

LIFE, HEALTH & PEACE

CHAPTER XIII: HOW TO RAISE CHILDREN

What is the use of attracting wonderful souls to incarnate in our family as children, when we are not able to educate, to live with them? When we are not able to communicate and cooperate with them???

We all know the problems of our modern parents today. One of the reasons is that the children are different and more demanding than those of earlier times. They also express a spiritual need and how often do they already insist, beginning in a very early age, in a special individual based treatment just like 'I don't eat meat!'

I found in the following book '***Children Are from Heaven***', written by John Gray, the author of the book "*Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus ...*" a wonderful guideline which parents can use and follow without concerning to do anything wrong. It is a help to raise cooperative, confident, and compassionate children who are able to master life and to resist temptations and disappointments easier than others! ... And isn't it that what we want to be for our children???

So each of the five messages in the book of positive parenting supports the development of a strong sense of self and contains a special gift of greatness: They are:

- With permission to be different, children are able to discover, appreciate, and develop their unique inner potential and purpose.
- With the permission to make mistakes, children are able to self-correct, learn from their mistakes, and achieve greater success.
- With the permission to express negative emotions, children learn to manage their emotions and develop a feeling awareness.
- With the permission to want more, children develop a healthy sense of what they deserve and the skill of delayed gratification. They are able to want more, and yet be happy with what they have.
- With the permission to resist, children are able to exercise their will and to define a true and positive sense of self. This awakens a child's natural willingness to cooperate and be guided by parents. By learning to manage a child's resistance, parents stay in control while also giving their child increased freedom.

In *Children Are from Heaven*, John Gray presents a brand new approach to parenting that will show you how to give your children the freedom and direction to discover and express their true selves!

In the following Chapter you can pre-read the **INTRODUCTION** for this book which you can buy in any bookshop: John Gray, Ph.D.; ***CHILDREN ARE FROM HEAVEN; Positive Parenting skills for raising Cooperative, Confident, and Compassionate Children***; ISBN 0-06-017565-6

... INTRODUCTION

After my first year of marriage, I was the father of a new baby and had two lovely stepdaughters. Lauren was the baby, Juliet was eight, and Shannon nearly twelve. Though my new wife Bonnie was a seasoned parent, this was my first experience. Having a baby, a child, and a preteen all at once was quite a challenge. I had taught many workshops with teens and children of all ages. I was very aware of the way children felt about their parents. I had also counselled thousands of adults, helping them resolve issues from their childhood. In areas where their parents' care was deficient, I taught adults how to heal their wounds by re-parenting themselves. From this unique perspective, I began as a new parent.

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At every step of the way, I would find myself automatically doing things my parents had done. Some things were good, others were less effective, and some were clearly not good at all. Based on my own experience of what didn't work for me and the thousands of people with whom I had worked, I was gradually able to find new ways of parenting that were more effective.

To this day, I can remember one of my first changes. Shannon and her mother, Bonnie, were arguing. I came down stairs to support Bonnie. At a certain point, I took over and yelled louder. Within a few minutes, I began to dominate the argument. Shannon became quiet, holding in her hurt and resentment. Suddenly, I could see how I was wounding my new stepdaughter.

In that moment, I realized that what I had done was a mistake. My behaviour was not nurturing. I was behaving as my dad would when he didn't know what else to do. I was yelling and intimidating to regain control. Although I didn't know what else to do, I clearly knew that yelling and intimidating was not the answer. From that day on, I never again yelled at my kids. Eventually, my wife and I were able to develop other, more nurturing ways to regain control when our children misbehaved.

LOVE IS NOT ENOUGH

I am very thankful to my parents for their love and support, which helped me enormously, but, in many ways, in spite of the love, I was wounded by some of their mistakes. Healing those wounds has made me a better parent. I know they did their best with the limited knowledge they had regarding what children needed. When parents make mistakes in parenting, it is not because they don't love their children, but because they just don't know a better way.

The most important part of parenting is love and putting in time and energy to support your children. Although love is the most important requirement, it is not enough. Unless parents understand their children's unique needs, they are unable to give their children what children today need. Parents may be giving love, but not in ways that are most helpful to their child's development.

WITHOUT AN UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS, PARENTS CANNOT EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN.

On the other hand, some parents are "willing" to spend more time with their children, but don't because they don't know what to do or their children reject their efforts. So many parents try to talk with their kids, but their kids just close up and say nothing. These parents are willing, but don't know how to get their kids to talk.

Some parents don't want to yell or hit or punish their children, but they just don't know another way. Since talking with their children has not worked, punishment or the threat of punishment is the only way they know.

TO GIVE UP OLD WAYS OF PARENTING, NEW WAYS MUST BE EMPLOYED.

Talking will work, but you have to learn first what children need. You have to learn how to listen so that children will want to talk to you. You have to learn how to ask so that children will want to cooperate. You have to learn how to give your children increasing freedom and yet maintain control. When a parent learns these skills, he or she can let go of outdated methods of parenting.

FINDING A BETTER WAY

As a counsellor to thousands and teacher to hundreds of thousands, I was aware of what parenting behaviours didn't work, but I didn't yet know more effective solutions. To be a better parent, it was not enough just to stop doing things like punishing or yelling to control

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my children. To give up manipulating my children with the threat of punishment to maintain control, I had to find other equally effective methods. In developing the philosophy of *Children Are from Heaven* and the five skills of positive parenting, I gradually discovered an effective alternative to traditional parenting skills.

TO BE A BETTER PARENT, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO STOP DOING THINGS THAT DON'T WORK.

The skills of positive parenting contained in *Children Are from Heaven* took me more than thirty years to develop. For sixteen years as a counsellor of adults with individual and relationship problems, I had a chance to study what didn't work in my clients' childhoods. Then, as a parent, during the next fourteen years I began to develop and use new and different parenting skills. These new insights and skills have not only worked in raising my own children, but also in thousands of other families.

Marge, a single parent, began using these skills with her oldest teenager daughter, Sarah, who wouldn't even talk with her and was on the verge of leaving home. When Marge shifted the way she communicated, they were able to resolve their issues. Sarah changed literally overnight. Before Marge took a *Children Are from Heaven* workshop, Sarah would scowl when her mother talked. Within a few months after the workshop, Sarah was talking about her life, listening, and cooperating with her mother.

Tim and Carol had difficulty with their youngest son, Kevin, who was three. He was always acting out, throwing tantrums, and controlling situations. By giving up spanking and using time outs instead, Kevin gradually had fewer tantrums. Tim and Carol learned how to regain control in their family by understanding how to nurture Kevin's unique needs.

Philip was a successful businessman. After taking a *Children Are from Heaven* workshop, he realized how much his children needed him, and what he could do to assist them in growing up. He had been raised mainly by his mother and didn't really know how much a father was needed. Once he learned what his children needed and what he could do, he was motivated to spend more time with his kids. He is grateful for this new information, not just because his children are happier, but because he is happier. He was missing out on the joys of parenthood and he didn't even know it.

MANY MEN WHO ARE NOT INVOLVED IN PARENTING DON'T REALIZE THE JOYS THEY ARE MISSING.

Tom and Karen were always fighting about how to raise their children. Since they were raised differently, they would argue about how to discipline or raise their children. After taking a *Children Are from Heaven* workshop, they had a common approach to raising their kids. The children not only benefited from more effective support, but also because their parents stopped fighting all the time.

There are endless stories of families who have benefited from the new insights and skills of *Children Are from Heaven*. If you have any doubts regarding their validity, just try them and see the results. The effectiveness of these skills is easy to prove. As you begin to use them, they work immediately.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE SKILLS IS EASY TO PROVE. USE THEM; THEY WORK IMMEDIATELY.

Each suggestion in *Children Are from Heaven* simply makes sense. In many cases, your experience of reading *Children Are from Heaven* will clarify what you already felt was true or right for you. In other cases, these new insights will point out where you have made some mistakes and answer many of your questions. Although *Children Are from Heaven* does not deal with every problem you will encounter, it provides a whole new approach for problem solving. You still solve the problems, but with a different and more effective approach. This new way of understanding children will assist you in coming up with your own, unique day-to-day solutions.

Children Are from Heaven is a broad practical philosophy of parenting that works at every age. The new insights and skills work for infants, toddlers, young children, preteens, and

teens. Even if your teens were not raised with these skills, they will quickly begin to respond to them.

CHILDREN ARE FROM HEAVEN IS A BROAD PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF PARENTING THAT WORKS AT EVERY AGE.

In my own experience, I found that my two stepdaughters responded immediately to this new non-punishing approach. Even though they had been raised with some of the old methods, like punishment or yelling, the new approach was effective. Children at any age, regardless of their past, begin to cooperate more as a result of using these new skills.

These techniques work even when children have been raised with neglect, abuse, or cruel punishment. Certainly, neglected or abused children may have unique behavioural problems, but these are more effectively corrected or solved as soon as this new approach is employed. Children are incredibly resilient and adaptable when given the right kind of loving support.

THE NEW CRISIS OF PARENTING

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.

Some parents believe that these problems come from being too permissive and giving children too much, while others contend that outdated practices of parenting, like spanking and yelling, are responsible. Others believe these new problems are caused by negative changes in society.

Too much TV, advertising, or too much violence and sex on TV and in movies are pegged by many as the culprits. Certainly society and how it influences our children is part of the problem, and some helpful solutions can be legislated by the government, but the biggest part of the problem starts at home. Our children's problems begin in the home and can be solved at home. Besides looking to change society, parents must also realize that they hold the power to raise strong, confident, cooperative, and compassionate children.

OUR CHILDREN'S PROBLEMS BEGIN IN THE HOME, AND CAN BE SOLVED AT HOME.

To cope with changes in society, parents need to change their parenting approach. During the past two hundred years, society has made an historic and dramatic change toward greater individual freedom and rights. Even though our modern Western society is now organized by the principles of freedom and human rights, parents still use parenting skills from the Dark Ages.

Parents need to update their parenting skills to raise healthy and cooperative children and teens. Businesses know that if they are to stay competitive in the free market, they need to keep changing and updating. Likewise, if parents want their children to be able to compete in the free world, they must prepare their children with the most effective and modern approaches to parenting.

LOVE- VERSUS FEAR-BASED PARENTING

In the past, children were controlled by dominance, fear, and guilt. To motivate good behaviour, children were made to believe they were bad and unworthy of good treatment if they were not obedient. The fear of losing love and privileges was a strong deterrent. When this didn't work, stronger punishment was given to generate even more fear and to break the will of a child. An unruly child was often called strong-willed. Ironically, from the perspective

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of positive parenting, nurturing a strong will is the basis of creating confidence, cooperation, and compassion in children.

NURTURING AND NOT BREAKING A CHILD'S WILL IS THE BASIS OF CREATING CONFIDENCE, COOPERATION, AND COMPASSION IN CHILDREN.

Past parenting approaches sought to create obedient children. The goal of positive parenting is to create strong willed but cooperative children. A child's will doesn't have to be broken in order to create cooperation. Children are from Heaven. When their hearts are open and their will is nurtured, they actually are more willing to cooperate.

THE GOAL OF POSITIVE PARENTING IS TO CREATE WILFUL BUT COOPERATIVE CHILDREN.

Past parenting approaches were aimed at creating good children. Positive parenting creates compassionate children, who don't have to be threatened to follow rules, but spontaneously act and make decisions from an open heart. They do not lie or cheat because it is against the rules, but they are fair and just. Morality is not imposed on these children from outside, but emerges from within and is learned by cooperating with their parents.

RATHER THAN SEEKING TO CREATE GOOD CHILDREN, POSITIVE PARENTING SEEKS TO CREATE COMPASSIONATE CHILDREN.

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. These confident children are aware of who they are and what they want to accomplish.

CONFIDENT CHILDREN ARE NOT EASILY SWAYED BY PEER PRESSURE NOR DO THEY FEEL THE NEED TO REBEL.

These strong children are not easily swayed by peer pressure nor do they feel a need to rebel in order to be themselves. They think for themselves, yet remain open to the assistance and help of their parents. As adults, they are not held back by the limited beliefs of others. They follow an inner compass and make decisions for themselves.

CHILDREN TODAY ARE DIFFERENT

Just as the world today is different, our children are different. They no longer respond to fear-based parenting. The old fear based approaches actually weaken a parent's control. The threat of punishment only turns children against their parents and causes them to rebel. The intimidation of yelling and spanking no longer creates control, but simply numbs a child's willingness to listen and cooperate. Parents are seeking better communication with their children to prepare them for the increased pressures of life today but, unfortunately, they are still using outdated approaches for parenting.

THE THREAT OF PUNISHMENT ONLY TURNS CHILDREN AGAINST THEIR PARENTS AND CAUSES THEM TO REBEL.

I remember my dad making this mistake. He would try to control his six boys and one daughter with threats of punishment. He had been a sergeant in the military, and this was the only way he knew. In some ways, he treated us like army privates. Whenever we would resist his control, he would regain control with the threat of punishment. Though this parenting style worked to some degree in his generation, it didn't work for mine, and it clearly is not working for our children today.

When his threat didn't result in obedience, my father would increase the threat. He would say, "If you keep talking to me like that, you are grounded for a week."

When I continued to resist, he would say, "If you don't stop, it will be two weeks."

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When I persisted, he would say, "Okay then, you are grounded for one month, now go to your room."

Upping the punishment has no real positive effect and only engenders greater resentment. For the whole month, I just reflected on how unfair he was. Instead of increasing my willingness to cooperate, his action pushed me farther away. He would have had a much more positive influence if he had just said, "Since you are not respecting what I am saying, I want you to take a time out for ten minutes."

Punishment in the past was used to break a strong-willed child. Although it may have worked to create obedience, it doesn't work today. Children are now more sophisticated and aware. They recognize what is unfair and abusive and will not tolerate it. They will resent and rebel. Most importantly, punishment and the threat of punishment break down the lines of communication. Instead of being a part of the solution, you the parent become a part of the problem.

PUNISHMENT MAKES YOU, THE PARENT, AN ENEMY TO HIDE FROM INSTEAD OF A PARENT TO TURN TO FOR SUPPORT.

When parents yell at children, it just numbs their ability to hear. To succeed in school and, more importantly, to compete in the free market or experience success in a lasting relationship, adults today need better communication skills.

These skills are most effectively learned when children listen their parents and parents listen to their children.

CHILDREN LISTEN TO THEIR PARENTS WHEN PARENTS LEARN HOW TO LISTEN TO THEIR CHILDREN.

What happens when you listen to music at loud levels? You lose your hearing. The same thing happens when parents yell or make demands all the time. When parents today yell or communicate the way their parents did, it has a different effect. Children today will just be turned off, and parents will lose control.

GIVING UP PUNISHMENT

In previous generations, societies were suppressed, controlled, and manipulated by strong, punishing dictators, but it is not so today. People will not stand for injustice and the violation of human rights; they will revolt instead. People have sacrificed their lives for the principles of democracy.

In a similar way, children today will not accept the threat of punishment. They will revolt. Children today feel more intensely the injustice of punishment. When punishment goes in, it comes back out as increased resistance, resentment, rejection, and rebellion. Children today are rejecting their parents' values and rebelling against parental control at younger and younger ages.

Before they are psychologically mature or prepared to let go of their parents' support, children and teens are pulling away and rejecting the support that is so important for their development. They long to be free of their parents' control at a time when they need that control to develop in a healthy manner.

BEFORE THEY ARE PSYCHOLOGICALLY PREPARED, CHILDREN AND TEENS ARE REJECTING NECESSARY PARENTAL SUPPORT.

Many parents recognize that the old methods of punishment don't work, but they just don't know another way. They hold back from punishing, but that doesn't work either. Permissive parenting doesn't give children the parental control they need. When given an inch of power, these children take a mile. Children quickly learn to use their freedom to manipulate and control parents.

When children are allowed to use strong, negative moods, feelings, and tantrums to get their way, they are in control. When a child is in control, they are out of their parents' control. In

many ways, they will develop some of the same problems of children who are raised with outdated fear-based skills.

WHEN CHILDREN ARE IN CONTROL, THEY ARE OUT OF THEIR PARENTS' CONTROL.

Whether a child is raised with fear-based skills or permissive skills, if the child doesn't experience that his parents are in control, he will rebel or reject any attempts a parent makes to regain or maintain control. Disconnected from his parents' support, his development will be restricted. By using the skills of positive parenting in *Children Are from Heaven*, parents can give their children the freedom and Leadership they need to develop a strong and healthy sense of self.

THE RESULTS OF FEAR-BASED PARENTING

The old fear-based practices of managing our children through intimidation, criticism, disapproval, and punishment have not only lost their power but are counterproductive. Children are more sensitive than in previous generations. They are capable of much more, but are also influenced in a negative way by old parenting skills like yelling, spanking, hitting, punishing, grounding, disapproving, humiliating, and shaming. When children were more thick-skinned these approaches were useful, but today they are outdated and counterproductive.

In the past, punishing children by spanking made them fear authority and follow the rules. Today it has the opposite effect. Violence in, means violence out. This is a symptom of being more sensitive. Children today can be more creative and intelligent than in previous generations, but they are also more influenced by outer conditions.

WHEN CHILDREN ARE MORE SENSITIVE, VIOLENCE IN MEANS VIOLENCE OUT.

Children today can best learn to respect others, not by fear tactics, but through imitation. Children are programmed to imitate their parents. Their minds are always taking pictures and making recordings to mimic and follow whatever you say or do. They practically learn everything through imitation and cooperation.

When parents model respectful behaviour, children gradually learn how to respect others. When parents learn how to remain cool, calm, and loving while dealing with a child throwing a tantrum, that child gradually learns how to remain cool, calm, and loving when strong feelings come up. Parents can stay calm, cool, loving, and respectful when they learn what to do when children go out of control.

PARENTS CAN STAY CALM AND COOL WHEN THEY LEARN WHAT TO DO WHEN CHILDREN GO OUT OF CONTROL.

If you hit children to regain control, children learn that aggression is the answer when they feel out of control. Many times I have witnessed a mother hitting her son, saying, "Stop hitting your brother." She wants him to understand how it feels, but hitting is not the answer. By hitting her son, she reinforces his tendency to hit or use aggression.

Later on, when he is not getting what he wants, he will automatically resort to acting out his anger by either direct or passive aggression. Although spanking or hitting children worked in the past, it backfires today. Fear-based parenting methods restrict our children's natural development and make our job as parents less fulfilling and more time consuming.

NOT ENOUGH TIME TO PARENT

Parents today have less time than ever to devote to parenting. For this reason, it is essential that they learn what is most important for their children. This knowledge not only helps them to use their time more efficiently, but also motivates them to create more time. A greater

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awareness of their children's needs naturally motivates parents to spend more time with their children.

In dealing with stress and pressure, many adults often time to what they feel they have to do and can do. Women commonly feel overwhelmed with all the things they have to do. Men feel primarily focused on what they can do. When fathers don't know what they can do to help their children, they often do nothing. When mothers are not aware of what their children need, they often make others things more important.

When parents learn what their children really need, they are less motivated to create money to acquire things and more motivated to create time to enjoy their family. The greatest wealth for a parent today is time. Parents begin to find more time to be with their children when they recognize what they have to do and can do.

UPDATING YOUR PARENTING SKILLS

By reading *Children Are from Heaven*, you will learn practical ways to update your parenting skills. You will not only learn what doesn't work, but what you can do instead. You will learn new ways of motivating your children to cooperate and excel without having to use fear tactics.

Children today do not need to be motivated by the fear of punishment. They have the innate ability to know what is right and wrong when given an opportunity to develop this ability. Instead of being motivated by punishment or intimidation, they can be easily motivated by reward and the natural, healthy desire to please their parents.

In the first eight chapters of *Children Are from Heaven*, you will learn to use the different skills of positive parenting to improve communication, increase cooperation, and motivate your children to be all they can be. In last six chapters, you will learn how to communicate the five most important messages your children need to hear again and again.

The five positive messages are:

1. It is okay to be different.
2. It is okay to make mistakes.
3. It is okay to express negative emotions.
4. It is okay to want more.
5. It is okay to say no, but remember mom and dad are the bosses.

These five messages will set your children free to develop their God-given abilities. When practiced correctly with the different skills of positive parenting, your child will develop the necessary skills for successful living. Some of these skills are: forgiveness of others and themselves, sharing, delayed gratification, self-esteem, patience, persistence, respect for others and themselves, cooperation, compassion, confidence, and the ability to be happy. With this new approach, along with love and support, your children will have the opportunity to develop fully during each stage of their growth.

With these new insights, you will have the confidence needed to raise your children well and to sleep soundly at night. When questions and confusion arise, you will have a powerful resource to return to again and again to give you support and to remind you of what your children need and you can do for them.

Most of all, you remember that children *are* from Heaven. They already have within them what they need to grow. Your job as parent is only to support their process of growth. By applying the five messages and positive-parenting skills, you will not only enjoy the confidence that you doing exactly what is needed, but know that, with your help, your children will be able to create the life they were meant to live.

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Do you understand the important role of parents and the proper upraising of our kids for the transformation of our world and our society, and would you like to participate in our work to create '*Heaven on Earth*'?

Publisher Love₍₊₎Wisdom₍₌₎Truth