

Part I - Decisions about Parenting

1- Parenting: A Rewarding Choice

p. 24

Heritage and Culture Awareness Needs

Each family belongs to one or more **ethnic groups**. These are groups of people with a common racial, national, tribal, religious, or cultural origin or background. Members of ethnic or cultural groups have shared customs, beliefs, and behaviors, or **cultural traditions**. Children learn from and enjoy participating in traditions that involve food preparation, clothing, or religious practices of a family's ethnic background. Children also want to hear stories and see items from their own family history.

All of these experiences help children form an **ethnic identity**. This refers to the way a person views himself or herself as a member of a particular ethnic group. Children develop pride in their family background by knowing about their **heritage**, or all that has been passed down through the generations. As children learn of their cultural heritage, they learn that others may also have a different cultural heritage. Parents can help their children learn about **diversity**,

This suggests the importance of passing down ethnic, cultural, racial, national, tribal, or religious beliefs, customs traditions and behaviors to form an ethnic identity. While there is nothing wrong with preserving heritage, it is equally important to respect and adopt American values and heritage and to identify as an American by teaching American history and insisting on English as a primary language.

Newt Gingrich on Assimilation:

--- *Maintaining one's special identity is perfectly compatible with assimilation into American civilization—indeed is a characteristic of it. The new multiculturalism takes a much more radical approach. Bilingualism keeps people actively tied to their old language and habits and maximized the cost of the transition to becoming American. As a result, poor Americans and first-generation immigrant children have suffered pain and confusion.*

*Yet the personal problems caused by bilingualism are overshadowed by the ultimate challenge they pose to American society. America can absorb an amazing number of people from an astonishing range of backgrounds **if our goal is assimilation.***

If people are being encouraged to resist assimilation, the very fabric of American society will eventually break down.
A civilization is only one generation deep and can be lost in a very short time. Insisting that each new generation be assimilated is the sine qua non of our survival.

To Renew America – 1995

p. 28

Developing Common Core



19. **Speaking.** Interview a parent about the importance of being a nurturing, dedicated, and flexible parent. Ask if this person always finds it easy to display these qualities. Are there things about being a parent that make parenting more difficult?

We are continually told that none of this is Common Core or related top-down dogma. Under this caption students are asked to research and write about other ethnic cultures and "...find at least five positive facts that you did not know about this ethnic or cultural group...." I would consider this commendable if there were equal encouragement by the authors to encourage assimilation into the American culture."United we stand; divided we fall."

Practicing Career Readiness

25. The ability to gather and analyze information with cultural relevance is an important workplace skill. Consider the following problem: As foodservice director for a multinational corporation, it has come to your attention that foods served in the company cafeteria are not meeting cultural needs of employees from Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. You and your culinary team need to make changes in some types of foods served, but need more information. With your team members, create a plan to gather and analyze the information you need with culture in mind. List culturally sensitive questions you need to ask about food needs and potential sources of reliable information.

Why so much focus on catering to Middle Eastern cultures? Why not Hispanic? Why not just serve wholesome and tasty American food? And what does this have to do with parenting?

2 – Families and Parents

p. 32

Extended Families

- Children develop closer relationships with family members of several generations and learn to respect and appreciate aging family members.
- Older family members can provide good child care and parenting advice.
- Older family members often help children develop family pride and ethnic identity.
- Children often have more emotional security.
- Instead of being able to help, elderly family members may need care themselves. This may put time, financial, and emotional strains on the family.
- Living space may be crowded.
- Adjustments in lifestyle take time and patience.
- With more adults in the family, children may have problems in knowing "who's in charge" and may feel over-supervised.

Couples Without Children

- Without the challenges of parenting, couples can focus more time and energy on their careers, hobbies, and interests.
- Couple often finds the spouse relationship more satisfying.
- Unplanned pregnancy can be traumatic.
- Long postponed pregnancy can result in physical complications for mother and baby, and adjustment problems for parents.
- Couple does not have the rewards of parenting.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Basic Family Structures

Advantages

Nuclear Families

- Income is usually higher than in other family structures, especially when both spouses are employed, so more child care options are available.
- Both parents split the burden of parenting tasks.

Single-Parent Families

- Children are likely to have more and earlier opportunities to become self-reliant.
- Children may be better adjusted and happier with a well-adjusted single parent than with two parents who are in conflict.

Stepfamilies

- Family members often develop patience, cooperation, and creativity in their new roles.
- Various child care options are available. Father or mother may stay at home or work at home and take care of children. Center care is often discounted for families enrolling more than one child. Larger families with lower incomes may qualify for not-for-profit centers or programs funded with government monies.

Disadvantages

- Rate of divorce is high. Families often have to adapt to new family structures.

- Single parent carries the burdens of all the parenting tasks. This can be overwhelming.
- With less income, child care options are limited.
- Single parent may expect too much from children and give them tasks they are too young to handle.

- Roles, responsibilities, and schedules often change.
- Children may resent discipline by the stepparent.
- Family members must learn to share attention and space.
- Income may be limited if several children are part of the new family. One or both spouses may have to pay alimony, child support, and possibly debts of a former spouse.

The authors' comparison of advantages and disadvantages falls short under *Nuclear Families*. There are far more advantages to nuclear families than are listed here. Every effort should be made to convince young people to think of the long-term advantages vs. consequences when making choices about their partnering and reproduction.

Under disadvantages to single-parent and step-families, they have overlooked separation anxiety children are likely to suffer in response to the missing parent.

p. 36 Once again the emphasis is on cultural differences. ...Seems obsessive. The beauty of America is her blend of cultural traits; we can pick the best practices of all the different cultures and adopt them as American.Just because a tradition is accepted in other countries does not mean it is suitable for America. (Sharia, honor killings, genital mutilation, bigamy. Etc...)

p. 40

Current research shows that parenting is really a two-way process. Parents do influence children, but the children also influence parents, 2-10. For example, a fussy baby may cause parents to feel less confident about their parenting skills. Some parents seek help, but others may see themselves as failures.

Add: Most parents simply cope and do just fine.

p. 41

Family Systems Have Boundaries

Boundaries are limits that control the degree of closeness between family members. They also control the closeness between the entire family and influences outside the family. Family members and the family as a whole determine whether they will operate as an "open" or "closed" system or somewhere in between.

In the discussion that follows this introduction, the "open" families are favored and the "closed" families are portrayed negatively. This seems to under-value strong, close families which have been the building blocks of a resilient sense of

justice, honesty and integrity and a robust American economy.

p. 43 Is all about cultural differences again; nothing on American culture and virtues of assimilation.

p.44

This page should have **led** with the information about single parenthood, poverty and stress as a warning to teens to avoid pregnancy while young, single and unable to earn a comfortable income.

p. 44 Under "Lifestyles" it could have been pointed out that many good basic lifestyle choices are not predicated on income. Examples: rising at a reasonable time, sitting together for meals, sharing chores, sharing games, story time, and attending one another's special events.... These basics do not depend on wealth.

A very good point is made at the end about the generational effect of good parenting.

p. 46

When used responsibly, the media can be very useful. Dangers exist, however, when parents do not monitor their children's exposure to the media, 2-15. For example, unsupervised children may view websites, television shows, and movies or listen to music with adult language and themes that are not suited for children. Children are too young to understand what they see or hear and evaluate its content. Some media can send damaging messages to children.

This is important advice but should be made stronger. Many rap lyrics are not just inappropriate; they are evil and destructive. This is a huge problem in the African-American community where the rappers are idolized and their words taken as a formula for behavior.

p. 48 (following box) Society is not a reliable support system. In many cases society does more ill than good. **A stable family household is a far better influence** than bureaucracies, do-gooders, debased entertainment and polarized media sources. It's unrealistic to expect society to make sure that children "grow into mature, responsible citizens" when society itself is dysfunctional at so many levels.

Importance of society to parents and children. In addition to expressing gratitude for the role of parents in society more often and directly, society informs parents of the skills children need. It provides support services for parents who need them. Likewise, society provides for children's needs through community resources and the media. When families have problems that interfere with how children grow and develop, society intervenes on behalf of the children to protect their rights. Society makes sure that children have everything needed to grow into mature, responsible citizens.

And why is the church not mentioned in the references as a helpful support entity?

As a parent, I assumed the responsibility of *countering* the negative influences of society and raised three very good citizens who became good parents.

Summing It Up

p. 49

It would be extremely important and helpful here to point out the success rates of the different family structures. Too much is said to accommodate the less desirable choices rather than making clear the undesirable aspects of single parenting, divorce, early partnering, etc. Statistics illustrate the irrationality of single parenthood and its detrimental effect on children and their chances of ever reaching their full potential. These statistics should be made quite clear to the reader.

p. 33 lists only 2 advantages to the nuclear family while citing as many or more for the less advantageous arrangements. Unacceptable! The purpose here should be to guide young people into making the wisest choices during the most influentially vulnerable time in their life, not to make them feel better about the poor choices they may make!

Individual goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do I plan to continue my education? If so, for how long? How much will it cost? Will I have any income while working toward this goal? What career plans do I have? How many hours per week will I work, including commute time? Will I travel as part of my job? If so, how often and for how long? Will I be asked to work overtime or at home beyond work hours? Does the employer provide for leave time at the birth or adoption of a baby, or during severe family illness? Does the employer have any form of child care help? What leisure activities are important for my personal growth? What time and expenses are involved?
Couple goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we both expect to work after marriage? If so, do we plan to continue being a dual-career family with children? What will our combined earnings be? What major consumer purchases do we want to make? How will these affect our income? What are our plans for savings? for gifts and contributions? for retirement? What are our goals for social life? How important are these goals? What time and expenses are involved?
Parenting goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we feel about children? Do we both want children? If so, how many children do we want? Have we decided when we want to start a family? What kind of child care would we have? prenatal care? relative care? nonrelative care? For how long would child care be needed? at what cost? (Remember parents who do not work during the parenting stages forego an income. However, they pay less taxes and do not pay child care expenses.) How would our plans for having children change our social life? Would we have less time to spend with family and friends? Would we be willing to give up plans for leisure activities if we had children?

This and the following graphic on p. 58 serve to discourage parenthood as a choice. It lists all the self-serving rationales for *not* having children. Even the solutions cited on p. 58 appear to be the lesser of evils.

3 - The Decision to Parent

Many reasons are offered that would discourage the decision to have children to those rational and disciplined enough to deliberate the decision; --the very people we would want to choose to have children;-- lots of them! At the same time there is a less robust argument pointing out the hopelessness of children who are the product of casual and irresponsible sexual activity. The end result is that responsible people do not have many children while irresponsible people have many.

Deciding whether or not to become a parent is one of the most difficult and important decisions a person can make. Couples must deal with societal pressures, family pressures, and peer pressures. They must also question their own abilities, wants, and needs. After deciding about parenthood, couples must live with the choice.

This suggests that couples make rational decisions. High school "couples" are ruled by hormones and emotions. They need compelling reasons more specific to their young needs and desires to encourage self-discipline.

how children grow and develop. Successful parenting brings many rewards, such as enjoyment of parenting tasks and the joy of seeing your child grow from a helpless newborn to a competent adult.

p. 55 One of the few positive statements in this section:

p. 56 One of many negative statements:

of parenting will probably cause even more problems between them. In fact, research shows parenting stress causes a short-term decline in marital happiness even when a couple has a strong marriage.

Balancing Career and Parenting Roles

Jermaine and Suzanne
Jermaine and Suzanne have been married four years and they want to have a child. They both have good, steady jobs. Two years ago, they bought a small house. Jermaine and Suzanne need both paychecks to pay the mortgage and other living expenses. Therefore, both plan to continue working after the child is born. They realize their situation may be difficult. Jermaine and Suzanne have the following concerns:

- Worry they may feel guilty about not spending enough time with their child
- Difficulty in finding quality child care
- Strain on their budget, even with both paychecks, for child care expenses
- Potential stress about trying to fulfill too many different roles (They will need to remember expecting one another to be loving spouses, caring parents, skilled housekeepers, and valued employees is asking a lot.)

Jermaine and Suzanne have identified the following ways they can make the best of their situation. These include:

- Finding satisfaction in their work
- Having satisfaction in caring for their child when they are not working
- Locating quality child care at an affordable price
- Working out alternate plans for times when their child care may not be available, such as holidays and illnesses
- Sharing the responsibilities of child care, running the household, shopping, cooking, cleaning, and doing repair and maintenance chores

Mike and Angelica
Mike and Angelica have been married two years and want a child. Mike has high goals for his banking career. Angelica enjoys her job as a nurse, but wants to be a full-time homemaker once their child is born. They realize the potential difficulties in this situation. Mike and Angelica have the following concerns:

- Possible feelings of alienation for Mike if the child develops a closer relationship with Angelica since she will be at home
- Possibly growing apart if Mike's main interest is work and Angelica's main interest is their child
- Meeting their expenses on one paycheck
- Difficulty in reentering the workforce for Angelica once their child is grown

Mike and Angelica believe the situation will work if they keep the following factors in mind:

- Developing a close relationship with their child is a priority for both (especially Mike during his off-work hours)
- Communicating so their relationship stays strong (Mike needs to know what is happening at home; Angelica needs to know what is happening with Mike at work.)
- Finding satisfaction with the division of labor and their work and family roles
- Tightening their budget since they will only have one paycheck
- Realizing the benefits gained by having a parent as the primary source of care, nurturance, and guidance for their child
- Maintaining other interests so they can continue enjoying life even as their lives change

Notice that J. & S. are pondering 7 negative issues while considering only 2 that might be positive. M. & A. have about the same ratio of negative and positive issues to work on as J. and S. even though Angelica elects to stay home with the baby while J. & S. both continue working.

Overall I found this whole section very good advice. It was not until the end where I found the following exercises to continue a theme that discourages future child bearing to thoughtful, responsible young people. Those that are ruled by their emotions and their hormones will not be dissuaded from risky sexual behavior by these admonitions.

The end result is a continuation of the trend we have today: A 1.8 birthrate among Caucasian-American women compared to a 2.6 rate among Muslim women with other minorities somewhere in between. The effect is a decline in

population of the former group, while the latter groups expand.

Some exercises that discourage parenthood:

3. Describe two negative reasons for having a child.

13. Analyze the following statement: If you say *yes* to parenting, you are saying *no* to other things. Give examples of what people might say *no* to if they choose parenting. Write your responses on a separate sheet of paper. Discuss the pros and cons of these choices in a small group. Does the group agree or disagree?

14. Create a two-column chart on a separate sheet of paper. Write these two headings (one at the top of each column): *What I Like About Children* and *What I Don't Like About Children*. Draw conclusions about how each item listed might affect parenting decisions. Then discuss your responses in a small group.

Part II - Positive Parenting

4. Becoming a Competent Parent

This section is extremely clear, comprehensive, and commonsense. **It should be required of every high school student.** Poor parenting is generational and therefore exponentially destructive to civil society. To require this kind of commonsense instruction could turn this critical trend in a positive direction.

p.113

You may be wondering which parenting style is best. Parenting experts favor the democratic style because it is high in nurturance, communication, behavioral expectations, and control. This approach takes the middle ground between the authoritarian and permissive styles, 5-4. The democratic style overcomes the weaker aspects of the other two styles.

When parenting styles were discussed earlier, it was pointed out that the parents were the ultimate authority. No such caveat here.

“Democratic” suggests majority rule. If we are identifying the optimal system, I suggest at the very least, using *semi-democratic*.

The American model could be summoned here: A Constitutional Republic is a system whereby a set of rules is agreed upon by the members and

they are obliged to follow, with the threat of some type of remedial action if they defy a rule or rules. This is the most just and nearly perfect system for countries. Why not for families?.....
p.110

The Importance of Communication

Any means by which people send and receive messages is **communication**. It has two parts: messages sent and messages received. Communication is nonverbal, including body movements, facial expressions, and tone of voice. It is also verbal, including spoken and written words, 5-5.

“Communication is nonverbal” should read

“Communication is often nonverbal” or “is nonverbal as well as verbal”.

p. 121

Children need to know that their parents still love them even when they disapprove of the children’s behavior. If children must receive punishment, they should understand it is only their behavior that is unacceptable. It is important that parents reassure children they will always love them. Parents should never threaten to withdraw their love to get their children to behave.

This is **so important** for every parent to understand. Kudos for including it but make the point stronger. Bold box it!

If a child who gets regular, positive parental attention misbehaves to get attention, the parents should ignore the misbehavior if possible. If the misbehavior is not reinforced, children are less likely to repeat it. When the child is using positive behavior, the parents should try to give extra attention to the child, 5-13. Doing so will encourage the child to repeat the desired behavior.

This is another point worth making more important. Some children will do anything for attention. Ignoring (or unceremoniously squelching) bad behavior and rewarding good behavior trains the child toward good behavior.

p. 123

Physical punishment is discouraged. I contend that there are some circumstances when it is appropriate. Example: a child runs into the street. He is counseled on the danger but continues to run into the street without looking for cars. After several warnings, a good swift swat will reinforce his memory the next time he is tempted to run into the street. Punishment should be swift, not delayed.

A parent should never use physical punishment when emotions are out of control.

p.125

To fit into their social setting, children must be taught their culture's norms regarding emotional expression. Norms, or general practices, dictate how people may express emotions. They also tell which emotions are acceptable in certain situations and which are not. Learning to control the expression of emotions, or *self-control*, is highly important to children and to society. Self-control relates to positive interactions with family members and friends. It also relates to stress management, moral development, and positive attitude.

This is something that I see woefully missing in today's society. I fear there are parents who **don't understand what is appropriate and what is not in expressing emotions.** Examples are needed here. A good one might be the inappropriate cheering at large graduation ceremonies when guests have been asked to withhold applause until the end. I have recently attended 3 such ceremonies and each time protocol was violated.

There are even more egregious examples by adults and many examples involving children.

p.126

Helping Children Curb Aggression



- Model calmness, problem solving, and willingness to compromise.
- Reinforce positive behaviors, such as sharing.
- Reduce frustration in a child's day. Having a regular daily routine and letting children know when changes will occur helps eliminate aggressive behavior.
- Screen media content for violence. Do not allow children to watch violent programs.
- Set clear limits and enforce them consistently.
- Use time-out to let a child calm down before teaching effective ways to handle emotions.
- Teach children to respond verbally rather than physically.

5-20 Dealing with aggression can be a challenge for parents. These ideas can help.

Two problems here: First bullet ; only compromise when it is appropriate, not "giving in" to inappropriate behavior.

Last bullet; Verbal aggression can be more destructive than physical aggression. "Verbally" could be substituted with "by reasoning".

PART 5 - The Challenges of Parenting

CHAPTER 18 Balancing Family Concerns

p. 472 Managing Multiple Roles

This was covered to some degree in Part 1; 'Decisions about Parenting (p.56-) It would have been a logical place to include these arguments and just do a bullet point recap here.

- Dual-career and single-earner parents monitor children's behaviors equally well.
- Compared with other children, children in dual-career families have less traditional views about the roles for men and women.
- In dual-career families, fathers spend time with children individually as well as in whole-family activities. In father-earner families, fathers spend most of their family time with children in whole-family activities.
- Children of dual-career families tend to be very independent and achievement oriented.
- Children of dual-career families are often more outgoing than other children.
- Children in dual-career families more often share in household tasks, 18-3. By sharing tasks that help the family, children learn concern for others.

What is the evidence to back up these rose-colored assumptions? It seems to promote the dual-career choice over the stay-at-home homemaker. My decades of observations lead me to conclude that a stay-at-home mother is the best possible situation for children. I am confident that statistics would back that up. (This conviction is actually stated on p. 522.) While the advice for managing responsibilities and demands is sound, the physical and emotional fatigue is not acknowledged in this section. It is not good for parents or kids when the care-giver is weary from a hard day's work, a commute home, and then faces the prospect of cooking, clean-up, seeing that homework is done, laundry, perhaps taking a child to an activity and/or picking them up. I have witnessed this first hand and even with the best planning and time-management, it is exhausting!

p. 475 (Divorce and child custody)

For example, in most cases children should be in one school for one term. Changes in

This is ambiguous and confusing. I assume they mean that the child *complete* one term before changing.

The advice on how to handle divorce is good, but I wonder if it is not inappropriate for high-school students. It suggests that divorce is not unusual—and while it is not—do we really want to suggest that it is commonplace? Doesn't that just make the decision to divorce easier?

Another argument is that we hope and assume these 15-18 year olds will not reach a point in their lives where such a decision has to be made for years. **The specific advice contained in this section would be long forgotten.** Better to scale it down to a few reasons why divorce is undesirable and list resources for the kind of advice that would be helpful if they were ever to need it.

p.501- Family Crisis

rates (30 to 60 percent). Children who live with the effects of partner abuse are more likely to

- become abusers who may commit sexual assault
- resort to substance abuse and other risky behaviors to cope with abuse
- run away from home or attempt suicide to escape abuse
- have academic problems, usually an inability to focus on school due to sleepiness or agitation
- have no real friendships and a home unsafe for entertaining friends
- become the protector of the mother and siblings
- display anxiety and depression due to blaming themselves or staying afraid

Some children who witness partner

This section is very good advice—for an adult. These lessons should be more carefully structured for teens. The list of possible ill-effects on children living with an abusive parent may be damaging to a student who is in that unfortunate situation. The itemized pathologies may become a script for a depressed young person.

The excellent advice for a victim's escape may become a recipe for a teen to run away from home to a possibly more dangerous situation.

p. 505

Why do some people emotionally abuse children? In many cases, such people find childrearing a burden. They lack knowledge about how children grow and develop. Because of this, they also lack knowledge in how to guide and discipline children appropriately.

This is too conclusive. They may be overly impatient with kids or they may have been victims themselves.

p. 510

homes. Experts agree that almost every teen goes to school with a peer troubled enough to kill. Those wanting to kill will get access to weapons, and some will get them past

This is so troubling that, if not substantiated with empirical evidence, I think it irresponsible to suggest. I have 9 grandchildren in 3 states and I don't believe even one of them "goes to school with a peer troubled enough to kill." If they are referring to some unknown person in a student body of hundreds, that is a possibility.

p. 511

Anyone can be a victim of violence. Parents and other adults can help prevent children from being victims. Adults can

- communicate openly about all forms of peer violence.

- know what their children are doing, where they are, and who their friends are.
- listen to their children's feelings and concerns about themselves and peers.
- be aware of signs (changes in behavior) that may indicate their children are victims of peer aggression, 19-15.
- tell their children what to do when confronted with a bully or gang (such as do not fight back, but rather be assertive

- insist their children stay away from areas frequented by gangs.
- keep their children from wearing clothing items that resemble known gang symbols or colors.
- have children avoid clothing or jewelry items that attract attention.

Once again the bullet points are directed at adults charged with protecting students. Wouldn't it be better to advise students how to protect themselves so that one day they may become parents?

p.516

Preventing Suicide

What can parents and other caring people do to prevent suicides? Children who have problems in early childhood need professional mental health care. Parents

need to seek immediate help if teens show warning signs. Because depression is a common symptom of suicidal tendencies, children and teens may be prescribed drugs for this condition. Parents should carefully watch how their children respond to any antidepressant drug and report their concerns to the doctor.

This is another example of misdirected advice. It would arguably be more than a decade before HS students would be parents of teens. This advice would be long forgotten. It would be a great service to address this problem to troubled teens and perhaps prevent a suicide.

Long term effects of drugs cannot be detected until it may be too late. Most of the young school shooters were on anti-depressants or SSRIs. There are foods that can elevate mood, brazil nuts being one (loaded with selenium). Friends and family reaching out is excellent advice.

The last chapter on childcare is very thorough and well thought out.