

INDONESIA A.C.E. Newsletter



The Extremes of Parenting. Begin Training a Child Early.

How Parents think about Parenting

Many parents wait for their child to grow 'bigger' before training them for proper behavior because they believe that a toddler is too young to be trained. They feel that young children should be 'loved' and in due time they will be good and obedient children.

Parents often unconsciously assume that their child has a 'good' heart and that eventually he will know what is right and wrong.

Parents make many assumptions about the psychology of children, and tragically, many of these are inaccurate. The consequence is the child does not undergo proper or adequate training.

Parenting is a skill that needs to be learned and apply.



Parenting the Child

How children are parented has a profound effect on their behavior. Schools that understand the principles of obedience and parenting are more able to help parents be effective, and schools are also better able to help the students.

There are many good parenting books and programs available. This Newsletter has based its reference on *Growing Kids God's Way* by Gary Ezzo, founder of Growing Families International (USA).

A.C.E. Activities in Indonesia

**A.C.E. Professional
Training Jakarta**

6th to 10th Jan 2014

Venue: Beacon Light
Community School, BSD,
Serpong. Jakarta

**Indonesian A.C.E.
Student Convention**

10th to 15th April 2014

Venue: Camp David,
Puncak, Bogor,
Jawa.



Training the Heart . . . Early

A child at birth has no functioning conscience. He possesses no awareness of standards of right and wrong. Therefore it is necessary that as early as possible, we train children in the precepts of biblical morality.

The primary consideration in early parenting is the child's heart and not simply outward behavior. There is something about the human heart that requires attention, and that is the focus of early training.

The heart is the center of all of life and behavior. In Matthew 12:34-35, Jesus said that all behavior and words have their origin in the heart. Proverbs 4:23 warns us that in the heart the impressions of a young life are molded, and that the issues of life flow from it. Proverbs 6:18 speaks of the heart's ability to devise wicked plans. There is something in a child's heart that parents need to reach.

In early parenting external pressure is necessary to bring acceptable behavior even though a young child has no cognitive understanding of the reason for the behavior. The fact that a child has no moral

understanding as to why food should not be intentionally dropped from his high chair does not mean we hold back instruction and restriction. There is a reason for that.

With adults, beliefs precede actions; with children the opposite is true – actions precede beliefs.

Parents should insist on correct behavior long before the child is capable of understanding the associated moral concepts. Children first learn how to act morally and then they learn how to think morally.

(Excerpt from *The Foundations of Growing Kids God's Way* from the book *Growing Kids God's Way*)



Message to Parents:

1. Train your child early
2. Insist on correct behavior even though they are young

Message to Schools:

1. Train your students early
2. Insist on correct behavior at school



The Child's Heart

The Lord Jesus Christ wants our child's heart, not just his head. It is eternally important that we make sure that it is not just head knowledge and intellectual assent our son or daughter have given to the Lord. Christ commands a complete surrender of heart and life.

Salvation is always a heart matter.

Moral and Self-Control Training

Moral Training

The first step toward moral comprehension is the development of right learning patterns. From the beginning, the establishment of right learning patterns starts to play an increasingly dominant role in the right maturation process. Patterns of learning ultimately affect the way a child manages instruction, direction, correction, limitation, freedom, and new and expanding relationships. Therefore, the patterns learned in the early years need to be the right patterns. That is why early moral training is essential.

When we train our child to have a right moral response, we simultaneously train him in self-control. Self-control is a base virtue. That is, other virtues are dependent on it. Self-control influences kindness, gentleness, proper speech, controlling negative emotions, concentrating, focusing, sitting skills, and many other behaviors.



Self-control is the basis of good behavior.

A child can speak rudely or politely. The self-control needed to sit, think, and choose a better way to communicate is the same self-control that will safeguard the child through life. Such self-control is the product of moral training and not the result of doing flash cards, playing educational games, or teaching our baby math.

Waiting until a child is five years old is much too late to start working on the skills of sitting, focusing, and concentrating.

These are moral development skills, not stage-acquired activities. They are also skills that depend on structure from the earliest days of life. Can parents alter their child's intelligence quotient? No.

Can they maximize or limit it? Yes. ***Growing Kids God's Way*** maintains the perspective that parents who have rejected structure in the early years and did nothing to correct it in the toddler years have actually slowed the process of moral and intellectual development.

That is why Biblical ethics and its handmaiden, Biblical discipline, work on the heart of the child. Parents who work on their child's heart will ultimately train the whole child. Those who work exclusively on the intellect will, at best, raise a smart but morally weak progeny.

*(Excerpt from The Foundations of Growing Kids God's Way from the book **Growing Kids God's Way** by Gary Ezzo)*

The Parent Factor

How one was parented as a child has a profound effect on the patterns adopted in adulthood. If the growing-up years were pleasant, there is a strong tendency for parents to use training techniques similar to those by which they were raised. They may, however, radically swing to the opposite extreme if they feel the methods their parents used were wrong.

As a result, they parent their own past more than their own children by projecting their own fears and disillusionment of life unto their children. Looking back at our past can explain our current patterns of parenting.

Permissiveness

When parents find their unhappy childhood results from permissive discipline, they often become very strict, especially if they feel the lack of guidance was a great handicap to them. These parents often move ideologically from a psychological approach to religious extremism. Those, for example, who lived morally relaxed lives in their youth, will often overcompensate with their own children by becoming overly protective and sheltering.

Parents brought up under unfair, restrictive, or even abusive methods often and unknowingly move to permissiveness. Ideologically, they move from right to left, and become feeling-oriented. They tend to be more preoccupied with their child's feelings than with their child's actions. They elevate psychological health above moral health and what is right and wrong. How they think their child feels at the moment becomes the basis of their ethics, and not God's Words.



Authoritative

For the authoritarian parent, the policy of obedience, and not principle of obedience, becomes the rule. Parents are more concerned with outward conformity than helping the child internalize the guiding principles for interpersonal relationships. In comparison, permissive parenting is more dangerous, for the weapons of destruction are more subtle.

One does not have to observe permissive parents very long to realize there is a basic confusion: they equate indulgence and permissive with love.

The supreme issue in the relationship becomes tolerance to wrong. The permissive Christian mother and father must 'love' the child this way in the hope that the child will 'love' the parents back.

*(Excerpt from The Foundations of Growing Kids God's Way from the book **Growing Kids God's Way** by Gary Ezzo)*

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The Extremes of Parenting

Only Biblical ethics provides safeguards to prevent parents from drifting to extremes of parenting, because only a Biblical approach calls both parent and child to accountability. The moral rules for the parents are the same for the child. There is no double standard, which is not the case for the extremes of authoritarian and permissive parenting.

When parents suspend the moral rules for themselves but enforce them for the child, we have authoritarian parenting. “Do as I say, not as I do” is the authoritarian rule. In contrast, when parents suspend the rules for the child, or make them so broad that they appear nonexistent, you are left with permissive parenting. Tolerance to wrong behavior prevails, since there are either low or no moral expectations placed on the child only the pursuit of the child’s happiness – not his holiness.

Authoritarian Parenting

In this extreme style of parenting, although children typically conformed and did virtuous acts, they did so out of the fear of reproof and not because of the love of goodness. The child heard “you will do it or else.” The “or else” became the motivation for right behavior, not a resident principle of the heart.

Authoritarian parenting manipulates the child, not his environment. Parents play off dependent emotions such as love, guilt, and fear. For example: “Susie, if you keep doing that, Mommy won’t love you.” Although the weapons of fear and conditional love are devastating, authoritarian parenting is still not as personally or socially destructive as permissive parenting.

Permissive Parenting

Permissive parenting is not concerned with suppressing evil or elevating good. At its core, the concern is over the creation of the right environment for the child, and not behavioral results.

Permissive parenting seeks the emotions of love, joy, peace, contentment and confidence. For them, child rearing is reduced to avoidance of all the negative emotions and pursuit of all the positive ones. Thus right and wrong training is measured by how parents think their child feels rather than by the end product – their child’s behavior. Feelings belonging to both parent and child become the basis of nurturing and their ethics. If the child feels happy, the parent is satisfied. If the child is sad, then the parents work to create an environment that will eliminate his sadness.

Permissiveness is a great part of our social problem today. Its legacy is evil in the land. Parents have made tolerance of wrong behavior and have elevated it above what the Bible calls right and wrong. Today it is acceptable to tolerate the wrong of a child’s behavior but not acceptable to speak out against it.

Both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles are wrong and are detrimental to the welfare of a child. That is why it is important to guide parents according to the basic rules of biblical ethics.

*(Excerpt from The Foundations of Growing Kids God’s Way from the book **Growing Kids God’s Way** by Gary Ezzo)*

Goal of Parenting

The goal of parenting should not be to eliminate individual responsibility in choice. The desired result of parenting is the rearing of a completely God-dependent child who is ruled by biblical precepts and not by the impulses of his flesh. The absence of biblical values and self-control hinders this process, whereas the presence of values and self-restraint aids the process. Biblical values are not a substitute for regeneration, but they present the standard of conduct that conforms to God's moral laws.

Parents are to guide, nurture, and discipline their children. (*Growing Kids God's Way* has a major emphasis on the moral training of parents and children.)

The Means of Grace

The duty of Christian parents to instruct their children in the knowledge of God cannot be achieved apart from His grace. The ultimate issue in parenting is the salvation of the child. It is true that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9) yet, many parents wrongly conclude that dependency upon grace means that they should 'let go and let God'. How can parents expect the communications of grace unless we 'wait upon God' in the manner prescribed in Scripture.? Such 'waiting' does not lead to passivity but rather to an understanding that God's grace is applied through our labor (Col. 1:29).

Seek diligently the salvation of your child that he might enter the fullness of God's power and influence. In parenting, grace and labor are not enemies but divinely appointed comrades in the work of the Lord.

(Excerpt from *The Foundations of Growing Kids God's Way* from the book *Growing Kids God's Way* by Gary Ezzo)



Self-Gratification

Not all decisions made by children are as morally drastic as stealing. For example, it would be very tempting for a child to sit down and eat a whole chocolate pie, but it would not be a healthy thing to do. Because the desire for continual and immediate gratification begins at birth, the need for cultivating self-control in the child also begins at that point.

For our personal welfare, self-control is necessary to keep gratification drive in check. Hence, parents play the leading role in shaping the child's heart.

Children are not born with self-control. Therefore, the moral duty of every parent is to function as the child's self-control until the child is able to govern his own life from intrinsic principles of righteous conduct. Parents are to act as governors in the life of a child until the child is capable to rightly governing himself.