

showing and telling them how to explain clearly, not confusingly: how not to give false messages; how not to alienate when they mean to be constructive; and so on.

Where It Begins

When you were little, how often did you hear grownups say: "I don't want to hear that from you," or, "Now, *don't cry*" or, "Control that temper!"? These familiar parental phrases set up an internal conflict that can have a lasting effect on how we communicate.

We live an interesting script as we learn to grow up. We're each born with a sturdy little spirit inside, the essence of our survival, the one that says, "Me, me. I want. I need." That little self-spirit sees the world through one pair of eyes—its own. It pushes us to take what isn't ours; to hit when we're mad; to scream when we're frustrated; to cry when we're hurt or sad. At that early point our feelings have a direct pipeline to what we say and do. That's how we start.

Our parents' job is to move us into a world where *everyone's* spirit is telling them, "Me, me. I want." In order to protect us from instant demolition, they have to teach us to curb and hold back, even to deny our self-spirit's outburst of feelings since everyone *else's* self-spirit is doing the very same thing at the very same time! This is the necessary process of socializing, of adapting to sharing the planet with other people—who also want what *they* want, first and instantly.

Socialization

A necessary process but harmful in the way we do it.

In their zeal to get us on the right survival track, parents often teach us to *deny* rather than to modify our first and truest responses to life experiences so we develop a filter and internal censor that says:

"Before you do anything, run that action past me. There's *danger* in expressing yourself openly. Let's just see how that's gonna play in the big world. Will you get clobbered?"

Now the socialization process works because most of us *do* grow up able to survive on the planet with lots of others. But we pay a big price for it.

That-direct line from feelings—to—action is interrupted, rerouted, and detoured so often that most of us run the risk of getting out of touch with the source: How we *really* felt and what we *really* wanted. To become accomplished at *surviving*, we become good at self-deception, denial, and public accommodation.