

Heart, Mind & Body Connection

A Change of Heart

In 2009, our family was asked to be on a BBC reality TV show called “The World’s Strictest Parents”. The producers carefully chose a couple of troubled teens to live with parents who lived strictly by principles, with the hopes that great drama and explosive tension might result. So these two British teens came ready for a fight, there was no way they were going to make any kind of change in our home. For two days they fought. When the producers did the show with us, they were shocked. There was no drama, from our side of things, we were completely calm the whole time. Furthermore, the teens changed – not simply deciding to comply to make a good ending for the show, but they really changed. By the end they were hugging and crying as they were saying their goodbyes. They hung on our shoulders, pleading through their tears, “Please don’t make us go. You don’t understand. We feel safe here. No one will understand why we want to make these changes in our lives.”

Their hearts were totally transformed by the simple things they learned: the skills of how to follow instructions, how to accept ‘no’ answers, how to disagree appropriately, and accept consequences. They learned how to take ownership for their own behaviour and that having a set of standards was a good idea, and it could give them power. They learned all of this in eight days and they didn’t want their new life to change. The changes weren’t temporary either. We’ve have been over to England to visit the teens and they were both doing well, especially James. He was almost graduated from University which is a first for his family that has a history of being on welfare. He quit smoking (which he started when he was eight years old), he stopped doing drugs, he stopped doing many of the things he did before he lived in our home.

When a person is changed forever – it is because their heart has changed. That is the goal of parenting. In the absence of love, family vision and structure, the self-government skills and system of teaching cause and effect would simply be another behavior modification strategy. But when we focus on creating a calm, loving tone in our homes, and develop a family structure that is consistent and includes effective communication, ongoing planning and deliberate action - then teaching self-government can become a transformational experience, hearts can be changed.

Perhaps you are watching your children make poor choices and feel you may have failed them. Do the self-government principles you are learning seem to be coming too late to bless their lives? Don’t fear. They will come to a point when they will look at what you are doing, notice how you’re self-governing and how you’re living. When they come to realize, “My life is in the toilet and it’s bugging me. What should I do different? Either I make a change, or I don’t. Honestly I know making a change is what I need”... that is what I call the ‘honesty point’. Throughout our lives, every heart is afforded opportunities to experience these honesty points. When we do, then we can choose to do

something super massive! We can change our heart.

How do you train a heart? It is an actual process, which can be described and understood. As you grow to understand how a heart works, you can become confident and trust that process –for yourself and your family.

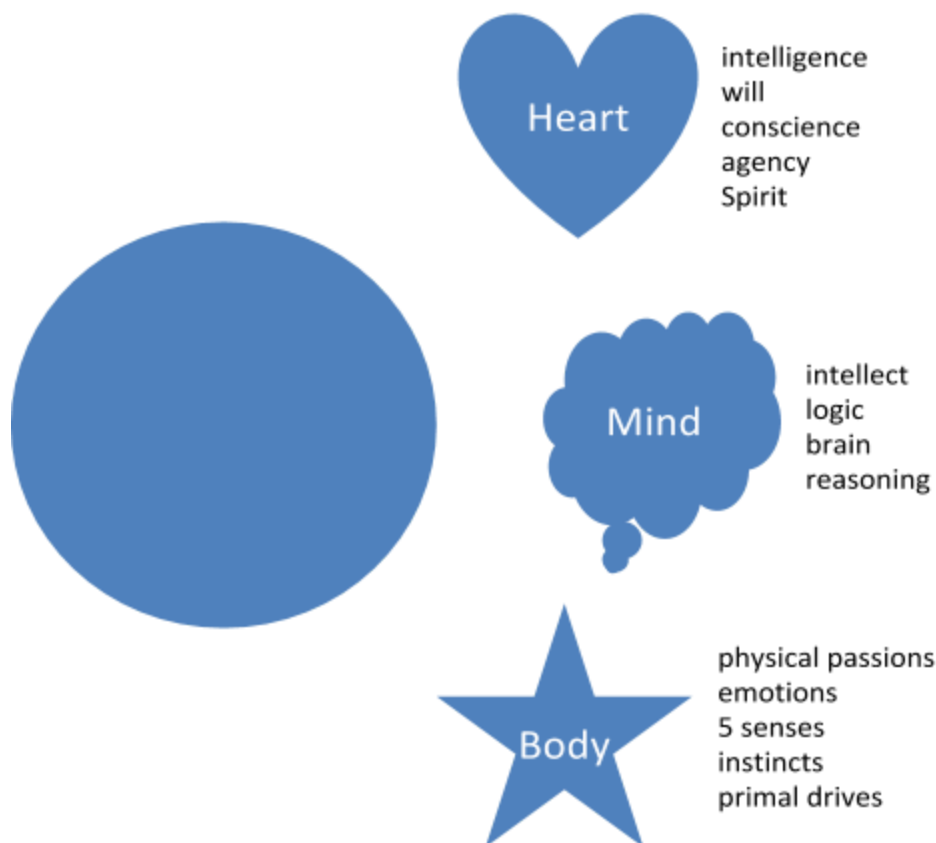
Have you seen a person become completely converted to something? Do you notice a change inside them or feel something different when you are with them? That is the change of heart that learning self-government produces. It must be trained, it is not something that happens accidentally, it is something that happens very deliberately. It is something that a person ‘wills’ to happen.

Three Parts

This life truly is about a battle with ourselves, a battle for our will. Everyone is given two things as they are born – our body and our will. Some people might call this will their heart, their spirit, or perhaps conscience or agency. No matter the term, it is your ability to make choices. Once you get those two things – they are in conflict the whole rest of your life! One side is this ‘natural’ side – this man or woman who wants to do all kinds of things that might not be very good for it. The other is the ‘choosing’ side, the part that is constantly asking, “Do I do it? Do I not? What should I do?” But then there is the third part of us, our brain – our reasoning and logical side that we sometimes appeal to as we make decisions, “Would that be a good idea?” And this life-long battle can only come out right and good for a person if they master self-government to some degree. You have to have a little bit of self-government or the body will win, every time.

In the book entitled, “Our Home” by C.E. Sargent there is a convincing argument to support the idea that we are born animals – that we require training. He suggested that mothers would endanger the life of her child if she did not understand basic physiology, meaning the study of how the body works. He said that a mother is required to adequately be able to train a child, physically and morally, and to do this she must understand physiology. So the study of physiology in his time, the late 1800’s, was a physical study and a moral study; the two were linked together. Today the body is just the body and morality is relative; we have lost the basic understanding that if we only listen to our bodies and don’t involve moral choice, we become slaves to the body’s desires and there are lots of resulting problems.

The three parts that make up a soul: mind, body, and heart are meant to work together, not against each other. When a person learns to use all 3 working in harmony, that person has extreme happiness - no matter their circumstances. Because circumstances can no longer impact the body or the emotions, instead the person has conquered the choice to be happy within themselves, they have freedom -even more than that they have power.



INTEL'LIGENCE, n. A spiritual being; as a created intelligence. It is believed that the universe is peopled with innumerable superior intelligences."

Webster's 1828 English Dictionary.

Notice that there is a difference between intelligence and intellect. Intelligence is actually part of the heart; whereas, intellect is where logic and problem solving happens.

There is a beautiful poem by Louisa May Alcott called "My Little Kingdom"

A little kingdom I possess
 where thoughts and feelings dwell,
 And very hard I find the task
 of governing it well;

For passion tempts and troubles me,
 A wayward will misleads,
 And selfishness its shadow casts
 On all my words and deeds.

How can I learn to rule myself,
to be the child I should,
Honest and brave, nor ever tire
Of trying to be good?

How can I keep a sunny soul
To shine along life's way?
How can I tune my little heart
To sweetly sing all day?

Dear Father, help me with the love
that casteth out my fear;
Teach me to lean on thee, and feel
That thou art very near,

That no temptation is unseen
No childish grief too small,
Since thou, with patience infinite,
Doth soothe and comfort all.

I do not ask for any crown
But that which all may win
Nor seek to conquer any world
Except the one within.

Be thou my guide until I find,
Led by a tender hand,
Thy happy kingdom in myself
And dare to take command.

Louisa is talking about inside herself, that she has this kingdom in which there is turmoil all the time. At the very end she is essentially saying, 'Can I dare to take command of my kingdom?' It absolutely takes extreme courage and strength to conquer our bodies.

Physiology of the Heart

A moral life, a life lead by the heart, is spiritual in nature and has a firm base of character. Self-control – the strength to rule oneself is sought after because power and freedom flow from self-government. The conscience and sense of duty, comes from a Higher Power.

To understand the workings of our heart, or will, consider how we develop from infancy. As babies grow, they start to do things like grab objects, roll over, sit up, and then they begin to take their first steps. When that baby is learning to take its first steps it is not thinking, "I need to lift up my right

foot, and put it down, while at the same time keeping balance on my left foot...” It seems that the baby is just thinking, “Mom, Mom, Mom” and that’s what is driving them to go towards her – something inside is willing him there. That will is so strong, that it controls his whole body. Once the will takes complete control, then the child can walk.

So when a child misbehaves, why is it that we focus almost exclusively on the behavior - talking about, getting upset or frustrated over the behavior? Why don’t we focus on connecting our hearts, leading and engaging their will? That’s a strong place, a place that can drive things! Additionally, recruiting their brain and logic can also prove more powerful than focusing on the actual behavior.

Our Logical Center

The brain, the logical part of who we are, is vitally important. We spend much of our lives training the brain: reading, studying, and learning. You probably know some people who are really smart, who know they are smart, in fact you might be raising some of these intellectuals. You might even describe these children as lawyers. Smart children tend to be really good with logic and love to debate everything. They tend to respond well to instructions provided they understand the logic or rationale behind a particular choice or request.

Logic is awesome as long as your will is sufficiently strong; however, if your heart is not well-trained then you really can be ‘too smart for your own good’. If the brain overpowers the body and heart, then logic leads to manipulation. I know - I lived that life when I was a kid. I was the one that always had the perfect argument and my mom was always frustrated. I was the one that kept putting adults in their place because I was so sure of myself - apparently I didn’t understand my role. Anyway, I got over that and it led me to new manipulation, to years and years of lying. Because our society is such a logic-driven society, manipulation and lying is embraced – honored in many ways. Think of the targeted marketing strategies that bombard us daily, they are one manipulation after another – attempts to trick the logic part of our soul.

It may be oversimplifying the matter, but I think of the brain, our logical center, as a puppet. If the will is leading with deliberate action, “Because it is right, I will take a stand. Because I should I will take a step, because I was meant to – I will do what needs done,” the brain will follow.

Similarly, if the body says “I feel this way...or I need this...” the brain will focus only on that. I’m sure you have seen that happen, even inside of yourself. These are the times you hit a roadblock; when your body starts controlling the brain. The only thing strong enough to turn all of that off is the will – the heart.

Body in Balance

For people whose bodies dominate, each day there is some new complaint, a host of things going badly. They make excuses for things that go wrong rather than taking responsibly and making different choices. For such people, somewhere along the line, instead of the will taking control of

everything – like learning to walk - the body became very powerful in its feelings and emotions.

A purely 'physical life' is animalistic and sensual; behaviors and thoughts are informed by emotions and the five senses. The focus is pacifying the needs of the body – using whatever temporary means to help you feel good, right now. You become an impulsive slave if you allow your body to rule. You are a slave for instance when you wake up in the morning and allow your sensations of fatigue and desire for ease and rest to govern your decision to get up or not. We've all experienced this moment: your alarm clock goes off, the body feels too tired and wants to stay in bed, you hit 'snooze' again and again and your brain follows the body – you tell yourself, 'Just a minute more won't matter too much, I can shower more quickly, eat in the car...etc.' But if your heart kicks in, you say to yourself, 'You know what brain, you know better! If we don't get up we are going to have a bad day! Everything is going to go awful, we won't get a good breakfast, I probably won't even have a good dinner because of this choice right here. Get up! Get up!' This is the power of your 'will', it is fantastic!

Society preaches that we should pamper our bodies – we are to adjust it, make it feel good, send it on retreat, do all kinds of things for your body. We are battling those messages on every front in our home, it's coming in from the internet, the TV, the radio, we even see it at church – it is everywhere. We really don't want a society of sensual people. Compared to anytime in the history of the world, our civilization is so pampered. If we overly pamper the body, William Sergeant says that we will have a moral problem. He says that if you give a child a cookie when he cries for a cookie, and similarly indulge the child when he becomes emotional then he will develop the bad habit of cursing when he doesn't get his way. His steady complaining for not getting what he wants will lead to a negative disposition and he will most likely develop the dirty habit of swearing. He concludes that his swearing will be the result of the habit of complaining and needing to find a more explosive vocabulary to feel like his complaining was still effective. I think he is right. I know people in my family that were real whiners and as adults, perhaps thinking it is not manly to use a whining voice, they've become accustomed to swearing.

What happens if the body is disregarded? This is an equally important consideration in this balance because the body is important. In most homes, disregarding the body looks like physically hurting – spanking or being harsh. The person administering this cruelty to the body, hopes to manipulate fear or anxiety into the heart of a person; to encourage them to be submissive or to feel penitent – this is destructive. If you are the kind of person that reacts that way, maybe you were raised that way, know that you are not alone. Many people come to me and express the need for help - they recognize that they are out of control and for some reason keep hurting their kids. If you believe, as I do, that our bodies are truly gifts from our Creator, do you think it is OK with Him if we mistreat them in any way, altering them, or being cruel to those bodies? Trying to control your children with fear or domination is not the only option. You can begin by training your own heart: stop allowing your body, your emotions, rule your reactions. We can all chose to lead with our heart and engage the mind to stop our emotions from taking over.

Training YOUR Heart to Lead

Self-government is contingent upon our will. No one can change their results, until they change their hearts. Each time you deliberately choose to do something hard, turn your will towards goodness, your power - will-power - is strengthened. In truth, people who DO more, are ABLE to do more -their capacity increases.

One of my friends recently wrote this account of how she is learning how to teach her heart and learn self-government:

“A couple of years ago, I was in a Sunday meeting when a woman with young kids, like mine, shared how she gets up every morning at 4am to study her scriptures. She totally inspired me! I decided right then I would start getting up early to study. Having worked on this habit for a couple of years, I am much more consistent, with fewer 'relapses' into old habits. However, I continued to push the snooze button once, longing for just 6 more minutes of sleep.

Recently I challenged myself to conquer procrastination and decided get up the first time my alarm went off. Since starting, I have noticed a huge impact on my activities throughout the day: I have been quick to act, whereas before I was quick to delay my work. This morning doing my daily workout, I kept this thought in my mind, “You can take a break when you go to sleep tonight. For the next 25 minutes- give it 100%!” Recognizing my ‘maintain’ attitude was not getting me the results I wanted, I decided to give it my full 100%. When I got done I felt like a limp noodle - a very satisfied happy limp noodle - that had given 100% effort with no breaks.

It was as if I had been doing 100% of the work with 80% effort and acting at the right time only 50% of the time. The product of this formula - a lot of work with little results. The idea of timing intrigues me; just like in surfing there are things in life that need to be done at the right time. Certain actions are required to 'paddle' ourselves to the right place and the timing is critical to catch our wave. Choosing to act without delay will get us in the right place at the right time.

In the ocean of life there is really no “maintain”. We are either working to get stronger or by default we are getting weaker. I have felt for many years that there are things I need to be doing to help people but I have held myself back, using many different sad excuses. Since I have stopped pushing the snooze button, I have eliminated a little more of the procrastination in my life. An amazing effect of my 6 minute transformation: I am finding the conviction, somewhere from deep down inside, to follow through with the ideas that come to me regarding my mission to help others.”

by Pennie Rumsey

Self-government really is the power to change the world. And, it really does start with something as easy as choosing to get up when the alarm goes off the first time. That is real will-power!

Part of living as an adult means that we are in the business of changing lives: we teach, nurture, correct, repair, inspire, and serve all those in our spheres of influence. As difficult as all these things sound on the surface, nothing is more challenging than changing ourselves. Our lives often seem so much more complex than the lives of others. Our troubles feel heavier and our behaviors too automatic.

When we talk about changing our hearts, we are talking about switching some of these automatic processes. Normally when something happens, you get a reaction. Every person has their own kind of reaction and we all have shortcomings. Some people are judgmental. Some people are worriers and prone to stress. Some people have short tempers or find themselves often lying to get out of social pressure. Some people aren't happy without people around. Others really don't like being with people. This list could go on and on. People often make bad choices because of fears, anxieties, emotions, or all those reactions that they have trained themselves to do. Everything that puts us into bondage starts in that reactive place. We need to understand what our body does and make a conscious choice instead of just a reaction. That requires teaching yourself to stop, a little bit, before you make a choice.

You can train yourself not to react. This is what I do to stop my reactions and allow my heart to lead:

First, I notice my reactions and the trigger. I pay close attention to how my body feels - particularly the sensations I experience right before I react. I observe my behaviours and analyze the cause and effect of those choices. Next, when I notice my body just beginning to react, I have trained myself to take a physical step backwards. As soon as I do that, I disengage from my reaction. It's weird, but it works and that's what I have done for years. If I've got a foster child in front of me screaming about whatever, the first thing I do is take a little step back because then I can watch myself make a decision. That is one way that you can stop the emotional center of the brain from reacting.

The oldest part of your brain is where the emotions are rooted. As an infant you trained yourself to cry, scream or reach out every time you felt anxiety or discomfort. Many of our reactions are rooted in that same place and if we react emotionally right into adulthood we begin to believe that we can't change the way we respond. We make excuses, 'No I can't do it like that - I just don't react that way.' Don't react - just don't do it. You can be proactive.

Try stepping back and engage a different part of your brain, recruit the brain to help strengthen your will - your heart. The natural first reaction is emotional, when it is the emotion that is running everything, it is the body that is leading. But if you can take a step back and think, 'What am I doing? What is the problem here? Am I calm?' you engage the logical part of the brain - that problem solving part; then your heart has the freedom to lead the brain. I ask myself all kinds of questions inside my mind, all the time. When I question myself, in an assessment kind of way, then my heart can answer. The heart knows the truth. I believe the heart, your will, is connected to God so it will not lead you astray.

I believe that both physical and spiritual self-government are essential for eternal happiness. If we don't govern ourselves physically, we can damage our spirituality. Likewise, if we don't govern ourselves spiritually, we can also corrupt our physical behaviors. I want to share the keys I have used to enable a spiritual change of heart.

1. **Decide Who You Follow.** Agency is not choosing if you will wear green or blue in the morning. That is choice. Agency is choosing who you will follow. Who will you be an agent for? One voice preaches truth, and one voice preaches lies. There really are only two people to follow, either Christ or Satan. Sometimes, we are agents for both depending on how confused we are or what actions we take each day. Knowing who we will follow is essential to our happiness. One voice appeals to the body and senses and the other voice appeals to the heart, or spirit. Both are strong forces and can control the brain, but only one force will actually lead the soul to happiness.
2. **Live with Purpose.** After we know who we will follow, we have declared an allegiance. Allegiance requires action. When we recognize truth, we must serve it. We assess our actions and thoughts to make sure they are in line with our allegiance. We ask daily for direction and live with purpose - doing things we have never done before so that we can be an instrument we have never been before.
3. **Pray in Faith.** Once we have identified who we are choosing to follow, and have decided to be an agent for Him, then we need to plan regularly with Him for our missions. Prayer is our opportunity to humbly express gratitude and to seek guidance from the Father. As we kneel at His feet each day and unite with Him for His purposes we are filled with the Spirit of truth, peace, purpose, and love. This prayer time is the time each day when we plan with the Father how we will change ourselves that day. Making a plan keeps us focused on our goal to change.
4. **Act Deliberately.** This is probably the step most people fail at. There are just too many excuses for failure. We are just too comfortable with our shortcomings to want to really let them go. Change requires deliberate action. Deliberate action is an action of the heart. Actions of the body are response type actions motivated by habits, senses, and feelings. These actions often happen without engaging the will, and can lead us to bondage.

Deliberate actions usually require stepping outside of our comfort zones, and are done honestly. They are the kind of actions that we usually want to tell people we have done. These actions cause people to tell things like, "I went a whole day without a cigarette!" or "Yes, I didn't cheat on that test", or "I stayed calm all day today!" Some of my favorite deliberate phrases are, "I'm sorry," "Please forgive me," "I forgive you," "I love you," and "Thank you." When we deliberately say these phrases, we are never the same again.

5. **Surround Yourself with Goodness.** The more goodness we surround ourselves with, the better we become. Our whole tone of living changes. We see people differently and communicate effectively with those around us. Goodness invites more positive change and inspires others around us to change as well. Our good feeling, rooted in honesty and personal transformation, touches the hearts of others and drives them toward transformation too.

Change is an interesting word. It evokes painful and hopeful feelings all at the same time. No wonder

so many people use that word in advertising. Just hearing the word can manipulate our emotions. But real change isn't emotional. Real change is spiritual. It comes from deep within our hearts and causes the strongest force we have, our will, to assert its strength and lead us toward truth and goodness. Then all who know us can feel our change and begin to hope that they can change too.

Training our Children's Hearts

To train another's heart, a teacher must be firm and secure; firmly rooted in principle and securely fastened to calmness, trust, love and truth. A strong willed person will resist firm, secure training at first. It is in their nature. But after a short amount of time they will recognize the power within, the will-power, and they will become an amazing force for good.

Training requires deliberate action, fostering new habits, but it also requires truth. The word origin of the word 'soothe' means [truth](#). In order to train the heart or soothe the battle that is going on within, we must present truth to our children all of the time. That is part of training the heart.

What does the training actually look like? Let's say I told Johnny to take a bag of apples over to the neighbor's house and he chose not to do it. What we need to do, on purpose, is to soothe them - give them truth. And what you do when you give them truth is to say, "Johnny, just now I gave you an instruction. I told you that you needed to take that bag over to the neighbor. You didn't look at me, with calm face and body, you didn't say "ok" or disagree appropriately, you didn't do the task immediately and you didn't check back. Those are all the steps of following an instruction. What you should have done was.." then I would tell them those steps again. Then I would say, "Since you chose not to do that, you have earned an extra chore." Because Samuel Smiles, author of the classic book "Character" says that 'work is the antidote for a sick character' I offer them the opportunity to improve their character. Do you see the truth that I presented to them? Or sometimes if a person is yelling in my face, I will just say, "You are yelling at me. You should be calm." That is the truth. There is no need to react, just tell them the truth in a calm way, having your heart calm, and they will learn to be free.

I hope that your home revolves around a moral life. Everything will stick better – even math – if you have lot and lots of heart training, every day. If the family doesn't know self-government and their hearts are corrupted and they are fighting against each other, then learn self-government first. Get the environment right, invite that feeling of love, then work on training the brain because you can learn all you need in four years provided you love learning. You can trust in that, I watched my son do two and a half algebra books in one homeschool year because he wanted to know.

CS Lewis is one of my favorite writers, in his essay "Men Without Chests" he describe the heart as the 'spirited element' or 'chest'.

"Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is powerless against the

animal organism... As the king governs by his executive, so Reason in man must rule the mere appetites by means of the 'spirited element'. The head rules the belly through the chest...the seat of Magnanimity, of emotions, organized by trained habit into stable sentiments. The Chest-Magnanimity-Sentiment these are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man. It may even be said that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal."

C.S. Lewis

So few people train the heart anymore. We hope it will happen if we show up to church or maybe if we say prayers with our family. While those things help by inviting a spirit of truth into your home, it is up to us -as parents- to diligently, intentionally train their heart. If we do not create a society of 'men with chests', we are doomed.

That is my whole mission. I go around this whole world, raising my voice wherever I can to try and help families so they can be happy, so they won't be bound by their bodies any longer. That they will use them for what God intended. We are meant to be a strong people, our children were meant to do mighty things. That's why we feel compelled to do hard things: to conquer our bodies and lead with our heart. If Gandhi changed himself and changed all of India, can't your son do it too? If Benjamin Franklin could change himself and lead a nation to re-birth, can't your daughter do it too? If I can go talk at the UN and talk with people in different countries, write every day and miss precious hours of sleep, can't you do it too? You can. As soon as you start learning how to train your own heart, to choose what is right, every time.

REFERENCES:

"Our Home Or, the Key to a Nobler Life" (1890) by Charles Edward Sargent

"How to Change Your Life! in 5 Steps" Article by Nicholeen Peck

"The 6 Minutes That Changed My Life" Article by Nicholeen Peck and Pennie Rumsey

"The Abolition of Man" by C.S. Lewis

RESOURCES:

- “Our Home Or, the Key to a Nobler Life” by Charles Edward Sargent (free Google eBook)
http://books.google.ca/books/about/Our_Home_Or_the_Key_to_a_Nobler_Life.html?id=BSAEAAAAYAAJ&redir_esc=y
- “Character” by Samuel Smiles (free e-book on Project Gutenberg)
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2541>
- “The Abolition of Man” by C.S. Lewis
- “Emotional Releases and Self-Government” (available to Implementation Course members)
<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/understanding-emotions-vs-self-government-there-balance-0>

In this call we talked about what kinds of emotional releases are healthy and which are not, and how Self-Government allows for expressing feelings in a healthy way. Be sure to listen all the way until the end...The last 15 - 20 minutes are really important.

In the story discussed, the parents train their daughter to "emotionally vomit." This kind of parent training could go wrong in the long run; it devalues personal responsibility and maturity, and can encourage attention seeking behaviors. Learning not to take things personally and teaching self-government leads to happy, optimistic, motivated, problem solving people. It doesn't mean you don't ever hug and cry because of sadness, but the cry itself should never be the goal.

Emotionally exploding releases endorphins and can become really addicting. I had a few foster children who admitted to being addicted to the rush of a rage. I have also felt it myself. It is a dangerous habit to get into.

- “On Subjects and Unnatural Affection”
<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/article/subjects-and-unnatural-affection>
- Recorded conference call (available to Support Group Members)
<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/conference-call-6-7-13>

AUDIO: Segment 9: Amazing Information Seeker and Learner - What you need to do is less time focusing on your feelings in our body; Focus on our heart, our will, and our actions being driven by the will; Body, Brain, and Heart/Spirit

- Recorded Conference Call (available to Support Group Members)
<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/conference-call-5-24-13>

AUDIO: Segment 7: Healing Relationships and Getting Calm - Using your body instead of will to help things to right; Analyze how to help your heart be soft; How to break a habit; Finding your trigger and watching your body language

- "The Anatomy of Peace" - Book discussion
<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/forum/parenting/book-discussion-anatomy-peace>
- You may find that as you participate in the TSG Learning Circle that the practical 'how to' skills for TEACHING self government are only touched on. The TGS Circle's focus is primarily on LEARNING for you as an individual - specifically to encourage changes in perspective, creating vision and understanding to motivate personal growth.

Having said that, you can TOTALLY learn and practice the self-government skills in your own life at the same time as teaching it to your family. In fact, you need to know that you do not need to get all the skills down before you begin such teaching. You can start right where you are at today. You can both learn and teach!

If you find that you would like more practical tools for Teaching Self Government within your family, the book, A House United, will give you a great foundation. (Link to resource) Half of the book is dedicated to your family vision, mission, economy and the feeling in your home. The second half gives you the practical details - how to teach the 4 basic skills, the 'rule of three, how to run family meeting, practicing effective communication... the how to's of teaching Self Government are all in there.

You'll also find more specifics using the searchable archive of free articles online. Articles are categorized by age and skill set at <http://www.teachingselfgovernment.com/>

For further support changing your family culture, the feeling in your home or support as you teach - the [TSG Support Group](#) gives you monthly articles as well as being able to send in questions to Nicholeen which she answers during a weekly conference call.

The most intensive level of support we offer is the Implementation Program (link) a step by step parenting course that can take as little as 10 weeks to complete.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. "When a person is changed forever – it is because their heart has changed. That is the goal of parenting." Do you agree with this statement? How would you describe your goal as a parent?
2. Towards the bottom of Page 1 Nicholeen describes an 'honesty point'. Looking back in your life is there such a time in your life - when you took an honest look at your life and made a decision that changed your heart and direction in life? Consider sharing such experiences with your circle.
3. Are there other descriptive words that help you visualize the three parts that make up a

person? Add them to the diagram on Page 3.

4. Brainstorm what harm stems from a person becoming a slave to their - physical body? - reactive emotions? - intellect / reason?
5. Consider how you handle your emotions. How do you achieve a healthy balance between emotions allowing you to have empathy vs. emotions so powerful that other's challenges affect your own life? Are emotions such as anger, sadness, guilt useful? What about rage, depression, shame? How do spiritual feelings differ from body-centered emotions?
6. How do you train your kids to handle their emotions? In the book, Parenting: A House United, Nicholeen shares that when her children hurt themselves she gives a hug and some empathetic words but then the focus quickly shifts to taking care of the problem, cleaning it, finding a band aid. By focusing mainly on the solution or actions needed to make it better, she shares how the sadness is quickly soothed and her children seem better equipped to handle physical pain. Whereas coddling, making a big fuss over small injuries, focuses the interaction on emotions, rather than teaching the child resourcefulness, problem-solving and resiliency. What situations do you find the most challenging for your children to manage their emotions? (i.e. disappointment, physical pain, or conflict) As a group share practical strategies to help your children be OK when such situations arise.
7. Nicholeen shared once how the dentist knew just what would motivate her to make flossing a consistent habit - he told her flossing would improve bad breath. Her will was totally engaged by understanding truth that mattered to her. How can you engage your will, or that of your children, to change? What truth, if understood better, would matter sufficiently to get your heart to lead? With your children, consider their age, ability to reason, what interests and is important to them? What truths could you use to soothe them, to create more harmony in mind, body and heart?

(TSG Circle member comment: Recently a friend reminded me that I could spend as much time as I wanted sharing how my musical talents bring me such joy and has enabled me to bless others lives - while these effects are super valuable to me, they may not be to my son. In his violin studies he needs truth that will carry him through each practise - a closer vision because his perspective is limited, stuck closer to the here and immediacy of what he'd rather be doing right now. Being able to play what you love to listen to on the radio or fell in love with at a concert, having opportunities to be in the spotlight at a recital, jammin' with friends - what's the truth he needs to understand to engage his will, being young? - - - if you practise you can have a lot of fun!)

CHALLENGE:

Choose a challenge from those listed or create your own. Let your Circle know what your challenge is for the month. Be prepared to report back on your progress.

1. Challenge yourself more to give your full 100%. Find a way to eliminate one habit of procrastination in your life and increase "your personal best". You are precious and needed. There is something specific and amazing that you were born to do that only you can do. It's

yours; no one else's. You cannot delegate your purpose; you cannot give it away. Face your fears. Overcome your blocks. One step at a time.

2. As a family, memorize the poem "My Little Kingdom". It is a fantastic poem with beautiful words and teaches much truth.

3. Begin your personal heart training. Each time you begin feeling tense (i.e. when your child needs correcting, when a sensitive or emotional topic comes up in conversation, or a challenging situation surfaces) stop and examine where you are coming from in your own being -- are you leading with your heart or your body? If it is in your body, consciously change it. Each evening jot down an instance where you intentionally stopped and record what difference it made. At the beginning and then towards the end of the month, notice how often you have to stop and switch from an emotional reaction to heart/spirit lead interaction.

4. If you share Nicholeen's Christian Worldview, using the suggestions on Page 9, set a goal related to one of the following spiritual keys:
 1. Decide Who You Follow.
 2. Live with Purpose.
 3. Pray in Faith.
 4. Act Deliberately.
 5. Surround Yourself with Goodness.