

PARENTING AS INTERPERSONAL

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Parenting takes place first by interpersonal means. It is on top of interpersonal process that any authority comes, and that authority is bounded in its application by the distinctive purposes at work in this special setting for interpersonal process. The interpersonal circumstance sets the attitude parents take toward their children. Children are smaller but not less. If love is the medium of interpersonal relationships, love becomes the medium for parenting. The means and manner of parenting are primarily interpersonal influence instead of physical force, intimidation, authoritative control, manipulation, and the like. One of the main means of interpersonal influence is modeling what we want to teach, commend, command, and so on.

Parents are to provide for their offspring the skills of personal relationship. That is essentially what teaching is (education). The motive of discipline is the better quality of personal life they will have.

We want to provide them with self-esteem as persons, and security that comes from interpersonal acceptance. We provide them with self-esteem when we esteem them.

Kids are not for fulfilling parents' aspirations. They are not for being used; that would reduce their personhood. We can let them make a difference by letting them have input into decisions that affect them, by taking time with them, by listening to them.

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