

Some basic findings on the importance of the family from a developmental psychological view

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1. Modern Developmental Psychology has shown that the desire for emotional attachment is a primary desire of human beings. It disproved Freud's thesis, according to which the attachment to the mother establishes only secondary, as a result of the satisfaction biological needs (breast-feeding, feeding etc.). The emotional bonding to the mother is a indispensable prerequisite for a healthy development of personality. Where the mother is missing, she must be substituted by a person who is able to establish an equivalent emotional relationship. Investigations on the early interaction between a baby and his or her mother confirm, that already the newborn with his or her physical and sensory physiological equipment is orientated towards the getting into contact with other human beings, and that he or she prefers interpersonal experiences to any other impressions.

Where such a relationship is missing or only insufficiently available – a state that is called deprivation or sub deprivation – defective developments arise, which may range from a lack of self-esteem, feelings of uncertainty, light to heavier deficits in personality, heavier psychic and disturbances up to physical decline and death.

(Literature: 2; 19; 21; 22; 23; 24; 26; 27; 30; 36; 40; 43; 50; 54; 59; 60; 61; 62; 63)

2. Numerous studies show that a secure, emotionally-warm hearted, intimate relationship of the baby and child to a reliably available, constant human relation is the necessary basis for his or her physical, emotional, intellectual, social and moral development. In such a relationship a stable personality core, the basic trust, i.e. that emotional attachment to fellow beings, that forms the foundation stone of a healthy development of personality. Thus the basis is established for the human ability to build up human relationships and social competence, and as well for the shaping of conscience, and the development of discernment and reason (emotional intelligence). Along with the basic trust into the fellow beings the trust into one's own ability to master one's life.

(Literature: 4; 5; 13; 14; 33; 35; 37; 38; 41; 43; 44; 45; 64)

3. Decisive and of prime importance for the development of the above mentioned abilities is the quality of attachment. Observations and investigations on the mother-child relationships have shown that the character and quality of this developing relationship depend on the ability of the mother to respond suitably to the signals of the baby. On the one hand she must be able to perceive and interpret these signals correctly. On the other hand she must be able to react adequately, i.e. in a manner suitable to its stage of development and one which accords the child the necessary scope for its own activity. The better would the mother be in the position to do so, the more she is free from negative feelings towards the baby, and has a positive mental attitude towards it.

(3; 4; 6; 7; 8; 29; 44; 46; 53;68)

4. Besides the natural orientation towards the interpersonal contact the child disposes a swell of a inspirational-creative component, with which it orientates itself in the interpersonal sphere in the family, and develops and forms its personality. In the day-to-day life with a constant relationship the child develops a "inner working model" (Bowlby; Adler called it "life style"), i.e. an emotional idea of his fellow beings, of itself and of the way how to participate in and to find its way in interpersonal relationships, to manage them, and to actively or passively influence them. For the development of a healthy personality the child needs human beings, who truly and with inner joy participate in a personal relationship with the child, who accompany its development with inner interest/sympathy, who give it orientation and guidance, and who offer it resistance where ever necessary.

(Literature: 1; 4; 11, 12; 25; 64; 68)

5. Becoming an adult does not mean a detachment from the parents. The natural development means that the slowly growing up juvenile develops a new quality of relationship to his or her parents: the puberty ups and downs are not due to a starting detachment of the parents, but the uncertain/inconstant testing of new forms to shape a relationship, and the desire to be accepted as an equivalent partner among the adults – of course this is often tried by childlike defence and compensation mechanisms. This does not detach the emotional bond to the parents, but gets a new quality on an adult level. Apart from the new relationship to the spouse, the relation of the adult to his parents remains a source of mutual enrichment, and is an important emotional support.

(Literature: 15; 16; 17; 18; 65; 66; 67; 74)

6. The parents' successful establishing of a secure attachment to their children is the best protection against anti-social developments. The trust in their parents allows the children to identify with them and to adopt their families'

values. The development of conscience, the feeling of right and wrong would then not only be the mere adoption of values and norms, but a psychological process in which the child emotionally incorporates these values. Investigations show that children and young persons, who can fall back on a secure relationship with their parents, are less in danger to commit crimes or to become drug addicted.

(Literature: 9; 10; 32; 39; 43; 51; 52; 55; 56; 57; 71; 73)

7. Emotional relationships are of lasting importance of a person's life. The aspiration for intimate emotional relationships is a specifically human desire. It is already present in the neonate, and remains basic element for human life up until the old age. The desire for intimate relationships is not at all a pure childlike desire, and has nothing to do with dependency: it rather characterises the mature personality to be able to start, maintain, and develop close relationships. It is in the position to offer other people emotional support, and is as well able to look for support or help of others. The ability to establish bearing, trustful, and constant human relationships is a prerequisite for independence in feeling, thinking, and acting. The mainstay and certainty in interpersonal relations forms the basis to completely develop an own personality, and to be able to fully exhaust the possibilities of life, for inner calm, contentment, and happiness.

(Literature: 1; 26; 31; 37; 38; 42; 58; 68; 69)

8. Investigations show that the natural family, consisting of mother, father, and children, is the best prerequisite for the child's development. Mother and father are of equal importance. However, by nature they fill different emotional fields. This includes their task to be a model for the same or opposite sex, and an identification model. With their co-operation as a life companionship bound by love, and as parents they give the social frame for the common welfare of the family, which differs fundamentally from other forms of living together or collectivist educational institutions. Today exist numerous studies on the effects of collectivist educational institutions in the former Eastern block countries, from current China, but as well of the kibbutz education and children's homes, the "Kinderladen movement", and communes, in which the importance of emotional relationships and obligingness was not or not enough taken into account. The studies refer to frequent proneness of those children for drug addiction, crime, squalidness, psychiatric diseases, and above all the frequent proneness to mentally break down and fail in situations of great stress because of a lack of inner stability.

The mutuality in the relationship between parents and their child the intimate and emotional bonds, the uniting in the common future, the

common shaping of live under one roof characterises the family and can not be substituted.

(Literature: 20; 28; 34; 43; 47; 48; 49; 53; 70)

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