



All About Raising Children

By Helen Andelin

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In one of the most crucial areas of human life, raising children, parents face many problems of varying degrees and far too many failures. The parents themselves may be excellent persons with the best of intentions and love for their children but they may not necessarily be good parents. This may be because they do not understand children or how to motivate them to good behavior. When parents face these perplexing problems, many of them feel without adequate guidance.

The purpose of this book is to teach parents how to reach success with their children. It explains the kind of persons parents must be, the home life they must provide, the care and devotion required and the close friendship they must build to reach this success. It teaches clear-cut methods of training them to be obedient and responsible, of developing their character and intellect to its highest potential and of building a feeling of self-worth.

In raising children what should our aspirations be? First, we have an important duty to help them find happiness. To help them find this happiness we must help them succeed in important areas of daily living, such as in their studies, their work, their personal achievements and their relationships.

To succeed in all areas we must build the child. We must build his character so he is responsible and honorable with a code for moral living that is solid and unchanging. We must train him to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, refined, well-mannered and self-controlled. We must develop his mind so he can reason soundly, concentrate intently, exercise good judgment and make wise decisions. We must inspire him with the confidence to do what he sets out to do and develop his self-reliance so that he can take care of his own needs and stand on his own feet. We should cultivate his creativity so he is capable of original thought and original work and fire him with ambition to live a useful life.

What would reaching these objectives do for your children? First, it would insure their success and happiness. This does not mean they would have a life free of problems, but they would have the inner resources to deal with these problems effectively. Instead of becoming burdens to society, as so many are, they would be the lifters and the builders.

Parents would benefit equally. They would be spared the anxiety, worry and usual distress parents experience when children are problems. They would feel pride and satisfaction as they see their children mature into honorable, happy adults. They would begin to enjoy the rewards of their many years of dedication and sacrifice. Their children's success would be their success. The father's kingdom would be his family; the mother's glory would be the happiness of her children.

A generation of excellent children would have a profound effect upon society. We would eliminate vice, corruption, violence and most of our social problems. Instead, our youth would begin to build our country in a positive way. Our children would be our country's greatest wealth. To quote the late religious leader, David O. McKay:

"Our country's most precious possession is not our vast acres of rangeland supporting flocks and herds, not our productive farms; not our forest, not our mines and oil wells producing fabulous wealth. Our country's greatest resource is our children."

What are the possibilities of reaching success with our children? Can we reach any potential we desire for them? The following theory makes this seem possible:

Sculpture

I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly fashioned it one day
And as my fingers pressed it, still
It moved and yielded to my will.

I came again when days went past;
The bit of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it still it bore,
But I could change it nevermore!

I took a piece of living clay,
And gently pressed it day by day,
And molded with my power and art
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when years were gone;
It was a man I looked upon.
He still that early impress bore,
And I could fashion him no more.

Anon

Our power to shape a child is profound. We can mold his character, instill a faith in God, build self-worth and almost insure his success and happiness. However, a child is not quite as pliable as a piece of clay. He is born with inherent traits. Our success depends on us recognizing the uniqueness of his personality and guiding him in that direction. Aside from this we have great power to reach high goals, to

bring out the best, noblest elements within him.

Success with children should include each one of them, not just the more promising ones. It would be a serious mistake to pass over a particular child because he is a real challenge. Some parents console themselves because they have other children who meet their expectations. In raising children we should not be satisfied with percentages. We must bring all of our children "into the fold."

The role of parents requires diligence, sacrifice and wise priorities, but we can reach success without sacrificing our entire lives to them. It is not wise, in fact, to confine ourselves entirely to our family life. The doting parent who lives only for his children is not a good parent. He must have a well-rounded life, other interests and make contributions outside the home.

It is possible for parents to have such a life of their own, even in a large family. When children are well-trained they become easy to manage. As they become dependable and responsible they become an asset and actually free their parents to do other things. Parents can enjoy the passing years instead of looking to the day their children are raised. Methods of reaching success are outlined in the four parts of this book.

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