

Dare to lead: Parental Leadership Training (PLT)

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Abstract

Parents often wonder why love and discipline do not achieve desired results. The workshop seeks to equip parents with the leadership skills necessary for effective parenting in a rapidly changing society. **PLT** is based on a servant-leadership model: parents need to have the heart to love and serve as well as the authority and competence to inspire and influence. **Part 1** (May 19) addresses the basic principles of parental leadership, such as leading by example and creating a positive home environment. **Part 2** (May 26) applies the principles to provide solutions to some common concerns, such as how to raise healthy, happy and responsible children and how to discipline without power struggle.

Workshop leaders:

Dr. Paul T. P. Wong (PhD, University of Toronto) Director and Professor, Graduate Program in Counselling Psychology, Trinity Western University

Dr. Lilian Wong (PhD, University of British Columbia), Area Counsellor, Vancouver School Board and Counselling Supervisor, Trinity Western University

The Wongs have had extensive experience in counselling both parents and children. More importantly, they have raised two boys: Austin and Wesley. Austin graduated from the Law School of the University of Toronto, and works as an entertainment lawyer in Toronto. Wesley graduated from the University of British Columbia and at present pursues a PhD in Physics at Harvard University.

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Introduction

Parenting is the most complex and difficult task for which most people are ill prepared. Today's rapidly changing world poses even greater challenges to parents.

- Have you ever wondered why love and discipline do not seem to work?
- Are you concerned that you may be too permissive or too strict?
- Do you feel grieved when the child you love turns against you?
- Are you frustrated and angry because your children do not respect you?
- Do you feel worn out by the demands of work and the task of parenting?
- Do you dread the day when your teenaged child becomes a stranger?
- Are you worried that one day your children may get into trouble?

Personally, we know so many parents who feel confused, hurt, powerless, anxious or guilty. For some parents, their dream of happy parenthood has turned into a nightmare and they now wish that they never had kids.

What we face is a parenting crisis – parents feel besieged and pressured on all fronts, and the family is under assault from so many forces beyond parents' control. We should not take it lightly, because today's parenting crisis is tomorrow's social crisis and the destiny of a nation hinges on the quality of parenting.

In today's pluralistic, post-modern society, love and discipline are not enough, and parenting skills are not enough. There is often an important **missing link** in parenting practices – parental leadership! Contemporary parents need to reclaim their authority and learn how to be good leaders at home.

We all want to be better parents and we want the best for our children. The PLT workshop seeks to equip parents with the leadership skills necessary for effective parenting. We trust that PLT will be helpful to you, whatever problems you might experience in child rearing.

We do not claim to have discovered a magic bullet or panacea for parenting, but we have re-discovered the foundational truth that children need adult leadership to guide, support and mentor them.

This basic truth of parenting is rooted in thousands of years of human experience, the accumulated wisdoms of religions and philosophies, and hundreds of research studies in psychology, education, and leadership.

Almost everywhere, people openly talk about the importance of leadership: Youth Leadership programs for high students, leadership courses and programs in hundreds of colleges and universities. Of course, leadership training has always been big for corporations. It is time to unabashedly talk about the need for parental leadership!

Objectives: what you will learn

1. Understand the problems confronting today's parents.
2. Learn from different perspectives on parenting.
3. Understand the principles and practice of servant-leadership at home.
4. Maintain your values and beliefs in the midst of cultural and social change.
5. Create a positive family climate conducive to good behaviour.
6. Become aware of personal issues and manage parental self-care.
7. Improve relationship and communication with your children.
8. Acquire effective skills and strategies in parenting.
9. Know how to side-step power struggles with your children.
10. Gain more knowledge and confidence in parenting teens.
11. Identify and help difficult children.
12. Learn how to raise happy, healthy and responsible children.

Part 1 describes the various social, demographic changes that have contributed to the current crisis in parenting.

Part II identifies the missing link the parenting literature and introduces principles of servant-leadership as the foundation for effective parenting.

Part III describes the task of servant-leadership, and applies leadership principles and skills to address parenting concerns

PLT integrates sound psychological and spiritual principles. PLT is based on servant-leadership rather than authoritarian dictatorship. According to PLT, parents need to have the heart to love and serve, but also possess the authority and competence to inspire and influence.

Standing firm on the foundation of servant-leadership, parents are more likely to succeed in raising healthy, happy, and responsible children, who will become future servant-leaders.

What makes this workshop unique is the belief that at its deepest level, parenting is about **what you are** in relating to your children, rather than **what you do** to your children. The challenge of parenting is not about how to control children; it is more about how to mentor them and develop their potentials.

After all is said and done, **who you are as a person** matters more than **what skills you have** in terms of effective parenting.

We hope that PLT will fundamentally change the way you view yourself and your children. More importantly, will hope that PLT will transform you and your family.

This workshop will first look at the problems facing today's parents, and then consider various solutions. Finally, we will present the principles of the servant-leadership model and its applications.

The principles of PLT are simple and easy to understand, but it takes determination and commitment to put these principles into practice. You need to embrace servant leadership as a lifestyle rather than a parenting task.

You will be surprised how things will change for the better, when you change.

Effective Parenting Questionnaire

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There may be more than one correct answer for each question. Please complete this questionnaire prior to the Workshop. Then, do the questionnaire again after completion of the Workshop. The correct answers can be obtained from ptpwong@home.com.

1. Who is in “the driver’s seat” most of the time in your household? (a) I am. (b) My spouse. (c) The children. (d) No one.
2. What is your highest priority as a parent? (a) Build up my children’s self-esteem. (b) Make sure that they achieve academically. (c) Teach them to be responsible, caring people. (e) Train them to be good, obedient children.
3. When your children are doing poorly in school, which party owns the problem? (a) Parents. (b) Children. (c) Teachers. (d) Both parents and children.
4. If you have no idea what your teenaged children are up to or where they go, how should you react? (a) Express my concern. (b) Tell myself to trust them. (c) Insist on being informed about their whereabouts. (c) Simply leave them alone.
5. What do you do when your children are consistently rude, defiant to you? (a) Punish or scold them. (b) Tell them firmly that such behaviour is not acceptable. (c) Talk to them and try to understand the reason for their rude behaviour. (d) Ask myself whether I am part of the problem.
6. What would you do, if your children spend too much time on TV, Internet or video games and ignore their homework? (a) Agree on an allotted time. (b) Not to worry, as long as they are getting fairly decent grades. (c) Teach them the importance and skills of time management, (d) Emphasize the importance of doing well in school.
7. What should you do if you are worrying about losing control of your children? (a) Increase your efforts to keep them under control. (b) Teach them self-control and responsibility. (c) Build a loving, trusting relationship. (d) Model for them self-discipline.
8. Your children don’t seem to appreciate your love and efforts, what can you do to change that? (a) Withhold my love for a while. (b) Stop doing too much for them. (c) Allow more personal space for my children. (d) Make sure that what I do and say commands their respect.
9. Do you have a mission statement for your household? What is your vision for your family? (a) Don’t need a vision or mission for the family. (b) My mission is that my children will be successful. (c) Build a loving, supportive family, where every member can develop their full potential. (d) My family will honour and serve God.
10. If you feel that you no longer understand your children, what should you do? (a) Have the faith that they will turn out alright. (b) Get to know them better in an unobtrusive way. (c) Spend more time together as a family. (c) Encourage them to bring friends home.

11. What is your over-riding attitude towards children? (a) Treat them as my equals and friends. (b) Demand respect and obedience because I am their parent? (c) Just love them. (d) I have the authority and responsibility to guide them and nurture them.
12. How do you feel about the task of parenting? (a) It is a real burden. (b) It is demanding but rewarding. (c) It is a sacred trust and an awesome responsibility. (e) It is no big deal.
13. Where did you learn about parenting? (a) My parents. (b) The Bible and the church. (c) Parenting classes. (d) Parenting books.
14. What is your view regarding parental authority? (a) Parents should give children a lot of freedom. (b) Parents should really keep children under control. (d) Parents should provide leadership at home. (e) Every member of the family should have equal rights and equal votes.
15. Which of the following is essential to effective parenting? (a) Love. (b) Discipline. (c) Good parenting skills. (e) Being a caring leader to my children.
16. What should be the most important parenting role? (a) A good provider. (b) A caregiver. (c) A mentor. (d) A disciplinarian.
17. Who should take the most blame for the children's misbehaviours? (a) School. (b) Mass media. (c) Society. (d) Parents.
18. Ultimately, who should determine the rules in your household? (a) Parents. (b) Family meetings. (c) Society. (d) Rules are not necessary.
19. What kind of expectations should parents have of their children? (a) Minimum expectations. (b) High expectations. (c) Realistic but challenging expectations. (d) No expectations.
20. What is the basis for parental authority? (a) Their position as parents. (b) Their knowledge and wisdom. (b) Their power to reward and punish. (c) Their caring and competent leadership.

Crisis in Parenting: The problems and the challenge

Nowadays, parents are having a very tough time.

- They are blamed for all sorts of problems, but rarely understood or appreciated.
- They are held responsible for their children's behavior, but their authority to discipline their children is undermined by professionals and Government agencies.
- Many parents, especially single parents, have to work long hours to pay the bills, and they are accused for not devoting enough time to their children.
- Parents are expected to teach their child moral values, but the decline of national morals, the spiritual pollution from mass media, and the post-modern attitude against absolute standards conspire to undermine their efforts.
- Parents are pushed and pulled by all sides; they are overworked and underpaid; they are stressed and alienated. They are left to fight the battle on their own, without receiving the support they desperately need.

Dr. John Gray (1999) observes: "The Western free world is experiencing a crisis in parenting. Every day, there are increasing reports of child and teen violence, low self-esteem, Attention Deficit Disorder, drug use, teen pregnancy, and suicide. Almost all parents today are questioning both the new and old ways of parenting. Nothing seems to be working, and our children's problems continue to increase" (xxiii).

The widespread mental health problems of children threaten to become a national social crisis. Guess what? Parents are blamed for failing to provide an optimal home environment for healthy development of the children. For example, Dr. David Satcher (2000), Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General, said, "Growing numbers of children are suffering needlessly because their emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs are not being met by those very institutions which were explicitly created to take care of them."

There is a lot of finger-pointing directed to parents, but there has been little help given to the parents, who need it most.

The following themes serve to illustrate both the nature and the scope of the parenting difficulties.

Parents are blamed for every social problem

Parents are blamed for every social ill, from school violence, substance abuse, to various emotional, behavioral problems of the children.

In many provinces and states, parents have to pay for vandalism or thefts committed by their children. One father was even sentenced to jail for negligence when his son was killed by a car while riding a tricycle near his home.

There is the widely held implicit belief is that if parents are doing their job right, then there won't be so many young offenders, adult criminals, and there won't be any need for the war on drugs.

What have we done wrong? Why has parenting failed? Why is it the old-fashioned method of parenting practiced by grand parents seemed to have produce more responsible, law-abiding children?

We now know a lot more about child development, about parents. But why so many experts' advices on parenting have not worked?

This workshop will answer these puzzling questions.

The dream of happy parenthood has often turned into a nightmare

As parents, many of us still remember the joy of anticipation and the excitement of arrival of a brand new life. We still remember how the baby has changed us – how it fills our hearts with a warm, fussy feeling that we have never experienced, and how much joy we experience as the baby seems to recognize us and respond to our love.

Yes, we want to be loving parents and want to be the best parents for our children. We want to do everything we could possible can so that our children can have a happy, fulfilling life. We are willing to work hard, to sacrifice so that our child can have the best. We remember the sleepless nights, the anxious moments, when our child got sick. We remember the happy moments of playing, or traveling together. Walking in the park and holding that little hand could be a precious experience.

We want to believe that our children are from heaven, as Dr. Gray would say. Personally, our children have given us so much joy, in spite of the difficulties and struggles. We have a family – a sweet home. All the hard work seems worth it. Life would be empty and less meaningful without a family, where we can love and be loved, where we have someone to trust, someone to care for. Children can truly enrich our lives. Parenthood can be the most rewarding and fulfilling experience.

Yet things do not always turn out as anticipated. For many parents, the bundle of joy in their arms has become a burden of sorrow. In spite of their best intentions and efforts, their once beloved babes have become their enemies, their tormentors, their children from heaven have become aliens from a totally different world.

The tragedy of lost boys and girls

Many of these heart-broken, distraught parents have no idea what has gone wrong. They want to practice love and discipline; they try to follow the Bible; but somewhere along the way, they have lost their children, and they don't know what can be done to win back their lost boys and girls.

Some of these lost children have joined a gang; some have run away from home and live a life of drugs, prostitution, and crimes; some have ended up serving time in some correctional facilities; some even got killed.

We have done research on these troubled children. Some of their tragic stories are very disturbing. Many have been physically and sexually abused. In one case, the mother introduced her 8-year old son to use illegal drugs with her. In most cases, they are products of dysfunctional families. The saddest part is that many parents are not even aware of the dysfunctioning in their marriages or in the way they treat their children. There are different forms of dysfunctioning, ranging from constant fighting and intense conflict to emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

In a recent Murray Show entitled "My wild, sexy girl needs to go to jail" (aired on Feb. 5, 2001), young girls, from 13 to 15, seem to come from a totally different planet. Their trash-talk, obnoxious, defiant attitude, rude manners, their utter lack of sense of responsibility and positive values are shocking even to the jaded.

One 14-year old repeatedly said that if her father went to jail because of her problem in school, "I don't care, that's his problem." Even when Murray confronted her and pointed out that it was her misbehavior that caused him to go to jail, she seemed totally clueless about her responsibility. She proudly stated that she would steal anything she could lay her hand on, and had no fear of getting caught.

Another disturbing case was that after the older sister, age 16, was stabbed to death by another teen, the two younger sisters, aged 15 and 14, continued to walk down the same path of self-destruction, totally unaffected by their sister's recent tragic death. Even when Murray asked them whether they were concerned that the same thing could happen to them, they did seem to care.

The common theme among all these out-of-control teens is: I can do anything I want with my life, and no one can stop me. This is my body, this is my life, and I can do whatever I want. I just do what I feel like. My parents can't tell me what to do or what to wear. I am my own person. I just want to do whatever is fun. I don't care about the consequences,

and I don't care about tomorrow. Right now, I am having a blast. I am totally free and I am not responsible for anything or to anybody.

While their parents were in pain and tears, these teens seemed totally indifferent to their suffering. The amazing thing that they all claimed to love their mom or dad, but they didn't have any qualm of inflicting pain on them.

Where do these out-of-control teens come from? What has happened to them? Who is responsible? Has their school failed them? Have their parents let them down? Should we blame the media? What can parents do so that the same nightmare would not happen to them?

One thing is sure – children do not become wild and irresponsible over night.

While growing up, somewhere along the way, little by little, they have learned that they can pretty well do whatever they want and get away with it. They have learned that they possess the freedom and power to do whatever they like, and their parents are not able to stop them. They will see their parents as either too weak, or too busy to bother with them; they may even come to the conclusion that their parents do not really care about what kind of trouble they getting into.

While growing up, somewhere along the way, they have also learned by observing their parents that life sulks, and there is nothing worthy living for. They have learned that the only way to survive is to do whatever it takes to have a good time. If it makes you feel good, just do it. Don't worry about the consequence. Don't worry about tomorrow. That is why many kids live on the fast lane and die young.

While growing up, somewhere along the way, they got involved with the wrong crowd, and discovered that doing drugs seems to be more fun than doing home work, and that selling drugs is definitely more profitable than working for McDonald or Pizza Hut.

While growing up, somewhere along the way, they have learned from the mass media that most adults are corrupt, dishonest, hypocritical, and violent. The children have also learned from the media the world is unfair, might makes right, and the bad guys often win. Therefore, life is what you can out of it, by whatever means.

In sum, parenting is one of the several factors that contribute to a generation of troubled children.

Working parents have little time for their children

Today's parents have to work longer just to pay the bills. Often, both parents have to work in order to survive. As a result, they have less and less time for their children. One recent research shows that on an average, parents only have a couple of hours of quality time with their children per week.

In the last few weeks, parenting has again dominated the news and talk shows, because a recent major study found that kids' aggressive behavior was positively related to how longed they stayed in daycare facilities. This finding makes many working mothers feel defensive and guilty.

Some expert say that this study proves that mothers are the most important person to the children, and that they need to stay home to invest in their children so that they will not end up in court one day.

However, others say that this study is inconclusive, and it only serves to make working mothers feel guilty; they also point out that those who advocate that mothers should stay home have lost touch with reality, because many mothers, especially single mothers, have to work to make a living.

Then, there is a related debate about quality versus quantity of time spent with the children. Some claim that it is the quality that counts. Others contends that the quality argument is a myth and that mothers need to be there when their kids need them; they also point out that neglecting the kids during the weekdays and indulging them during the weekend is not a good receipt for building trust and respect.

Staying at home does not guarantee that kids will turn out good. Being at day care does not guarantee that kids will turn bad. Child development is a very complicating process, and parenting is just one of the contributing factors, even though it may be the most important factor in the first few years of child's experience.

All experts agree regarding the importance of attachment and bonding of a child with a mother or a mother surrogate. They all agree that attachment to a caregiver is the cornerstone for the development of a healthy personality. To grow up without a caring person to attach to can have long lasting harmful effects.

There is also a consensus that the quality of relationship is important – kids need to experience love, warmth, sensitivity and acceptance from parents. But for such a loving, trusting relationship to develop, there needs to be sufficient time for warm, caring, and engaging interactions with parents. If parents are absent most of the time, very limited amount of quality time may not be sufficient to produce bonding and attachment.

Failing to devote sufficient time to children is certainly a difficult parenting problem. However, it would be wrong for me to blame working mothers, because many mothers do need to work to support themselves and their children. But I also know that many parents work long hours just to keep up with the Jones.

Parents really need to ask themselves -- Which is more important to us: Investing in our children or investing in our financial security?

We need to keep in mind that childhood is very brief, and it is a crucial time for parents to lay a firm foundation for their future development. When we establish a strong

attachment with our children, I am confident that even when they do go astray, they will come back.

Single parents have a tougher time

Single-parent households have been on the increase over the last ten years. Single parents have a definite disadvantage in terms of financial and human resources. Many single mothers live below poverty line. Often, single mothers have to work as well as carry the full burden of child rearing. A great deal of their time consumed by demands from the children and trying to correct their unruly behaviours. They have little energy or reserve left for personal development or social life. Some single mothers feel guilty and stressed out because of on going conflicts with their ex-husbands and competition for children's affection. Who understands and empathizes with the pains and struggles of single parents? Are there support and resources to help them in parenting?

The situation is even worse for teen mothers because of poverty and their own immaturity. Research has shown that for teen mothers without a high school education, the chances of their children becoming aggressive are much higher. In short, the prospect of their children's future is not very bright, unless teen mothers receive the necessary education and support.

Part of the parenting crisis is clearly related to the breakdown of marriages and the unraveling of the family. A long-term solution to today's parenting crisis would have to involve the strengthening of marriages and families.

The undermining of parental authority

In many households, parents are no longer in the driver's seat. Somehow, they have lost confidence in their parental authority.

Both God and society have endowed parents with the authority to supervise, teach and care for their children. "Parental authority is this ability to establish rules and values for the child and to prevent all actions that subvert them. In this sense, all parents, be they modern or old-fashioned, lay or religious, honest or dishonest, want to possess authority" (Omer, 1999).

Yet, many parents are hesitate to set rules or limits. They try to treat children as their equals. They want to be buddy-buddy with their kids. As parents become more permissive, children become more unruly, disrespectful and irresponsible. I am really shocked to see how children treat their parents in some of the contemporary films.

When are so many parents afraid to excise their authority? A lot of helping professions are against parental authority. "Children, like adults, prefer to be their own authority over their behavior." (P.188) For example, Gordon (1970) wrote: "The stubborn persistence of the idea that parents must and should use authority in dealing with children has, in my opinion, prevented for centuries any significant change or improvement in the way

children are raised by parents and treated by adults.” (p.164). “Children resent those who have power over them” (p.177). The stubborn persistence of the idea that parents must and should use authority in dealing with children has, in my opinion, prevented for centuries any significant change of improvement in the way children are raised by parents and treated by adults” (p.164).

Then, there is the Children’s rights movement. Although this movement was initiated to protect children from child labour and child pornography, it has clearly limited parents’ rights to discipline children. For example, President Clinton signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children in 1995. This treaty requires all signatory nations to comply with its articles. Article 12 grants children “the right to express views freely in all matters”, Article 15 guarantees “freedom of association”. That means that parents do not have the authority to interfere, even when children get involved with gangs.

Government has undermined parental authority in so many ways. In many provinces and States, Government provides money for independent living, once the kids are 16 years old. In many states, even 13-year old girls can get an abortion without parental consent. Parents who discipline their children by spanking may see their children taken away from their home by social workers.

Consequently, many parents feel that their authority is being undermined by school, government agencies, as well as by the mass media. They feel that many of their tools of discipline have been taken away from them. Many parents have lost their confidence, their authority, and their voice. They are afraid to affirm their values or set limits. We have even seen parents victimized and assaulted by their children. Interestingly, some weak parents are successful leaders in their chosen professions, such as medicine or education.

Ultimately, parenting is the primary responsibility of parents, not the responsibility of teachers, social workers, or Government. Parents need to be empowered and equipped to be effective parents.

We have all held the belief parents have considerable influence on how their children will turn out. However, even this belief has been challenged by psychologists.

About two years ago, xxxx published a book, claiming that what parents do have little effects on how their children will turn out. Her research indicates that the neighbourhood, school, and peers may have more impact on the children than parenting. Therefore, parents should not take themselves too seriously, and they should not blame themselves when their children go astray. This kind of thinking may relieve some parents of their guilt feeling, but may also undermine parents’ efforts to raise healthy, responsible children. If what parenting does not matter, then why bother?

In spite of all the research and thousands of papers and books on parenting, there is still so much we don't know. We still don't know why the worst parents sometime produce wonderful children, while the best parents sometimes produce problem children. However, there is enough evidence to indicate that parents are one of the important factors in shaping children's development – psychological, physical and spiritual.

The problems and the challenge

We have just examined several aspects of the parenting crisis. The problems facing today's parents are clearly complex and multifaceted. There is no doubt that the task of parenting has become more demanding and difficult than 10 or 20 years ago. Dobson: "In the absence of adult leadership, the child is his own master from his earliest babyhood. He thinks the world revolves around his heady empire, and he often has utter contempt and disrespect for those closest to him." (p.13)

Dobson defines permissiveness in terms of "the absence of effective parental authority, resulting the lack of boundaries for the child" (p.60)

Parenting has become increasingly difficult, because authority has been undermined by society. They become frustrated and confused, not knowing what their rights and responsibilities are.

How many people want to bring a baby tiger or lion to their homes as pets? Not many, because it can be dangerous, when these animals grow up.

But giving birth to babes can be more dangerous, because without proper parental guidance, they can more dangerous than tigers or lions when they grow up – they can break your heart and ruin your life; they are capable of all sorts of destructive acts, including killing.

Giving birth to a child without assuming the responsibility and authority to bring them up properly can be serious threat to the parents, to society, and to the children themselves.

So, we living in a free society, and everyone thinks they have the right to produce babies. But society also has the right to demand that parents be responsible not only for their physical, emotional, social and spiritual well being.

Parents need to learn to develop leadership and skills to fulfill this awesome responsibility.

Now, we need to ask ourselves: what can we do to resolve this crisis? How should we approach the parenting task?

We will briefly overview different approaches to parenting. All of these approaches offer something valuable to parents, but each by itself is inadequate. Finally, we will present

the servant-leadership model, which attempts to integrate the best from other parenting perspectives.

Why discipline is not enough: The limit of control and obedience

To many Christians, discipline is also equated with corporate punishment. Their matra is “spare the rod and spoil the child.” But the bible does not have such a simplistic view.

Prov.13:24 “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”

Dr. Leman points out that “The Jews believed in discipline, but when biblical writers used the word rod they were thinking more of correction and guidance rather than hitting and beating. For example, the shepherd used his rod not to beat his sheep but to guide them. We are all well acquainted with that phrase from the Twentieth-third Psalm, ‘thy rod and thy staff they comfort me’ (v.4, kjv). But I doubt that many of us would feel very comforted if the Lord’s rod was waling away at our heads or bottoms at every wrong turn we made. Another thig that concerns me aobut the ‘spare the rod’ philsosphy is that is is based on controlling children rather than truly nurturing them....But if all I have done while they are young is to control and dominate them, they will be at a serious disadvantage.” P.38

Leman: “Discipline is not something you pass down to your children. Discipline is how you live your life” (p.244).

The oldest approach of parenting is discipline. It is based on respect for persions of legitimate authority, accepting orders and assignments from such authority figures, and behaving according to a set of rules and values. The emphasis is on control and obedience.

This used to work when society as a whole was fairly hierarchically organized, authority was respected, and there was a set of values shared by schools, churches, communities and families.

Some people may say that maybe we should return to our grand parents ways to raising children – the old-fashioned love and discipline.

But time as changed, and we cannot turn back the clock. parenting has become a much more complex and demanding task. We are now raising children under social conditions that are drastically different from what we experienced as children.

Just ask veteran teachers: “What’s different about today’s kids when compard with the kids of the ‘50s and early ‘60s? They always tell me today’s kids are generally disrespectful, irresponsible and undisciplined”(Rosemond, 1995, p.169).

The entire social climate, fueled by the mass media, has contributed to a generation of kids who are more independent, less respectful of authority. They want to think for themselves and question everything; they are also more willing to take risks to pursue their own dreams. Such qualities are not necessarily bad, because they can be useful assets to survival in a very competitive world. But when parents want to enforce discipline at home, they will likely encounter resistance. Today's parents not only have to fight against peer pressures, but also the whole array of power influences, which include Rock stars and rappers.

Many Christian parents are having a difficult time when they try to discipline their children and instill in them Christian values. The lasting popularity Dr. Dobson's classic "Dare to discipline" have great appeal to Christian parents. But from our experience in working with teens from Christian homes, strict discipline does not always work.

A Christian Family counselor surveyed 2,200 teens from Christian homes across the States; 79% of the respondents claimed that they felt a lack of love at home (cited by Leman). One wonders why do these teens feel this way? Is it because parental control has eclipsed their love, at least in the children's mind?

Many parents suffer from what Leman calls the super parent syndrome, which is consisted of the following four kinds of faulty reasoning:

I own my children
 I am judge and jury.
 My children can't fail.
 I am boss – what I say goes.
 (p.109)

Parents who still hold this type of authoritarian approach are likely to be disappointed, because children are not robots, and they have their free will, their unique needs and personalities.

God would have an easier time with us, had they made humans all robots, who are only capable of blind obedience. But thank God that we are not robots.

If parents resort to coercion and punishment, they will likely produce rebellious and antisocial children. But eventually, the power of control will fail, because when the children become teenagers, they may be stronger than their parents, and they can get away from home.

According to Gordon, parents have the advantage of larger "psychological size", because children tend to see their parents as being bigger, stronger, and more competent. And this is a major source of parental power over the child. This may be considered as "assigned authority", because the child assigns it to the parents, and because of this authority, parents' attempt to influence the child carry a lot of weight.

Another source of parental power is kids depend on their parents to meet their basic needs. Since they possess the means of satisfying children's basic needs, they have the

power of “reward” and “punishment”. They can withhold what a child needs, or they can produce pain and discomfort in the child.

Therefore, they can use reward and punishment to control their child’s behaviour. Gordon compares this kind of training the child as similar to the method used by dogs trainers to teach obedience, or by circus people to teach animals to do tricks.

But there are limitations to the use of parental power to reward and punishment. First of all, there are undesirable side effects, because children can become fearful and nervous as a result of obedience training, they may become resentful or hostile and vengeful towards their trainers.

Furthermore, as children become less and less dependent on their parents for meeting their needs, parents gradually lose their power. This becomes inevitable when the child approaches adolescence. Teens emerging independence creates problems to their parents, who can no longer control them through reward and punishment.

According to Thomas Gordon, parental power of reward and punishment can result in the following coping behaviours in the children:

- Resistance, defiance, rebellions, negativism.
- Resentment, anger, hostility.
- Aggression, retaliation, striking back.
- Lying, hiding feelings.
- Blaming others, tattling, cheating.
- Dominating, bossing, bullying.
- Needing to win, hating to lose.
- Forming alliances, organizing against parents.
- Submission, obedience, compliance.
- Apple polishing, courting favor.
- Conformity, lack of creativity, fear of trying something new, requiring prior assurance of success.
- Withdrawing, escaping, fantasizing, regression.

While I do not agree with Gordon’s basic premises that parental power is a bad thing, I do concur that the coercive use of power can produce some of the above reactions.

From my own observation as a professor, some of the most unruly and wild first year students came from very strict Christian homes. Once they were completely on their own in a new city, they did not know how to use their freedom.

Even in Christian universities and Bible colleges, the first year kids can be very unruly. Some of the worst offenders are pastors’ kids, who were tightly controlled at home.

Recently, I talked to a Christian youth worker. This what he said: “Kids from Christian homes and Christian schools which stress discipline and obedience, are very good in put

on the “good kid” show. They would say, “Yes Sir” politely. They would promise to do everything you ask them to do. But the moment you walk away, they would take off the mask, forget their promises, and engage in “forbidden” activities. On the other hand, kids from homes that allow free expressions, such as wearing a punk-hair do or wearing a nose-ring, may question your instruction, but after you have explained to them and they have agreed to do it, they will more likely to carry it out.

It is helpful to remember that the arm of control is very short – it can only reach children when they are in sight, and when they are very young.

Power and control may exact obedience and conformity, but would not contribute to self-discipline and responsible behaviour.

It is also helpful to remember that kids only know blind obedience are less likely to succeed in the world, because they would not be able to think for themselves and make good decisions. It is likely that they will blindly obey some other power.

But the Bible does emphasize discipline and obedience.

Prov.5: 23 “He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own folly.”

True discipline is not externally imposed; it is a set of internalized values.

Yes, the Bible also emphasizes obedience.

Eph.6:3 “Obey your parents”

1 Tim.3: 4-5 “He must have the proper authority in his own household, and be able to control and command the respect of his children” (Philips)

Col.3:20 “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (KjV)

But it does not talk about fear-based obedience, but love-based obedience. When parents are truly loving and godless leaders, they inspire obedience, because children love to please them. We obey Jesus more because he loves us rather than fear of his punishment.

Parents do not compel obedience, but command respect.

The Bible also talks about “spare the rod, spoil the child.”

Spanking or corporal punishment remains one of the legitimate tools of parenting with kids between 2 years old and 12, but the Bible does not talk about punishment out of anger, or physical abuse. You should also be concerned about being reported for child abuse.

The rod in the Bible is often used as a symbol of gentle guidance, correction and protection, rather than a symbol of punishment. It is portrayed as the rod used by a loving shepherd to keep the sheep from going astray.

Strictly speaking, the aim of discipline is not submission or obedience. The real objective of discipline is to make disciples – children who willing you follow you as their, mentor and model.

The concept of treating children as dogs is repulsive to me. Children do not need obedience training, they need guidance and support, because God has given them a free will and has given them certain inalienable human rights. I just do feel comfortable about the ideas of sending children to boot camps so have those fierce looking drill sergeants whip them into submission.

Just shouting, threatening, and punishing never work, if kids do not respect their parents, and consider their parents are unreasonable, unloving dictators.

We are not interested in producing submissive and obedient kids – we are interested in training kids to be cooperative and responsible. They have the freedom to say No and to express different ideas, but at the end, they need to recognize who is the leader and support whatever the final decision the leader makes, knowing that the leader has already considered his input. (This is reality. They can not survive in the world, if they always want their own way, and refuse to recognize that there is legitimate leadership in every organizations and institutions.)

In short,
discipline is not enough without love;
discipline is not enough without disciple-making.
Discipline is not enough without parental leadership based on love, competence and authority.

Why love is not enough: You may love them to death

Some of you may wonder: Why love is not enough. Sure, nothing is more important than love in terms of child rearing. Love is the nutrient that feeds the soul. The orphans in Romania have shown that without loving care, kids simply withers away.

Parental love is a natural expression towards their children, especially their babies. Their very helplessness, total dependence, and cuddliness trigger in their parents warm fuzzy feelings. Someone calls it instinct. We call it God's programming to ensure survival of the helpless children.

The Bible says that God so loves the world, that he gave us his only begotten son, that whosoever believes him shall not perish but everlasting life. God's love towards us is unconditional and sacrificial. But the Bible also says that Whom God loves, he also corrects and disciplines. So God loves us unconditionally, but he would correct our us when we go astray.

It should be the same with parents. We should always communicate to our children that our love to them is unconditional – it should not be conditional. However, we should also let their children know that when there are always boundaries and limits, as all humans have, and if they step beyond those boundaries, they will be correct.

Pastor David says, "I really love my two children. I could love them to death."

Be careful, Pastor David. Be careful, parents, too much love can be destructive.

When parents are overprotective and over-indulging, when they shower their children with excessive attention, praise, and toys, they may inadvertently:

- prevent their children from leaning how to cope with difficulties or face the real world
- rob them of the opportunities to develop courage, self-reliance, good judgement
- make them weak and wimpy, afraid to take risk or make decisions
- make them irresponsible, not knowing the real consequences to their behaviour
- make their children self-centred, unable to share with other children
- makes them feel insecure physically and emotionally, because they not have a proper perspective of who they are and what the real world is like
- turn them into demanding, aggressive, angry, unruly spoiled brats

John Rosemond, a syndicated columnist on affirmative parenting, claims that one study shows that maternal permissiveness is the best predictor of producing aggressive kids.

In short, a spoiled brat is an unhappy, unhealthy child. A spoiled brat will grow up into an irresponsible, entitled adult, who still believes that the world owes them a good living.

Marilu Henner and Ruth Vilikovsky Sharon in their book I refuse to raise a brat, said: “The surest way to raise a brat is to overindulge, overgratify and overprotect.” They believe that parents should memorized the line: “I am the parent. I make the rules. You are the child. You obey the rules.”

Doing too much for your children also produce dependent and demanding children, who demand to be helped whenever they encounter any difficulty. One of the important Adlerian child guidance principles is Never do for a child what he can do for himself” because a dependent child is a demanding, irresponsible child.

The other two important principles are:

“Overprotection pushes a child down.” – because assume that they children are incapable of taking care of themselves or acting responsibliy. And take away their opportunity to learn and develop a sense of competence and responsibility.

“Over-responsible parents often produce irresponsible children” – this follows from the tow other principles. Parents my learn to let the children learn from the consequences of their own behaviour, and learn to make good decisions.

Why do parents pamper their children?

The reasons are many. Some parents do not have the confidence, competence or energy to discipline the terrible twos or the defiant teens; they simple capitulate to the children, thinking that it would be an easy way out.

Some parents feel guilty, because they do not have time for their children. Therefore, they indulge the children in order to compensate for their own unavailability. These parents would include the working parents, Astronaut parents, or divorced parents. Many parents who feel guilty for leaving kids in the day care may cuddle them to death during the weekend.

Some parents spoil their children because of the misconceived idea that some how if they discipline their children, they may damage their self-esteem.

In their book on Wimpy parents, professor Condrell points out that the “self-esteem movement” has led to “wimpy parents”, who are too loving, too kind, too patient, too understanding, to the point of producing inconsiderate, irresponsible, and sometime abusive children. When parents are wishy-washing with respect to discipling and enforcing house rules, because they want to save children from unhappy consequences of failure, they actually produce children who are unhappy and demanding, and who also fail to cope with the real demands of school and life.

Dr. Roy Baumeister and his colleagues (as cited by Milstone, 2000) have found that inflated self-esteem is at the heart of conceitedness, arrogance, and narcissism, which often leads to violent transgressions. Highly conceited people are more vulnerable to ego-threat and asserting their superiority. Their study is published in JPSP, 540 college students, and who with excessive high self-esteem become aggressive when criticized or insulted.

Many Oriental parents are not very demonstrative of affection, and they rarely praise their children. The logic is that they don't want to spoil their children. This may be going too far.

Unconditional love and acceptance from parents provide the foundation for emotional security. However, love without discipline may have dire consequences.

Traditional wisdom is that combining love with discipline is the most effective way of parenting. However, it takes a wise leader to find the right balance between love and discipline, because every child is different in personality and needs. Birth order, gender, age, temperament, environment should all enter into consideration.

Some children are eager to please, and they require very little discipline; even a slight harsh tone is already very painful for them. Some children may be very active and aggressive, and they require a firmer hand to guide them.

Prov.13:24: "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." The rod symbolizes parental love.

Prov. 19:18: "Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death."

Love is not enough without discipline

Love is not enough without parental leadership.

Why skills are not enough: It depends on who is using the skills

The best skills in the hands of ineffective parents are going to be ineffective

This principle is obvious enough. For example, one psychologist is that one skill to elicit obedience is to repeatedly say state your request without any explanation, and without raising your voice: “I want you to clean up your room; I want to clean up your room.”

Have you tried this technique? Does it work for you?

You see, the trick is not how it is said, but who says it. If a child knows that the parent is weak and whimpy, and he can get away without complying, he would not listen. On the other hand, if the child really respect his parent, and would not want to offend him, a single request will suffice.

Here is another example, first promoted by Thomas Gordon, and copied by many other parenting experts. That is using I-messages. Instead of directly attacking the child for his bad behaviour, which may hurt the child’s self-respect, the parent would send the child an I-message. For example, “I feel really hurt, or I am very upset by what you just did.”

Guess what your child would respond, if he does not respect you and care you. He may roll his eyes and walk away, while talking under his breathe, “Why should I care? Who cares about my feelings?” Or the kids might talk back, and say, “Oh yet, how about me? I am also upset. I’m still angry with you.”

Let’s suppose that there is a still bonding between parent and child, and the child really admires his parent, the last thing he wants to do is to hurt his parent’s feeling. Therefore, the I-message will be very effective.

Even the appropriate use of reward and punishment has its limitations. Adlerian advocate the use of natural consequences (the direct results of the child’s behaviour – failing his exams, getting expelled from school, or going to jail) and logical consequences (established by parents, but are logically or rationally related to the misbehaviour, often working out with the agreement of children, such as if you fail to do your assigned chores, then you will make up by doing more chores next week). However, neither approaches work without parental leadership. In the case of natural consequence, an effective leader would be proactive – he simply would not sit back and see his son get expelled or sent to jail. He would do everything within his power to see that some of the natural consequences with really long term negative impact on the child would be averted. With logical consequences cannot be applied, when parents do not have the

necessary leadership skills. For example, what will happen when the child refuse to accept the logical consequences? If he still refuse to do his share of the chores. If parents are leaders, he will have to whatever tool in his arsenal, which may include unexpected penalty, loss of important privileges, and he would not whatever it takes to ensure that the son learns responsibility.

I can go on and on to illustrate why all the skills will not work, unless the parent has established his leadership.

Treating children as our equal reduces the effectiveness of parenting skills

It is interesting to note that most psychologists present themselves as the “middle course” or the third way. They contend that neither the authoritarian style, nor the permissive style works for the new generations of children.

The authoritarian style emphasizes discipline, control, and obedience – the parents always win.

The permissive style emphasizes love, understanding, and self-esteem – the children always win.

The middle course suppose to be a win-win situation, because both parents and children have equal power

Most psychologist advocate the middle course. The third approach has been called the “no lose” approach (Gordon), reality discipline (Leman 2000), positive discipline, active discipline.

We also need to question the philosophy and assumption between the this third approach. The assumption is that children are by nature good, cooperative, unselfish, all they need is a democratic, supportive environment, and they will ultimately behave well.

Whenever, there are behaviour problems, it is because parents fail to meet their psychological needs, or parents abuse their power. Therefore, their philosophy is that parents should treat children as their equal and give them the same power and respect as they would give to their business partner or room-mates. I have no idea where these psychologists come from and whether they have had their own children.

The overwhelming psychological evidence indicate that before kids are ego-centric because of the immature cognitive development and lack of experience of reality.

Gordon challenges the age-old assumption that parents have the “responsibility” to influence their children to behave in ways that are acceptable to parents or society.

He raises the following questions:

Parents may not be wise enough to determine what is in the best interest of the child or society, because all men are fallible. “Children, like adults, prefer to be their own authority over their behavior.” (P.188)

“The problem is who is to decide what is in the best interest of society. The child? The parent? Who knows best? These are difficult questions, and there are dangers in leaving the determination of ‘best interest’ with the parent” (p.190).

“Children, like adults, prefer to be their own authority over their behavior.” (P.188)
It seems strange that this question is even asked? It seems more strange to say that this is a difficult question. Surely, a two-year old is not in the position to know what is good for society. If the decision is not left with parent, then with whom? Do we leave it to the state?

Secondly, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”
“One of the last strongholds for the sanction of power in human relationship is in the home – in the parent-child relationship.....Why are children the last ones to be protected against the potential evils of power and authority? Is it because they are smaller or because adults find it so much easier to rationalize the use of power with such notions as ‘Father knows best’ or ‘It’s for their own good.’

Gordon does have a point, because there is a great deal of evidence of child abuse in the hands of their parents, and some of the abuse can be quite subtle.

The problem with Gordon is that he confuses leadership with the use of power to control. The use of reward and punishment is just one of the many tools of leadership. If Gordon questions parental authority to lead, because they are fallible, then who is responsible to teach and influence the children?

Secondly, Gordon can not talk about nonpower methods of influence without recognizing parental authority. I cannot use nonpower methods of influence on my neighbour;s children, because I don’t have the legal parental authority. Secondly, even parents have the legal authority to discipline and influence their children, their nonpower methods are ineffective, if their parental authority is not accepted.

Parental authority should not be equated with the authoritarian parenting styles. Authoritarian parents make all the decisions for their children. “Parents do feel that they truly do know what’s best for their children. And as we seek to convey love and concern to our children, we want to guide them away from some of the pitfalls of life and getting hurt. But at the same time, we should want to reach our children that they can make some mistakes. Children need to know they have the right to fail. They need opportunities to make decisions about their own lives.” (p.35)

I question the wisdom of treating our children as our equals, because they neither have the mental capacity, nor the experience. More importantly, being in the position of parents should mean some thing. (Our children still respect us and consult us, not because we are smarter, but because we are their parents.)

Prov.20:23 “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.” A child is foolish, because of their cognitive immaturity, their lack of experience, their lack of knowledge of what the world is like, and also because the human nature of being selfish, and demanding.

By relinquishing parental authority and responsibility, we actually reduce our effectiveness to employ various parenting skills.

Child-centred parenting also limits the effective use of parenting skills

Many psychologists who advocate the importance of parenting skills adopt a child-centred approach. In other words, parents exist to serve the children.

According to this new paradigm, a child's self-esteem and happiness come first. "The oh-so-subtle implication: Where there is a child with a problem, there is a mother who is not giving the child enough attention and praise....Bad mother had given her child no choice but to seek attention in inappropriate ways." (Rosemond, p.31)

We also question the wisdom of this approach? The meaning and purpose of our existence is not to serve our children and make them happy. If we exist for our children, and our children become our God, and we violate the commandment that there should be no other God. It is really amazing how many parents actually exist for the children.

My objection is not only based on theological ground, but based on psychological principles. If parents do not care about their own well-being, and personal development, and if they place their children first in everything, it is actually counter productive, because it takes happy parents with high self respect to produce happy children with high self respect. More importantly, this child-centred approach does not work in the classroom, and does not work at home, because it overlooks the essential truth that children need adult leadership to guide them .

but Rosemond soon found discovered that this did not work in dealing with their three year old Eric – they began to embrace old-fashioned attitudes and methods of discipline. They decided that the choice open to parents was a simple one: "either create a benevolent dictatorship or fling wide the door to family anarchy" (p.6)

We think that a servant-leadership model is preferable to benevolent dictatorship

As parents, their focus should not be the children's happiness and self-esteem. Surely, a major part of their responsibility is their children, but they also have the responsibility to develop themselves and carry out God-given mission. Parents do not exist solely for the children.

Parents need to change their parenting approach to adjust to changing times.

The purpose of parenting: "to help your children develop healthy self-esteem and the life skills they need to be effective, happy, contributing, and respectful members of the family and society.

(Nelsen et al, 1999, xi)

There are many people who have attended several parenting classes, and acquired many parenting skills. Do you know why? It is because they need to reclaim parenting authority first, they need to exercise parental leadership. That is what we will talk about in this workshop.

”Technique is not the key to successful discipline” (Rosemond, p.204)

“While certain techniques doubtless have more merit than others, the essence of successful discipline is not technique; rather it is self-confidence. If, as a parent, you project self-confidence in your dealings with your children, then not only will discipline problems be ‘small potatoes’ in your family, but when such a problem arises, just about any disciplinary technique will work. If, on the other hand, you lack self-confidence, discipline is likely to be a ;major issue and no technique will work – not for long, anyway.” (rosemond, p.205)

The Adlerian model

Adlerian model (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956) of child guidance has been very influential, it has been extended by Dinkeyer & McKay (1996), Dreikurs and Soltz (1964) and Popkin (1983). Emphasize a democratic way of raising children raising responsible, cooperative children by recognizing their legitimate goals and needs and correcting their misguided goals through logical and natural consequences, and employ mutual respect and encouragement techniques. So the main task is to draw out what is good in them, and correct misbehaviour is a way that is consistent with democratic and humanistic principles.

According to Adlerian child guidance principles, traditional use of reward and punishment is ineffective and outdated. When reward is used as bribery, kids learn to be manipulative. If reward is excessive, and often not consistently contingent on good behaviour, they learn that they are entitled to rewards, and they think that they have the right to demand a reward for everything, and expect bigger and better rewards, or else, they will act up. Punishment is also ineffective, when it consists of empty threats, or it is carried out inconsistently, irrationally, or in a fit of anger. When children perceives the punishment is being unfair or unjust, they will become very angry, and try to get back at the parents – they can retaliate very effectively by doing whatever that is most disturbing to parents, this may be not doing homework, fighting with siblings, not eating, going out with the person parents strongly oppose.

To be effective as parents, they need to reclaim their leadership, and mobilized all their resources to accomplish their goals of parenting. When children come to respect and love their parents as leaders, they will come on board.

Why parents need to reclaim their authority: A servant-leadership model

Old methods are no longer working – discipline is not enough, love is not enough, and even skill is no longer enough.

We need to rethink parental responsibility, and explore new approaches, if want to see our children grow up into responsible and successful adults. We have come to the conclusion that we need to reclaim parental authority and exercise servant-leadership.

“To reclaim is to recover and redeem, to restore value to something that has been devalued,” (brendtro, p.2).

Parents have always been endowed by God as well as by law with the authority and responsibility to bring up their children as law-abiding citizens. For the reasons, we have mentioned, parental authority has been seriously corroded. If we want to be better parents, if we want to be effective parents, we must reclaim parental authority. We must think, act as leaders with authority.

The need for parental leadership

The need for parental leadership seems so intuitive and obvious.

In order to better appreciate this model, we ask ourselves this question: What is common in the following situations?

- A school
- An army
- A church
- A ship
- A corporation

They are institutes that serve various purposes and they have a leader or leadership team. Without leadership, these organizations will not be able to carry out the purposes for which they are created. Without effective leadership, none of these institutes can function well or survive for long.

A ship without a captain will be lost in high seas

People should not confuse democracy and equality with the absence of leadership.

Similarly, the family is an institute, an important institute that mediates between government and individuals. It is an institute ordained by both God and the State with the responsibility of caring for the children and bringing them up to be responsible citizens.

Can say say with me:

I have authority over my children.
 My children
 I am the leader at my home.

Dobson (1992) is correct when he wrote: “Many of the writers offering their opinions on the subject of discipline in recent years have confused parents, stripping them of the ability to lead in their own homes.” (p.13)

Dobson (1978): “The recommendations offered to this point have clearly reflected my conviction that loving parental authority is healthy for children and their parents. This concept has been accepted *prima facie* for thousands of years, but is now being challenged vigorously in some professional circles.” (.165)

“As parental control weakens, grades go down and school and family-related activities diminish. Cut off from parental control, boys are unable to develop their true potential. Though girls may experience some of the same problems, they tend to internalize the inevitable confusion and pain of being cut off from parental support. Girls particularly lose their confidence and their self-esteem drops” (gray, p.316-317)

Rosemond suggests that in order to have respectful children, there are three basic rules no child can do without: The First Rule (from parent to child): “From this point on in our relationship, child of mine, you will pay much more attention to me than I will ever again, as a general rule, give to you” (p.125) – at around 18 months.

The Second Rule: “You will do as I say” (these rules are implicit to a functional parent-child relationship – therefore, it is not really necessary to actually say them out loud” (p.130)

The Third Rule: “Your will do what I say not because of bribe, brutality, threat, or persuasive explanation. You will do as I say because I say so. Period.” (p.136).

“Parents who command from the solid platform of the Three Rules let their children know exactly where they stand and where they want them to stand. Because their parents’ expectations are unambiguous, these children engaged in relatively little testing.. On the other hand, parents who fail to establish the Three Rules act as if they don’t know where to stand and don’t know, further more, where they want their children to stand” (p.162)

“The bottom line is this: If you want to create circumstances within which you will be able to effectively demonstrate to your child you love for him, then you had better stand in one place. Parent, discipline thyself!” (p.163)

I prefer leadership to control. Setting limits is a form of control. Giving children increasing freedom as they grow and become more responsible, but parents still need to exercise leadership – away from control, but more in terms of influence and inspiration. The Bible teaches the importance of exercising parental authority.

Dobson (1978): “the leadership of parents plays a significant role in the development of a child! By learning to yield to the loving authority (leadership) of his parents, a child learns to submit to other forms of authority which will confront him later in life....Without respect for leadership, there is anarchy, chaos, and confusion for everyone concerned. There is an even more important reason for the preservation of authority in the home: while yielding to the loving leadership of their parents, children are also learning to yield to the benevolent leadership of God himself. It is a well known fact that a child identifies his parents with God, whether the adults want that role or not. ” (p.171).

“Parental power can be defined as a hostile form of manipulation in order to satisfy selfish adult purposes.....Drill instructors in the Marine Corps have been known to depend on this form of power to indoctrinate their beleaguered recruits. Proper authority, by contrast, is defined as loving leadership. Without decision-makers and others who agree to follow, there is inevitable chaos and confusion and disorder in human relationships. Loving authority is the glue that holds social order together, and it is absolutely necessary for the healthy functioning of a family.” (179).

What is a servant leader?

We need to make it very clear that leadership is different from dictatorship. The former leads by influence and example, the latter by power and control. In order to highlight the difference, whenever we talk about parental leadership, we mean servant-leadership.

Before the law and before God, parents have to be the leaders in their own family. The leadership role is essential. Without leadership, then you are just a banker, a cook, a driver.

Being a leader does not mean being an authoritarian dictator who demands absolute, unquestioned obedience, for whom might makes right. This style of parenting may be able to list conforming children, for them to engage in lying and evasive, deceptive maneuvers. They will seek to run away or rebel openly, when they reach adolescence.

Democratic, servant-leadership, on the other hand, they try to inspire, motivate them and win cooperation. They try to influence them with personal examples. They use encouragement, and logical consequence. They create a family climate of fairness, respect, openness, safety and trust. The children learn to love their children and find them reasonable and helpful.

In the late 60s and early 70s, there was unrest and student rebellion on many university and college campuses in the States. Robert Greenleaf, hailed as the grandfather of the movement of servant leadership, proposed a new style of leadership “leaders will bend their efforts to serve with skill, understanding, and spirit, and that followers will be responsive only to able servants who lead them” (1977, p.4)

“The servant-leader, and especially the Inspirational Leader, is therapist, mentor, teacher, guide, friend, role-model and counselor all rolled into one. The role of the leader is not lust to perform and represent functions, merely relating with other functions, but to remove the mask, to be real human being who relates with other human beings at a level that really matters.” (sec. P.162-163.)

Influence can last a like time, while power
 Every effective parent is a leader in his or her home.
 All children need to grow and be equipped with the necessary tools to develop their full potential.

We need to teach them how to fish so that they can feed themselves for a lifetime.

Many parents see themselves either as a reluctant caregiver or a dictator; feel see themselves as leaders.

Would you allow your children to wonder around in NY without a guide? The Internet can be a more unsafe than the worst neighborhood in any big city.

You have to represent order and security in a dangerous and chaotic world, but it is not based on tyranny, and it is based on your ability to present the most meaningful possible patterns of adjustment.

“The establishment of parental presence involves more than the mere outward display of assertive behavior: the parents must also develop a sense that what they are doing manifests their feelings and values. Personal presence refers to this experience – the parents are speaking with their own voices.” (p.81)

Leman: “Yes, we have authority over our children, but we should always use that authority with tender, loving fairness. Challenges arise every day in our lives and the lives of our children. But reality discipline stresses that we are not to pass down judgments on our children, even though they often try to involve us doing just that.” (p.111)

“The parent who uses reality discipline is in authority but never the boss. In the Christian home, God is boss. The parent is only managing what God has provided.” (Leman, p.114)

In this new millennium, I am proposing a leadership model of parenting.

Parents need to think, act as leaders, and do the task of leaders.

What are the tasks of parental leaders?

The concept of leadership conjures up images of all kinds of leadership roles – planning, setting standards, visioning, team building, motivation, human development, -- a good leader has his presence felt in every corner, in a positive, inspiring way.

Rewards and punishment work, not so much because of the principle of reinforcement, but because of the parental authority behind the delivery of reward and punishment.

Leadership is an attitude – You act and believe that you are in charge and expect them to respect you as a leader.

Leadership is action – You need to demonstrate competence and inspire confidence in carrying out your job as a leader. You will advocate on behalf of your children.

Leadership is motivation – You know how to make them want to follow you.

Leadership is goal-oriented – you know how to produce the necessary results.

Parents as leaders are prepared to make sacrifices and do battles to achieve their goals.

They will do battle with their children to save them from self-destruction.

They will do battle with all the evil forces out to destroy their children.

They will be active politically to vote for a government that cares about children and family.

Parents do not have to be perfect, but they need to be able to help children to benefit from their own mistakes, their experiences, and from family history, so that they may be spared from making the same mistakes.

Since our job is to train leaders, we will seek to empower them and encourage them to develop confidence, good judgement, self-esteem.

We need to build upon the above by trying to answer two key questions: how do parents express or exercise parental authority, and what motivates children to agree to follow.

There is power to love, trust, and respect – in fact these attributes are more powerful than the power of coercion.

Another thing about leadership and loving authority is about the developmental stages. A wise leader certainly will treat a one-year old child differently from treating a 17-year-old teens. In dealing with very young children, with very limited cognitive development and language skills, parents have to adopt the control-and-command type leadership style of a benevolent dictator. But in dealing with a 17 year old, there has to be reason behind our request and some sort of negotiation when there is disagreement.

Parents' task would be a lot easier and effective, if they dare to reclaim their leadership role.

For Dobson (1978), the way to establish parental leadership is to define clear and reasonable boundaries and then enforce them with confident decisiveness. "When that nose-to-nose confrontation occurs between generations, it is extremely important for the

adult to win decisively and confidently. The child has made it clear that he's looking for a fight, and his parents would be wise not to disappoint him! Nothing is more destructive to parental leadership than for a mother or father to disintegrate during that struggle." (p.32)

Unfortunately, most parents do not have a clear understanding of parental authority, nor do they know how to exercise their leadership effectively.

We do not own our children, nor do we owe them. As children, they are under our care; as adults, they are their own person.

Their blood relationship to us is a biological fact, but let's don't be carried away by myths and sentimentality.

They are special to us, for sure, for their genes mark us as their parents. Apart from all the emotional baggage attached to parenthood, a sobering fact remains: we are responsible for their nurturing, protection, and guidance.

Their birth is not an accident. The moment we bring them into this world, we have chosen to have them as part of our family, we have taken on the awesome responsibility of being parents.

Yes, we have much to give and much to sacrifice, but there is also much more to receive in return. All the joys and tears only known to parents give content and meaning to our lives.

We really need to have this larger view in order to be effective as parents.

Love is not enough, because love without discipline can spoil the children and turn them into self-centred, irresponsible adults.

Discipline is not enough, because discipline without love simply drives children away, and many of them do runaway from home.

Combining love and discipline is still not enough, because the outside destructive forces can effective cancel out parents' best efforts.

We need a more wholistic approach; we need a "war plan" to save our children. Parents as leaders function like any other leaders-- they will do what ever it takes to create an environment that is conducive to healthy development.

Parents as leaders are activists – they will work with school boards, different levels of government to protect their children. They will form alliances with churches, mosques and synagogues to create a better morale climate. They are no longer alone, fight their lonely battles.

Parents as leaders are forward looking people. They constantly improve themselves so that they can be good role models.

The primary job of parenting is leadership not dictatorship. More specifically, it is a caring and responsible leadership to ensure the healthy development of every child under our charge. This leadership view gives us an entirely different perspective of our responsibilities. Traditionally, we think of parenting in terms of providing well for their needs, helping them to be successful adults. But as a leader, our job is to ensure that the whole family functions well, and the family accomplishes its shared mission, whatever it may be. As a leader, our responsibility to our children is to use whatever skills and influences we have to make sure that they are productive members of the family, and they will develop into future leaders. This gives us a much more broader and system-oriented view of parenting.

Consider your family as a business or company, and you are the manager. You are given the responsibility to turn out products that meet certain quality control standards. As a parent, I want to succeed in meeting those standards.

Another way of looking at it is that I am a steward, given charge of my children for a limited number of years, and I am held accountable for the final products.

Having a leadership-orientation gives the parents a broader perspective of the parenting task. According to the traditional view, the parent is responsible for managing the child, at least until they are legally adults. According to the leadership view, the parent is responsible for managing every aspect of the family, so that every family member, especially the children, have the proper environment and resources to grow and develop. The focus is no longer on the behaviour, but on the environment that is conducive to good behaviour and healthy personal development.

The mentor in Ulysses provides a model for parenting. Mentor's task is to prepare the son for the throne. Parents' task is to prepare their children for leadership.

In a study looking at 937 students from elementary schools in Northern California, Jackson et al (1994) found a high positive correlation between the authoritative parenting style and competencies (including self esteem, social confidence, work orientation and academic performance.) They also found that children of parents with an authoritative parenting style were 21% less likely to initiate smoking behaviour. In this study, authoritative, as different from authoritarian, parenting styles as one that "balances responsiveness with control.... Authoritative parents establish and enforce clear standards for behaviour, they are also responsive to their children's needs and rights."

The present approach goes beyond discipline, because discipline has become a small part of leadership. In fact, if a leader is doing his job right, he may not even resort to discipline.

“Past parenting approaches focused on creating submission; positive parenting aims to develop confident leaders, who are capable of creating their own destiny, not just passively following in the footsteps of others before them.” (Gray, xxv)

We need to nurture what is good in them, and help them to overcome what handicaps them.

Our role is more than to provide a safe and nurturing environment, but a positive, learning environment.

Parents need to take a larger view of parenting. No matter how loving, skillful and dedicated parents are, they alone cannot protect their children from all the destructive forces. Their task is no longer just teaching them good behaviour, or good values. They need strategic planning – they need to take into account external threats and opportunities as well as internal threats and opportunities. They need to know how to combat external and internal threats. They need to manage all the available resources to ensure success. These resources include friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers, churches, and clubs. They need a long-term view rather than day-to-day behaviour. They need to anticipate and manage change to ensure smooth transitions in their children’s development. They need to recognize individual differences. As all good leaders, their job is to work themselves out of a job.

Misty Bernall describes her transformation from being a friend to becoming a leader. It is her determination to act forcefully as a leader that eventually turned her around. Misty was willing to quit her job, move Cassie to a private Christian school, moved to another neighbourhood – she would do whatever it takes to rescue her Cassie from her self-destructive path.

“Gradually we began to see where we had failed Cassie as parents, especially in the period leading up to her most troubled phase. Previously, whenever Cassie was rebellious, we had tried harder to win her friendship. The more she acted out, the more we bent over backward for her. In the end, we were catering to her whims and wishes far more than we ever wanted to. It was Susan, a close friend of mine who had been a rebellious teenage herself, who helped us out of this trap. She’d say, ‘Stop trying so hard to be Cassie’s friend. You’re the adults; you’re her mother; you call the shots. You don’t have to have Cassie’s approval for everything you do. She’ll just end up thinking that the world revolves around her, and that she can do whatever she wants, because you’ll still love her.’ Of course, it was never a question to me that we would always love our children, no matter what. But through Susan I began to see my role as a parent in a new way – as a mentor and confidant, rather than a buddy stopped trying to please Cassie and make her like me, and I started trying to guide her consistently. Unbelievably, instead of rebelling, she accepted the boundaries I set for her and even seemed grateful for them” (p.80-81)

In her reflection, she wrote:

“If I’ve learned anything from Cassie’s short life, it is that no adolescent, however rebellious, is doomed by fate. With warmth, self-sacrifice, and honesty – with the love that ultimately comes from God – every child can be guided and saved. At least I will never give up that hope” (150)

..

We may never fully understand the complex interactions of genes, environment, culture and parenting in the development of our children, but we do know that every era calls for a reexamination and an exploration of the better ways to raise children.

Part of the problem is lack of knowledge; part of the problem is either fear of assert their leadership, or don’t know how to. They are afraid of hurting the kids’ self-esteem, or feel guilty of having no time for the children. Parents before helpless and powerless. They feel confused – don’t know who to deal with problems that stem for the human nature of selfishness and pleasure-seeking, and problems that stem from normal developmental process

What are the tasks of parenting?

The most complex and difficult task, the least preparation, the changing times, the forces arrayed against the family.

Your mission of parenting

What do you think at the four most important tasks as a parent:

- Promote children’s self-esteem
- Produce happy and healthy children
- Produce high-achievers
- Provide a loving environment for the children
- Meeting their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs
- Develop their potential

- (1) Encourage and support them to receive the best possible education so that they can develop their full potential and become economically independent.
- (2) Teach them positive attitudes, good habits, and people skills so that they can become positive, cooperative, and responsible citizens.
- (3) Equip them with a moral compass and a set of values so that they can tell right from wrong.
- (4) Guide them spiritually so that they will have a personal knowledge of God and learn trust in Him.

What are the roles of parents? Providing, protecting, guiding, teaching, mentoring, leading, being a friend, counseling, encouraging, preparing children for adulthood, teaching them values, bringing them to Christ.

Deep down, kids want to belong to your family, kids want to be proud of their parents. They have an innate need for belonging and feeling being an important part of a family.

“Children are born needing to follow their parents’ lead; their greatest wish is to make their parents happy; and their strongest desire is to cooperate, “ (Gray, 83).

“To have a healthy sense of security in life, children need to always remember that the parent is the boss.”(Gray, 90)

of asking, listening and rewarding (bribing) do not work, then command. “When the first three steps of asking for cooperation do not work, parents need to command their children, just as a general commands the troops” (Gray, p.141) – In a firm but calm voice, say “I want you to put your clothes away” parents need to assert their leadership. “The most powerful assertiveness technique is to repeat your command with the confidence that the child will soon yield” (Gray, p.149)

“giving reasons is a way of giving up your command” (Gray, p.149)

“Because I am the parent, that’s why, is the best response to children’s challenge to commands” (p.153)

“The new message we need to give our children is that it’s okay to resist, but remember mom and dad are the bosses” (Gray, 91)

Parenting is not just about skills and strategies—it is about who you are and how you live your life. I don’t mean to be super parents. I do mean that in spite of our imperfections and weaknesses, who we are as a person as a leader is more important than knowledge of parenting skills.

“The more involved you are, today’s mother is told, the better a mother you are,” (Rosemond, p.48)

Omer (1999) suggests that parental presence involves three key elements:

- (1) Parents must be effective agents :I can take effective actions.
- (2) Parents must have moral authority: I know that this is right.
- (3) Parents have the social support from others for what they try to accomplish.

Gottman (1997), the main task is to teach their children emotional intelligence.

One of the goals of parental leadership is to produce children who are competent achievers.

David McClelland summarizes research on practices that encourage or discourage achievement motivation.

“Adult domination. When adults prescribe what the youth is to do and how it is to be done, the child may remain dependent and does not learn to set and pursue personal goals. Obedience. Adults who stress obedience and conformity in order to develop polite and manageable children inadvertently lower achievement motivation. Affection. Adult expressions of genuine interest, pleasure and affection can increase measured achievement. Expectations. Low expectations and over-indulgence both lower achievement while realistic challenges with a high ratio of success to failure raises motivation. Independence. Autonomy must be planfully nourished from early childhood but aloof adults who ‘push the child from the nest’ too early do not foster achievement” (Breadtro, p.72)

Avoid the grandparent trap. When you relinquish your parental responsibility to the grandparents, you are no longer perceived by your children as their parents. Grandparents can play a supporting role, but never replace the parents.

One of the functions of leadership is team building – pulling together everyone, in spite of their individuality and different interests, so that they can work together to achieve some common goals. One of the common goals in a family setting is that everyone contributes to the chores and well-being of the family, so that everyone can enjoy a harmonious, supportive, home environment to live and work. Team building is even more important in cases of a blended family, or family with adopted or foster children.

What are the characteristics of effective leaders?

A leader is someone who command attention, respect, and inspire following. They are to command attention, because they exude confidence, decisiveness. Kids deep down wish that they could look up to their parents, and follow their lead.

To command respect, they must consistently impress on the children that they know better and are far more wiser than their children.

Because I say so -- no need to explain, especially when the kid wants to debate the reason you offer, and get you into an argument. Just simply says, there is the end of the discussion – just do it because I say so.

They need to learn that in real world, there are always rules and authorities. Many of the rules may not make sense to you, but nevertheless, if you don't comply, you have to pay for the consequence. That is how the world works. Of course, we are not trying to be

arbitrary, but kids do not always understand or accept our reasons when we say no to what they want, or ask them to do something they don't want to do.

Most parents want their children not only to obey but to have a good attitude about it. But they don't have to like what we want them to do – and they may express their dislike in unpleasant ways – but the important thing is that they respect your request and comply with it. Their unhappy feelings will eventually subside. It is alright to let them have the last word, to grumble.

“You want your children’s respect? Then retain your authority. It’s that simple,”
(Rosemond, p.149)

The key to effective parenting is leadership, yet the missing link in all the books on parenting I have read is leadership.

It is not enough to claim parental authority; good leaders know how to exercise authority to accomplish their goal. It is not enough to project a sense of confidence; the confidence of good leaders is grounded in competence, optimism, and commitment to achieving positive outcomes. It is not enough to learn communication skills and parenting skills; skills without leadership never go very far.

You are on your way to effective parenting, once you grasp the basic concept of parents as leaders, and begin to develop the qualities that make you a leader.

It is who you are as a person that matters most, not what you do.

So what are the qualities of effective leaders? What set them apart from others? It's not education, money, age, connection, beauty, physical size – none of these by themselves can make you a leader. Bethel (1990) has identified 12 qualities that all effective leaders possess.

The Twelve Qualities of Leadership

1. Has a mission that matters.
2. Is a big thinker.
3. Has high ethics.
4. Masters change.
5. Is sensitive.
6. Is a risk taker.
7. Is a decision maker.
8. Uses power wisely.
9. Communicates effectively.
10. Is a team builder.
11. Is courageous.

12. Is committed.

“Leadership not something that you learn once and for all. It is an ever-evolving pattern of skills, talents, and ideas that grow and change as you do.” (Bethel, 12)

“As we employ the twelve qualities of leadership, we need to ask ourselves repeatedly, “What message am I sending?” “What environment am I creating?” “What example am I setting?” When you set out to make a difference, your actions inspire others to follow. You lead first by example. You are accountable.” (Bethel, p.13)

In many family who believe in parental control, children have been over-managed, but under led.

“That’s what leadership is: influencing others. To make a difference and to be effective leaders, we have to influence others to think and to act, as well as to follow. We must set an example that others choose to follow. And the secret to eliciting that choice is the very essence of leadership.: (Bethel, p.16)

The arm of control is very short, but the reach of influence is very long.

“Managers have ‘to do’ lists. Leaders have ‘to create’ lists.” (Bethel, p.44)

The keys to enhancing your ability to change:

1. Don’t fight it.
2. You don’t have to like the change.
3. Be willing to let go of the past.
4. Have a sense of humor.
5. Expect to succeed. “When unexpected events occur, the value of a leader with a high-faith factor cannot be underestimated.” (Bethel, p.95)
6. Build a personal coping strategy.

Think big : “Some men see things as they are and say why? I dream of things that never were and say why not?” Robert Frost.

“One of the most important tools you have is the ability to release potential and make something happen” (Bethel, p.149)

“Whatever you do, be honest about your decision-making style. Your honesty will eliminate a lot of confusion, miscommunication, and incongruency. If you build a reputation for action and set an example of decisiveness, you give people the courage to make their own decisions.” (p.153)

“The ability to make decisions is important, but it is a quality that must be balanced by informed judgement.” (p.165),

“Power is the prime mover of people and events. It is inherent in leadership. You cannot lead effectively without it. The leaders who have made the greatest contribution used power wisely” (p.167)

Leadership cannot be effective unless you know how to exercise power and authority wisely. I use the term interchangeably, with the understanding that the former refers to the effect of authority to make things happen, while the latter refers to what the leader possesses because of his position, expertise, the force of their personality, the right and privilege to make decisions, the ability to give reward and punishment, the ability to create things, and the high standards of ethics (i.e., moral authority)

The benefits of using power wisely

1. Empowering others – we can achieve great results by sharing power with subordinates.
2. The power of persuasion. “Truly powerful leaders ‘pull rank’ only in emergencies. Their normal method of leading is persuasion.
3. The responsibility of power. Peter Drucker wrote: The leader sees leadership as responsibility rather than rank and privilege.”
4. The power of service. :If the basis of your desire for power is one of service, then your leadership acquires an aura of dignity. Your charisma is increased a thousand fold.” (Bethel, p.189)

Abuse of power happens, especially to those who have absolute power and are not accountable to anyone.

Abuse power is destructive – it forces others to be defensive, to lie, and to comply superficially; it destroys trust and loyalty. It rules through fear and intimidation.

Personal power is more important than positional power “His (Harry Truman) personal power showed in many ways, not the least of which was his ability to gather information and make difficult decision. He boldly accepted responsibility and the sign on his desk became famous. It read ‘The Buck stops Here.’ His calm nature and uninhibited way of expressing his opinions was a stabilizing force to a grieving nation” (Bethel, p.175)

Dr. Albert Schweitzer: “The most important thing in education is to make young people think for themselves.”

When parents want to wield raw power in a self-serving way (protect their own arrogance), they are doomed to fail, because they invite their children to rebel and give them the message that might make right.

Effective leaders are courageous. “We may define courage as: ‘The state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger with self-possession, confidence, and resolution.” (Bethel, p.239)

Becoming more courageous:

1. The courage to seek the truth.
2. The courage to have faith.
3. The courage to seek humility.

4. The courage to live an ethical life.
5. The courage to be involved.
6. The courage to believe in something.
7. The courage to reject cynicism.
8. The courage to resist social and peer pressure.
9. The courage to speak out.
10. The courage to be controversial.
11. The courage to assume responsibility.
12. The courage to lead at home. “Courage to lead at home is as important as leadership in the world beyond. If you are a parent, do you have the courage to offer your children equal discipline and love? In the push and pull of working families, we can not afford to have our leadership role delegated to childcare workers” (Bethel, p.251).
13. The courage to stand for something.
14. The courage to persist.
15. The courage to serve.
16. The courage to follow.

“Commitment is the glue to your success as a leader. It is the binding force that holds the other eleven leadership qualities together and give them power....Commitment to making a difference is the foundation of your mission that matters...”(Bethel, p.259)

Characteristics of admired leaders

Honest
 Forward-looking
 Inspiring
 Competent
 Fair-minded
 Supportive
 Broad-minded
 Intelligent
 Straightforward
 Dependable
 Courageous
 Imaginative
 Caring
 Determined
 Mature
 Ambitious
 Loyal
 Self-controlled
 Independent

(k and p, based on respondents from out continents.)

“We define leadership as the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations” (k and p, p.30)

How can you develop your parental leadership

Steps of developing parental leadership:

1. Willing to lead
2. Reclaiming parental authority
3. Exercising parental authority
4. Learning leadership skills
5. Developing leadership potential
6. Thinking as a leader
7. Acting as a leader
8. Leading as a lifestyle

In this new millennium, I am proposing a leadership model of parenting.

Parents need to think, act as leaders, and do the task of leaders.

The concept of leadership conjures up images of all kinds of leadership roles – planning, setting standards, visioning, team building, motivation, human development, -- a good leader has his presence felt in every corner, in a positive, inspiring way. Rewards and punishment work, not so much because of the principle of reinforcement, but because of the parental authority behind the delivery of reward and punishment.

“The establishment of parental presence involves more than the mere outward display of assertive behavior: the parents must also develop a sense that what they are doing manifests their feelings and values. Personal presence refers to this experience – the parents are speaking with their own voices.” (Omer, p.81)

Leadership analysis

What are my strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

Where do I need to improve my leadership ability?

How can I inspire and motivate others toward a common purpose?

What's the source of the self-confidence required to lead others?

(K and p, xxi)

“Leadership is everybody's business, and the leadership challenge is everyone's challenge,” k and p, xxv

Five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership

Challenge the process
 Inspire a shared vision
 Enable others to act
 Model the way
 Encourage the hear.

“Titles are granted, but it’s your behaviour that wins you respect,” (k and p, p.12)
 “Leadership is an observable, learnable set of practices,” (k and p, p.16)

critical incidents: seizing opportunities to teach.

“Critical incidents – chance occurrence, particularly at a time of stress and challenge – offer significant moments of learning for leaders and constituents. Critical incidents present opportunities for leaders to teach important lessons about appropriate norms of behavior” (k and p. o.222)

“Critical incidents are often the most dramatic sources of moral lessons about what we should and should not value, about how we should and should not behave,” (p and k, p.225)

“Each of us has within us the capacity to lead” David Aronovici, Director of Human Resources, Trident Microsystems

“Leaders can make a difference. If you want to have a significant impact on people, on communities, and on organizations, you’d be wise to invest in learning to become the very best leader you can. But first you must believe that a leader lives within each of us,” (k and p, p.321)

“Wanting to lead and believing that you can lead are the departure points on the path to leadership. Leadership is an art – a performing art – and the instrument is the self. The mastery of the art of leadership comes with the mastery of the self. Ultimately, leadership development is a process of self-development,” k and p p.336)

“The quest for leadership is first an inner quest to discover who you are. Through self-development comes the confidence needed to lead.” (k and p, p.336)

“The believability and credibility so essential for leadership are earned when your behavior is consistent with your beliefs. Thus, the first step in summoning the courage of your convictions is clarifying for yourself the beliefs that will guide your actions...To step into the unknown, begin with the exploration of the inner territory. With that as a base, we can then discover and unleash the leader within us all.” (k and p p.340)

“Leaders serve a purpose...In serving a purpose, leaders strengthen credibility by demonstrating that they are not in it for themselves; instead, they have the interests of the institution, department, or team and its constituents at heart” (kp, 1993, p.185)

(8) the role of culture

Culture affects everything we do. Your cultural schemas are adaptive, because to enable you to cope with complexities and better prepared for the unknown. But at the same time, they can also function as blinders, preventing you from acquiring new information and adapt to rapid social change.

“Every culture has its own unique child-rearing paradigm. In fact, a culture’s child-rearing paradigm is the centerpiece of the culture – its axis, if you will.” (Rosemond, p.20).

Parenting does not take place in a vacuum – it is shaped by the cultural context. Problem naturally occurs when parents still used the same authoritarian approach common in the 50s in the 21st century. Similarly, Chinese parents immigrating to North American will have problems of cultural clashes with their children; the generational gap is compounded by a cultural gap, as children and teens adopt to the Western culture much more readily than their parents.

Often the home becomes the battle ground of cultural war. This is more likely to happen when parents have very strong religious convictions and sectarian beliefs, while their children adopts a more secular, or even atheistic stance.

Parents want to maintain order and impose their beliefs and values on the children, and when teens change their parents axiomatic presuppositions.

Parents own culture may have served them well, giving them a sense of order and security and protecting them from confusion and chaos. Their culture has enabled them to adapt and survive. Indeed, there is much valuable that needs to be transmitted to their children so that the new generation can benefit from their parents’ experience and their cultural heritage. Experiences, stories, and narrative may be more effective than dogmas in transmitting religious truth.

Parents may feel threatened or even terrorized by the new styles, new information in their children. So the intercultural conflict is also an attempt by parents to protect themselves from terror as much as to protect their children from error.

Parents feel threatened, also because their children’s attitudes and behaviour threaten their own plans and goals for themselves, their family, and their children. They may react with anger, but whatever upset their plans and violate their beliefs is perceived as dangerous. If they are intent to subdue their children to protect their own culture, they fail to develop independence and future leaders, and at the same time, create a great deal of conflict and tension. On the other hands, if they let the children take over, they will not only make their own lives miserable and fail to carry out their responsibilities as leaders.

The best approach will be to discover the most adaptive patterns of behaviour which allows the parents to maintain their valued patterns, but modify certain categories to adjust to the new situation; at the same time, allow children develop their own plans, while protecting them from self-destructive ways and impart in them values and patterns that have proven to be adaptive.

Your job is to help them develop some order so that they too can adapt to a complex and dangerous world. Give them some tools, some structure, something they are proud to work with. Model from them a profound sense of meaning and purpose that allow them to stay on course in adversity and complexity, and at the same time enable them to explore and venture beyond their comfort zone. Provide them some universal narrative structures, which they can plug into and adapt to develop their own.

What are the consequences of emphasizing achievement at the expense of their children's well being and healthy development?

“The Piscean leader is The Mentoring. This is a leader who says, ‘I am your leader. How can I teach you?’ In Greek mythology, Mentor was the elderly friend of Odysseus and tutor of his son Telemachus. Today, the tutor’s name has become an eponym for a wise, trustworthy counselor or teacher” (Secretan, 1999, p.41)

“The Aquarian leader is the Servant. This is a leader who says, ‘I am your leader. How can I serve you?’ (sec, p.43)

As parents, don’t be too concerned with what should do, but be very concerned about what we should be. It is what we are that can influence our children for eternity.

What is your purpose in this world? What is your unique calling or mission? What is your cause? What is your purpose as a parent?

You also need to enable your children to find their unique calling.

“The ideal parent: the ultimate servant-leader. One of the prevailing role models in our society is the parent and often we experience the parent/child relationship as one characterized by power and control, permissions and requests, giving and taking. The result is that many of us are orphans – our parents don’t know who we are.” (scre, p.118)

“At their best, parents offer unconditional love, consistent communications, support, loyalty and commitment to partners, even as they impose discipline and order. They promote growth and development, health and safety, ethics and morality, beauty and comfort, nourishment and balance, spirituality and values. They inspire and teach, always in a loving way. They are boosters who cheer and encourage. They hug and serve. They make peace. They provide wisdom, vision and hope. This suggests that the ideal parental model may be the first and best example of servant leadership that each of us can experience. What greater characteristics could we be looking for in a leader?” (scre. P.119)

“Be the change you seek to achieve....Gandhi: “My life is my message” (scre. P.135)

We need to experience personal transformation, because we can get others to change.

We need courage, authretnicity, love and grace to become inspirational leaders.

“Courage gives us the will to do what is necessary to make change, is rise about the intimidation that that our personalities experience from the personalities of others. When we acquire courage we become authentic....Authenticity, as much as anything, generates love in the hearts of others.” (secr. P.147)

“It takes courage to say what we really feel – that we love the people we work with when this is so. Courage also enables us to become more authentic, therefore, more lovable....To love and to be loved is to experience grace. “ (secr. P.150)

(9) The role of the father

Fathers are now in a much weaker position. Not too long ago, father was the legitimate head of the household. His authority was reinforced by both Scripture and tradition. He was the sole provider of the family.

But things have changed dramatically in the last forty years. With the feminist movement, more and more women have entered the workforce. With increasing emphasis on equality and affirmative action, women have been gaining steadily in terms of income and influence.

Men in the Western countires have suffereded an identity crisis. They don't know what masculinity means any more. Traditional masculine leadership is ridiculed as “macho” According to the 1999 National Survey of Alchol and Substance Abuse among adolescents, it was found that 71% of the teens reported having a good relationship with the mother, while only about 34% had a good relationship with the father. More strikingly, about 27% of the teens would take to the mother in a time of personal crisis, while only about 8% would consult their father. (I read these statistics from Ladies Home Journal, and my recall may not be 100% correct.) These statistics are most disturbing to fathers, who don't seem to matter any more in the family. Of course, part of the reason is absentee fathers due to divorce, separation or job requirements, but there is a larger problem – because of the rapid social changes, many men are no longer sure about their own masculinity and their status in the family.

“Indeed, the average American father is nothing more than a ‘parenting aide.’ Like a teacher’s aide,Dad’s job is to assist Mom when she needs assistance andste in for her when she needs a break. In either case, his involvement is peripheral, temporary, and carried out at Mom’s direction only.” (Rosemond, p.35)

(10) The home environment

What is your concept of the family?

A family is like a hotel, bank, an orchestra, a basket ball team, a store, an non-organization, an institute ordained by God

Harris (1998) suggest that parents have very little influence on child outcomes. The home has to be a safe and trusting environment. But parents' influence is not just limited to behaviour at home --- if parents are really doing their job, they also have say on the neighbourhood they live in, the school they go to, and the kind of friends they associate with.

A child is not a lesser person, because he is not doing well academically.

Family atmosphere or home environment is important – it is closely related to parenting styles as well as who the parents are as persons.

It can be very oppressive, if the parents run the family as a military unit. Children are denied freedom to express their feelings or thoughts honestly.

It can also be like a pressure cooker, if the parents set very high standards, and demand success. Children feel anxious, disengaged, and inadequate.

It may be materialistic – The parents don't have to be rich to create a materialistic atmosphere. The parents value money, acquisition and financial security most. Everybody has to work hard to make and save money. Money is valued more than relationships or serving others. Children may feel their lives empty, because they don't experience love and meaning.

It can be like a nursery – when the parents are over-protective or indulgent.

It can be like a room house or a motel, where family members share the same room but hardly talk to each other – each does their own thing.

It can be a battle ground – frequent quarrels or fights between parents and between parents and children. This will breed very aggressive or violent children, or victims, if they happen to be the target of aggression.

It can be a very critical, disparaging place -- Family members may not be overly aggressive, but very critical of each other, making disparaging remarks, making fun of each other. It will develop kids who are cynical, unappreciative with a critical attitude, or feeling resentful and inadequate with a chip on his shoulder, if he happens to be the scapegoat.

It can be a sad and hopeless place – if parents are depressive, worried, because of their own conditions. There is very little joy at home. Kids will be affected and become sad, but they may also want to stay away as possible so that they can enjoy life.

A positive place -- t-- a warm, loving, and happy, nurturing, predictable place when kids learn to be positive people. Parents are not perfect, they are also bound to be conflicts and fights, but the overall atmosphere is one of acceptance, love, trust, and growth.

Create a calm and orderly environment, because this will be conducive to maintaining discipline. Chaotic environment encourages misbehaviour.

We need to structure a home environment that meets the children's needs – physical, psychological and spiritual. “What do children need? And how well can parents meet their needs? Children need acceptance. They need praise and appreciation. They need to learn they can trust their parents not to deceive them or to break promises. They need consistency and fairness. They need to feel that their fear, their desires, their feelings, their inexplicable impulses, their frustrations and their inabilities are understood by their parents. They need to know exactly where the limits are, what is permitted and what is prohibited. They need to know that home is a safe place, a place of refuge, a place where they have no need to be afraid. They need warm approval when they do well and firm correction when they do wrong. They need to learn a sense of proportion. They need to know that their parents are stronger than they are, able to weather the storms and dangers of the outer world and also able to stand up to their (children's) rages and unreasonable demands.” (White, 1979, p.181).

“I believe that a critical need in homes today is that they become the kind of environment in which children can learn more about themselves Home should be a place where children can make mistakes as they try out some things they have decided on their own.” (Leman, p.36)

Routines are helpful, not only because they contribute to order, but also they foster good habits. Everyone should be involved in developing the routines—a time for dinner, for laundry, grocery shopping, housecleaning, for different chores.

One of the important roles of the inspiration leader is to create the environment to inspire, or to build the spiritual energy of the team. “We are interested in ensuring that spirit and values are showing up on a person's radar and they are growing as spiritual beings. As leaders and parcerers we are interested in knowing whether others are depositing or withdrawing spiritual energy, thus enhancing or depleting the collecting SQ of the team.” (sacret p.153)

“Who is the leader? Surely everyone, at some point or another, must assume a leadership responsibility...In a team of 100 people, there are 100 leaders. Leadership is not an activity for them, nor is it limited to the person at the top. It is the responsibility of every human who is present on this planet, regardless of age, function, race, material status or any other condition. We are spiritual beings enjoying a human experience and we are all leaders.” (secr. P.154)

(11) Parental self-care – Parents, take care of yourself.

Freud – Physician, heal thyself.

Parent – Take care of yourself, develop yourself, because you cannot teach your children to be what you are not, nor can you expect them to do what you do not do.

Part of parental responsibility is to work thorough their personal issues so that their own unresolved conflict will not get into the way parenting.

Parental self-care is even more important in single-parent homes. (If one of the parents works in another city, it is functionally a single-parent family.

When one parent has to do two-parents' job, the stress level can be very high, and they will have less time and energy to care for their children.

When parents are burn out, they will not be good company for the children.

Need to be aware of what children do or say that get you angry. They try to bush the "hot" bottom, but we need to learn how to keep our cool and not to react.

Parent's personal problems or behaivours is often part of children's problem.

Confucius – Cultivate yourself before you can manager your family.

Questions to ask yourself:

Is it possible the trait or behaviour that you hate most in your children may actually mirror the same quality in you?

Are you under a lot of stress? If so, you are more likely to irritable and angry. You are more likely to yell at your children, when your boss has just yelled at you.

Are you secure in yourself? Do you need to be right all the time? Do you have a deep fear for being wrong? Is your way the only way? Do you react very strongly, if you child disagrees with you and question your decision?

Is there any unresolved issue from the past? Do you react strongly whenever a current situation touches on this hot bottom?

Do you have any unrealistic expectation or feelings of entitlement? Do you feel that you children owe you filial piety, respect and support?

Do you have a strong need for control? Do you have a strong desire to be seen as a strong, authoritative leader? Are you afraid of being vulnerable?

Do you have a strong sense of self-righteousness and importance? Do you feel that if you are not in charge, things will go wrong?

Are you good in developing and maintaining friendship and close relationship? Do you take a genuine interest in others?

Do you have the tendency to avoid or run away from difficult issues?

Do you feel very uncomfortable and upset, when other people do things in a way that is contrary to your thinking? Do you have difficulty accepting new ideas that are contrary to yours? Would you consider your as rigid, closed mind or flexible and open minded?

Do you have a high need for approval? Do really want to be liked by others?

Are you afraid of revealing you feelings? Do you express and speak your feelings freely? Do you feel the need to hide behind a mask?

Do you feel being trapped in a bad marriage and victimized by your children?

Do you hold grudges? Do you have difficulty forgiving others?

What kind of negative feelings that do you experience most frequently? Anger, depression, fear, guilt, confusion, sadness, helpless,.....

Do you have difficulty accepting yourself as someone useful, important, valuable, lovable, etc? Or do you despise yourself?

Do you have difficulty accepting others who have offended you or have done something wrong?

A child learns according to what he lives with:

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives with fear, he learns to be apprehensive.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.

If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives with recognition, he learns it is good to have a goal.

If a child lives with honesty, he learns what truth is.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself and those about him.

If a child lives with friendliness, he learns the world is a nice place in which to live, to love and be loved.

Kreikus & Cassel (1972, pp.28-29)

“Will we ever learn that the only behavior we can control is our own? You may be able to make your children act respectfully, but you can't make them feel respectful. The best way to encourage them to feel respectful is to control your own behaviour and show respect for yourself and others. Deciding what you will do instead of trying to control others may be a new thought for some parents. Many parents have been so busy trying to control their children that they haven't considered dealing with problems by controlling their own behaviour” (p.9)

“Michael Maccoby, author of *The Leader*, wrote, ‘The study of the Bible, comparative religion, ethical philosophy and psychology, and great literature leads one to explore the inner life, particularly the struggle to develop the human heart against ignorance, convention, injustice, disappointment, betrayal, and irrational passion. Such an education prepares one to grapple with his fear, envy, pride, and self-deception.’” (Bethel, p.264)

(12) How to build good relationships

Good relationship is the foundation for effective parenting. A parent's ability to influence, to teach is greatly curtailed when there is not a relationship of trust. This applies to all sorts of situations – boss-employer, therapist-client, pastor-congregation.

Relationship is more important than rules, more important than skills. If adults are liked and trusted by the children, then everything seems much easier.

You don't gain respect by keeping aloof, because the distance is necessary to maintain authority and respect.

“The most potent behavioural influence that an adult can have in the life of a child comes when an attachment has been formed. Adults who fear that strong relationships will lessen their authority and influence with young are misinformed. In the words of Korczak: ‘Your authority is based on the strength of your status as a beloved and admired model person.’ The existence of a positive relationship provides two very powerful teaching tools to the adults. Social reinforcement: Youth are more responsive to encouragement or correction which comes from an adult whose opinion is valued. Modeling. The most fundamental of all ‘discipline’ techniques is when a youth becomes a ‘disciple’ by adopting the adult's values and behavior.” (Brendtro p.60)

Eric Fromm in *The Art of Loving* sees the loving relationship not as an affect but an action.

“Relationship building is an endurance even....It takes a great persistence and patience to keep returning day after day to encounter a youth who seems oblivious to one's overtures.” (Brendtro, p.65)

A large body of literature demonstrates that attachment is a powerful universal need. It begins with acceptance. “Acceptance is like the soil – it merely enables the child to actualize his potential.....most parents rely heavily on the language of unacceptance in rearing children, believing this is the best way to help them. The soil that most parents provide for their children's growth is heavy with evaluation, judgement, criticism,

preaching, moralizing, admonishing and commanding – messages that convey unacceptance of the child as he is.” (Gordon, 1975, p.31)

When your child tells you something, you start one of the above – no wonder they don’t tell you anything any more.

Gordon suggests some of the non-committal door-opener or invitation to say more: Really, Is that so. Interesting. Mm hmm. I see.

Or “tell me about it. I’d like to hear about it. Let’s discuss it. Tell me the whole story. Sound like you’ve got something to say about this. These convey acceptance and respect of the child as a person with ideals and feelings.

Good relationship does not mean the absence of conflict, because conflict is an inevitable part of life. On the contrary, good relationship provides a safe and trusting climate for members of the family to freely express their different opinions and feelings, and relationship is strengthened by working through these conflicts in a creative, cooperative manner.

The key to conflict resolution is avoid the trap of power struggle to determine who is the winner and who is the loser. Work towards a win-win or no-lose method of resolving conflict. It is the resolve difference through mutual agreement just like partners in business or between labour union and management use to negotiate contract. This method is frequently used between individuals who possess equal or relatively equal power.

It is more effective because”

The child is motivated to carry out the solution.

More chance of finding a high-quality solution.

It develops children’s thinking skills.

Less hostility-more love.

Requires less enforcement.

Eliminates the need for power.

Gets to the real problems.

It brings up “therapeutic” changes in children’s behaviour.

The keys to good relationship”

Even Gordon recognizes that this no-lose method is predicated on some degree of perceived parental authority and strength . “A change to Method III for previously permissive parents will therefore require of them much more strength and firmness than they have been accustomed to exhibiting with their children. These parents need somehow to find a new source of strength in order to move away from their previous ‘peace at any price’ posture....They have to be convinced that they as parents have rights, too. “(p.252-253).

When parents act as leaders, they are more likely to inspire and motivate their children to keep their commitment to the agreement.

Gordon also reports that some parents this no-lose method does not work with older teenagers. "Usually these have been older teen-agers who already have written off their parents or who are so bitter and angry at their parents that Method III appears to them to give far more to their parents than they deserve.....I must admit that I have frequently felt that the best thing for them would be to find the courage to break away from their parents, leave home, and search for new relationships that might be more satisfying" (p.264). It is because the parent-child relationship has deteriorated to the point of being beyond repair.

This same to suggest that if the no-lose method does not work, then simply give up on the teen and let them move on.

A leadership model will not limit itself to only one method. It will do whatever it takes to win over their teens, even it may mean Method I (parents are the winners)

No kids can survive in the real world, if they think that have the right to bargain and negotiate everything rule. They can't do that at school, nor can they do that at work. They need to learn that certain house rules are necessary for the collective good and for their good, and not subject to negotiation. For example, the rule of no illegal drugs is not for negotiation.

Gordon seems to imply that it is a bad thing for parents to be perceived as an authority figure, even if they have earned it with their love, knowledge and leadership. How are they going to survive in a world, when there are authority figures in every realm – the judges, doctors, authorities in every field of study.

Gordon also recognizes the limitation of no-lose method in dealing with value conflicts. "When family conflicts occur over issues involving cherished values, beliefs, and personal tastes, parents may have to handle these differently, because frequently kids are not willing to put these issues on the bargaining table or enter into problem solving. This does not mean parents need to give up trying to influence their children by teaching them values. But to be effective, they will have to use a different approach." (p.266)

Gordon suggests that parents should recognize children's civil rights or inalienable freedoms, having a life of their own. "They have difficulty accepting our principle of allowing the child freedom to become what he wants to become, provided his behaviour does not tangibly and concretely interfere with the parent becoming what he wants to become." (p.273).

This kind of thinking is dangerous – the family is a bunch of individuals and each is free to do whatever they want as long as they don't interfere with each other. This kind of individualistic thinking is harmful to the family health. First of all, whatever happens to one member of the family inevitably affects other members of the family; this is what

relationships are all about; this is what family is all about, because we are not isolated individuals moving in our own little worlds.

This kind of thinking is dangerous also because it is an abdication of parental authority and leadership, we simply let children to be free to become whatever they want. Do we sit back and let them free to become drug addicts, prostitutes or criminals? Yes, they have the right and freedom to choose self-destruction, but love and responsibility demand that we fight for their lives so that they can choose to get their life on track.

However, Gordon recognizes that parents are allowed to transmit their most cherished values to their children. “Parents cannot help but teach kids their values, simply because children are bound to learn their parents’ values by observing what their mothers and fathers do, and hearing what they say.” (p.273)

Parents will be models --- they model for their children what they value, because their actions speak louder than their words.

“Parents can teach their values by actually living them....This is the best way, perhaps the only way for parents to ‘teach’ children values.” (p.273).

But Gordon fails to recognize that there are opposing forces – school, tv, internet, and peers who exert even more powerful influence than what is being modeled at home. Parental responsibility includes taking actions to protect their children and counter-act forces that advocate destructive values.

In addition, parents may act as consultants. “They may share with their offspring their ideas, their knowledge and their experience, much as a consultant shares rather than preaches, offers rather than imposes, suggests rather than demands. Even more critical, the successful consultant shares, offers, and suggests usually no more than once.” (p.296) “The successful consultant offers his ideas, then leaves responsibility with his client for buying or rejecting them. If a consultant behaved as most parents do, his client would inform him that his services were no longer desired.” (p.276). Similarly, parents can get fired by their children if parents push their values on the children too persistently.

There is something wrong with the consultant analogy, because it fails to recognize the developmental aspect of children. Yes, when they become young adults, parents better serve as consultants, but when they are still minors, you have to teachers, clergy, and counsellors, or coaches to equip them with a moral compass. The second thing wrong is the failure to recognize family relationship is different from business contractual agreement. Once you are part of a family, you are always part of that family – it is in your blood, in your psyche. You can no more fire your parents than divorce them. No successful coach functions as a consultant – they have to whatever within their motivational toolbox to instill good values, attitudes and habits in their players so that they will win games. Similarly, a company leaders will do everything he can repeatedly to instill proper attitudes and values in their employees so that company can be productive. Parents need to do a lot more than just suggest, offer and share. They need to teach, tell stories, even preach, discuss, and reinforce good moral values.

Finally, Gordon takes the defeatist attitude “To accept what I cannot change”—if modeling and consulting do not work, simply let them be. The principle ‘You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink” applies to smoking, doing homework, premarital sex, getting into trouble at school, associating with certain kids, smoking grass, so so all. “As I see it, a parent can only accept the fact that he ultimately has not power to prevent such behaviour, if the child is best on doing them.” (p.280).

Misty has demonstrated that parents can do a lot more than just modeling and consulting.

Problems agreed to be child’s responsibility which does not require mutual problem-solving. The list includes:

His school work – how much he studies, when he studies, whether he studies,

His choice of his own friends.

Where he goes, when he goes out.

In today’s situation, this list will include:

How long he spends on the internet, and where he surfs.

This kind of permissive parenting certainly will reduce the frequency of conflict, but will not lead to optimal development of children’s potential as well as character.

For example, with respect to doing home work, when children are young, external constraint is more likely to cultivate good study habits. Similarly, if kids are free to choose their friends, and get into bad company, they can get into all sorts of problems, even with the law. I can’t see any responsible parents will say, your choice of friends is your problem, and you get into trouble, that is your problem.

Gordon also suggests that parents can prevent conflicts and improve relationships by modifying themselves.

Can you become more accepting of yourself.

Parents need to change their view “by coming to see that their children are not their children, not extensions of themselves, but separate, unique.” – then the number of unacceptable behaviour in their children will reduce.

Learn to like children who may be different from what you expect – academically minded children need to like children who are non-academic.

“The more certain parents are that their own values and beliefs are right, the more they tend to impose on their children.” Parents need to take the attitude that their values and beliefs are not the only true ones.

- (1) Be a good listener -- Many teens stop talking to their parents, because they feel that their parents do not listen, nor do they understand. Have to be listen to what they say about their world; make them feel safe to tell it like it is.
- (2) Acceptance – Accepting them, in spite of their weaknesses, but we will fight them with all our power to pull them back from the path of self-destruction, and be brutally honest about the terrible consequences if they do not turn around.
- (3) Develop trust. All parents want to trust their children, until they are let down. Be prepared that they will do something to betray your trust time and time again. Give them the opportunity to earn it back, to rebuilt trust. Sometime, parents have reason not to trust some of the friends kids have; let them know how you feel, and empower your kids to do the right thing before you intervene. Trust is the foundation of good good relationships. It takes a long time to build, but does not take much to destroy it. Often kids get very angry that parents go through their room; but parents have reason to believe, because of their kids strange behaviour, that something “bad” is going on.
- (4) Quality time is more important than quantity time. Quality time indicates that you are fully present, and there is open sharing, and connection. Listen to what they have to say with 100% attention. They will respond positively to the attention and the genuine encounters. Need to spend time on mutually enjoyable activities.
- (5) Need to make constant adjustments to maintain develop good relationships as they go through different developmental stages. Having a blood relationship does not automatically translate to good personal relationship. There is always some give and take. Both parties have to work on it. When kids are going through adolescence, begin to move away from parents, and we make the mistake of either let the drift away, or try to one of them, or impose ourselves on them; the best course of action is maintain you leadership role, but allow them more freedom and responsibilities as they mature.
- (6) Accept them as people, not extension of your self. If we impose our own ambitions and expectation on our children, they will react, because they may have other interests which are different from yours, and they are afraid that they will not be accepted, if they cannot meet your standard and expectations.
- (7) Treat them with respect . “Try treating your adolescent as respectfully and considerably as you do your best friend, and you can develop a highly satisfying relationship” Dinkmeyer (p.9)

“Positive individual relationships between adults and youth are the foundation of successful programs of education, group care and treatment.” (brendtro, p.69)

(13) How to improve communication

Much of the communication between parents and children consists of questioning, commanding, preaching, lecturing, evaluating, and ridiculing. “Your acceptance of the need, faults and all, is basic to any communication that draws parents and adolescents closer together instead of driving them further apart. It begins with your attitude that the teen is an acceptable person.” (Dinkmeyer, p.9) You need to express your acceptance in words and behaviours. You may not accept some of his behaviour, but you always accept him as a person.

You also need to learn to listen – not just the words, but the feelings and intentions accompanying the words. Reflecting listening indicates that you understand their feelings and their message.

Focus on the positive. Even when you are dealing with a problem, or a negative situation, you can still do it in a way that points out the reason why it is not acceptable, finding out a better alternative, and encouraging them to do it better.

Even when you are angry with what they have done, you need to do so in the context of communicating that you care for them and love them, and that's why you need to correct them.

Do not put them down or criticize them constantly or show favouritism. Express a keen interest in them as a person, in their perspectives, their ideas and their dreams about the future.

Make time to talk, to share, on a ongoing basis.

Don't try to prove that you are always right. Be ready to admit your mistakes and apologize.

The weekly family meeting is a very effective way for to improve communications skills, problem solving skills, responsibility, how to work together as a family, and more importantly, learn leadership skills – to see how parents promote cooperation, mutual respect, give and receive validation, provide opportunities for every one to contribute to agenda,

Genuinely interested what your children think and feel by ask them: What do you think about what has happened? How do you feel about it? Do you have an idea how to resolved it? How could we prevent it happen again??

Reflective listening (reflect back to your child what you hear.

Active listening (listening to their feeling between the words, without trying to explain it away or fix it. It is like advanced empathy, guessing what really bothers them, so that they feel understood.

Give direct request, Please tidy up your room, let's cleanup this room.

Listening and understanding reduce their resistance, especially if you understand the reason behind their resistance.

Ralph Waldo Emerson: "What you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say."

“People will follow your lead if you communicate to them something in which to believe. They want to find fulfillment in their work. They want to be inspired and feel a part of something that matters.” (Bethel, 201).

“Think of the people you know whom you consider to be true leaders. When you are with them, they invariably ask questions. They are interested in you and your ideas. They are also interested in improving their listening skills, in another way – seeking feedback,” (Bethel, p.205)

Are you a good listern?

- Do you like to listen to other people talk?
- Do you encourage other people to talk?
- Do you listen even if you do not like the person who is talking?
- Do you look at the personal talking to you?
- Do you try to understand what the person means?
- Do you let the person finish what he is saying?
- Do you listen regardless of the person’s manner of speaking and choice of words?

“The moral tone of your organization is established and communicated by you, its leader.....The highest form of communication is example....What messages are you sending and what examples are you setting?” (p.214)

“Prasie what’s right – train for what’s wrong” (Bethel, p.224)

“All of us want our people to improve, change, and grow. So it’s time we discard the old term ‘constructive criticism’ and replace it with ‘constructive support.’ This is a much better phrase. It creates a bond between you and the other person.” (Bethel, p.228)

(14) How to teach children good behavior

about doing chores --

We rarely succeed at any task unless we enjoy it. One of the most significant tasks you have as a team builder is to create an atmosphere free of tension, fire fighting, and stress, in which your team can enjoy its work. Obviously, everything isn’t fun and games. But if you can find ways to tap people’s inner excitement, if you can make their work enjoyable, you’ll go a long way toward channeling their talents and energies to achieve the goals of the team.” (Bethel, p.234)

We are disgusted when we see kids behaving like brats and teens behaving like tyrants. In a recent article by Carol Milstone (2000) on brats, she quoted Adler: Every pampered child becomes a hated child. There is no greater evil than the pampering of children.” At the other extreme is negligence or child abuse. We can ruin a child with too much love. Over-protection deprives them of the opportunity of learning the consequences of

their behaviour or misbehaviour. Over-protection may make them feel insure as if they cannot do anything themselves without the intervention of their parents. Adlerian child guidance principles include “Never do for a child he can do for himself. “Overresponsible parents often produce irresponsible children.”

By and large, children learn what they live.

The first rule of parenting, according to Ken Marlin (1973), is the golden rule: “When parents really do unto their children as they would have children do unto them, children usually try their best to satisfy. The parent who trusts his children tend to get trust back. Parents who are courteous with children usually get courtesy in return. Parents who have trouble with their children do not realize that the many ways that they themselves actually demonstrate, model or provoke the very behaviours they object to in their children.” (p.1)

As a general principal, this may be true, but there are many exceptions – there are courteous parents who produce rude children, because they pamper their children too much, and allow them to be rude, whenever they don’t get their way.

The key to a good parent-child relationship is validation:

Love, hope and encouragement

Character counts. According to a large recent by Josephson Institute of high school and middle school students, 71% of all high school students admitted they cheat on an exalce at least once in the past 12 month, 92% lied to their parents in the last year, 40% of males and 30% of females say they stole something from a store in the past 12 moth, and 68% said they hit someone because they were angry in the last year. These statistics suggest moral decay.

Encouragement is a very positive motivators formc. Focus on what is good but not what is perfect. Acknowledge and validate what is good in him and encourage him to overcome his weaknesses.

“The encouraging parents:

1. Values and accepts his teen-ager.
2. Communicates in a manner that helps him build a feeling of adequacy and self-worth.
3. Shows trust and faith and an attitude of ‘I know you’ll do your best; I’m behind you 100% regardless of how it comes out.” (Dinkmeyer, p.11)

Parents need to serve as a role model, a teacher, a listener, an encouragers, and someone who know all that is good and bad about their children without judging and rejecting them. “

All the important values children learn, they learn from their parents.

Parents need to behave well so that their children will too. If a father throws a temper tantrum whenever he is frustrated, their children will more likely do the same. Actions always speak louder than words.

Provide an orderly, loving and positive home environment that is conducive to good behaviour.

Respect is the cornerstone of good behaviour. It has to be learned from a very young age. Dobson says “Developing respect for parents is the critical factor in child parents – not to satisfy their egos, but because his relationship with them provides the basis for his later attitude towards all other people.” (p.18).

Children learn from how they live and how their parents live.

Respect and good manners cannot be mandated or demanded.

Respect needs to be earned.

Respect has to be a two-way street.

Parents demonstrate positive ways of handling anger, such as talking about feelings “I feel angry, when you come home so late without letting me know where you went” or “Let’s find a solution to this problem.” Or Try to see a different meaning of the triggering event.

Help children experience the good feelings of owning up and correcting their mistakes.

Demonstrate how positive words and positive actions have a rippling effects on others.

How do you teach respect when you do not show any respect to your children.

“You are a bad boy – you are not a human, you are worse than animals.”

Focus on the positive and try to discover and bring out the best in your children.

Believe that all children, even difficult children, are capable of changing and growing.

No one is perfect, and no one can be good all the time. Therefore, it is important to learn how to apologize and forgive. Parents sometimes can wrong or hurt their children. Similarly, siblings can hurt each other. We need to give each other grace.

Good behaviour is acquired through modeling, observing, and growing up in a family environment that encourages good behaviour.

“respect begets respect. Obedience can be demanded from a weaker individual, but one can never compel respect.” (Brendtro, p.66)

“developing programs that teach caring values and behaviour to young people who had otherwise distinguished themselves by self-centered and antisocial behaviour.”

(BRANTRO, P.93)

(15) Effective discipline—how to avoid the power struggle

Everyone agrees the need for discipline, because the world without rules and standards is dangerous and destructive, for both parents and children. Without discipline, very little learning can take place.

But effective discipline cannot be based on command and control, nor can it totally be based on freedom and responsibility, but based on principles of effective leadership which help children meet their basic needs as well as the shared needs of the family.

“Discipline is the process by which parents make disciples of their children, a child-disciple being one who pays close attention to his parents and follows their lead. There are numerous aspects to this overall process, but three are of primary importance:

13. Establish reasonable, yet challenging, expectations.
14. Setting and enforcing limits.
15. Modeling socially appropriate behavior.

Together, these three parental functions provide for a child’s successful socialization, the outcome of which is responsible citizenship. In other words, the ultimate goal of parental discipline is to produce an adult who requires minimal ‘management’ of his or her behavior; an adult who is self-disciplining.....Underlying all of the above is one basic fact: Only self-disciplined adults can be successful at disciplining children”(Rosemond, p.170-171)

“I’m going to give you enough rope to hang yourself” (give enough freedom, but responsible for the nasty consequences when abuse the freedom)

“You make your bed, you lie in it”

Freedom in a democratic society has to be based on shared responsibility. If you are free to do anything you want, most likely, you will not learn very much and end up hurting yourself.

Do not make unrealistic or unreasonable demands and commands. For example, ask little children to remember long list of things. Or ask older children to stay home and baby sit, when they have to perform after many weeks of practices.

Resistance is their attempt to test their limits, their ideas, and achieve independence – instead of putting them down or crush their will, explain to them your reason, remind them you are the boss, and one day they will be boss too, and encourage their cooperation for the good of the family and for their own good.

A watched-pot never boils.

“The simple fact is that as long as you stand over him after you ask him to do something, he has an opportunity to get into a power struggle with you, which he dies. If you wouldn’t stand over him – overing his pot, so to speak – he’d be more likely to come to a boil. In other words, he’d be more likely to do what you’ve told him to do.: (Rosemond, 207)

“Watched-pot syndrome (WPS) is one of the most vicious cycles in parent-child relationships. A parent gives an instruction and then, certain that compliance will not happen otherwise, stands over the ‘pot’, inviting noncompliance (the self-fulfilling

prophecy again). The child, having someone with whom to engage in a power struggle, struggles.” (rosemond, 208)

Discipline should not be equated with punishment.

“The aim of discipline is to train the person being disciplined. Discipline is a means by which that person’s behaviour may be shaped to please the rest of us and hopefully in a way that will be better for the person receiving the discipline. If a child has the habit of stealing, for example, discipline will aim to make him or her more honest. Punishment on the other hand aims to rectify an injustice. The person being punished is seen as guilty of a wrong. He or she owes a moraldebt to the rest of us. The punishment is viewed as a means of putting the wrong right, repaying the devt and removing the guilt.” (White, 1979,p.190).

White has provided an interesting but technical distinction. But to my view, punishment can also be considered one of the means of discipline, which involves inflicting on the person some discomfort or pain. Indeed, punishment may serve the purpose as described by Dr. White. For example, often people who feel guilty for their wrong doings ask for punishment so that they can feel some relief from their guilt conscience. This is also true for children – they often want to feel the pain in order to feel better about themselves.

“One of your major goals in using reality discipline is to help your child think and learn. But to be successful, you have to understand what reality is ---- reality is how your child views the situation.” (Leman, p.47)

“When you use reality discipline, you have to be much more aware of your child’s perceptions and you have to learn how to understand and relate to each child and his or her special needs.” (p.48)

Many people have declared that reward and punishment no longer work, because children are buying the way they used to. But the so called encouragement “Hi Justin, you have done a fine job in cutting the lawn” is actually a verbal form of positive reinforcement.

“Punishment teaches children that because we – their parents – are bigger and stronger, we can push them around. We can force our will upon them....But forcing your will upon your child isn’t scriptural.” (Leman, p.73)

training children requires time and energy. “I believe that as you train up your child with loving discipline, his conscience is developed in such a way that he is much more likely to behave properly when you aren’t there. But to train him properly you must use encouragement and discipline, not reward and punishment. Parents who use reward and punishment as the two principal motivators of their children’s behaviour are not really helping them develop a good conscience.” (leman, p.75)

You are free to do anything you want on the piano key board, but you only produce noise, and you don’t have the freedom to create music. But once you have subjected yourself to the discipline of learning and practice, then you gain the freedom to express yourself musically. Kreikurs and Cassell: “Discipline is the seed from which freedom

grows....Without learned skills, courage and a sense of responsibility, you have no true freedom of choice" (p.20).

The goal of gaining the freedom to be financial independent, to pursue one's dream, will motivate students to learn the necessary skills, and pursue the necessary educational path to reach your career goals. You don't have to force them to study – they will enjoy the challenge of learning.

You can encourage responsibility is the same way. Since they are responsible for achieving their dreams of financial independence, they have to learn how to cooperate with others, how to relate to people, and how to gain people's trust. They will be doomed to a life of poverty and dependency on Government handout, if they have not learned how to work with others, and to win the trust of their boss as responsible workers – someone they can depend on. Where else to learn discipline and responsibility than at home as children.

What people don't agree is on how we discipline. There is the old disciplinary school of the military tradition – discipline is based on command and control and obedience. There is also the new school of discipline based on love and positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

But I want to emphasize that when it comes to discipline, there is no such thing as one size fits all, because to be effective, the discipline has to fit the individual characteristics. For example, a very sensitive, introverted child can be guided with a kind word, while a rumbonconscious, very active child may need some firm actions.

For discipline to be effective, we also need to have some understanding of human nature. If we understand human nature and individual differences, we will be better leaders when it comes to discipline.

Dreikurs (Dreikus & Sloth, Kreikurs & Cassel, 1972) has identified five basic assumptions about human nature as formulated by Alfred Adler:

1. We are social beings, whose main desire to belong.
2. All behaviour is purposive.
3. We have the freedom and capability to make choices.
4. We are wholistic beings, and cannot be understood by partial characteristics.
5. We do not see reality as it is, but as we perceive it to be. The meaning we attribute to reality is more important than reality itself.

Dr. Frankl will emphasize that we are spiritual beings, and spirituality is an important dimension of humanity. As spiritual agents, our primary motivation is to discover meaning and purpose for our existence; they long for a sense of personal significance.

According to many faith traditions, we are created in God's image, and we carry with us sparks of divinity, and the capacity, however later, to know God.

Discipline is no longer a matter of concern, if parents are able to channel their children's energy to meet the above positive needs.

The can't experience freedom without first learning the discipline and responsibility. Similarly, they can not gain recognition and personal significance, without setting and achieving socially acceptable goals. They cannot meet their need of belonging, if they do not know how to cooperate, do not respect others, and do not have an active interest in other people.

If we want to see children behaving in a cooperative, responsible way, we need to recognize their basic existing goals and motives, and encourage them to achieve what they really want. Extrinsic rewards and punishment are ineffective, if we are used to manipulate children to do things which they don't believe in.

On a given day, parents give out 2000 requests. No wonder children became "parent deaf".

The autocratic approach does not work, but it does not mean that discipline does not work. Discipline can be applied effectively – when it is followed by logical consequences, and it is a small part of parent's leadership.

Be very clear about the goal or purpose of discipline. We need to keep in mind the purpose of discipline is not children's obedience so that we can live more better. The main purpose of discipline is to teach responsibility and self-discipline. Always keep in mind what kind of adult we want our children grow up to be.

The Bible talks about the importance of discipline

Prov.5:23: "He (the wicked man) will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly."

Prov. 15:32 "He who ignores discipline despise himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding."

But how? Traditionally, parents resort to physical punishment.

We should expect resistance. Do we want our children to blindly obey us, even when we are wrong? If the child is very passive, and always does what is told, then we should be concerned, because such a child may not learn how to think for themselves, and they may not have the strength to stand on his own feet.

In disciplining, conflict is sometimes inevitable. At times, it may even involve heated arguments. It is necessary to “fight” with your children – to show they you care so much that you have to fight for their benefits. And, they know it, if you really have their best interest in mind. You need to pick your battle carefully, the ones that are essential to your child’s well-being, and for your own ego. Therefore, you need to understand the nature of the conflict and then decide what to do.

Whenever possible, try to avoid falling into the trap of power struggle. You can sidestep a battle in several ways:

Acknowledge that he has a point, and then walk away and say “We will talk about this when both thought about it more..

Acknowledge that there is a problem of disagreement, and discuss how this be resolved. This will involve identifying the issue and find a solution that is helpful to the child (always has his well-being in mind.) Thus, solving the problem becomes a shared responsibility.

Throughout the process, must maintain an attitude of respect and don’t lose our temper, = even when the child has a bad attitude. If we respond in kind, we fall in their trap. If we maintain a positive attitude towards them, they will likely reciprocate.

Don’t mix up opinion with facts, and don’t judge without knowing all the facts. We are not interested in winning an argument, or winning a fight -- we are only interested in winning an agreement and the cooperation.

How do you discipline your children? Can you name three techniques most commonly used by you? How do you assess their effectiveness?

According the adlerian approach, all children have goals of cooperation, contribution and belonging. Adults can win their cooperation with love and logic, Children’s misguided goals – undue attention “I demand special attention; undue sympathy and help “You must feel sorry for my sickness, and give me whatever I want” or power “You are not the boss over me, and I can defeat you; revenge, “You don’t care about me, I will hurt you back; social withdrawal, “I can’t win, so I am not going to do anything, just leave me alone: escape from reality “I can’t stand the reality, so just let me escape into my little world of fantasy, or music, .

We can discourage unacceptable behaviour by paying attending and reinforcing positive, good behaviour. Adler emphasizes the importance to distinguish between positive and negative attention. When kids can’t get attention through good behaviour, they resort to misbehavior and get negative attention.

All behaviour is maintained by some reinforcement and purpose. A reinforcement is what increases the likelihood of that behaviour – it is maintained by what happens after it. Behaviour is also maintained by a purpose or a goal, which attracts the behaviour – it is motivated by both the immediate consequence and long-term goal.

In order to discourage bad behaviour, you need to identify what purpose it serves. Once their needs or goals are met by proper means, while their misbehaviours

Gordon points out the “I-messages” are more effective in correcting a child’s misbehaviour than the traditional “Solution message”, “put-down message” (judging, criticizing, blaming, ridiculing, teaching (i.e., It’s not good manners to interrupt someone.”

Kids can be responsible if they want to. For example, Tamagotchi pets require certain cares, and if they don’t they will misbehave. Kids are very keen in pushing the right buttons, to feed them, walk them, etc in order to keep their virtual pets happy.

Keys to effective discipline

- (1) Parents need to maintain a calm, united front. When parents have heated arguments over how to discipline their child, it is very tempting for the child to play one against the other; this will not only undermine parental influence, but also confuse the child regarding what is right and what is wrong.
- (2) Set up very clear expectations. Expect your children to be polite and respectful especially in talking to parents.
- (3) Make sure that bad behaviors have real consequences, preferably natural ones.
- (4) Hold a family council to address matters of concern to both parents and children.
- (5) Timing has to be right -- there is the right time and the wrong time to discipline. It may not be appropriate to discipline when you are very angry, or when there is a crisis to be handled. Also, when the child is throwing a temper tantrum, it is better to say “I will talk to you when you have come down” than getting engaged in a shouting match. But on the other hand, do not procrastinate. It makes no sense to discipline the child for something he did a few days ago.
- (6) Know the differences between normal behaviour for a particular age and unacceptable behaviour. Children are not little adults. Teens are not adults. They go through developmental stages. What is normal for a two-year old is obviously not normal for a 10-year-old.
- (7) Setting limits – Children keep on testing the limits. They feel safe where there are reasonable limits, such as curfew (My son said that his friends envy him for having a curfew.) They may even feel disappointed when parents do not attempt to enforce those limits.
- (8) Pick your battles – Know when to leave them alone, when to fight them. Don’t major on minors (such as length of hair or the style of clothing).
- (9) Give options rather than orders -- If they are given choices with different consequences, then they learn about self-determination and responsibility.
- (10) Prescribe time-outs for unacceptable behaviors -- Stop arguing, nagging and hitting. Five to 10 minutes for a six-year-old and 2 minutes for a preschooler. “You have behaved so badly, that you need to stay away from the rest of the family.” Leman said “Keep in mind that time out is not a punishment but simply a method of helping your child understand he is responsible for his actions. When his actions become unacceptable, he has to stop and realize what he has been

doing.” Use to the opportunity to explain when he is isolated and asked whether he is ready to come back and play or join the rest of the family.”

(11) When siblings quarrel, bicker, -- Don’t intervene as long as they are not hurting each other; they need to learn how to resolve conflict. When you do intervene, make sure that you are even-handed; you can make things worse if you automatically side with the younger one.

(12) Don’t give empty threats or false promises. If you want to establish credibility, follow through your warnings, and keep your promises. Should always mean what you say, and say what you mean.

(13) Avoid confrontation and power struggle, especially over daily matters, such as eating, bed time, etc.

(14) Don’t be too nice, too understanding or indulging -- If you do, you will be vulnerable to children’s manipulation, and they will have less respect for you.

(15) Don’t equate the behavior with the person - When a child misbehaves, we are more likely to succeed if we focus on correcting or redirecting the behaviour than changing their personality. Furthermore, when we accuse them of being a bad person, we hurt their self-respect and reduce their hope for improvement. Need to target the behaviours that need to be eliminated or modified, one at a time.

(16) Reinforce good behaviours – Validate and praise for positive behaviours, such as being responsible, helping others, etc.

(17) Be consistent – This is probably the most challenging part of disciplining. Try to follow through on what has been agreed . Don’t give in to your children’s pleas and don’t let your own mood determine the action. (Often, when you are in a good mood, you choose to overlook unacceptable behaviour, but when you are in a bad mood, you overreact to every minor offence.)

(18) Your words have to be clear, concise, meaningful – When you talk too much and give empty threats, you simply undermine your own credibility and authority.

(19) Make sure that they know that your love is unconditional, no matter how badly your children misbehave and what tough measure you have to take.

(20) Don’t be too negative or critical, otherwise, the children will dismiss you once they come to the conclusion that you hate them.

(21) Teach your children how to manage their anger – by acknowledging that it is normal to get angry with certain people and certain situations, but stress the importance of how to deal with our anger appropriately and constructively.

For example, if the parent threatens to move out of the house when the children create problems for them, then the child gets the idea that they can run away from home.

(22) Don’t use angry, destructive, ugly words, (I’m so mad that I could kill you) but you may use words that are strong, firm, and reasonable. (I really do like your attitude; your rudeness is not acceptable.)

(23) Don’t over-react impulsively, no matter how offensive the behaviour might be. The discipline you employ should not be something that releases your anger, or punish the child, for the ultimate purpose of discipline is to help the teens to be responsible and self-disciplined.

- (24) Keep a short account – don’t let anger, frustration and resentment builds up. Deal with problems and take appropriate actions as soon as they arise.
- (25) The discipline should be appropriate for the child and his misbehaviour.
- (26) Never coerce a child into submission; otherwise, you will be modeling bullying behaviour.
- (27) Give them choices
- (28) Communicate with them what is expected, and that involves listening to them.
- (29) Do not accept excuses such as I forgot, or I am too busy – they are held accountable to do their share of the chores.
- (30) When your child talk back, or “smart mouth” in a disrespectful way, you cannot depend on your positional power to correct him, saying, “You cannot talk to you parent this way”. You can refuse to discuss with him, and say, “This is not the proper way to talk to anyone, especially, your parents. I will be happy to discuss this matter with you, if you talk nicely.” You may even walk away at this point.
- (31) Do not try to “make”them do the home world, but provide an environment conducive to study time – make a special time or place to study as a routine, and parents may even sit with them when they are young. (But do not do their school work for them.)

Give children limited choices – more choice as they get older. Involve them in planning and deciding on the choices will increase responsibility and aide power struggles.

Get them involved in solutions. “They are more likely to keep agreements in which they have ownership. They develop self-confidence and helaty self-esteem when they are listened to, taken seriously, and valued for their contribution. When we value their conribution, they experiece belonging and significance. “ (Nelsen et al, p.8)

“What did you learn from your parents about mistakes?”
What are the better ways of dealing with mistakes?

“1. Recognize the mistake with a feeling of responsibility instead of blame. 2.Reconcile by apologizing to the people you have offended or hurt. Resolve the problem, when possible, by working together on a solution” (Nelsen, p.20).

Positive time-out – give the children an opportunity to take a break for a shortime to cool over and to make a decission about what to do. “Come out when you feel better and are ready to change your behaviour. “The point of positive time-ouyt (and all other nonpunitive methods) is to teach children that mistakes are opportunities to learn, to teach tme life sills that will serve them when adults are not around, and to help them feel that they belong and are significant so thaty don’t feel a need to engage in nonproductive behaviour.” (Nelsen, p.21)

When adults intervene and try to settle conflicts between children, they often make things worse. Let them work things out themselves.

(16) How to parent difficult children

Yes, there are difficult children from a parent's perspective, for a various reasons. They may be difficult to control, to teach. They may be difficult to relate to. They may have some medical conditions, such as autism, and adda. They are often referred to as "bad" kids; clinically, they may be referred to as having oppositional disorder.

They also be referred to as "troubled", "out of control", "wounded", "lost" or "maladjusted", unmotivated, irrespoinsible, violent, aggressive.

"The concept of 'at risk,' althoughy very broad, avoids blaming the child and points our attention toward the environmental hazards which need to be addressed" (brendtro, p.2)

"Crisis is opportunity – Instead if bemoaning the problems such youth creates, adults must use these situations as opportunities for teaching and relationship building."

(breadtro, p.62)

Alienation is a big factor. "Parentss are too stressed, schools are too impersonal and the community is too disorganized to fulfill the most basic human need of children to belong. Estranged from family, friends, school or productive work, the seeds of discouragement have been sown in the four fowlrds of childrhood.

Four ecological hazards for children"

1. Destructive relationships, as experienced by the rejected or unclaimed child, hungry for love but unable to trust, expecting to be hurt again.
2. Climates of futility, as encountered by the insecure youngster, crippled by feelings of inadequacy and a fear of failure.
3. Learned irresponsibility, as seen in the youth whose sense of powerlessness may be masked by indifference or defiant, rebellious behavior.
4. Loss of purpose, as portrayed by a generation of self-centered youth, desperately searching for menaing in a world of confusing values.

(brendtro, p.6-7)

destructive relationship -- "When caretakers fail to meet a child's most basic needs, the child learns that they are unpredictable or unreliable. Some children reach beyond their families in search of substitute attachments with other adults or peers. Those more seriously damaged become 'relationship-resistant,' viewing even friendly, helpful adults with deep distrusts." (brandtro, p.8)

Learned irresponsibility of youth

- The learned helplessness of those who see themselves as pawns of others
- The defiant rebellion of those struggle to break the chains of authority
- The narcissism of an affluent generation lacking a sense of social responsibility
- The negative peer subcultures of predatory gangs terrorizing our cities

“Rousseau cleverly demonstrated in Emile how adults unwittingly teach irresponsibility in their attempts to deal with irresponsible children. By training children to be obedient, we teach them to be machines in the hands of others. By punishing rebellion, we teach children to manipulate and deceive to escape authority. Our attempts to satisfy the selfish child teach him to believe that he owns the universe. And we are impotent in countering the power of peers, for ‘the lessons pupils get from one another in the schoolyear are a hundred times more useful than everything they will ever be told in class.’” (brendtro, p.20)

Causes of learned irresponsibility

The tyranny of indulgence – “Rousseau (in Emile) observed that the surest way of creating a miserable child was to accustom him to get everything he desires. The child who has only to want in order to receive believes himself to be the owner who regards all others as his slaves.” (brendtro, p.22)

The tyranny of obedience -- “The concept of obedience training is closely intertwined with the notion that ‘children should learn to follow rules,’ which is not debatable, the important question concerns why children do follow rules. If rules are imposed by external sanctions, children will follow them as long as policed. When out of the range of surveillance, anything goes.” (brendtro, p.25)

The loss of purpose –

The pursuit of selfishness “young people cannot develop a sense of their own value unless they have opportunities to be of value to others.....The Jeffersonian concept of ‘life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness’ has mutated to a life free of social responsibility in the pursuit of personal gain.” (brendtro, p.26)

The misery of unimportance -- “In earlier times, they (youth) were indispensable for the survival of the family unit. Working in the fields and shops beside their elders, they built a life and a nation” (p.28) “While youth long for a feeling of importance, adults persist in infantilizing them. The typical approach of the cries of boredom from youth is to build them a new playground or teen-town where they are told to go and play some more.

Today, little is asked of young people except that they be consumers.” (p.28-29) “Perhaps the most damaging proof of the child’s unimportance is the shrinking amount of attention from adults who ‘don’t have time.’” (p.29)

Stealing -- from parents’ purse, dresser, punishing may make things worse, because it does not deal with the underlying problem. They may steal from sibling or parents, because the money is there and too tempting, or because they really want to buy an item that everybody else has it at school. They may be jealousy of the money their older siblings have.

They need to repay the stolen money or replace the item. Also discuss with them when stealing is not acceptable at home and in society. Let them know more appropriate ways of meeting their financial needs. If they use the money to support a drug habit, then a professional counsellor is needed.

Angry child and temper tantrums – seems to be angry all the time. Find out who or what he is angry with.

Teaching them the difference between feeling angry and hitting someone. It is alright for parents to be angry, but then you model constructive ways of dealing with anger – talking about it, calming down, and resolving the conflict or whatever cause the anger, so kids can learn from you.

Sometimes children have tantrums because they are tired or not feeling well. Or they feel frustrated. Often, it is an emotional outburst – lack of self control. It may serve the purpose of trying to get their way. You can ignore it and wait it out. Or firmly but quietly, take the child by the hand and leave the public place.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder -- a neurological disability, lack of control in attention, impulsivity and activity. These children can be very picky in eating, show incorrigible destructive behaviour as a toddler, have bedtimes hassles such as bed-wetting, be sure to notice and celebrate every small improvement. Give instructions one at a time. Drug therapy may be beneficial. Explore alternative learning opportunities. Get them into physical training that requires concentration and remembering sequences of moves. Get support.

Depressed child – if it is recurrent and prolonged, get professional help. Ask open ended questions “Is there something I can do to help? What has happened that makes you feel bad?”

Unmotivated – just do as little as he can just to get by, doesn’t do his chores, nothing seems to motivate him.

Again find out the purpose of his lack of motivation. Perhaps, your expectation is too high, or he can compete with his siblings, -- he is either a discouraged child.

Are you doing too much for the child, are you expecting too much. Just say home work, and take him by the hand and lead her to the task. Be a cheerleader to your child. Provide tutoring. Having faith in your child.

Disobedience

“Rebellious children are often the result for parents who try to force obedience” (Nelsen, p.208). ask what, how and why questions, use positive timeout, taking time for teaching responsibility, respect and cooperation, but more importantly, establish the habit of not “blind obedience” but listening to reasonable, beneficial request from parents, as a good team member listening to the team leader. Try not to set too many arbitrary rules.

Procrastinating

Procrastination may mean “I don’t want to do it, and you can’t make me.”—it is a way of faking good; it is passive resistance. But it can also be just a bad habit of waiting until it is almost too late – then they will experience the adrenalin rush.

One approach says -- who owns the problem, if it is the kid’s, let him suffer the consequences.

Destructive behaviour – Children may damage property by breaking windows, drawing on a wall. This could be an innocent mistake or a way of expressing anger. Teach them but don’t yell at them. Involve them in clean up. Provide alternatives --- set up a creation room, put large sheets of paper that children can draw on.

Poor self-esteem – feel inferior, thinks that he is ugly or useless.

Parents have a lot of influence on a how a child feels about himself. If parents create an environment in which kids are validated, accepted, valued for who they are (but not constantly praising them for their performance), and are allowed to contribute, they will develop a healthy self-esteem. On the other hand, if they are put down frequently, and unfavourably compared with other siblings, they may develop inferiority complex.

Shyness -- a child may be so shy that she will hide her head and won’t answer when people talk to, or tend to withdraw and show social anxiety with strangers.

Some are born shy or introverted. But they need encouragement to overcome shyness. Don’t over protect them, and enroll them in group activities, but don’t force them into situations that they aren’t ready for.

Swearing/foul language -- even young kids three or four years old can pick up swear words from tv, day care or adults.

Don’t over-react, They may simply copy others, or try to impress others, or because they are angry, and swear words help ventilate their feelings, teach them the difference between respectful and disrespectful behaviour. Tell them such language is not very nice and not appropriate and not respectful. When they swear, just leave the room without saying a word.

(17) How to parent teens

Many parents fear the day when their child turns adolescent.

They are worried about losing control of their teens.

Their worst worry is that their teens become out-of-control.

As teens learn to assert their independence and take control of their own life, conflict with children is inevitable for many reasons. The most common reason is that parents have to intervene when --

Teens want to make bad decisions, which may harm them, because they are not mature enough to good decisions consistently.

Teens get into the wrong crowd and develop patterns of self-destructive behaviour, such as substance abuse.

Gordon believes that adolescents do not rebel against their parents; they revel against parental power. "If parents would rely less on power and more on nonpower methods to influence their children from infancy on, there would be little for the child to rebel against when he becomes an adolescent." (p.172)

Another common reason for conflict is that their children develop tastes or values, which in themselves are not necessarily harmful, but may be offensive to their parents (especially when they are very religious)

Fourthly, when they try to use the same tactics for children with teens (such as threat, power tactics or coercion), they only encounter rebellion.

Many parents simply give in, and let them do whatever they want, in order main a more pleasant relationship.

Parents need to differentiate between their ways to identify with their own generation through their attire and hair style, and unacceptable, harmful behaviour.

Meaning-centred approach to parenting, we need to understand the underlying meaning of their behaviour from their perspective. We need to understand what purpose is served by their behaviour.

Dinkmeyer has identified four hidden purposes teens' behaviour: Special attention, power, revenge and proof of inadequacy. Once we identify these purposes, we can redirect their destructive behaviour to constructive behaviour.

When kids can not get special attention through achievement, then may get it through misbehaviour. If they get a lot of special attention this way, then parents inadvertently reinforce their bad behaviour. Parents have to pay attention to their children, regardless of their achievement. They should pay special attention to their good behaviours, such as being kind, considerate and hard working,

They also challenge parental authority in order to assert their power to do whatever they like. They actually seek confrontation and power struggle. If they have learned when they were younger that by getting mad and aggressive, they can gain control over their parents and other people, they will continue to use temper and aggression to take power away from their parents. This is the quickest way to gain independence, also the most destructive way, because of then they don't know how to use their total power in a responsible way. Parents cannot simply back off and give in; they need to recognize their need for independence and their own identity, and even acknowledge that they have the right to feel frustrated and angry, but then insist resolve the conflict and meet their needs for independence through communication and negotiation, not through anger, and power tactics.

Some times, teens may feel that they have been treated unfairly, or they are not accepted, loved by their parents, then then seek to create problems which serve two purposes: to revenge for the neglect, and get you pay attention to their grievance.

In other cases, their teens may be discouraged. They know that they cannot compete with their siblings, and they cannot meet their parents' high expectation, in that case, they may deliberately refuse to work hard, show no interest in school, or exaggerate their physical weaknesses or conditions. These kids need encouragement rather than scolding.

Dinkmeyer suggests: When you feel tempted to blast your adolescent for some misdemeanour, try to stop and ask yourself: How would my friends respond if I treated them as I am about to treat my teen-agers?" (p.9)

Parents can play an important role in preventing all sorts of problems in teens. We need to be alert to warning signs:

"In retrospect, Cassie's change from a trusting child to a sulking stranger was so gradual that it blindsided us. It was only when we started getting calls from Beaver high School (not its real name) about her ditching classes, when unexpected D's and F's showed up on her report card, and when we caught her in one too many little lies – that we began to take things more seriously. We were losing our daughter" (49-50)

What could have been done to have prevented Cassie's drifting away? No one knows. But if we are involved in the lives of our children on a daily basis and monitor their school progress closely, we might be able to detect our children's changing attitudes and appropriate actions. Nagging concerns without effective intervention is not much better than being totally unaware of what is going on. We need to act on our concerns before the situation gets worse.

The Bernalls did something courageous. Misty not only search Cassie's drawers and discovered a bundle of letters full of hate and death threats they turned the letter over to the sheriff.

"Even more important, we were afraid for Cassie. In fact, we were so afraid for her, we felt we had no time to stop and ponder the most appropriate response. Cassie was heading toward a cliff edge, and we had to pull her back immediately. There was no choice." (p.55)

Did Misty overstep the bounds of reasonable parenting in violating Cassie's "right to privacy"? I don't think so. Cassie's well-being is more important than her right to privacy. Parents have not only the right, but the responsibility to search for clues or evidence if they have reason to suspect their children is on to something destructive.

Suicide -- My teenagers have been threatening to commit suicide. Adolescence hormones create wild mood swings. Downswings accompanied by other personal problems may trigger suicidal thoughts, because during those down periods,

problems seem unsurmountable. Symptoms of clinical depression – extended periods of severe depression, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep during the wee hours, loss of interest in everything, including personal hygiene. They may give up on school, use drugs and alcohol.

It becomes real serious when they begin to give away personal possessions and talk about the means of suicide.

Many teens will show some of these signs as a part of the turmoil of adolescence.

Asking who does killing oneself would change things – this may reveal what is bothering them.

Ask how things are going with them in several key areas – school, family, friends, and love-relationship.

Self-mutilation – cutting or mutilating their own bodies.

Refuse to talk – just give one word answers, fine, yeah – they hate the inquisitions, protect their privacy, fear of disapproval, or because the relationship has been so bad that they know that it is useless talk to their parents, which only gets them into trouble.

Understand that pre-teens and teens have to struggle with a lot of personal issues, and also they may be going through a period when they don't know how to relate to their parents. (my personal experience – did not go to my mom's room when she was sick).

Learn to be a good listener, gain their trust, and get some conversation going, by asking for their opinion, etc, and not just ask them questions.

Television and video games -- can be a real problem agree on a limit – two hours a day, and they can't watch before school or after bed time, if they haven't completed their homework. Sit with them and discuss the show. Don't overreact.

"When adult-dominated strategies are in vogue, two opposing cultures arise: controlling adults and counter-controlling youth. Adult control becomes self-perpetuating: the more one controls the more one needs to control. Adults who struggle to manage surface behaviour believe they are creating an organized environment. The reality is often a submerged subculture made by chaos and disorganization." (Brennan, p.80-81)

"Coopersmith asserted that children need autonomy within a structure. Adults who give freedom without guidance are sending youth on a journey without a map. Adults must set clear and consistent expectations so that the young person can successfully navigate life's challenges. Adults do not become preoccupied with control, but focus their efforts on mapping out the structure and values. The youth is thus given a safe environment in which to develop independence, while adults still exert a major influence." (Brennan, p.81)

"Discipline is a process of teaching, not of coercion. It seeks to involve youth in learning social responsibility and self-control. Discipline is mediated by the unilateral exercise of adults authority and control." (Brennan, p.82)

see beyond the problems.

Here are some of the key steps.

Communicate with them,

Care for them.

Respect their opinions and views.

They too are striving to fill the void in their lives. As parents, we need to provide meaningful projects that involve the entire family.

Need to differentiate normal rebelliousness and unacceptable rebellion.

As teens progress into adulthood, it is normal to question the philosophy and moral values of their parents in order to discover what is right for them.

Drinking, smoking and experimenting with drugs is part of the process of breaking away from parental control. However, we need to allow them to grow away from us in areas that are have much less risks – for example, in terms of taste in clothing, hairstyle, hobby, career choices.

Some times, dating the wrong kind of person can also be a way of rebellion.

Parents often interfere regarding the kind of boy friends or girl friends their children have. Parents have reason to be concern, because love is blind, especially for young people. Parents may be biased, but they are not blind; when they see “danger signs”, they have the every right to warn their children.

Need to determine who owns the problem. “Once parents realize that school grades, homework, social relationships, etc. are the adolescent’s problem, they will decline to interfere. But we always need to make it understood that we’ll be available if the teen needs and seeks our empathy, support or assistance and encouragement. When the adolescent’s behavior interferes in a specific way with the parent’s purposes or needs, that become the parent’s problem....he owns the problem and it’s his responsibility to figure out how to solve it.” (Dinkmeyer, p.12). Such an analysis seems to treat the family as a room house with two separate individuals; it fails to recognize the unity of the family and the special responsibility of parents. The advantage is that everybody is free to do their own thing as long as they don’t interfere with each other, and this will reduce conflicts for everyone. The disadvantage is that without mentoring, without firm guidance, teens are likely to choose the easy way out, and fail to develop their full potential.

If the parents know that their children are underperforming and getting mixed up with the wrong crowd, they cannot just stand back and say, “It is your life, you are free to mess it up.” If they really care about their children’s future and well being, if they are

responsible leaders, they will do everything within their power to ensure that their children develop positive values, and the good habit of working hard, doing their best.

Do not make control a major issue. It is less important who is the boss than whether the well being of our children is being served. Their welfare is our primary concern. They are entrusted for us to guide, to teach and develop. Their healthy development is our goal. Therefore, when kids rebel or misbehave, we need to make it very clear that they need to make some changes not to please us, but to benefit themselves --- so that they will have a better life, a better future.

Parents are accountable for the way they teach their children. Eli dis not discipline and coreshi his teen-aged sons. (1 Sa,2:12-34; 3:11-14; 4:1-3, 10-22) El was punished by God for not fulfilling his parenting responsibilities.

When Dobson shew signs of defiance, he father changed his job (from a traveling speaker to a pastor) so that he could spend more time with him for the last two years. He also relocated the entire family to a new community, so that he oculd have a freshstod. He would not anything to create an environment that is best for his son. “This was one way they revealed their love for me at a critical stage of my development.” (p.206)

“In summary, I have been suggesting tat parents be willing to take whatever corrective action is required, but to avoid nagging,moaing, groaning, and growling when possible. Anger does not motivate teen-agers!”(Dobson, 1978, p.207)

“The most common mistake made by parents of ‘older’ teen-agers (sixteen to nineteen years of age) is in refusing to grant them the independence and maturity they require...I believe American parents are the world’s worst when I comes to letting go of their children.” (Dobson, p.211)

“Parents try to be reasonable and lose. Children and teenagers just just keep asking why, yet each time you answer, you become weaker. With each answer, you get further and further away from your true power” (Gray, 153)

all the at risk teens from dysfunctional family or havinb been abused “felt misunderstood, unimportant, unappreciated, and unfairly treated at times.” (Gray, p.255)

“If you teen resists your requests, then shifting to rewarding or commanding still works best. Just give your message and give it time to sink in. Until your children leave home, they still need you to be the boss, but they don’t need punishment.” (Gray, 325)

“For teens to gain more freedom, they need to earn trust. If they prove to be incapable of respecting the limits of their new freedom, then less freedom is given. A parent may temporarily take away a freedom as an adjustment, but not as a punishment.” (gray, 334).

“Toresist unhealthy pressure from other teens, your teen needs to feel connected at home. ... Teens need someone they can come to for understanding, acceptance, advice and

direction. They will only seek out their parents' support if parents know how to give them what they need" (p.346)

"Teenagers especially need the freedom to think differently and form their own opinions" (gray, 349)

(18) Immigrant teens

Often do not understand the struggle immigrant teens are going through. They are torn between two sets of values and cultures. In their search for their own ethnic-cultural identity, they may go from total identification with the host culture to total rejection. Most of them, however, will try to find a balance between maintaining their parents' cultural heritage, and adopting their peers' Western culture.

(19) Conclusions

"We are imperfect not only in failing to do those things we can (which is blameworthy) but in lacking some parental capacities entirely. We can only give what we have. We cannot give what we do not have. So our children are bound to experience deprivation because they are born to imperfect parents in a fallen world." (White, 1979, p.179)

Parents to their children as what is to us. Children learn about the love and faithfulness about God from their human parents.

"What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy spirit to those who ask him!" (Lk.11:11-13).

"As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. For he knows our fame; he remembers that we are dust" (p.103: 13-14)

We are to treat our children the way God treats us.

"Knowing our weakness and pitying it, loving us with an everlasting love, he found a way to come to terms with the dilemma. Blood could be shed and sin could be forsaken." (white, 1979, p.214).

"We may not be perfect, but we can refuse to excuse our imperfection. God does not want us to impress our children with our spiritual success so much as to let them see that we take his demands seriously for ourselves. We should freely acknowledge our failings and confess our sins when we have wronged our children. But we must still strive Christ's law." (White, 1979, p.215)

"The more we think about God as our parent, the more we multiply responsibilities we have toward our children. The rule stands. As he is and has been to us, such are we called to be to our children. You will notice that there is a difference between God's standard of parenting and human standards. His are infinitely more stringent. Nevertheless his demands are less grievous....And when you fail, as you often will, he is patient and forgiving since he wants to teach you more about himself through the whole process of parenting" (White, 1979, p.221)

“Make it the aim of your life then to adopt God’s standard and leave the results of doing so with him. Bring him your loves and fishes telling him it is all you have, but look at what he demands you do with the loaves and fishes. It is not your responsibility to make sure five thousand stomachs are filled. It is your responsibility to obey instructions. Beside the Sea of Galilee, it meant to go on breaking and passing bread as long as the supply lasted. As a parent of growing children, it means that you will go on striving to be to your children all that God is to you. It is God’s part to look after the miracles.” (White, 1979, p.222).

“Regarding our own children, he already has plans and projects for them. Our part is to collaborate with him. How may we know what his plans are? We can know God’s general plan for our children from Scripture. ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification...’ (1 Thess.4:3). He wants our children to be holy. He wants them to become like his Son.” (White, p.227)

“God, however, has even more specific goals for your children. He is concerned about their education, their future work, their health and their marital partners, to mention only a few things.” (White, p.228)

“In your own pain and tragedy you are being invited to enter into a close relationship with God. Whatever may or may not happen to your children, great good and enormous enrichment can come into your own life if only you draw near to God....Your very pain brings with it the possibility of untold riches.” (White, p.235).

parenting has always been a challenge. Leadership-based parenting is a much greater challenge, because it demands parents to develop their own leadership potential and skills. This model will not only make parenting easier, but also ensure success in parents’ own lives. By exercising leadership, you enable them to grow up as leaders.

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