Principles on the Family
from the Psychological Perspective

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1. Marriage and the family are a natural life-long community involving man and woman, parents and their children.

In all its cultural and historical forms the family fulfills an anthropological necessity and cannot therefore be arbitrarily arranged. It is a community set up by nature to provide for the needs of daily life. It is based upon a personal relationship between the different sexes, between man and woman. The family is made up of father, mother, children, grandparents and other relatives. It is a life-long community involving very strong mental and emotional bonds that last a life-time and provide each individual member with the support he/she needs.

2. Due to the bond of trust that exists between children and parents, the family is the natural place where children are prepared for an active life characterized by consideration for others.

Family bonds are the foundation upon which the child can develop emotionally and mentally. The family is a natural community for upbringing and education, in which the child not only experiences warmth and love but also learns to pass on that experience. The child is dependent upon his/her parents as role models and upon receiving responsible guidance from them. This allows him/her to develop into an independent, industrious, warm-hearted, caring and reliable individual. An individual's deepest roots lie within his family, in his relationships to his parents and siblings, and later in life to his spouse and own children.

3. Both spouses are responsible for caring for the family, whereby mother and father fulfill different roles.

In her role as a mother, the woman has a very intimate relationship with her child from the very beginning. As a mother she lovingly and caringly devotes herself to her children. It is her task to create a warm and inviting home and to create an atmosphere of cheerfulness and confidence in which all the members of the family can relax. Organizing the daily household is her responsibility. The mother provides comfort and warmth and teaches her children how to form friendships, to cooperate and take on responsibility within the home. She

provides her husband with emotional support and acts as a mainstay for the tasks he is faced with outside the family.

The father is responsible for financially supporting his family. He provides the necessary protection for his wife and children. He also provides his wife with emotional support. For the family he embodies security in economic and practical matters. He supports his children and is demanding of them in relation to their abilities and knowledge, and he introduces his sons to specifically male behavior.

4. For a healthy emotional development it is imperative that the child can identify positively with the parent of his/her own sex.

It is natural for a child to identify with the parent of his/her own sex with respect to character traits and attitudes to life which he/she will at some stage train as a man or woman. The manner in which mother and father fulfill their male or female roles acts as a model for their children. The child must experience that the parents live and cooperate in friendship and mutual respect for each other.

Today, psychologists in their practices repeatedly encounter the devastating effects upon young boys' self-confidence of fathers who, under the influence of the feminist *Zeitgeist*, did not dare to take on their male roles.

5. Children are in need of particular protection from violence, drugs, pornography and sexual seduction.

Children and youths who feel secure and accepted by their family will trustingly turn to their parents when they have a troubling experience. They will then tell them, for instance, if they have been accosted by a strange man, if someone has tried to sell them drugs, or if someone has threatened them. The appropriate parental reaction and information, the support and guidance that they can give their children is decisive for strengthening the child's personality. Studies by Lefkowitz et al, for instance, have shown that when parents do not clearly express disapproval of violence, children interpret this as acceptance. In contrast, clear condemnation of violence causes children to develop a disapproving attitude towards violence acts. In discussing the issue with their children, parents can communicate to them other ways in which they can defend themselves and react in such situations. In today's world it is also urgent that parents inform their teenage children of the destructive effects of narcotic drugs.

6. Grandparents have a special and very important role to play in the family.

Grandparents are rich in experiences, have the time and leisure for their grandchildren, and can calmly give them the attention they need. Children are often very interested in hearing their grandparents' stories, in learning manual dexterity from them, and enjoy just being together with them. In this way grandchildren are introduced to cultural traditions and come to appreciate their value. Grandchildren love their grandparents deeply and willingly help and support them in their old age. Caring for their grandparents when they are old and sick become natural to them.

7. Inner values are formed and reinforced in familial interaction.

The formation of values involves a complex emotional process which takes place in the child-parent relationship. The child absorbs his parents' values in the emotional exchange between them. Values that are appropriate to man's social nature can develop to the extent that parents are able to provide their child with a feeling of security, trust and understanding, and to the extent that they are able to awaken their child's interest for others. In this way the child is able to acquire an emotional attitude towards his others, towards life, the tasks that life sets before him and towards the world. The feeling of attachment with his fellow men and the experience of being important to others is the emotional basis upon which his inner values and thus his social feeling is built. Accordingly, basic human values are developed in the family. These are human values such as the respect for the dignity of others, public spirit, the willingness to help, the feeling of responsibility, tolerance and the willingness to actively contribute to the well-being of the whole.

8. The most intimate and strongest life-long relationships are developed within the family.

Modern developmental psychology confirms Alfred Adler's findings that a child is born with a strong social nature. The newborn spontaneously begins to take up and establish a relationship to his parents, to seek their attention and acceptance and to orient itself on them.

The nature of the emotional relationships between individual members of the family and of their dealings with each other determine the family atmosphere. A prerequisite for a good family atmosphere is a cooperative attitude between the spouses. The more parents know about human nature and psychological insights, the more capable they are of reacting in an adequate manner, of providing their children with encouragement, guidance and loving correction. They are able to understand why their child acts in such a way and not in

another, and are in a position to either strengthen their child's behavior or, if needed, help their child find other solutions.

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