

Popular Parenting Methods: Are They Really Working?

Based on the book with the same title by Nicholeen Peck.

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Questioning Popular Parenting

What Are The Three Core PARENTING STYLES?

It seems that parenting methods go in cycles. Strauss and Howe, authors of the book *The Fourth Turning*, identified four main types of people who have specific characteristics which identify with others of their generational type from generations before them. One of these generational types of people who show up every 80 years or so is the “Hero Generation.” This is the generation of people who fought in WWII and the Revolutionary War. If Strauss and Howe are correct, then we are raising “Hero Generation” children and youth right now. We should learn from the parents of the last “Hero Generation.”

In the early 1900’s the “Hero Generation” were the children of **traditional strict** parents. After WWII, the parenting culture changed partially because the American families were more in survival mode. There were fewer fathers, so mothers had to work, and much of the day-to-day family responsibilities landed on the children. Gradually, to maintain control, parenting became more aggressive; discipline became harsh. I call this type of parenting **bullying, fear-based** parenting. Notice, *the busier the families were, the more desperate the discipline measures felt.*

Dr. Spock, a very popular post WWII parenting guru, swung the parenting pendulum into the extreme opposite of aggression, one of telling children nothing and allowing them to find their own direction. His philosophy was that the parents should not be parents, but their children’s friends instead. His books became the standard, were quoted widely, and parenting changed drastically. This was the ‘birth’ of the hippie generation full of ‘enlightened’ individuals who did ‘their own thing’ in every aspect of life. This style of parenting is the **modern progressive philosophy** of parenting.

A Need For Change

Mark Wanstall, a British reporter/critic, wrote an article called “What Can We Learn From *The World’s Strictest Parents?*” One of the first things he said was that parents are going about parenting all wrong, that the traditionally strict model, which was the style in our family

dynamics, has been lost to modern progressive parenting. This made me think about some of the episodes on this show that I had watched earlier. Some parents were very confrontational, aggressive and angry. Their attitude was power – the one with the most power won the battle, while other parents were so laid back that they allowed the children to do whatever they wanted. They had the attitude that the child should decide everything without any, or very little, direction from the parents. This later type of parenting is more dangerous than the over-powerful, aggressive kind since the parent isn't giving the child a moral foundation to make choices with.

Mr. Wanstall suggested that societies should re-establish the traditional strict type of parenting. However, the word "strict" often implies the aggressive, damaging type of discipline, but that is not what traditional strict parenting is. In Webster's 1828 dictionary, the word "strict" means "governed by a certain set of principles." So strict is good! Traditional strict parenting values the individual and at the same time has rules to be taught and followed. A wise friend of mine said that a strict parent doesn't have to be mean or yell. How true!

In his article, Mr. Wanstall stated that there is an "emptying out of the adult identity" going on in the world today. Adults feel powerless. They generally don't feel very confident about parenting, so they want someone else or some agency to do it for them. With child-rearing methods flip-flopping so much, adults are afraid to say or do anything when they see delinquent behavior in children, both in their own or in someone else's. Some adults do not understand what their real identity and responsibilities are, and they are afraid their standards might be wrong in our ever-shifting societies.

The first change we should make is to consciously choose to be proactive. Decide what principles and standards *you* will live by and take action. Furthermore, if you love people and care about your society and its future, choose to make a difference when you see something obviously wrong in someone's behavior; even if they don't live with you. Correction can be done calmly and with love in the way a good parent would do.

How does this apply to our own families? How we were raised determines how we will raise our children. For example, I was raised in a bullying, fear-based, aggressive household. When my father declared that he was "the boss" (and he meant it!), I asked him why. His standard answer was, "Because I'm the dad, I'm the boss, and that's the way it's going to be." Why was he that way? Simple. His parents did not want to go along with the Dr. Spock theories of non-parenting, so they raised him in the opposite way because they knew no other.

It is natural for people, like my parents, to see one way of interacting as extreme and to assume that going to the extreme other direction is the solution to the parenting problem. However this is not going to solve the problem, it's just resorting to the other side of the manipulation measuring stick. The question should not be, "How can we manipulate the children so that they do what we say?" The question should be "*What principles do we focus on to touch the children's hearts so that they will be changed and improved forever?*"

There is no measuring stick for changing hearts. The process is so incremental and so personal it cannot be measured. It is inside the person. The parent and the child are both focusing on what is happening inside himself and the other person. It is an attachment action which creates lasting family connections. These connections happen when a child chooses obedience and is praised, and when a child chooses disobedience and receives correction. In both these situations the focus is the connection.

Keys To Parenting Success

As we look at these parenting methodologies, it is important to remember two key principles:

1. Parents must *deliberately* and *consciously* make choices for their families. If they don't, that void will most likely be filled with popular agendas formulated by smart, clever, and often misdirected experts.
2. Parents are the ones to decide what is best for their families' physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare –no one else– not the government, not school teachers or church leaders. Parents should look within themselves for the answers for their families because the dynamics and the personalities are different in each home. Therefore, they need to be aware of what is happening in the home in order to decide what needs to be changed.

How Parenting Styles Differ

To help us examine our parenting choices and look closely where those choices will lead our children, it is necessary to discuss in more depth the differences between modern progressive (lenient), bullying/fear-based (aggressive), and traditional strict (principled) parenting styles. (See Popular Parenting Methods Comparison Chart [HERE](#))

Modern Progressive Parenting

In this parenting style, the children have total choice and very few guidelines. Most parents who choose modern progressive parenting know they don't want their children to be afraid of them. The parents don't like getting mad and want calmness, they see friendly social behavior as the key to this goal. They want happiness and they want the child to feel free. These are great goals.

The only problem is that freedom doesn't come from leniency. Freedom is born from self-awareness, self-restraint, self-motivation, and self-government. The freeing process is based on moral order and virtuous core principles - what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, what is true and false. In order to evaluate the truth of something, a person must be taught

what truth feels like. They must be told what truth is and have been exposed to it. They must also have been exposed to false principles and be able to discern the difference between the two.

I think all parents want children to be confident stewards of their own lives. However many parents don't know that being over-indulgent, or not teaching enough about core principles, letting the child 'figure life out on their own' is not a gift, but rather a large obstacle to over-come.

A young mother once shared with me, "I was raised in that modern progressive house. My parents didn't care what I did or where I was. It really hurt me inside to know that they didn't care about me. I often tried new things, even mean behaviors and risky choices, just so that they would notice me. I just wanted them to care about me and my life." She went on to explain that she felt like her childhood was a mess and that she often felt lost and alone because the parents were so lenient with her.

Children of modern progressive parents are not free even though the parents are hoping freedom will be the result. Parents wanting to give children opportunity with modern progressive methods will usually end up bewildered and frustrated at the actions the child chooses. This method of parenting is destructive by nature and frustrating for all involved.

Bullying/Fear-Based Parenting

Bullying/fear-based parenting is an aggressive form of parenting which is destructive to family relationships. It looks like: belittling, yelling, pushing, dragging, accusing, nagging, bossing, and sometimes even striking. In this style the children have very little choice, if any. Parents are at war against disobedience. They will win the war at all costs.

Fear is the motivation for the children to comply. The parents feel that fear of parents is a healthy and proper motivation since the parents are bigger than the children and they themselves probably choose to live productive lives out of fear. Bully parenting isn't about what you are supposed to be or do, it is about what you are not supposed to be or do.

A number of years ago I witnessed a mother scold, threaten, and punish her son for wearing a pair of shorts when she had told him not to. Instead of focusing on teaching him the skill needed (being able to accept a no answer) and giving him the opportunity to safely and calmly learn cause and effect, she emotionally and somewhat physically beat him up. I couldn't help but ask myself, "Was she effective? Did she accomplish what she really wanted?"

In her heart she wanted a boy who would obey her and want in his heart to please her and do what was right. She wanted love and respect. But she was trying to force him to act like a person who would feel that way; you can't force a person to love you. Anyone who tries will only succeed in scaring another person.

Yes, this boy was definitely afraid. As soon as she started yelling at him about the shorts, he was suddenly defensive and blatantly dishonest in order to protect himself. “Uh, Dad said I could wear them...” With each lie he was driven further and further away from love and respect. So did this mother get what she wanted? If she only wanted shorts off, then yes she did. But if she wanted love, respect, obedience and peace at home, then she just made an error.

Traditional Strict Parenting

Traditional strict parenting is different than the other styles because it is productive instead of destructive. It acknowledges choice, within a structure which is built around principles of virtues and morals that you, the parents, believe in.

Traditional strict parents know that relationships are based upon truth, vision and respect, so they regularly expose their families to truth, create a vision for their families to focus on, and teach skills within a structure which promotes respect.

Children with a moral compass and skills to succeed and connect with others are not only self-governing, but they are also confident.

Yvonne, a friend of mine said to me one day, “Nicholeen, your children are the most confident children I know. Anyone who thinks that you are repressing them by teaching them skills and having a family structure for communication, is blind. And not only are they confident, they are happy. I have never met happier children in all my years of teaching school and living.”

People often ask me what I recommend to help promote self-confidence in their child. My answer is almost always the same. I say, “Teach them skills and how to work.” When a person knows skills and how to use them, they are free to succeed. They recognize their ability to free themselves and refuse to turn their happiness over to another person.

And when children know how to work, they see themselves as capable and free. They feel mature. With the maturity and new capabilities, the children see themselves as valuable and strong. Seeing a job well done increases a person’s self-worth. This is why it really is a gift for children to have the negative consequences they earn, be chores.

MODE AND MOVEMENT

The second column on the chart is called “Mode and Movement”. This refers to how the teaching or parenting is happening and what direction the parenting style is going.

Modern Progressive Mode and Movement

Progressive means ‘to move on; to abandon the past as if it does not exist’. For modern progressive parents the mode is to *improve on the past*. The movement is forward. It is a relationship revolution. Because some aspect of parenting was not liked in the past, it is abandoned and the *revolution* pendulum swings as far away from that behavior as possible. Modern progressive mentality grew out of the bullying fear-based approach, which was needed to a point, but it also threw out cause and effect, natural consequences and connective relationships. The feeling of unity was lost.

A modern progressive parent’s job is passive; there is no real responsibility, and no power. The parents often feel like victims of the system or of their children. They let others raise and influence their children and blame others if their children don’t ‘turn out right’, but they really don’t have a clear idea what ‘turn out right’ means. So the movement of the modern progressive family is into the future because the present doesn’t make sense and the parents are being dragged on by the dictates of society. The hope is that the future is always better than the present and the past. The perspective is linear.

Modern progressive parents think they are moving forward, but really they are moving away from being a parent at all. The “emptying out of the adult identity” in our society means that parents don’t really know what it means to be a parent or don’t want to be, what they think a parent is. God designed families with parents so that children can be trained. Children can’t learn all they need to on their own, wisdom is learned by principle. If parents run from that foundational family plan, children will fail to succeed.

Progressive parents think that trying to be their child’s friend will create unity in the family, promote obedience and allow for natural life lessons to be learned, but it doesn’t. Friendly behavior is good, but good parenting is bound by standards and principles. Friends let each other do whatever they want to, parents can’t.

Bullying/Fear-Based Mode and Movement

The mode of bullying/fear-based parenting is that relationships are *animalistic*; ‘king of the hill’ mentality. “I’m bigger than you, so I’m in charge!” It is power based and very aggressive. It causes helplessness and depression, a feeling of being lost, uncared for and devalued. The movement of the bullying and fear-based parenting form is *backwards*. Relationships regress because of the damage the attitudes and behaviors cause the relationships. Since the relationships are power-based each person is often literally pulling the other family members *back*.

Teaching and correcting are happening but without a unified family government, including family meetings where everyone’s input is solicited and valued, the family is in danger of power struggling with each other until someone wears down.

Traditional Strict Mode and Movement

Traditional strict parenting is historical and based on moral order. While most people associate the term ‘strict’ with the aggressive bullying form of parenting, historically ‘strict’ meant governing yourself or others by a set of virtuous principles. It has been proven that the best parents still do this. So, traditional strict parenting means being a *principle-based* parent.

So if the movement of modern progressive parenting is forward, and the movement of bullying parenting is backward, is traditional strict parenting stuck somewhere in the middle? No, traditional strict parenting moves *inside* each family member. It is about each person's ability to self-govern. The teaching revolves around bringing people to this end. It trusts that with strict principles and a structure based on love, acceptance, trust, mercy and effective communication skills, a self-governing family can be realized.

Strict parenting is all about changing children's hearts. It is not merely behavior modification, or how to get them to do what you want them to do. It is teaching children to see what the causes are, what the effects will be, then helping them realize they can make a different choice if they want to change the consequences. Since children, like adults, have agency, they need to be taught how to use that agency—choosing wisely, from the inside out.

When I plant a seed and want to have a tree that is beautiful and productive, I must nourish it, water it, brace it, train it in its growth, give it everything it needs to be strong so it can weather the storms and bear fruit. That is what parents were meant to do with and for their children. Children are born to parents, not to society, to teachers, or to the government. Traditional strict parents offer nourishment for their child's happiness and self-government—in their personal lives and in their social successes and interactions.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

Modern Progressive Leadership Structure

The modern progressive leadership structure is *child-led*. The parents generally act as managers of chaos. And there tends to be a lot of chaos because of the disconnection between parent and child. Management is not able to have proper parenting impact; it is servitude, child-led, and tyrannical (the child being the tyrant). Such parents complain, “My three-year-old is in charge of the house.” Three-year-olds should not be in charge of the house, neither should thirteen-year-olds!

I have noticed that modern progressive parents are very good at facilitating. They facilitate entertainment and opportunities to keep their children busy and pacified. Facilitating is usually

seen as the main responsibility of parenting. The parents all gather together on the sides of the soccer field, or the back of the music studio and discuss the strains of facilitating. Yet parents were meant to mold, discuss, plan and prepare the children to happily succeed in life. These responsibilities take adequate connection time. So activities need to be monitored carefully to ensure they are not over-done or reorganize family priorities.

Bullying/Fear-Based Leadership Structure

Just as modern progressive parenting is tyrannical, so is bullying/fear-based parenting. The tyrant in modern progressive parenting is the child, but the tyrant in bullying/fear-based parenting is the parent. Most people spend their whole parenting lives trying *not* to be this kind of parent for this very reason.

There is *no leader* in the bullying/fear-based parenting form, just an out-of-control bully, a dictator, enforcer, but certainly not a leader. The attitude in this parenting style is generally: 'Parenting is a battle, and I will win!' The home becomes a war zone. It is probably easy to see why parenting should not be tyrannical. Parenting should be a relationship which is wrapped in principles which create love and enduring affections.

Traditional Strict Leadership Structure

The leadership structure for traditional strict parents is modeling by *parents*. The leader is the parent, and the parent models leadership. Parents handle discipline by being calm and acting deliberately while correcting a child when something has gone wrong. Because of this modeling the children are more likely to respond in a similar way when things go wrong in their lives.

Modeling is a mindset. It is a way you see your role as a parent. If you see yourself as the example of what to do, then you are more likely to assert yourself and take deliberate action to train your children correctly. Leading the family in this way solves many household and relationship problems. For instance, what happens if you take time to work with your children daily instead of just assign work and have expectations? Your children will learn how to do the job effectively and up to standard in a stress-free, nurturing environment. They build confidence and create a vital connection with their parents. Eventually children need to learn the skill of doing chores independently, but they more quickly get to that skill level when they have been coached, taught and nurtured through the learning process.

TEACHING

Modern Progressive Teaching

One day, while talking to an acquaintance about parenting I said, "I look at my role as parent as a sort of teacher. To me parenting is much more than just a disciplinarian." This woman looked at me strangely and was obviously not used to the idea of thinking of herself this way.

If the family is completely child-led and there is a *meager amount of teaching or correcting* of any kind, then where and how do relationships develop? The children have essentially been abandoned; they are on their own to figure out what is right and what is wrong. Right and wrong vary depending on what you want, how you feel, or how society and the law defines it. If it is illegal it is wrong. If it is legal it is right. If society considers it productive or responsible, it is good. If society considers it wasteful, selfish, or distracting then it is bad. Morals, or who defines morals, aren't really brought into the conversation.

The goal for modern progressive teaching is independence.

Bullying/Fear-Based Teaching

The language of fear-based parenting is power struggling. That is how the teaching is done. Quite often parents resort to fear-based parenting when they don't know what else to do. This happened in my home growing up when my parents didn't have the skills to deal with disrespectful or lazy behavior. My heart did not ever change in response to this force.

Unlike modern progressive parenting there *is* a definite right and wrong. What is right and what is wrong is determined by the dictator/parent. If the parent is bothered or frustrated, the action is wrong. The parents don't take any time to seek to understand the child. Instead they solve the behavior problem by verbally or physically attacking the person to quiet them. In bullying/fear-based parenting there is *no connection and no open communication* – the family structure crumbles a little more with each storm of contention.

Bully parents are often very picky and have a habit of making big deals out of small issues, they have a tendency to fault find to an extreme. There is a difference between fault finding and teaching. Teaching is much more. It involves praising, preparing, correcting, and calming a learning child.

The goal of bullying/fear-based parenting is co-dependence. The ruler wants to maintain control for as long as possible, because it makes her happy and secure. The future of the child is always related to the contentment of the ruler.

Traditional Strict Teaching

Traditional strict parents lead the family based on their core values and principles. Religion is a vitally important aspect to teaching. God determines what is right and wrong, good and bad, true and false for traditional strict parents. There is no leniency in God's law. However, there is also no tyrant. God's principles are taught by consequences. Traditional strict parents teach the same way.

Traditional strict parents know that families are forever. The family relationships are extremely

important. They are our basic security and our strength in hard times. The environment at home is not about being friendly or being right, it is about being united.

If parents and children understand that they all need each other for happiness and recognize their family as the means to happy living, then they are more committed to learning self-government and communicating effectively. Acknowledging that we need each other for success and happiness, and living in a way where we honor and respect each other and our relationships, is called interdependence. The teaching goal for traditional strict families is interdependence.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE

Modern Progressive Foundational Principle

In modern progressive parenting the foundational principle is *entitlement*. The children are entitled to make their own choices, have all the things they need to keep up with society, and to have non-oppressive friends instead of parents.

Free from correction, children are encouraged to pave their own trail in life. They are flooded with stories and comments about the importance of identity and making your own identity. The irony is that modern progressive parenting is identity-based, but the children often end up with no identity. Because identity is based upon purpose. Without core values and proper moral teaching, children will not feel a sense of mission, or purpose in life. Instead they feel isolated, lonely, and burdened, as well as confused because there are too many choices.

Bullying/Fear-Based Foundational Principle

The foundational principle in bullying/fear-based parenting is *punishment*. It is retaliation or having a feeling of resentment towards a child. Bully parents typically care a lot about their own comfort. They may dread being with their children because they allow the children to bother them so much that they just don't care anymore. When parents yell, kick something, or lash out they also feel an emotional release and though they feel out of control and regret words or actions, they make choices that manipulate their body chemicals and damage relationships. The result of this punishment principle is fear, dishonesty and distrust.

Bullying parenting is anger-based so calmness is the key to changing the base and improving the focus. When you are tempted to aggressively demand obedience, stop! Fight that feeling, do whatever you need to in order to get in control and into calmness, and then make a change.

Traditional Strict Foundational Principle

With traditional strict parenting the foundational principle is *consequences*. By nature people

look for what works to get what they want. We all try to manipulate the law of cause and effect by adding emotional elements to the situation (ie: drama, tears, anger, attitude, whining, pouting, self-pity, playing the victim) If it works we keep manipulating, but if it doesn't, we ultimately find what does work. In a traditional strict home, true principles are what works. In this way you give the children structure; they feel safe, they feel loved, and they feel a connection to you.

If you ever wonder why your child is obedient for teachers but not for you, remember that your responses train the child to create a habit of connecting in a certain way, even if it is destructive to the relationship. So don't give in, give up, or power struggle. Show them the only thing that allows them to be heard and understood is calmness, and then they will choose that.

FOCUS

Modern Progressive Focus

The focus of modern progressive parenting is *self-discovery*, and it is a failure. It is human nature to want to know who we are and what we were meant for. Some people spend their whole lives trying to figure this question out, while others are taught the answers to these questions in their youth and quickly understand that their lives are about much more than themselves.

Not knowing who you are and what you were meant for is dangerous. Such a person can be influenced heavily by the media and popular thought. They are not really free to think like they want to. Their perspective on life is limited and they often feel small and unimportant. This is why modern progressive children often make many mistakes in life. They are drifting and may make bad choices just to see if they really are bad or give them a clue to who they are. It *might* cause some sort of feeling that will make a change, give direction or an event to attach identity to.

Bullying/Fear-Based Focus

The focus of bullying/fear-based parenting is *self-preservation*. Being self-preservation minded is physically, spiritually and especially emotionally destructive and, therefore, is a failure as well.

Traditional Strict Focus

The focus of traditional strict parenting is *family unity*. It is not focused on the self of the parent or the self of the child. Its about this collective group –Father, Mother, and children– making a home together. It focuses on the family's purpose as a group; its mission.

Have you ever noticed that when people get old, their favorite subject to talk about is their family? They tell story after story, family accomplishment after family accomplishment because

they know their families are the most important part of life and have the greatest value. If, at the end of their lives, family relationships are more valuable than anything else, we can learn from our elders that we need to value them all along. We shouldn't wait until we are nearing the end of our lives to strive for strong family relationships. Family unity should be a daily focus now.

AGENCY

Modern Progressive Agency

Modern progressive parents give their children complete license to choose without teaching them right and wrong. Leaving their children alone to choose doesn't give them freedom but confusion because the consequence of their choices seems unpredictable. Success must be gained by trial and error and often success isn't found, especially in relationships.

Bullying/Fear-Based Agency

Similarly, bullying/fear-based parents also encourage their children to learn by trial and error because they change the law so often to fit their whims and behave so oppressively. When a person feels oppressed they try to find ways to feel freedom, so they 'play systems' by trying to find a weak spot to steal freedom. They have been shown that the only way to win the relationship battle is to get power, any way you can. The children can't wait to be big enough to not be bullied any more. Then they can bully who they want to and have power.

Bullying/fear-based parenting uses opportunities to take agency away from the children. That is why in the chart it says children have no agency with this form of parenting. They still have some, but such children base their choices on which manipulation will work best in a given situation rather than on what is right or wrong.

Traditional Strict Agency

Traditional strict parenting is liberty based. Liberty means knowing; knowing is freedom. The root of the word liberty is *liber*, which actually means "book; or to read, write and speak". You may notice how library and liberty have the same Latin root. What do we get out of books? Knowledge. What do traditional strict parents focus on giving their children? Knowledge. Their parenting is free and liberty-based parenting. Since the parenting is founded on true principles and skills which lead to effective, loving communication, the family has the support it needs to be truly free.

Since traditional strict parenting is based on liberty it is very predictable. Children and parents are both using skills based on principles which make learning cause and effect easy. The family knows what will happen if they choose one way or another and have no anxiety over the family structure. When a person has been grounded in what is right and wrong then there is no

confusion about where happiness comes from, and obedience is chosen as a means to that happiness and family connection.

PARENTING ACTION

Action is a manifestation of the heart of the person. I know we all make action mistakes from time to time and work to correct them, but I also know that the only way to make sure the action doesn't happen again is to strengthen the heart. So what can we learn about the heart of each of the three kinds of parents?

Modern Progressive Parenting Action

Modern progressive parents act in an ignoring way to their children. They ignore the teaching which can strengthen the child, and ignore the effects from many actions. Ignoring is a wild behavior. Some may like to call it organic, but looking closely, it is easy to see it is wild. The product, or child, is uncultivated, unrestrained and unproductive. When a person is used to being unrestrained by principle they are like water; ever flowing to the lowest point.

Bullying/Fear-Based Parenting Action

By contrast, bullying/fear-based parenting is very demanding. All action is required. The parent is unyielding; much like a rock. The parent is an obstacle not a nurturer. They are something to work around and watch out for, not someone to respect.

Rocks smash things, they don't nurture and produce. A rock-type parent demands productivity without planting seeds. They are consumptive. Their focus is on how *they* are affected. And, since this is the focus, rock parents inspire their children to also be selfish, and in no time they are 'rock children' with illusions of strength, passively waiting for their next battle.

Traditional Strict Parenting Action

Seeds cannot grow in water, and will not grow on rocks. They grow in soil; the richer the better. Traditional strict parents see themselves as rich soil. They nourish their little seeds and train them up as they grow. Their parenting action is to be inspiring.

The child chooses correct principles because the tone and structure of the home inspire that kind of self-government.

Since the parent is aware of his nurturing role, he constantly cultivates himself and nourishes himself, just as a good gardener amends the Fall soil for a strong Spring crop. The parent sees himself as the reason the child will choose self-government. He is the leader; the example of happy living. Even if his life is not ideal, he constantly focuses on what he can control...himself, and what his role as parent means. A person who understands their role, is focused and ready

to inspire others.

Your Parenting Revolution

The world we live in preaches a doctrine of selfishness. There are so many distractions which are pulling family members away from their families to more self-absorbed lives. What would happen to our societies if this changed? What if families healed and focused on uniting again? We would have a family revolution.

In order to have a family revolution, there needs to be a parenting revolution. Revolutions are moments when citizens stand up and say, “no” to social norms and peer pressure. They are moments in history when the citizens are assertive and will not be bullied by fears and worries. They are moments when citizens look inside themselves and see a God-given power to choose what is right.

It is time for just such a revolution. Our families are under attack. Darkness and confusion are encircling our families and our communities. Tragedy abounds. People are asking themselves what they can do about it all. When there are problems in the world, it is always wisest to look for the nearest place you can have an impact for good. Those nearest places are you and your family.

Especially for Husbands

My husband’s style of parenting used to be aggressive, the bullying/fear-based kind. He was in bully mode 100% of the time, and was 100% successful in repelling our children. They always went to me first before they went to him. But, he was sad because he did not want his children to be afraid of him. His desire and his method did not match, but he thought that being soft was unmanly and would not be effective. Here is one of the ‘turn-around’ experiences he had with our son:

“I used to read scriptures or a story with my son at night before he went to bed. When he guessed at a word, I always declared, “That’s not right. Do that word again!” Pretty soon he didn’t want to read with me anymore. I was troubled about that, and eventually realized that I had to change the way I read with him. I came up with a plan. I decided when he didn’t say a word correctly that I would give him a hug or tickle him (he loves to be tickled). So when we were practicing his little flashcards, I did just that. Pretty soon he felt more comfortable with me, and I enjoyed reading with him more.

The constant correcting I was doing was bullying. It caused discouragement and emotional distance in my son. I noticed and made a plan to change the outcome.

If I could give a piece of advice it would be to take time to look at your methods and observe the reactions of your children. They will tell you much! Turn things around by loving and cherishing your children. Remember, they will grow up to be like you!"

Traditional Strict - The Best Style!

On our chart, the only constructive parenting style is traditional strict; it builds good people using cause and effect. Strict parenting is the effective parenting of the past, and has also been proven to be the effective parenting of the future. True principles don't change. So many answers to life's problems are found through strictly following principles. I call this self-government.

Use the discussion questions and challenge below to explore your parenting goals. Openly discuss your parenting goals and new direction with your family; have family meetings regularly and do this article's challenge. Start implementing changes in your family. If things are not going well, you can get help. There are many helpful books and audio classes, as well as our own Implementation Course to help you make your transition smoothly. Be deliberate and vigilant. When things get tough, resist the temptation to slip back into old ways that destroy relationships. Pray for courage, direction and help.

My family has been very deliberate and very vigilant in our parenting, and I can promise you that when your children gather around and hold onto the truth and correct principles that pour from every movement and every conversation you have, it is sweet, and they are happy. They achieve things you never thought possible.

Reflection & Discussion

Understand it:

1. Comparing the three styles of parenting, what difference stands out the strongest to you?
2. What concerns you the most about this revealing article?
3. In this article, what do you find the most inspiring or encouraging?

Personalize it:

1. What is your tendency as a parent? Which style do you lean towards most often (your default) --*remember awareness is half the battle!*
2. Who else in the Circle matches your default? (You're not alone! How can you support each other to make the needed changes?)
3. What behaviors do you need to **stop doing**?

4. What do you need **to do** most to help heal your family, right now?
5. Who, in your family, needs your attention most, right now?
6. To support the type of parent you want to be, what should your parenting structure look like? (see pg 8 for leadership structure)
7. What ten things does your family need to focus on first? (morals, virtues, principles, etc.)

Discuss your plan:

1. Does your structure and communication support your goals?
2. How *could* you present your ideas to the family? How *will* you present these ideas?
3. What skills or resources are you lacking to make the needed changes? Where can they be found?

If your structure or methods don't support your foundational list, then look for something that you can do to fix it. Look for new ideas. Look for mentors.

Challenge

What principles are most important for your family to live by? What actions will you take this month to move forward?

Think of the principles in which you believe and that are important to your family. Here are some ideas to start you off: hard work creates confidence and happiness; polite behavior is a sign of respect for family relationships; effective communication needs to be learned not assumed. There are many, many more. Make a list and then prioritize them. The principles or virtues which come to the top of the list are usually the ones your family needs to spend the most time learning.

Even if you don't yet know *how* to teach your family these principles, the list will keep you focused and help you notice when you have found the answer you are looking for.

But what if you don't know *what* principles to put on your list yet? That's okay too. Focus on exposing yourself to depth. Read classical inspired writings and discuss openly with people who you want to be like. As you surround yourself with greatness, you will see the great principles you need in order to change your heart. When your heart is changing, then your child can also experience a change of heart. It is impossible to teach something which you haven't experienced yourself.

Decide what you need to focus on the most, right now? Write it down and share your thoughts with your circle. Ask for support, seek out resources. If you need one, find a mentor -perhaps you can connect with a member of the TSG Forum, or notice and seek out people who embody

a particular trait, or have strength in an area that you are weak, look for people who have been successful in teaching a specific principle or skill. Maybe your circle is that mentor? Plan to succeed. It may take time and consistent effort...but plan for progress and success.

Resources

To read the complete book, “Popular Parenting Methods: Are They Really Working? Time for a Parenting Revolution,” go to <https://teachingselfgovernment.com/store/popular-parenting-methods-are-they-really-working> or Amazon and purchase a soft back or Kindle copy.

Great Parenting Books:

[A House United: Changing Children's Hearts by Teaching Self-Government](#) by Nicholeen Peck

Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More by [Gordon Neufeld](#), [Gabor Mate M.D.](#)

[Kids Are Worth It!: Raising Resilient, Responsible, Compassionate Kids](#) by Barbara Coloroso

Parent Effectiveness Training: The Proven Program for Raising Responsible Children [Dr. Thomas Gordon](#)

[Aha! Parenting](#) by Dr. Laura Markham

Online TSG Resources:

Parenting with Different Personalities (Q&A Forum Post)

<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/forum/parenting/parenting-different-personalities>

Fathers - Parent or Playmate? (3 Segments that explains the different role father’s play and how to get them on-board for a unified parenting partnership.)

<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/fathers-parent-or-playmate-part-1-103>

<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/fathers-parent-or-playmate-part-2-104>

<https://teachingselfgovernment.com/fathers-parent-or-playmate-part-3-105>

Classics

List of adult classics: <http://www.tjed.org/resources/classics/adults/>

- Uncle Tom’s Cabin
- Les Miserables
- Ghandi’s biography
- C.S. Lewis