

ADOLESCENCE.*

**SOME NOTES FROM A LECTURE GIVEN BY
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Contrary to the belief of the average school-master or mistress, the problems of adolescence rely upon what has happened to the child before the age of seven, in fact a person's whole life will react to the pattern of their personality before that age, and this can be faced, if it is worked out. Therefore everything is not settled, for the cause of trouble may be found out and the pattern of life greatly altered. Personality is:—

Partly { Inherited.
Acquired.

The individual, though starting as it were from nothing to make straight for the goal of adult life; but unfortunately in childhood many things infringe upon the straight line, and it is warped by bullying, bad management, etc.

Therefore you find people with other goals than the adult. Having been warped at an early age they may have a goal of:—

(a) Superiority. They love to triumph over people, and hate being laughed at.

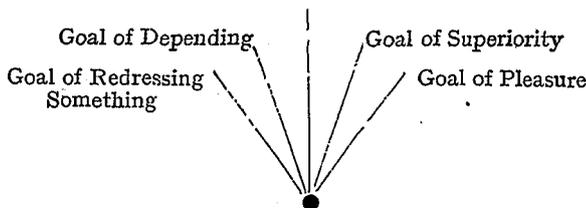
(b) Dependence. They must have someone to depend upon, because the right kind of influence to make them face life alone and be independent, has been absent from an early age.

(c) Pleasure. When too much stress has been put upon pleasure in children's lives, they will grow to think too much of sex, night clubs, alcohol, etc.

(d) Redressing something. When there is deprivation of love, which is the most important factor, you find a person who is ever aggrieved, always looking for their rights, always feeling the absence of something. They do not realise you cannot have "rights" and freedom.

There are people who never really grow up.

Goal of Adult Life



Adolescence means "Growing towards," and may be said to be the period of puberty between the ages of thirteen or fourteen to the ages of seventeen and eighteen.

The changes are both physical and psychological and are linked up round the development of the sex glands.

Sexual changes may be counted as almost secondary to the changes in the:—

Attitude of mind.

The adolescent develops an increased sense of awareness of his own power. Feels he is capable of doing anything, works for work's sake, has boundless energy, can assimilate wide views.

Therefore he must have something big to cope with, and it is only natural that he experiences big crises and battles.

The adolescent is inclined to be homosexual, to take more interest in its own sex than in the opposite; if this homosexuality goes on too long, it is a sign of danger; but it is at this period that girls and boys should be mixed, as the average healthy individuals will take the right brotherly and sisterly attitude towards each other.

Very few cases would go wrong, and if they did, would probably have done so without co-education, etc.

A boy's centres of interest are rather different from a girl's, viz.—Mother, Father, School, Mate.

A girl's:—Mother, School, Father, Mate.

PHANTASIES.

There are 400 versions of Cinderella; we constantly tell it to ourselves and also many other fairy stories.

It is much easier to live in phantasy, the world is too hard for a small child, who therefore almost lives in phantasy, but it should gradually taper off to a world of reality at the age of seven or eight.

But the reality must be made pleasant and life looked upon as an adventure.

Some adolescents live in regressive phantasies, are the type who creep away to corners, read by themselves, etc., and their difficulties are hard to get over.

The Scout and Guide movement do more good than anything else in linking up phantasy with reality in the child's mind.

AUTHORITY AND FREEDOM

Before he is adolescent the child can be made:—

1. Mild, amenable, dependable, a type always on the side of the majority. "The Good Boy," "Mother's Boy."

2. Rebel, the type who resents all authority and finally becomes eccentric, a bolshevik, or a crank.

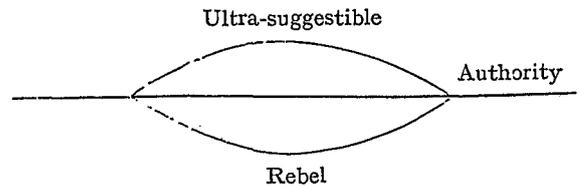
3. Independent, rational, self-reliant.

These types are:—

1. Brought up to be too dependent.

2. Forced to implicit obedience to unreasonable authority.

3. Rationally brought up.



Children often find their way into courts, their rebellion and delinquencies being only rational attempts to find freedom from unreasonable authority.

Ex. A "Mother's Boy" to whom his mother, a widow, was all in all, got a scholarship to a certain school. The headmaster constantly reminded him about this.

He jumped upon him because he was a scholar and wrote at the end of his reports: "He must remember he is under an obligation."

Finally the unreasonableness of the headmaster was too much for him, and he tried to burn down his house. When turned over to the police, his mother asked him, how he could have fallen into the arms of the police. He replied "There were no other arms to fall into."

This case shows both the reaction of unreasonable, unjust authority and the regressive desire to at all costs get back to his mother.

Presenting authority to a child is a difficult matter.

Authority must not be personal, the parent or other grown-up must not put himself in place of God, but should present it as the rules of Society, acting only as interpreters of society's demands.

"Social order cannot be kept if you steal."

"The house cannot be run, if you are late for meals."

"Social ostracism occurs if rules are disobeyed."

Most punishments are insults to children, especially if administered in anger.

AUTHORITY IN WORK.

Examinations are a great strain, and pushing to work is often disastrous.

* From the *Nursing Journal of India*.

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