’ levels for each child, to raise the quality of life for the majority. The government now includes: helping the unemployed to move to areas where there is work... giving tax incentives to businesses to move to areas of high unemployment.

Life expectancy is greater for the rich. This statement is not necessarily obvious because if compared to a family living ‘the good life’ the rich may overindulge. Nevertheless, the rich may include those blessed with greater common sense to work out for themselves what is likely to improve their life chances. The increase of people living longer is attributable ‘to that person’s life style’ – fitness, diet, food nutrition, choices, environment, abstentions, mental stimulation and education; above all maybe the will to live longer.

If the state believes rising expectations is good then it will concentrate on, ‘the improvement in all young children’s education’. If they further believe in the worthwhileness of social engineering they will plough even more money into infant schools. As a first step the necessary teachers need to be selected and trained, class sized reduced, and infant school facilities improved.

The cost of the government's decision will be born by the present rich, and they are no different from those of past ages. Those who have more wish to keep it and to add to it. It is not in the personal interests of the rich to spread largess – they will lose power, influence, prestige and position – the poor will demand more, will not work, consider themselves easily satisfied.

To meet the desired aim: 'to help more of the lower class into a higher class' the sought for improved education must include 'personal responsibility' as a highly desirable prerequisite to social advancement.

### **Conclusion**

When researching this work - reading the experiences of others - their separations and final divorce, it remains difficult to suggest better solutions for an age old problem. The difficulties arise, as in all marriages; along way after reasonable discourse is possible. Positions are rigidly held, resentments harbored and fostered, and opinions shouted from the rooftops. Any sensible mediation is impossible until each party genuinely apologizes to the other for mistakes made [1996 Family Law Act [7] Informal meetings].

If a third party is involved who is part of the reason why the marriage has broken down the remaining partner is facing separation and loneliness whilst coping with shattered dreams and destroyed plans... it is not always the case that the guilty party walks away, they maybe in daily contact, rubbing salt in the open wounds. The mental stress having to pick up the pieces and start again when energy levels and perhaps health not so good compounds the situation.

What is good for the children is used as an excuse to try and find a quick solution. This is obviously the wrong approach. One

or other of the parents is still likely to be involved with their children's care. If unhappy, stressed and momentarily mentally incapable, nothing is going to be done, of a satisfactorily long term nature, until that problem is resolved.

Children are far more likely to come through the trauma of divorce if their parents are properly housed and comforted - capable of giving them shelter, even though it maybe only for a short-term arrangement.

Many unsatisfactory marriages start when the couples see each other walk down the aisle. They question themselves what their motives are and if the right ones. Some divorce courts are right to seek who was at fault, especially when there are children involved - and the more children involved the larger the fault. The same applies if the marriage has lasted a long time. In both these cases a lot of history is involved which makes such decisions difficult to resolve.

## **Future Trends**

It seems that the majority of families have problems bringing up their children... It is their children's teenage years that are the worst. Though they are traumatic, the six years are fortunately soon over... Those problematic events are profoundly disturbing, and tend to escalate - forming a pattern over many years - until eventually the child becomes an adult... Then the pressures of daily living and forming relationships overshadow adolescent difficulties. For others within this group the problems are 'of a self destructive nature' and carry on into and beyond adulthood. Both these two groups, once the problem faced and surmounted, can resurface in times of stress, when they can lash out at friends and family... then, once again, the pressures of daily living pushes the problem to the rear.

Families come in all shapes and sizes and their life is a dynamic process all contained in a structure that can be in turmoil or ordered calm. But whatever, they are intimate and individual..., and even though they are so personal they are based on life lived by thousands throughout the ages – they are not alone and isolated parents but suffering as many others have done before.

What can be said is that most problems start when children are young – in early childhood, when the family is going through a period of stress. The unhappiness maybe caused by the parent's problems and pressures at work, or, other trauma within the extended family. This does not mean that automatically the parents have withdrawn their support, they maybe distracted – have less time, patience, and concern for daily acts of affection...

The most penetrating of all troubles for the family is separation, absence of a parent, divorce, remarriage, change of school, serious illness, and finally, death. Children and young adult are hugely affected by change of routine – of instability. The greater the estrangement the greater the effect... especially in early teenage years.

Mothers, not being near to their child during the 'close period' [birth to three] may result in their child becoming demanding in later life... even if fathers take on that role the trend for assertiveness has still been noted. Fathers not close to the family during early teenage years stimulate - in their child - particularly boys, a protective stance towards their mothers. Girls remember not having the security afforded by close father relationship exhibit distrustfulness towards authority.

The object of good parenthood is to provide perfect training for life, and that requires a full-time commitment, security and love. When this has been accomplished the child is free from deep seated fears; displays confidence and assuredness,

which allows them to feel happy, inquisitive, and relaxed - in the world around them.

Unfortunately, when a marriage breaks down the cause didn't just happen the day before. In most cases marriages stagger on for months, years and even tens of years. The delay in coming to terms with the disaster cancels out any hope for there might be for reconciliation. As soon as the innocent party hears they are no longer loved – and perhaps the identity of somebody else, the die is cast for a divorce. There is much written about how both parents should consider the feelings of the children. I am afraid that when the first realization strikes home every party considers how they are affected, if they can survive, and will their life ever return to normal. Depending on when the guilty party's first transgression began, and how soon it was discovered lies how dedicated the innocent party plans their divorce.

Although all: religions, political parties, and the country's premier institutions, declare marriage as, 'the bulwark of social life' the divorce rate suggests the public's moral fiber is weak. What do they believe marriage brings to the society other than discordance? Government policy is directed to support marriage [the procreation of children] yet its lawyers assist marriages to end. My belief is that if society feels marriage is an important institution it should make the marriage state harder to enter and one way of doing that is to ensure couples fully understand, support and abide by their jointly held beliefs – a declared [amended at regular intervals] written agreement of intent, based on their own desires. Either party who breaks the agreement is at fault - jeopardizes custody and property rights. The Government should support this by statute and tax concessions. The object is to assist couples to understand each others needs. The guilty party's needs are the last thing the innocent party is concerned about.

When one or other of the parents elects to leave the family home by dint of self preservation - instances where the person creating the problem stays, causing unrest, unhappiness and disruption..., an effort should be made to separate the two adults, allowing the children to fluctuate between the two - retaining frequent contact. Courts should enforce a division of the estate to bring this about.



The Wise Owl

**OPEN WINDOWS LEARNING  
PUBLICATION**