

Are you getting this>>>>>>



“Often you hear stories about never working with children. I disagree because children still have that residual magical thinking. They haven't had their imagination and life experiences knocked out of them by turning into adults.”

Black father's verses society

There are many forces in the United States making for diversity. The United States more than other nations comprises people of disparate cultural heritage and this wide continent provides a variety of geographic regions, each with its own historic roots. Now since resources are wealthier than others, moreover each state retains its own legal structure.

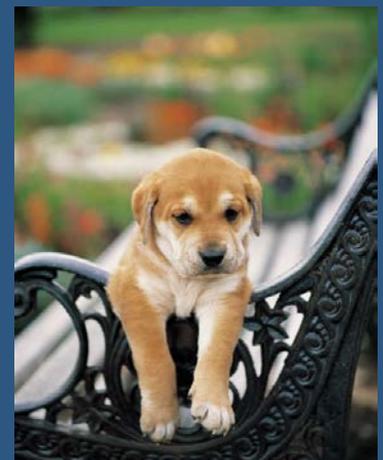
Although Americans prefer to regard themselves as living in a class's society, this is truly not the case. Distinct socioeconomic classes profoundly mold many offering privileges to some and disadvantages to others.

Many minorities are subject to prejudice and discrimination. These geographical historical, political and social forces

combine in different ways to forms a variety of family rather than simply one American family mold.

In considering the father in the black families, bear in mind that although American slaves were subject to systematic efforts to obliterate their African Cultural heritage some aspects of their African lifestyle may remain today especially as expressed in a unique way of relating to each other.

Under slavery the Afro-American family was necessarily matriarchal because black marriages were not recognized under slave law and black fathers were not accorded the status of parent.



Fathers in America

The Father's role and position in the family is troubled seems obvious, but it is an oversimplification to assume that mom singlehandedly created the problem. Many forces conspire to dilute the impact of the father in the home. Critical issues surrounding the role of the father in the turmoil of today's America. The father's role is being undermined for several reasons and these seem to fall into five areas:

1. The father's absences and detachment of work demands.
2. Fragmentation of the family because of the separate interest
3. The knowledge, explosive and rapidity of changes.
4. The changing nature of sex roles.
5. Divorce

1. Fathers Absences

One of the factors eroding the father's position in the family is the nature of work today in urban industrial societies. Father's now are away from the home, so that a degree of father absence is taken for granted. Now this has not been true throughout history, nor is this true in all cultures today (exceptions are the craftsman and the farmer on a small plot of land).

But in our society, the absence of the father through death or divorce can be considered simply an extreme on the prevailing continuum of the father absence. First consider fathers who are executives, scientists, high level technicians, professions. Now second consider unskilled to skilled laborers. Do these two groups differ in the degree of father absence? "Yes."

The typical day may actually under represent the extent to which work absorbs toe executive professional. He may also work weekends or if not may feel the tension of the job (and incidentally of the family) to relax with tennis or golf partners recuperating for the demands of the coming week.

In addition he is frequently away from home on business trips. He is frequently active in civic affairs, from a genuine sense of responsibility. On the other hand, working fathers must also frequently be absent from the family to fulfill these obligations. The salesman must often travel; the serviceman may have duty overseas and the small businessmen spending long hours struggling to become established.

A positive personal commitment to work generally declines in importance as one descends the status hierarchy, because the nature of one's job loses intrinsic appeal. Hence work at the lower socioeconomic levels entails limitations in income and lifestyle but allows more time that can be devoted to one's family.

The activities that working men engage in may be more appealing to little boys of all classes, than professional executive activities , due to the fact all little boys enjoy watching carpenters, demolition crews, automobile mechanics and firemen. The professional executive father's career in contrast may not be understood or appreciated by a small child or middle child but becomes increasingly valued as he/she grows older.

As the child matures the working man's son identification with his father may weaken and may become disenchanted with the family. Although the possibilities for father's detachment are real many professional executive and working fathers can and do balance work and family involvement. Moreover many craftsman and farmers on small farms, although physically present with the family, may lack the energy or motivation to become involved.

Work service as an escape from family hassle is not new. Of course our pluralistic country is composed of families of varied cultural and ethnic heritage and the roles that fathers play vary accordingly.



I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by little scraps of wisdom.

~Umberto Eco

Fathers in America (continued.....)

2. Fragmentations of family interests

It is not simply the absence or preoccupation of the father; however that weakens his impact on his children. The family is fragmented as never before by the disparate interest of its members. Youth culture more compelling in America than in other countries attracts even young children away from the family toward peers who share their separate interests and values. Mother's too, especially in the middle class may be absorbed in her own social and community responsibilities. These diverse interests may leave a family little in common to talk about when they are together. The result may be a home environment that dulls the fathers' effectiveness. But diverse interest need not inevitably fragment the family. In loving families with genuine involvement in one another, diverse interests give the family more to talk about and enrich their lives.

3. The Knowledge Explosion

Another development sabotaging the father's influence in the family is the father's influence in the family is the knowledge explosion. The growth of knowledge is now so rapid that even the most intelligent and intellectually oriented man cannot stay abreast of all that is taught his children in the public school or absorbed through television. The knowledge explosion is the source of ever accelerating change in source of ever accelerating change in virtually every facet of the culture. With the rapidity of technological change and innovation comes a constant revolution of values. Consequently, every adult is living in a transformed and unfamiliar world. Something like a stranger in a foreign land. The world is not the world we he/she knew as a child. And like a foreign country it may be exciting and invigorating even awe inspiring, but it is uncomfortable and it isn't home. To youth however, the contemporary world is home and they are orientated in it. They turned to their peers who share with them the values of the new world of intrinsic every changing environment. For the youth of today as well for the immigrants children, the values transmitted from the past seem of little utility. This condition is exacerbated when a youth scorns the achievements of his father's generation and rejects his way of life by demeaning the value of traditional education, hard work and material wellbeing and by living without plans for the future in unconventional relationships. Now this contempt for older achievements and values is the ultimate repudiation of his fathers' way of life and can only damage a father's effectiveness.

4. Changing nature of sex roles

Another development that undermines a man's confidence and thus indirectly his relationship with his children is the changing nature of sex roles. Regardless of the justice of the demands and the more wholesome relationships between the sexes that should obtain once equality is achieved, this transition period is stressful for many men.

5. Divorce

Another social development combines with those already mentioned to tax the stability of marriage. The belief in the right to personal fulfillment and the belief in the justice of terminating relationships that fail to provide fulfillment and in immorality of maintaining the relationships that do not. Within the recent value system a person whose mate is unstimulating, emotionally or sexually, might feel completely justified in terminating the marriage and guilty for prolonging it. The extremely high divorce rate should not lull us into the comfortable assumption that since it is frequent it could not possibly be tragic. One of the obvious consequences of divorce is that in all but the rare instances that the father is awarded custody, divorce separates the child from his father, a condition that may be compensated for to some extent by visitation of varied length and frequency. If a father lives near his former family, he may become a weekend father with visiting privileges who takes his children on the weekend to playgrounds, parks and museums. This period this should be reserved for re-acquaintance tenderness, affection, and reassurance for of mutual love as a part of being the weekend parent and eventual compensation for underlying emotions of resentment, guilt, competition with the mother for the child and the fear of reports of boredom back to the mother.

Hope for father/child relationships:

The contemporary social revolution has some bright features that may have positive implications for the father-child relationship. Many fathers are more genially motivated to meet the individualistic needs of their children are less likely to impose their own ambitions and hopes on their children and are less authoritarian and arbitrary, as well as less austere and unapproachable than fathers of the recent past.

Now perhaps these underlying positive values coupled with anguish over failure to actualize them, can be developed as motivating forces for discovering more compatible social structures from which satisfactory father-child relationships. It is easy to lose perspective on the father by focusing too narrowly on contemporary issues/problems. It may help to turn from the human condition altogether and examine "our parental behavior!!!"
