

Do You Know What You Missed As A Child?

Most of us grow into adulthood knowing that we missed some things in childhood, but not necessarily knowing what or how much the deficit hampered our growth. [http: billallin.com](http://billallin.com)

Turn the power of praise upon whatever you wish to increase. Give thanks that it is now fulfilling your ideal.
- Charles Fillmore, cofounder of Unity School of Christianity (1854-1948)

Okay, I accept that the quote sounds like it was spoken directly from a pulpit. But that was the way Fillmore spoke and wrote.

Praise is to human social interaction what fertilizer is to gardens. Most gardens will grow without using fertilizer, but they may grow stronger, healthier (free from risks of attack by competing species of plants) and more plentiful with fertilizer. So will the good effects of praise on relationships, including work relationships.

As members of a social species, we human naturally seek acceptance from our fellow humans. We want to feel that we belong. We want to feel that we are a part of something of significance. We want to feel that the part we contribute helps to make our total experience work better, both for us and for those who are part of our group.

The traditional model of relationships in a work environment was based mostly on the old master-slave model of our distant past. People work to the best of their abilities because they get paid to do so, so that model dictates. But it doesn't always work that way.

People can do barely adequate work for which they get paid a more than reasonable wage, but they can't necessarily be fired without the employer risking a wrongful dismissal legal case. A barely adequate job may not only hold a company back, it could bury the company if a significant number of employees have a similar attitude.

In the new business model that is increasing in popularity since the 1980s, an employer tries to make each employee feel that the success of the company is a direct reflection of their own person success. Even in times of poor markets, the employer strives to encourage employees by watching carefully for individual examples of good work and successful dealings with the various publics of the business so that the employees feel that they will all work their way through troubled times together.

In this business model, there are no bad employees (or there shouldn't be), only employees that need more encouragement and direction to be more successful. Every one of us has bad times in our lives and they don't correspond with the bad times at our place of work (we hope). A good employer will help a troubled employee through those bad personal times in order to get good work while on the job.

It works the same in a family. Every young child seems to bring home a steady supply of creations (usually paintings) from school or a pre-school facility. Those creations make their way onto the refrigerator or a bulletin board, so the child knows he or she is appreciated. But that only works for just so long.

A child knows if he or she has produced a piece of trash painting, even if the teacher praised it and encouraged the child to take it home (less trash to dispose of after school). If the parent gives only blanket praise, as the teacher had done, the child knows that the parent is praising him or her, only the effort that went into it. In other words, flattery, with no substance or sincerity.

A child needs to know what is good about a piece of work, not that the whole thing is "marvelous." A child needs to know that the parent understands what is in the painting, The child learns that by having the parent ask questions about it, then adding comments and constructive advice.

Just as an Olympic athlete feeds on successes along the way to the next international Olympics, a child grows in a positive way by both praise and help to improve next time. Blanket (non-specific) praise is treated by a child the way everyone should treat flattery, knowing that it's for show, but without value.

The sole objective of a child--every child--is to grow to be a competent and confident adult who can cope with downturns in life because he or she has the skills and tools to work with, yet having the ability to achieve great

successes because their increasing body of skills and improved talents have produced better than ever results.

Kids know this intuitively. Parents, many of whom treat their children as if they were never children themselves, don't necessarily remember this.

The prime objective of a parent is not to provide food, shelter and video games for the child. The prime objective is to be a role model and teacher so that the child stands "on the shoulders of giants" (Isaac Newton's words) in order to reach greater heights than the parents could or have.

No child ever has the objective of being nearly as good as his or her parent. Nor should it ever be the objective of a parent that the child should only be nearly as good. Both child and parent should want the child to be better because the child could take advantage of the experience, skills and talents of the parent, then add their own to create something new and unique.

If a parent doesn't "get it," the child may not be what he or she could have been.

A person doesn't need perfect parents in order to reach self fulfillment and achieve their potential. But a child who has parents who know what they are doing in growing the child will reach greater heights sooner than the one with little help from home.

As an educator and sociologist specializing in education, I have never met a parent who didn't do and want to do their very best for their children. I also have never met a parent who claimed that they knew enough--what they needed to know and should have known--about raising children when they first became parents.

That's wrong. The discrepancy is both tragic and unnecessary. People--kids and adults--suffer because they don't know.

We have the knowledge. But it's tied up with a few educators and social science professionals who meet roadblocks everywhere they turn trying to spread the word.

Talk about it.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to know what kids really need instead of just the limited stuff that school curriculum provides. Learn more at <http://billallin.com>

Author: builder

Article downloaded from page eioba.com