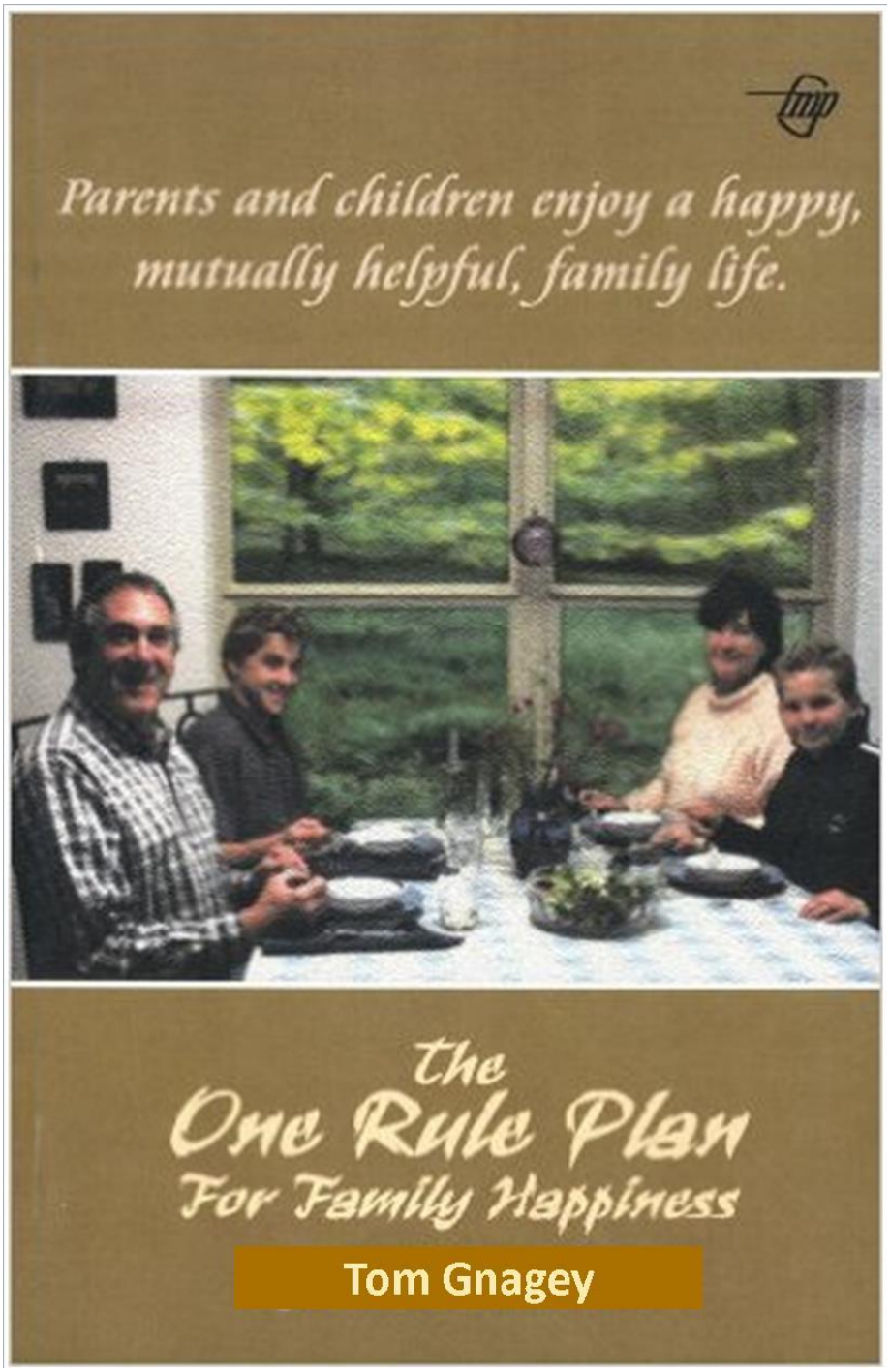
Parents and children enjoy a happy, mutually helpful, family life.
The One Rule Plan For Family Happiness
Tom Gnagey

The
ONE RULE PLAN
For
FAMILY HAPPINESS:

A STEP BY STEP MANUAL FOR PARENTS

3rd edition

By

Tom Gnagey

Clinical Psychologist

A simple plan,
based on the parent's own values,
which allows parents and children to
live together happily and helpfully.

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As a required activity, you are asked to plan, and then go have, a great, self-centered time away from your family!

WHY AN INTRODUCTION?

Have you ever wondered why some books begin with Chapter One and others with an Introduction? In this case, it is because I want us to make certain that we share a common foundation of basic information about ourselves as people, as family members and as knowledgeable parents. To accomplish this I have assembled, here in the Introduction, those topics, ideas and tasks, which I feel are necessary for us to discuss and accomplish in order to assure a solid and similar starting point prior to developing your individualized *One Rule Plan for Family Happiness*.

WHY ARE YOU READING THIS MATERIAL?

Some years ago in my practice as a Family Life Consultant, a lad slipped into my office just ahead of his family's regular session to deliver a warning to me. With genuine concern in his voice, he said, "Watch out Doc! Mamma bought another new how-to-raise-up-kids book."

Perhaps you have found yourself in that same cycle; read a book, try it out, read another, try it out, and so on. It wears you out. It wears the kids out. Even though each book probably had some suggestions you were able to apply, somehow none of the plans seemed to correctly fit you or your special needs.

That is understandable, I believe, because most child rearing or family-life books are written to spread the author's own point of view on how to do whatever it is that he or she is telling you to do. Now, if that author's background, experiences, values, problems, neighborhood, religion, family structure and income level were exactly like yours, the advice offered might fit your situation pretty well. Usually, that is not the case. Is it?

So, you keep looking for ideas that really will fit you, your beliefs and your

circumstances. More than likely, that is why you have invested in, and are now reading this book. It seems very important, therefore, that before we go much further you should hear exactly what I propose to do, and also, learn some things about me so you can clearly understand my biases.

WHY SHOULD YOU LISTEN TO ME?

Please notice I did not ask, "Why should you do what I tell you to do?" I only request that you listen to me, form your own impressions and then proceed according to your own best judgment. (There will be a lot more, about how you may choose to do this later on.)

Let's take a short side trip here. (I believe strongly in the use of side trips. Later I will show you how you may find that you can use them effectively with your family.) Undoubtedly you would like to know some things about me. I have been a son, a brother, a grandson, a father, a foster father, an uncle, a husband, a widower, and an adopted grandfather. I guess you could say I have led a triple professional life. I have written extensively in the areas of self-help, psychology and fiction. For years, I have ghost written and edited books for others because I enjoy learning about other people and writing about them. While those things were going on I also maintained a professional life as a clinical psychologist/Family Life Consultant, a fancy name for someone who sits down with parents and families to help them improve things within their own homes.

I like to think of what I do as helping families learn how to grow together. To me this means two things. Families that come to me have often grown apart and as a result, they are experiencing tension, anxiety, or even open conflict. In this sense, I help them learn how to grow back together. In the second sense, all family members are bound to change over the years. Unless they keep up with

one another, that is, grow-up together, the resulting problems and misunderstandings can lead to terrible distress. So, I try to help families grow-*up* together as well as grow-*back* together.

I see my basic role, in this kind of relationship, as first, to find out where a family wants to be headed and then carefully help them get there. This, I think, is the important difference between my approach and many of those you may have experienced before in other material, books, programs and perhaps from other counselors or therapists. Where they tell you where to go (you know what I mean!), I help you find ways to get yourselves to where you want to go. If you are not sure just where that may be I help you find out, according to your own values and beliefs (not mine or some other author's, or that of some religion). When I state my own beliefs or opinions in this book I try to indicate them clearly as just that so as not to present them to you as facts.

Over the years, I have had my ups and downs like most people. But through it all I have learned to love life and living and have come to value the family unit as the most significant contributor to a person's later happiness, success, contentment and productivity.

I was one of the fortunate ones who happened into a loving, thoughtful, caring family. It helped me build a solid, mentally healthy basis with which to meet life’s challenges and wonders. The family, which my wife, son and I built together, was, you will understand, the highlight of my life. Although they are both gone from my life, the memories of my years with them, continue to be a source of great strength, happiness, contentment, and more than a few smiles and chuckles each and every day.

Through the years, my wife and I had several dozen foster children in and out of our home - some for only several months and others for many years. This One

Rule Plan began to emerge as a way of helping those kids adjust quickly to our home and as a way of helping to reorganize their natural homes so they could one day return there and benefit from life with their own parent or parents.

As a result of these several facets in my own life I began to see that to be a well-adjusted person was *not* an appropriate goal. Adjust*ed* suggests a static, stable condition that would not change - once adjusted that would be it! But, like you, I suppose, I have found that life is an ever changing process. So rather than seeking to be well adjusted I seek to be well adjust*ing*. This simply means being able to give a bit here, and grow a bit there, and learn a whole lot about successful living from every experience that comes down the pike - to change and grow as life requires. This means the rules I set for myself must be flexible enough to meet and include inevitable changes. I therefore seek to become a well adjusting person and wish the same for you.

Early in life, I learned about responsibility, privileges, work, and the value of education. All in all, as I look back on my life, it's obvious that the good and wonder-filled times have far outweighed the bad. That has been due, partly, to the kind of world, which I was fortunate enough to experience, as I was growing up. It was also partly due to my own determination to build a good, happy, productive and useful life. I believe one must decide to take charge of whatever aspects of his or her life that he or she can come to control. For some, that is most things; for others only a few things. But we all need to feel that we are in charge of our own destiny in at least some small way. Children need to feel this just as do adults. Families most certainly need to feel this.

Along the way I have picked up four academic degrees in psychology and communications which, I suppose, afford some credibility to my scientific knowledge about human behavior. I credit life, itself, however, as having been my most profitable teacher. At any rate, please don't hold my academic degrees

against me! (At least, not this early in the book!).

I hope this brief peek into my life and some of the forces that have helped shape it will be helpful to you as you approach the remainder of the book. You should also know several of my basic biases. If I believe one set of things about life and living it would be this: Change is inevitable so we must plan for it and use it to our best advantage as we grow as a person, as a parent and as a family. Since change is a fact of life, the rules we make must allow for change. Our children must be taught how to modify the rules and preferences that we hand down to them, so they can find appropriate ways to survive, grow and prosper in their own World of the future (the nature of which is totally unknown to us as we now try to prepare them for it). No two people's needs, values or goals are the same so the rules we make must be allow for all those differences within our families. I believe that you can learn to make my One Rule Plan do all of these things.

WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?

The answer is probably obvious from what has already been said. The family living experience should be, I think, the greatest and most helpful experience one can ever have. When it is not, it must be fixed as soon as possible. This book - a manual, really - is written to help parents fix family life situations that are not the best that they can be. I hope it can also be used by young families to get them started on their right track and keep them there as they grow and change and learn about life and one another.

Being a parent is a full time job and yet, today, most parents find that they must divide themselves between family and employment. We therefore have to find ways that help us become more efficient as parents. I believe the simplicity of this One Rule Plan can help accomplish that.

Having said all this, I present this manual to you with love and best wishes. So many folks have helped me along the way, I hope that through this book I can, in some way, fulfill their confidence and begin to repay their kindness and unselfish generosity.

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

In the purest, most traditional sense of the term, a family unit is a mother, a father, and their children. The extended family includes close relatives, usually those seen often enough to influence and to be influenced by the smaller family unit.

Over the years, the traditional definition has required changing. Even back in the days of the *Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe,* the traditional family unit didn't exist for many people. It is becoming more and more common these days that children do not live with both natural parents. Often, there is either just one parent (usually the mother) in the family unit, or there is one of the child's natural parents plus a stepparent. In the latter case, there may also be stepbrothers and or sisters.

One alternative family structure, which is becoming more common these days, includes a single teenage mother and her baby living in the girl's mother's home - grandmother, mother, and child; or grandmother, grandfather, mother, mother's brothers and sisters and the teen mother's child. (Can't you just imagine all the bosses that little one might have! It could be a scary world with all those big people around, or it could become a very safe, secure and loving place, depending on the temperament, values and organization of the family.)

A child may find that he or she is actually a part of two separate families, spending some time in one parent's home and some time with the other parent.

There can even be more than two homes involved. A child may be a part of a foster home when things are not working out in his own home.

I know of one case where a child (Matt) lived among three homes and was loved and well cared for in each. (You may need a pencil and paper to keep this all straight!) His parents, Jim and Mary, divorced. Jim married Alice. Mary married Bill. Then after five years, those couples divorced (on friendly terms) and Alice married Bill. Since Alice and Bill (though neither natural parents of Matt) had both grown to love Matt and to be important to him as step parents, they continued to play a positive part in his life, so he spent time with them as well as with each original parent. (Life can get complicated, can't it? Even so, it is still quite possible for it to provide positive experiences for all of the family members.)

More and more families have two, same-sex, parent figures – two mothers or two fathers. In many quarters such arrangements are the focus of scorn and derision which often makes life unnecessarily difficult for the fully innocent children involved.

So, we see that the term family has many descriptions and definitions today. For the purposes of this book, we will assume that a family includes at least one adult and one child. From there on it can mean a whole variety of other things. You know best what you mean by the term family so just think of your own situation each time the word is used.

WHAT IS FAMILY HAPPINESS?

When all is said and done, you will be defining family happiness in whatever way seems appropriate to you. In the meantime, let me offer a few ideas and dispel a few fantasies.

A young mother came to me once and said, "I'm a total failure as a mother! No

matter how hard I try it seems that my kids and I still have problems." This mother had a pretty warped idea of what being part of a family was all about. Since I have heard that same story so many times through the years, I think it may be helpful to begin by suggesting what I believe family happiness *is not*. It is not a utopian state in which problems never occur, where people do not get upset with one another and where Mom's and Dad's plans always work. Problems have to occur. It is part of growing and learning. The helpful family focuses on teaching children how to find acceptable solutions to the problems rather than focusing on the problems themselves. More about that later.

I believe that family happiness is a state in which all parties understand that all family members are helping them experience a happy, growth producing, family life. They come to see that everyone else in the family is on their side. It is a state in which everyone makes honest efforts to help everyone else get the best from life and to develop ways to work up to their personal potential. It is a state in which parents and children work together as a team, learn together about themselves and one another, and discover together how to tailor-make their own family experiences to meet the important needs of every family member. These were the goals my wife and I had when, over a period of twenty-plus years, we used this One Rule Plan for Family Happiness in our home.

I believe that a happy family life means all family members hear at least *fifty* good things about themselves to every *one* not-so-good thing, and that smiles, cooperation and laughter outweigh - 100 to 1 - frowns, arguing and tears. If these seem to be goals you wish to seek within your family, let's work toward them together as we proceed through the rest of this book.

WHAT ABOUT PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

This may seem like a strange place to bring up privileges and responsibilities. I can understand that, but these topics are so important that I want to introduce them early. Discussing them here will help build our common base. As you are probably aware, much of what is written about families and parenting deals primarily with just these two concepts. How one thinks about privileges and responsibilities, so colors how one thinks about family life, that I want to make sure you understand my thoughts before we proceed.

A very bright, eleven year old boy, who kept his family in constant turmoil, once defined privileges and responsibilities to me in this way: "Privileges are what I con Mom into letting me have, and responsibilities are what I con my little brother into doing for me." I said he was bright, and in the context of his family setting, he was entirely correct!

Let me talk about privileges first. I see two basic kinds of privileges - those that come to us free of charge with no strings attached, and those which must be earned or deserved. I call the first type *free-bees*. Sometimes these are referred to as rights rather than privileges. They include things for children such as shelter, clothing, food, sanitary conditions, health and medical care, education, love and affection, freedom, minimal allowances (when possible), truth, beauty, justice, and so on.

All of these, I believe, we are due just because we are a child. Parents may not always be in a position to provide some of them. I understand that. But if they can, they must be provided free - no strings attached. “I love you” – period! Never, “I love you when you. . . .”

The second type of privileges I call *earnables*. They do not come just because the child deserves them. They must be earned. These types of privileges might

include things such as: ten dollars a week, rather than the usual two dollar allowance; the angora sweater, rather than the less expensive and more serviceable cotton sweater; an extra two hours out after the usual curfew; the right to drive the family car; the right to purchase a car, bike or toy; the right to get a part-time job; to watch TV; and on and on down a long list.

With privileges usually come responsibilities. Even the free-bees I mentioned require some responsibilities. For example, the privilege of having clothing requires the responsibility of taking reasonable care of them (A parent's concept of what is *reasonable*, of course, varies from age to age and child to child.). Having food requires that the child be responsible enough not to waste it. Being provided the opportunity for an education requires the responsibility of serious study.

I like to think of two types of responsibilities. The first, are those *required responsibilities* many of which were suggested just above. Those responsibilities that just come with life's territory are required responsibilities. We keep ourselves clean, we do our homework, we carry out our assigned family-help tasks, we are considerate of family members, we get enough sleep at night, we eat properly, and so on. We have little or no say in obtaining these responsibilities. They are just built into our lives - they are simply required!

The second are the *optional responsibilities*. These are responsibilities that may be taken on voluntarily and may or may not produce some special reward. Being a band member can be seen as an earned privilege but can also be seen as an optional responsibility. One is responsible to practice to attain a certain level of competence, to attend rehearsals and functions, and so on but only because one chose to take on this responsibility himself. These are responsibilities no one has to take on (they are optional) but they are necessary if one wants to learn to play the instrument, go on band trips, have friendships with other band

members, and attain the personal satisfaction that comes with musical achievement. When one takes on a non-required privilege one immediately has assumed the associated optional responsibilities as well.

Let's say this in another way. Some privileges come free. We don't have to earn them (free-bees), but even so, some required responsibility may be attached (parents get you the needed medicine, but you must take it wisely). Some privileges must be earned (like first demonstrating you are careful and dependable before you get the privilege of using the family car). In addition to required responsibilities (taking care of a younger sibling when the parent must step out for a while, or mowing the lawn on Saturday), there are some optional responsibilities, which one may take on, but only if he or she wishes to do so (join a team, get a job, take on honors classes, run for student council office, etc.).

So: Privileges may be

Free-bees (rights) or

Earnables.

Responsibilities may be

Required or

Optional.

When optional responsibilities interfere with one's ability to perform the required responsibilities, life is out of balance and things must be reorganized. This often means giving up or cutting back some of the optional activities. This situation may arise for both children and parents. The young teen, is particularly prone to over-extend himself in the area of optional responsibilities. Some optional

responsibilities may be considered important enough to the family that some required things are cut back for a while and other family members may pitch in to take up the slack. Examples of such circumstances might be taking a part in a play at school, a month in Spain to practice one's Spanish, summer camp, being on an athletic team for four months, or some short-term special job.

On the other side of the coin, when optional activities are not being appropriately tended to (doesn't practice the trumpet though wants to remain in the band) the privilege may well need to be put on hold or removed.

[A mini-side trip here. To make this manuscript easier to read and less wordy, I will often be old fashioned and use the words he, him, or his when, you will understand, I really mean he or she, him or her, his or hers.]

Within family settings, the area of responsibilities and privileges can become quite complex and confusing. Some members demand privileges which they, mistakenly, think are free-bees when, in fact, the parents see them as earnables. Having these several categories available can help one quickly sort things out and nip such misunderstandings in the bud. (By the way, I believe that, "Just because everybody else has one," does not automatically make a request for that item a free-bee! Neither does it automatically mean that it may not be obtainable in some way.)

Some responsibilities have to be required just because one is a family member (occasional babysitting, lawn mowing, taking out the trash, doing the dishes, bed making, room cleaning, table setting, etc.). I believe all children need to have some of these. This is the way they contribute freely to the family. It helps them feel important and needed within the family. Even though they may protest, it provides them with the identity of a needed and contributing member of this ("My") family.

In the old days, the boys had to chop wood and do the gardening. The girls had to help can the food and wash the clothes. The sexist aspect of that plan aside, the children were needed as a part of the family team and they each knew it. This built a sense of belonging and being needed that is often lacking in these days of modern conveniences. Some might go so far as to say that those kinds of interdependencies are necessary to build a feeling of family. I tend to agree.

There should (I believe) also be some optional responsibilities available that earn special rewards (payment for housework done above and beyond that normally expected) or special privileges (wash the car and you may use it Saturday night). These optional responsibilities help children learn the value of taking initiative and of working to obtain their own goals. They help them see the World is full of grand possibilities if they will but work for them. They come to see the connection between taking responsibilities seriously and obtaining the privileges or rewards that will follow. When rewards and privileges come without work or responsibilities it is most difficult for children to make the all-important connection. (Spoiled rotten, I think, is one term used to describe kids who have not been asked to learn about making this connection between privileges and responsibilities!).

We will talk about ways of "enforcing" required responsibilities in Section Five.

WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT TRENDS IN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS?

A good understanding of developmental trends is absolutely necessary if a parent is to be successful. I believe most of the friction between parents and their children occurs because, as parents, we may not know, or at least momentarily forget, about some of these normal trends. I will discuss several of

the important trends here, but if you have never studied them in detail, you will want to read a good child development book.

In general these trends can be described according to how much the children have to be (or need to be) dependent upon the parents. Said another way they stem from how much control over the child the parent *needs* to have (not *wants* to have). Or, it can be described in terms of how much or how little parental help and influence is best for the child at any given age (freedom or self-direction).

Let's trace the trends that should occur as gradual changes in several types of relationships between parents and children. The most obvious, perhaps, is physical care. The newborn infant must depend entirely upon his parents for physical care. The need continues to be high through about age four. By this point, the child can help with bathroom processes, baths, feeding, dressing, and even some basic safety skills. Soon after this, the child's need for parental involvement in physical care drops steadily and rapidly. Unless one of your goals is to keep children dependent on you, a good rule to consider is this: Once a child can do something for himself, he should be expected to do it for himself. This builds self-confidence and a healthy self-image. Parents soon learn to ignore the protests when they feel their demands on the child will be best for him or her in the long run (when they are realistic!). *Being a parent should never be thought of as a popularity contest. We do what children need and not what will make them like us.* When we do it well enough, they are almost bound to like us in the long run.

Financial support, as a parental responsibility, lasts longer - well into the late teens, usually. We gradually introduce youngsters to the world of money earning and money management, as they seem ready. Experiences such as managing (and failing at managing) allowances, letting them do odd jobs at home (and later

elsewhere) for extra money, and obtaining regular part-time work in the middle teen years, all help prepare children to eventually become able to support themselves. Some homes provide older children with a clothing allowance and help them learn to live within it. Basic financial support from the parent, however, remains high until the child is a young adult.

Participation in family life is another relationship that shows interesting trends. When small, a child participates in virtually everything. Generally speaking, this remains true through the fifth or sixth grade years - Where the parents go, so go the kids. (One of the exceptions may be the nine or ten year old boy, who often sees no use at all for home and family, except as a place to eat and sleep at those times when his friends are not available to him.)

By Jr. high years, a child's *own* social life, with *his* friends, blossoms and becomes very important. His or her social loyalties begin to be divided between friends and family. Normally, this rapidly tilts toward peers and away from family participation during the high school years. I personally believe it is important to maintain some regular points of contact with high school age children - breakfast and dinner as family times and, if at all possible, some other regular time spent together as a family (one evening each week or half a weekend day). These must, of course, be positive, child-centered times if they are to be useful and helpful. In this way the parent keeps up with the child's plans, dreams, ideas, and needs, just by being there and listening - never needing to pry.

Decision making, is a fourth area in which relationships change drastically over the years. As with physical care, parents make all the decisions for the very young child. I believe children need to begin practicing personal decision making early but always in age appropriate areas and within acceptable limits set by the parents. Even the two year old, who would automatically say "No" when asked if he wanted to hold your hand while crossing the street, can be asked to make this

decision: "Would you rather hold this hand or this hand, today?"

It is necessary that children be allowed and encouraged to practice making decisions that are within their realm of competence and understanding. The One Rule Plan, which we are leading up to, consistently teaches this. As the parent, we have to make certain that we are not asking too much of the child, while at the same time being sure we are asking enough. Some children just seem to be able to make better decisions than others, and so do something at twelve may in no way predicts Todd's readiness at that same age. (One reason the time-honored adage of ‘same rules for all kids’ is not only misguided but can be quite harmful.)

Often, children go through periods in which the quality of their decisions deteriorates a bit for a time. Ups and downs are to be expected but the trend is away from direct parental influence and toward independent decision making. This can't happen in quality ways unless parents plan appropriate, individualized ways for the child to practice.

It is better, I believe, to let our children practice making their own decisions, while Mom and Dad are still around to lend support when things go wrong. I have known many youngsters who had never been allowed to practice and fail while still at home. When they got to college or out on their own in the world of work, they made a disaster of things. They tended to make one poor decision after another and fell apart at even small failures. I believe that if we do our parenting job right, once a child leaves our home (at 18 or so) he will never, really, need us again. We hope he will want us, but we should have prepared him well enough, through carefully planned practice, that he can make it on his own.

I will never forget the seventeen year old who, when contemplating his upcoming move into his own quarters said to me: "I'll be so glad to be on my own so I won't

have to do all the stuff Mom makes me do around the house." A month after he made his move (he was living with two friends) he reported it to me this way: "I am so lucky my Mom taught me how to run a household. My friends are total washouts. Most days I feel like their mother." Perspectives do have a way of changing, thank goodness!

The child's right to privacy is another important area that changes with age. Small children really have no privacy, either physical or mental. As they mature, they need more and more of both. We often forget about the need for mental privacy. By this, I refer to the right to keep private one's own thoughts, ideas, fantasies and dreams. We can understand that when parents pry too much into their children's minds they tend to force and encourage fibs and dishonesty. Patient observation and listening are the best ways to know what youngsters are thinking. Help them to continue to feel free to talk with you about things, but don't press it. Parents who lecture and argue with children soon find communication is cut off. Those parents who listen and ask for their children's opinions, generally keep communication flowing.

Physical privacy (modesty) is more a matter of each family's personal preference. I would only add that children who have learned to be extremely modest at home have a difficult time later on in locker rooms, in the service, at physician's offices, and even in marriage. Each person's body is his own private concern, however, and each should have the right to decide (within reason) how much privacy is right for him. The general trend in physical modesty is that little children feel no need for it whatsoever and it gradually develops until around age eleven or so, by which time most children keep their private areas covered when in the presence of family members of the opposite sex. Girls tend to be more modest than boys.

Children define their own needs for modesty in unique ways. A five-year-old boy, with whom I was acquainted, had been dared by older boys on the school bus to

drop his jeans to the floor. In an attempt to win their favor he complied, dropping everything and standing there Jay-bird naked from the waist down. When later asked by his mother why he had dropped everything when the dare only concerned his jeans, he replied, "Well, Mom, I didn't want them to see my underwear."

Sometimes, the lack of physical modesty on one family member's part may be embarrassing to another. These conflicts of needs have to be worked out. This usually means that the immodest one must come to understand that he or she really needs to cover up when in the presence of the one who is bothered by it. To some degree, at least, we only have the right to do our own thing up to that point where it inflicts discomfort or imposition on someone else.

Home responsibility refers to helping maintain the household. Small children can do less than older children just because of skill differences. The typical trend, however, does not necessarily follow skill levels. I believe all family members need to contribute to the care of the home. If we live here, we help here, is not an inappropriate expectation. The trend usually is that younger children are eager helpers and with proper nurturing this continues to grow until somewhere around third or fourth grade. At that point reminder lists of tasks needing to be completed may be (usually are!) needed. (More later.)

In relation to this, I would like to recall for your consideration, *Grandpa's rule: We work before we play*. It is simply, though forcefully stated! This really is not so much a rule as it is a value statement. Grandpa valued being a responsible worker. He also valued play or he would not have mentioned it in his statement. He did, however, have a definite priority, which his statement makes clear - we work *before* we play. I think you will find that following this sequence will simplify life in most homes. It provides an approach to living that works effectively almost anywhere and at almost any time. (In case you're wondering, that is not the One

Rule Plan. We really will get to that later, I promise!)

Let's take a short side trip about those reminder lists I spoke of above. We will talk more about this kind of thing later on, but, here, just let me mention that all reminder lists need to be designed in two parts - the task and the time. For example:

Make bed - before breakfast each morning

Take out trash - immediately after super each evening

Practice horn for a period not less than thirty-minutes each day, always beginning prior to 6:30 P.M. each day.

Some examples of Grandpa's Rule might be:

Make bed before morning TV viewing.

Take out trash before evening play time.

Practice horn thirty minutes before evening TV viewing.

Usually, those who are to be responsible for each task should be consulted during the list making. Better yet, they make their own suggested list to be approved by, or revised with, the parent (remember, it is the parent's responsibility to be in charge). [End of side trip!]

The trend in home responsibility taking usually is that it peaks around age twelve or thirteen and then drops down a bit and levels off until the child leaves home. Obviously older children will be given those tasks, which need better judgment and more skill.

Finally, the trend in rule-setting. In a typical rule-bound home, parent-made rules just pile up higher and higher as a child gets older. He may have all those he had when younger plus all those that get added on later. As each successive

child comes along, those same rules may be forced on them also, whether they meet their individual needs and skill levels or not. Although this trend is often thought of as fair, it more frequently spells disaster. As we will see presently, with the One Rule approach, the number of rules never (well, seldom) varies from age to age - it is always just one. However, our expectations for a youngster's appropriate application of that rule, does indeed increase with age and maturity.

HOW MAY RELIGION PLAY A PART IN THE ONE RULE PLAN?

The One Rule Plan For Family Happiness is based on the parent's own value system and is a direct outgrowth of it. For families who profess a specific religion, I think you will find it quite easy to utilize the One Rule Plan. As a church member, you probably already adhere to a set of beliefs and values established by that church. (I know, exceptions, do apply here.) Some of those beliefs may be the ones you want to select as the basic values upon which you will base your plan. (We will go into this in great detail later.)

If formal religion does not play such a major role in your family, I think you will find that the ideas and activities suggested here, will be helpful in recognizing and organizing your own ideas and beliefs into your own personal value system. This is a necessary first step in this plan, as you will see, shortly.

During the 1950's, there were a series of merger discussions among the several very small Protestant churches in the little community where I lived. These inevitably involved debates of beliefs and rites and other practices. At one meeting a member of the Baptist church stood up and said with some consternation, "I don't see what all the fuss is about. I think it would be just great if everyone in town came to one big Baptist church."

Unlike that spokesperson who just assumed everyone should be happy believing as she did, this approach is far less interested in what you believe, than it is in helping you develop a plan that incorporates your beliefs into the plan.

HOW IS THE REST OF THIS BOOK ORGANIZED?

It has been suggested that a successful public speaker first tells his audience what he is going to say, then he says it, and finally, he tells them what it was he just said. This book – let's call it a manual - is organized in that same manner. We know that reviewing is the most important step in learning. Therefore, I will build in a review of the material at the end of each section. I will introduce each section with a list of the questions that will be addressed there. Within the body of each section, I may stop and ask you to think about what we have covered up to that point. I may review it with you briefly before proceeding, or say the same thing in several different ways when my experience has shown me that it seems to be a difficult concept to grasp the first time thorough. When I think we may need certain basic information before proceeding, I will take you on a short side trip in order to provide it. In general, most concepts will be introduced in one section and then developed further in future sections.

More specifically, we are going to begin by having you complete two *Inventories* to help you get a better idea of what you now believe about a number of important, related topics. This will be vital information for you to use in building your individualized *One Rule Plan for Family Happiness*.

Then we will talk about rules - rules that work and rules that won't work, and why. We will learn how to formulate and write workable rules and how to know if your rules are helping or hurting your family. We will analyze your present rules. We will translate your own values into your very own One Rule Plan For Family

Happiness.

We will then talk about the principles of getting along with others, especially other family members. This will be followed by a presentation of many real life examples, which illustrate how the One Rule Plan works. Throughout all of this you will come face to face with your own personal values and major beliefs and you will learn how to pass these on to your children . . . if you decide that is what you want to do.

We will talk about many specific topics such as individual differences, discipline, side trips, rule enforcement, problem solving techniques, good social skills, time-saving automatic routines and schedules, and teenage rebellion (and why you will come to appreciate it!).

WHERE ARE YOU NOW AS A PERSON AND PARENT?

In this section, you will complete two Inventories - *The Parent Inventory* and *The Value Inventory*. In both cases, the results are strictly private. No one else ever need see the results unless you decide to reveal them. Be as completely honest with yourself as possible when completing these. Otherwise, you won't have realistic information to use later on in this manual. One nice thing about these inventories is that there really are no right or wrong answers, just responses that describe you as of this moment. If you are honest with your responses, you get a grade of 100% regardless of what those answers are.

If yours is a two-parent home, I hope that both of you will be engaged in using this manual. It isn't necessary, of course, but it certainly makes it easier to implement changes. If both adults are involved you will want to make four extra copies of each inventory for your own use (even though you will see that they are both copyrighted). This will allow you to complete them a second time after

reading this manual, providing a before and after look at yourself.

The Value Inventory: An inventory such as this one is an informal way of helping you weigh certain personal traits as being more or less important to you than are other traits. From each of the fifty-five pairings of traits, you are asked to select the one, which you want most for your children during their lifetime. Sometimes it may be difficult to choose one over the other because they both seem either very important or very unimportant to you. In each case, though, do your best and choose just one. Circle the letter in front of the trait or phrase, which you decide is more important to you. Do not try to decide which choice may make you look better to someone else. Just circle the one you honestly feel you now desire for your children. Later on in the manual, we will return to analyze your responses. For now, just complete the choices and set it aside.

Below, I will briefly describe what I mean by some of the words and phrases used in the Inventory. Keep these meanings in mind as you make your choices. For those phrases not described here, assume they mean just what common sense tells you they mean.

Moral and ethical = That which is right and fair in human conduct.

Famous = Widely known and easily recognized.

Success in job = Be known as one of the best there is at doing what you do.

Power = Have and use great power or authority over others to obtain what one wants.

Knowledge and Understanding = Has learned a lot of things and understands how those things fit and work together.

Social acceptance = In general, the people of the community really like to have this person around them.

Altruism = Being almost totally unselfish toward others - being able to put others' needs or comfort on a par with or even sometimes before your own.

Now, please complete the *Value Inventory* before you read any further Once you have that inventory finished, then please go right ahead and complete the *Parent Inventory* (which follows). The instructions for filling them out, are on the inventories. When both inventories have been completed, you are ready to do the activity below and then to read Chapter One. [Inventories will be found right below the SUMMARY OF THE INTRODUCTION]

ACTIVITY: Planning for yourself

Plan a time for yourself (no spouse - a friend is OK, however) to be away from your home and family responsibilities for at least four hours (all at once!). Really be self-centered about this and do something you really want to do. If you can't think of anything (fat chance!) look around at what others your age do for fun and pick something to try. (If it doesn't turn out to be great you just may have to keep trying other things until something does!)

Perhaps you will need to trade baby-sitting with a friend. This way you can take off one day and your friend can do the same another day. This activity may or may not cost any money. It could be a movie, an athletic event or an afternoon in the park or sharing a cup of *Cafe Italiano* at a good friend's house as the spring rain gently falls outside. The important thing is to relax and have a great time. Then try to repeat this at least once each week. I hope you and your spouse (if applicable) can also get away together at least once every other week.

SUMMARY OF THE INTRODUCTION

We spoke of the importance of having a common basis of knowledge before proceeding to the body of this book (manual). To accomplish that we talked about the changing make-up of families, about privileges and responsibilities, some trends in parent-child relationships, the role religion may or may not play in your One Rule Plan, and I asked you to complete two inventories, the results from which we will use later on. In this section, as in all of those that follow, I suggest you turn back to the first page of the Introduction and answer each of the questions posed there. When you are not certain of an answer refer to the text and clarify that topic before going any further. Believe me, we have a grand adventure ahead of us!

Family Value Inventory

PURPOSE: *The Family Value Inventory* is designed to help parents determine which aspects of life they value enough to want to pass on to their children. This inventory is composed of eleven of the values most frequently encountered by the author during his thirty years as a Family Life Consultant. Most of them tend to help build a positive family life and mentally healthy children. Several, generally less helpful values, have been included, because of the frequency with which they seem to be held by parents who are experiencing parenting problems.

DEFINITIONS: These are the definitions of each value as intended in this e.

Self Confidence/self esteem: To believe in the genuine positive worth and capability of oneself.

Altruism. Being almost totally unselfish toward others.

Integrity. Moral and ethical beliefs supporting what is right and fair in human conduct.

Happiness/contentment. Enjoying, and being satisfied with ones life and with the relationships and other common aspects that make it up.

Knowledge/understanding. To learn a lot of things and being able to see how those things fit and work together.

Love/friendship. Feeling liked and loved by people who are important to you, and feeling you are actually a lovable, likeable person.

Success in job. Being known as one of the very best there is at doing what you do.

Social acceptance. In general, having the people of your community really like to

have you around them, so they include you in their plans and activities.

Power over others. Having and wielding great power or authority over others in order to obtain what you want.

Fame. Being widely known and easily recognized most everywhere one goes.

Wealth. Having accumulated great sums of money or other symbols of wealth.

INSTRUCTIONS: Below you will find fifty-five pairs of values (those defined above). In each case you are to circle the letter in front of the one of those two, which you believe is most important for you to see develop in your children as they grow up. There are no right or wrong choices in an inventory like this one. The only goal is to help you discover which things you value more and which things you may value less.

PREPARATION OF THE SCORES FOR INTERPRETA-TION: Directions are provided at the end of the inventory. It is best to complete the inventory before reading these directions.

INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS: See the discussion in the text of the book, *The One Rule Plan for Family Happiness*, by Garrison Hutchison.

The Family Value Inventory

(Select and circle one from each pair.)

1. A. Self-confidence B. Altruism
2. C. Integrity D. Happiness
3. B. Altruism E. Knowledge

4. F. Love/friendship G. Success in job

5. A. Self-confidence C. Integrity

6. D. Happiness F. Knowledge

7. B. Altruism F. Love/friendship

8. E. Knowledge K. Wealth

9. F. Love/friendship H. Social acceptance

10. A. Self-confidence D. Happiness

11. C. Integrity E. Knowledge

12. B. Altruism G. Success

13. D. Happiness F. Love/friendship

14. G. Success in job H. Social acceptance

15. A. Self-confidence E. Knowledge

16. F. Love/friendship I. Power

17. B. Altruism H. Social acceptance

18. D. Happiness K. Wealth

19. G. Success in job J. Fame

20. A. Self-confidence F. Love/friendship

21. H. Social acceptance K. Wealth

22. B. Altruism I. Fame

23. C. Integrity F. Love/friendship

24. H. Social acceptance I. Power

25. A. Self-confidence G. Success in job

26. E. Knowledge F. Love/friendship

27. B. Altruism J. Fame

28. C. Integrity G. Success in job

29. I. Power K. Wealth

30. A. Self-confidence H. Social acceptance

31. E. Knowledge G. Success in job

32. B. Altruism K. Wealth

33. C. Integrity H. Social acceptance

34. J. Fame K. Wealth

35. A. Self-confidence I. Power

36. G. Success in job K. Wealth

37. D. Happiness H. Social acceptance

38. I. Power J. Fame

39. E. Knowledge H. Social acceptance

40. A. Self-confidence J. Fame

41. C. Integrity I. Power

42. H. Social acceptance J. Fame

43. E. Knowledge I. Power

44. D. Happiness G. Success in job

45. A. Self-confidence K. Wealth

46. C. Integrity K. Fame

47. D. Happiness I. Power

48. E. Knowledge J. Fame

49. F. Love/friendship K. Wealth

50. B. Altruism C. Integrity

51. D. Happiness J. Fame

52. G. Success in job I. Power

53. C. Integrity K. Wealth

54. F. Love/friendship J. Fame

55. B. Altruism D. Happiness

If you are completing this inventory as a part of the One Rule Plan For Family Happiness book, return now to your reading in that book. You will be told when to return here and summarize the results.

SUMMARIZING THE RESULTS:

The Values:

Each pair of phrases above is numbered 1 through 55. Each phrase is lettered - A through K. To score the Inventory you count the number of times each letter is circled. Make a list down a page - letters 'A' through 'K' and enter a hash mark next to each letter as you find them circled. Count the marks and enter a total to the right of each letter. You may want to write the name of the trait beside it for later reference. [OR, make a copy of the form below.] The interpretation will be provided later on.

The Family Value Inventory

Score Summary Section

The Values	Total Scores
	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
A- Self Confidence	. . . .
B- Altruism	. . . .
C- Integrity	. . . .
D- Happiness	. . . .
E- Knowledge	. . . .
F- Love/friendship	. . . .
G- Success on job	. . . .
H- Social Acceptance	. . . .
I- Power over others	. . . .
J- Fame	. . . .
K- Wealth	. . . .

The Value Importance List:

The Value Importance List is a way of arranging the values by name from those you chose most often as really important to you, to those you chose as less important to you. (See text for interpretation of what this means.) When several have the same total score, you decide in which order to enter those.

Example: Assume here that Fame receives the highest number of choices giving

it the highest score of 9. Write Fame on line number 1. If wealth is the next highest with a score of 7, write in Wealth on the line beside number 2. If Power and Success both receive a score of 4, you decide which you feel is more important to you and write that on line number 3 and the other on line number 4. Enter all values in order of score so your final list contains all eleven values.

Value Importance List

HIGHEST SCORE 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

LOWEST SCORE 11. _____

PARENTING INVENTORY

SECTION ONE

INSTRUCTIONS: The descriptions of parenting procedures found within each of the following five sets of statements are arranged from the least appropriate or comfortable at the top of each list, to the most comfortable or appropriate at the bottom. Decide in each set which *one* phrase describes your present situation best, and enter that number in the, *I'm At*, space to the right. Then go right on to the next section. When you have finished all five sets, start over back at set A and decide which phrase best describes where you *eventually* want to be. Put the number of that phrase, in the, *I want*, space to the right. Later you will receive instructions on how to complete the rest of the section at the right side of the page, and how to determine what it has to tell you. [Some E-book formats will let you copy the form. On others you will just need to innovate.]

Why are you a parent?

I'm at ____ I want ____ Difference = ____

1. It just sort of happened.
2. I wanted marriage, and children just came along.
3. My spouse wanted children so I just went along.
4. My parents (or in laws) expected children so I went along.
5. Although I did not expect to like being a parent, I am happy to say it is mostly OK.

6. I have long wanted to be a parent, so I have worked toward becoming one, and I am happy about it.

B. How do you feel about being a parent?

I'm at ____ I want ____ Difference = ____

1. I hate it most of the time.
2. Right now I don't like it much.
3. I'm sure it's too difficult for me.
4. It's worse than I thought it would be.
5. It may be too difficult a job for me.
6. It's better that I thought it would be.
7. Most of the time I like it.
8. It is wonderful! I love it!

C. How do you feel about children?

I'm at ____ I want ____ Difference = ____

1. I seldom like them much.
2. Having children was a big mistake.
3. I love them, but often do not like them much.
4. I love them and usually like them.
5. Having a child is great for me!

D. How good do think you are as a parent?

I'm at __ I want __ Difference = ____

1. I am sure I am really inadequate (bad)
2. I have no idea.
3. At best, I am only adequate (average or below)
4. I am usually pretty good.
5. I am a great parent and proud of it.

E. (If there is another parent in the home)

I'm at ____ I want ____ Difference = ____

1. We usually disagree.
2. We often disagree.
3. We agree far more than we disagree.
4. Basically, we always pretty much agree.

SECTION TWO

INSTRUCTIONS: Within this section you will find a list of some parenting practices which have been found to be associated with happy, well adjusting, helpful family life. Circle the + sign in front of each phrase that usually applies to you.

\+ 1. Tell children you love them.

\+ 2. Hug and or kiss the children at least daily.

\+ 3. Take time to stop and listen when children have something to say or ask.

+ 4. Have clearly stated, easily understood rules and expectations for the children.

+ 5. Sometimes tailor-make some rules just for one specific child.

+ 6. Revise rules as called for by the changing circumstances, ages, etc.

+ 7. Enforce the rules immediately the first time they are broken.

+ 8. Notify the children ahead of time if a rule is to be changed.

+ 9. Spend at least a few minutes alone with each child each day.

+ 10. Attend the child's special events (at school, scouts, church, etc.).

+ 11. Visit each child's school and meet each teacher.

+ 12. See that homework is completed regularly.

+ 13. Limit TV viewing time and monitor program content.

+ 14. Answer child's questions about life, sex, and drugs as those questions arise.

+ 15. Conduct your life as you want and expect your child to conduct and live his.

+ 16. Usually have at least two sit-down meals each day with your child(ren).

+ 17. Sit down regularly and review your rules and expectations with your children.

+ 18. Discuss parenting concerns calmly with your spouse.

+ 19. See that each child has some free time each day.

+ 20. Meet and get to know your child's regular friends.

+ 21. Expect and allow each child to act his or her actual age.

+ 22. I am not afraid to correct my child(ren).

+ 23. I expect and encourage my child to be honest.

+ 24. I expect and encourage my child to be polite and considerate of others.

+ 25. I expect and encourage my child to be friendly toward others.

+ 26. I expect and encourage my child to be cooperative.

+ 27. I expect and encourage my child to read books.

+ 28. I have regular jobs for my children to complete at home.

+ 29. I see that those jobs are done on time.

+ 30. I see that those jobs are completed to the best of each child's level of ability.

+ 31. I expect the child(ren) to help out at home without expecting to always be paid.

+ 32. I provide payment or reward for extra jobs as I can.

+ 33. I regularly say things to my child to make him feel good about himself.

+ 34. I provide adequate food, clothing and shelter for my child.

+ 35. I see to it that I regularly have long periods of time to spend with my child(ren).

+ 36. My spouse and I (if together) arrange to have time together away from the children.

+ 37. I spend time learning about what is normal and less normal behavior in children, by reading books and articles, watching related TV programs, attending lectures or seminars, etc.

SECTION THREE

INSTRUCTIONS: Within the following list you will find another set of possible

parenting characteristics. Circle the - sign in front of each phrase that frequently describes you:

- 1. I yell at my child quite often.
– 2. I hit my child when I am angry.
– 3. Once I start hitting a child I have difficulty stopping.
- 4. I belittle my child, indicating to him that he is no good.
- 5. I embarrass my child in front of others.
– 6. I tell my child I don't like him or her.
– 7. I tell my child he or she is too much of a burden to me.
- 8. I let my child suck me into arguments.
- 9. I give-in to my child when I know I shouldn't.
- 10. I place too much responsibility on my child.
– 11. I allow (or at least do not prevent) another adult to abuse my child.
- 12. Spanking or hitting or slapping is my usual method of correction.
– 13. I overlook my child's illegal activities.
- 14. I regularly let my child sleep in my bed with me at night.
- 15. I'm afraid my child won't like me if I discipline him.
- 16. I'm afraid my spouse (or my parents or in-laws) won't like me if I discipline the child.
– 17. I am afraid of my child.
– 18. I engage in sexual activity with my child.
- 19. I feel depressed when I think about being a parent.

- 20. I seldom cook meals for my child.
- 21. I seldom have us sit down and eat meals together as a family.
- 22. I allow the TV to be on during meal times.
- 23. I use the TV like a baby-sitter.

(As you realize, this last list is made up of parenting behaviors that are frequently associated with unhappy families that are experiencing serious problems. Refer to the book, *The One Rule Plan for Family Happiness*, for help in understanding what your responses may mean, and for ideas which may be helpful if you decide you want to modify any of the feelings or behaviors reflected in you responses. In the book the longer dashes in from of the numbers are referred to as ‘bolder’.)

SECTION ONE

Let's talk about rules

In Section One, we will address these seven questions:

What is a rule?

Who makes rules?

In a general way, how can rules be enforced?

What makes a rule either easy or difficult to enforce?

What kinds of rules do families have?

How can rules help families?

How can rules hurt families?

For the activity in Section One, you will be asked to list and then examine your family's present set of rules.

SECTION ONE: LET'S TALK ABOUT RULES

WHAT IS A RULE?

Before answering that question, let me answer another one that may have occurred to you. If this book is about guiding family life by just one rule, then why spend an entire section on rules? If we are going to devise just one rule for your family it had better be the very best one anybody ever created, right? To do that, we need to know as much as possible about what goes into making appropriate and inappropriate, helpful and non-helpful rules. This section is intended to help you understand all the in's and out's of rule construction.

Now, back to the original question. What is a rule? Quite simply, a rule is just a statement that something shall or shall not take place. For example: "You shall complete your homework each day as soon as you get home from school." Or, "You shall not hit girls." The first rule is stated positively, that is, it states what *will* be done. A good positive rule does not leave room for various interpretations. Here is another positive rule that tries to accomplish the same thing but it has a built-in problem of interpretation: "You shall complete your homework after school each day before you can go out to play." What happens in case the child decides to stay inside and play? He may think this means the whole rule no longer applies. Maybe he is going to mow someone's lawn. That is certainly not going out to play. Again, he thinks he can legally slide by the rule and not do his homework immediately after school.

I believe that, in general, positive rules - that is those that say what shall or may be done, are better for families than negative rules - those that say what cannot be done (like the hit girls rule, above). Sometimes (as we will see later) short-term negative rules may be needed for some children to help them change an unacceptable behavior. In general, positive rules will be found to be of more

help.

Why? Well, children need to know what kinds of behaviors we *do* expect of them. If all our rules are *don't* rules, children are only learning what we won't accept, not what we will accept. ("Ok, so I'm not supposed to hit girls. How am I supposed to react to girls when they make me mad or I disagree with them?") The "don't hit girls rule" does not offer a single clue about what should or could be done instead.

Perhaps the best rule in this case, and the one which socially successful adults use, is this: "Use one of the proven problem solving techniques when you have a dispute with a girl." Now, (you observe keenly!) that rule is every bit as bad for a youngster as the original one if he has not been taught those proven problem solving techniques (which we will talk about later on). In other words, *rules must not require a skill, which the child does not yet possess*.

I will always remember the day I said to my own son, "Stop acting so childish!" He looked up at me with his big blue eyes and disheveled hair and said, "But Daddy, I'm only five. How else am I supposed to behave?" (My we can learn a lot from listening to our children, can't we!) By the way, when I said, "Stop acting childish," I was using what I call a mini-rule. A *mini-rule* is not a written down rule. It is one made up for the moment (and made up rather poorly in that case?! I could have said, “Act more grown up,” but he could have legitimately returned the very same response to me, couldn’t he?)

Let's think of another example of a mini-rule. Perhaps we are on a picnic at a spot that is close to a beautiful, inviting, rapidly running, stream and we say, "Please, stay on this side of the big tree." (That will keep them a safe distance from the water, yet close enough so they can throw stones in it and have other fun.)

Now, one of these two mini-rules ("childish" or "stream") is negative and one is positive. Which is which? "Don't act childish," is negative, because it says what not to do. "Stay on this side of the big tree," is positive because it suggests what the children may do. But, you may be thinking, negative or positive, they both really mean the same thing. We could just as well say, "Don't get near the stream."

They do mean the same thing *in a way*. But there is an important difference. My experience suggests, that a child who grows up in a negative rule home, learns that the World is just full of things he can't do, while in the positive rule home he learns that the World is just full of things that he can do. In the first home, the child grows to see life as limiting, and in the second, he comes to see life as full of possibilities. Children from negative rule homes often learn to be pessimistic to an extreme and to believe that nothing, which is fun, new, or intriguing, is ever going to be allowed. They also often feel that they must be a bad person inside, because so much of what they really want or need to do is prohibited, and therefore must be bad. (Don't hit, don't get so angry, don't yell, don't stay out so late, don't act childish, don't ruin your appetite, don't run indoors, don't make Mom feel bad, and so on. It would seem there are enough bad things to fill a volume.)

It has been my experience that children from positive rule homes generally feel good about themselves, their future, and the World around them. At the same time, they really are learning what not to do by learning what they should be doing. ("If I should be focusing on and solving the problems when I have disputes with others, then obviously fighting them is not appropriate.")

If you only have time to read and contemplate one paragraph in this book, please make it this one. And if you only have time to implement one concept from this book, please make it this one. *Help your children develop a sense for what is*

precious. I will explain. My experience with families and children has proved to me, time and time again, that children who have no sense that certain things in this World are to be considered precious, are hundreds of times more likely to inflict pain on others, steal from others, and treat others with disrespect. *A sense of precious means having experienced for oneself how important, valuable, and irreplaceable something or some relationship can be. It means to have valued something at an emotional level, not just at a material level.* Usually, it also means having experienced, or at least thought about, the genuine feelings of grief that come with the loss of such a personally valued possession or relationship. Having had these kinds of personal, emotional level, experiences, can then translate into a sense of empathy for the needs, desires and feelings of others. Without this sense of precious, I sincerely doubt if empathy and altruistic (selfless) caring about others can ever develop. Only when one appreciates, at an emotional level, how precious certain things and people can be to oneself, can one exhibit the strength of character to refrain from taking from, hurting, or demeaning others. Only then can one feel the hurt being felt by another and be guided by that knowledge. Only then can one set out to see that others have the opportunity to experience for themselves those wonderfully positive feelings about others, which only occur when one has a sense for what is precious. Only then, does the wellbeing of all people become the most precious element of living. Positive rule homes have a good chance of producing and cultivating children who possess a sense of precious. Negative rule homes have virtually no chance. (End of sermon.)

So, there are long-term rules, which we expect children to follow for years, and there are short-term rules (I have called these Mini-rules) that are just for special occasions. Rules may be stated positively or negatively. Positive rules tend to help children build more of the characteristics most parents want for their

children. Helping children to value things themselves, helps them develop empathy and altruism.

WHO MAKES RULES?

To be accurate, we all make rules, but the only ones that count are the ones made by those who have the power to enforce them. In a family, parents should be the ones with that power. As children grow older and more mature they get to practice trying to live by their own rules (a bit at a time), but the parents remain the ones who should almost always reserve the power to make (or approve) and enforce the rules.

One of the major tasks of childrearing is, I believe, helping children learn about rules - finding out which kinds are helpful and which aren't, and why. A parent might, for example, allow a sixteen year old to set his or her own bed time, providing his is up on time, pleasant to the other family members in the morning, and functions well throughout the day. We would not, of course, give a six year old that same privilege (a privilege and a responsibility, really.) We might, however, allow a six-year-old to make up the rules for a card game to be played just for fun, or we might let him decide whether he will take his bath at 7:00 or 7:30 (when either is really all right with the parent). In these ways, the younger child begins practicing the all-important rule making process and learns how his attempts turn out.

Many families have trouble with rules because it is not made clear on a daily basis that the parents are, in the end, in charge of *all* rules. When a child talks us out of enforcing a rule, the child is then in charge of making the rule. Sometimes that may be acceptable, but when it occurs, it must be understood, that it is just a one-time deal, made because of special circumstances, and that it

is back to Mom's and Dad's way the very next time.

My wife and I often recognized that when we once let a rule slip without enforcing it many of our foster children would assume that rule no longer existed. This even happened when we would specifically state that this is a special occasion so we won't worry about such and such. We thought we were doing something nice for them, but in reality, we were confusing them. Children who have lived with non-enforced rules find it very easy to believe all rules are only temporary, and that once turned off, the child then has the right to make up his own rule to cover that situation.

One of the nice things that happens as children mature, is that, more and more, they can share in the rule-making process. When they have good reasons for rule changes, and when they can be counted on to use good judgment in abiding by those changes, then they get to help set some of their own rules. But it is still understood that the rules are the parent's rules.

Children are always lobbying for rule changes. (What? That's *not* news to you?) It is just to be expected, isn't it? We do not change them unless, as the parent, we come to see how a change will benefit the family (or the child) in the long run. By benefit, we mean truly help him in the growing-up-into-a-fine-person sense of the word. We never change a rule merely so a child will like us better. I remind us again that being a parent must never be seen as a _____ _____ (what, what)? Right, a *popularity contest*. As parents, we always try to do what is best and not what is necessarily best liked.

Then there are all of the outside-of-the-home-advice-givers - relatives, friends, columnists, talk show guests, authors and me. All these folks have ideas about rules - how many, which ones, and so on. You, as the parent, have to sort through it all and decide by using your own best judgment, which to consider and

which to dismiss. (We will talk more about this as we go on. A little later, I am going to suggest to you the One Rule Plan. This will be one more piece of advice for you to consider.)

IN A GENERAL WAY, HOW CAN RULES BE ENFORCED

In Section Five, I will suggest a number of more specific techniques, which I believe you will find helpful in enforcing rules. Here, I just want us to think about some general, basic approaches that may be found to be helpful.

Power, of course, is the mainstay of rule enforcement. Power within a family can flow from several different sources. In the eyes of most children, parents have power just because they are parents. The position of parent or adult is enough to encourage most children to abide by an adult's rules and requests. Not all children buy into this position-equals-power scheme, however. My wife and I found that many foster children, especially the ones who came from homes having weak or depressed parents, felt no responsibility whatsoever to comply with our wishes merely because we occupied the parental seat.

Making youngsters fear you is another kind of power. It is not one I recommend, however, because it is so hard for a child to do his best when he has to be constantly afraid (ever have stage fright?). We also know that kids who behave just because they are afraid they will be punished if caught doing something wrong, tend to become very sneaky and quite skillful in finding ways to avoid being caught. So, when they behave themselves, it is only because they are afraid to behave badly, rather than because they have learned that to behave well pays off for them in positive ways. They see themselves as bad guys who have to disguise themselves as good guys in order to avoid pain. Also, they spend a good deal of time plotting how to get out from under the parent's thumb

so they can go and try out all those forbidden things away from home.

A study on a related subject was done in a Jr. High School. It was found that students leaving a classroom controlled through fear techniques, tended to "go wild" once released into the halls between classes, while those from positively controlled rooms, went about their business in the halls in an orderly manner. Be assured that the very same findings apply when children leave a fear-based home, compared with a positive-based home.

I often call the fear approach the lazy approach to parenting. ("I'll just be scary enough and my kids will behave. Then I can just sit back. No need to concern myself with all of this fancy help-your-kids-to-learn-how-to-control-themselves baloney.") This lazy approach does not require that the parent ever even attempt to help their children learn how to select and use values or make appropriate social judgments. The parent who controls through fear sees no need to learn about the developmental stages of childhood or positive mental health principles or the teaching of social skills. It really is a lazy man's approach.

Basically, the child from a fear-based home tends to learn, first of all, that he who is successful at being sneaky gets the breaks, and second of all, that he who can inflict the most pain, wins. A sizeable portion of our society today appears to believe in child rearing methods that produce those two outcomes. That really scares me! Those are not the kinds of things I want as the basis of our society during the reign of the next generation. How about you? This becomes one of your first and very biggest decisions here in this One Rule Program!

Respect is another form of power, very different from fear, though some parents (many, perhaps) confuse the two. Respect, as used here, means that the child thinks you are a great model and wants to become like you. He thinks you are wise and feels affection for you. He asks to hear your opinions and usually

believes that if you made these rules they must be pretty good (although he will most likely not tell you so until he's twenty-five!). Generally, children try to avoid a feared parent and seek to be with a respected one. Fear *demands* compliance. Respect *inspires* compliance.

Some parents fall into the trap of bribing children to behave or to follow the rules. Let's take a minute here to talk about the major (and frequently overlooked) difference between a bribe and a reward. A *bribe* is given before the desired act is performed. ("Here's a candy bar, now go clean your room.") The smart youngster eats the candy bar and stays put. After all, a parent who's into bribery may well give him two or even three candy bars in order to get the job done. In other words, a bribe never guarantees a job gets done because the payoff is delivered before the fact rather than after the fact. (It is akin to Grandpa's Rule.)

A *reward* is given after the job is completed satisfactorily. Note the three key ingredients in a reward - *after, completed, satisfactorily*. A reward is often agreed upon ahead of time ("I'll pay you $5.00 to clean out the fireplace. This is how it is to be done and this will tell me it has been completed correctly.") That is an anticipated reward, much like the salary you may earn at work. Rewards may also be unanticipated. The child does an extra amount of work or shows extreme patience with little sister while on a family shopping trip that became far too long, so Mom provides an unexpected treat as a reward. Homes, which provide occasional, unanticipated rewards, are consistently rated as pleasant places by the children who live there. These parents see their children as more helpful than do parents from homes that do not utilize this practice.

Rewards can take several forms. They may be tangible, such as toys, extended bedtime hour, a special privilege, money, etc. They may also be intangibles, such as praise, a hug, or Mom bragging to Dad about young Billy (within earshot of Billy.).

My best advice is not to get caught up in the bribing syndrome because the parent always loses and the child always wins (wins in the *short run*, only, of course). We will talk a lot more about appropriate uses of rewards later on.

Trades are another way to enforce rules or to get things accomplished. They are really a special case of either a bribe or a reward. ("I'll tell you what, Jenny," Mom says, "If you'll fold the clean clothes right now, I'll do the dishes for you tonight, because I know you would like to leave early for the game.")

Trades, as part of a reward system, are healthy and helpful procedures, I think, if used within reason and when both parties concerned *really* agree to the trade. The occasional trading of jobs or responsibilities between children is also all right, I believe. It teaches children important lessons about give and take relationships and being thoughtful and helpful to our loved ones. Just be certain that the parent approves these trades ahead of time.

Some people have the capacity to charm or con others into doing things. (Sometimes this is termed charisma.) When the parent's power depends on charm or the con, the children may go along with them, but they really haven't accepted the rules as good, in and of themselves. They just follow them because of the "spell" the parent weaves. When children mimic such processes, it only teaches them to try and get by on personality rather than by pulling their own weight.

The final enforcement method, which we will talk about here, is *enforcement by designation*. Sometimes the parents cannot be present so they designate an older sibling or baby-sitter to act in their place and enforce their rules. This must always be understood to be a temporary measure. It must only apply during the parent's absence. Sometimes older brothers and sisters get the idea that they always have the right to be the boss over younger siblings. Older

siblings usually aren't consistently wise enough or knowledgeable enough to be adequate bosses without specific instructions from their parents. Regardless, parents must watch to see that this independent bossing does not take place. A child needs to know that he or she has just one boss (or one set of two bosses when Mom and Dad are both present in the home). Letting one child become the artificial boss over another on a regular basis confuses the relationships and often causes unnecessary deep resentment between siblings. The younger one resents the power of the older and the older may resent the fact that the younger one will not listen or behave.

WHAT MAKES A RULE EITHER EASY OR HARD TO ENFORCE?

A rule that states who, does what, when, and to what degree of perfection, is the easiest kind of rule to enforce. ("Jill washes the dishes clean, immediately after dinner every Monday.") This is a well-stated rule. It tells us who (Jill), does what (washes the dishes), when (immediately after dinner on Mondays) and to what degree of perfection (clean). In most homes, Mom or Dad gives the inspection and passes or fails the job. Once children are patiently taught how a job is to be done, there is usually little problem understanding just what the parent's expectation is.

A clear rule, however, is a good news - bad news situation. The clearest rule handles just one specific event (like dish washing by Jill). Typically, it cannot handle a variety of situations. So, in order to be perfectly clear about all possible situations you would have to have a specific (clear) rule about each possible situation, job, task, or expectation that might ever come up within the home (and for each child), forever.

I met a family like this once. They had very clear rules all written down for each

family member and yet the family was in big trouble. I stopped counting after discovering their first three hundred fifty specific rules. Mother and Dad were exhausted just enforcing them all. The kids were "ga ga" trying to remember them all. I was struck by the fact that all this family ever had time to do was, "Do the rules," as their five-year-old put it.

There are dozens of things (maybe even three hundred fifty!) that *do* need to be controlled in families. The good news is that if you write a specific, clear rule for each thing there will never need to be any disagreements over what is, or is not, to be done in each situation. The bad news is that you would have to hire a bookkeeper and a private eye to manage such a system.

Therefore, families need to find a way to know what should be done in each case without needing a lot of specific rules. We will talk about how just such a plan works, in Section Three. First, though, we need to be certain we all understand some other basic information about rules and people and families.

WHAT KINDS OF RULES DO FAMILIES HAVE?

The rules we have been talking about are what I call, *formal rules*. These are rules we state clearly and may even write down and post. These are, indeed, needed from time to time and can be a big help when kept to a minimum (much more about this in Section Three). The other kind, *are informal rules* and I want to talk a bit about these here.

One type of informal rule is what we might call *the common sense rule*. We do not write it down or even state it often (if ever). We just expect that family members will use good common sense in dealing with one another. For example, "You will always stop fighting with your brother before you kill him." This is a good common sense rule, which we can reasonably expect to be

followed by most children over the age of five or so. (Perhaps not, it is sad to say, in some neighborhoods these days.)

SideTrip: We need to understand that recent research suggests that common sense appears to be a fairly specific function of the brain, and in a small percent of people, that brain function just does not work real well. What I am suggesting is that although we can count on most people to have adequate common sense there really are some otherwise nice and normal folks, who, through no fault of their own, do not possess it (or at least cannot utilize it very well). In those cases, closer, outside controls on them are needed. Also, common sense develops and matures, as the child grows older. Most four-year-olds have almost none; by ten most have some; and by twelve or thirteen most have quite a bit. By the time one reaches forty, it may have even grown into wisdom! Individuals vary a great deal in the rate at which their own common sense matures so as parents we must watch for and allow for these developmental differences. There is some evidence that common sense develops somewhat earlier in girls than in boys. Also, common sense about the long term effect of one's present behavior, typically does not become a reliable and effective trait until the mid-twenties. Don't count on teens to make dependably good judgments about future consequences, especially in males! [End of Side Trip]

Another kind of informal rule I call *family expectations*. These are the things we do just because we are or Pryors or Tarasenkos. The family automatically expects certain behavior from its own members. For example, some families just expect that the children will behave themselves in public, or will be nice people, or will be good athletes, or will be socially skilled, or will be the toughest kids on the block, or will work for acceptable grades, etc.

When these family expectations are reasonable and regularly enforced, they represent the easiest way to influence behavior and mold character. By age-

seven or eight, most children can describe their family's expectations pretty well. Just ask any seven-year-old: "What are the most important things to do in order to get along in your home?" Sometimes parents are surprised by what the children relate but the children are never wrong. Would you be surprised? Why not ask them and find out! (Remember this is an information seeking expedition, and not a reason to for confrontation, defensiveness, or even discussion.)

Expectations are not written down. In some homes they are, however, stated regularly. I often ask children what their parents say to them as the children leave the house. This often gives a very good idea of family expectations. Here is a sample of what I have heard through the years. "Have fun but remember who you are." "Don't do anything to embarrass your father." "Go kick butt, Son!" In others, they are seldom stated but are obvious just through the model presented by the parent(s). *Honest* acting parents evoke honesty expectations and behaviors. *Reading* parents evoke expectations about reading and education. *Physically active* parents evoke physical care expectations and behaviors. *Yelling* parents evoke yelling behaviors in the children. *Hitting* parents evoke ... well, you get the picture.

Children believe more fully what they see and feel than they do the words they hear. This makes it imperative that we let our youngsters actually see us doing what we tell them we believe. *Openly and regularly modeling what we believe is right and best, is the absolute best teaching device for passing on our values and beliefs.* Few things irk ME more than hearing that simply horrible adage, “Do as I say, not as I do.” (SHUDDER!)

This doesn't mean that we don't let children have their own ideas. They will whether we let them or not, so it is best they know we encourage them to think for themselves. However, this does not mean that they should not know what *we* believe about important matters. It does mean, I believe, that we do not demand

that they have exactly the same belief system that we do. Demanding a belief is the surest way to ensure an uprising against that belief. Passing on one's own beliefs to his or her children is actually not all that difficult - it may even be thought of as easy. Here is the formula: *Demonstrate daily to the child how, in the long run, the parent's beliefs provide a good life for all concerned,* and eventually the children will most likely follow suit.

I'll say just one other thing about beliefs and expectations here, and will come back to them again in Section Four. Although you do not force a child to have your beliefs, you do expect him or her to behave according to those family rules which you have built upon your beliefs.

Values and beliefs often become the ground for a totally normal struggle between parents and adolescents as the youngster tries to determine for himself what is right and to figure out how to be his own person. Most teenagers need to *try out* some *other* values, beliefs, and expectations in order to see (prove, really) how well yours (his own family's) actually stand up to the test of real life. When we recognize that "teen rebellion" is actually a normal and extremely necessary value testing procedure (comparison-shopping, if you will), we can come to appreciate what is happening rather than being threatened by it. When parents can relax about the normality of this stage, life with an adolescent becomes much easier. (Notice I did not say easy!)

We make this normal testing and comparing easier for adolescents when we have made our beliefs quite obvious right from the start. This way the youngsters don't have to guess what we value (that is, they don't have to guess what they need to take out into the World and test). We also help them when they see that we really do stick to our beliefs (provided they are reasonable) no matter how much the teen may attack them. I am not suggesting you need to defend your beliefs to the teen. Don't ever argue about them, just stick with them.

When we are steadfast, the teen learns we really do believe certain things are best. This requires, of course, that we really know what we do believe.

You have already taken the *Value Inventory*. I will help you use that information to sort out some of your beliefs a bit later on (Section Four) and show you how to make them the basis for your own Family Life Plan.

Another kind of informal rule can be called a *momentary rule or a mini-rule*. (We mentioned it earlier.) These are little, short-lived rules we use in special, often one-time, situations. ("Today, on this trip, in this car, only radios with earphones will be used.") Mini-rules are often needed, especially with younger children, and those showing poor judgment or common sense.

I will mention just one more type of informal rule - one I hope you will never ever use. I call it the *after-the-fact rule*. This occurs when the parent makes up a rule and enforces it after the child has broken it. This means the child did not even know about the rule until after he or she broke it (but may still be punished). It is amazing how often this occurs. After-the-fact rules are often accompanied by a parental comment such as, "Well, you should have known better anyway." The key word here is, "should". As a parent, you have to ask yourself, "How should the child have known?" When you honestly cannot find a simple, obvious answer such as, “It has always been our clearly stated rule." or “We just talked about it this morning,” then it is probably an after-the-fact rule and should not be enforced this time. If you see the need to make it into a stated rule or expectation to be followed from that moment on, it can then be enforced in the future, but only after that has been made clear to the child.

Later, when we work on making your One Rule Plan work, we will see that this after-the-fact situation doesn't have to cause a problem. In fact, it can be a great opportunity to help children think through their behavior and prepare a better

response for the next time that situation arises.

HOW CAN RULES HELP FAMILIES?

Without rules, social order would fall apart and so it is in families. Without some understanding about which behaviors will be allowed and which will not be permitted, family life is bound to be chaotic. Obviously, then, rules can be helpful.

Family rules are often thought of merely as a means for maintaining order, much as are the city, state and federal laws. Keeping life orderly is certainly one important way that rules help a family. I believe it is important for rules to do much more than this, however.

The rules a parent sets must reflect the parent's own beliefs about life. If they don't they become very difficult for a parent to enforce and for a child to understand and accept. Just think how hard it is for you to enforce someone else's rule (say, the school's), when you really think it is a dumb or hurtful rule. This is why parents find it is uncomfortable, if not impossible, to just take someone else's set of rules and use them with their family (regardless of how many degrees that authority may have after his or her name!). You will be basing your One Rule Plan on your own beliefs and values - not on mine!

Sometimes, without even being aware of it, we get into the bind of trying to enforce someone else's rules - like when we try to use for our own family, the same rules our parents used with us. They may have been good rules back then but most of us grow and change and mature and come to believe at least somewhat differently from our own parents. When there are two parents guiding a family, it is unlikely that both came from homes with identical rules. So, which set would be followed? Certainly times and styles change and we must carefully

consider all these things as we build our own set of rules (or our One Rule - singular - as I will suggest, later).

So, our rule or rules can help our family by reflecting the parents' values and beliefs to their children. As an example, let's look at the "honesty" rule as stated in two families I have known. In the Anderson family the rule was, "We don't steal," (or stated more positively, "We only keep or use those things which are ours or which we have permission to use.") The Baker family's rule seemed to be, "Don't ever get caught stealing!" These two rules tell us very different things about what the Anderson parents and the Baker parents believed. The Andersons believed stealing was wrong. The Bakers believed that it was not the stealing, but the getting caught, that was wrong.

In addition to maintaining order and reflecting the parents' values, there are other ways rules can help families. Rules can be used to keep things running on schedule. I have found that busy households often have a large percentage of their rules related to scheduling. Who uses the bathroom, when, and for how long, are important issues in most homes. So are topics such as, who makes the lunches, who does the dishes, laundry, etc. Rather than cluttering up the family rules with these kinds of items, I prefer that we simply use *schedules*. A family can formulate a good schedule by sitting down and working it out together. This process helps all family members come to understand and appreciate each other's needs, personal preferences and skill levels. The "whys" of the schedule all come to light as it is being constructed. Therefore the question, "Why?" never has to be asked (or *whined*, usually, I suppose!). Planning a schedule together helps children learn about rights and responsibilities and being willing to give and take for the family's over-all benefit. When a schedule is just that - a schedule - and not a set of rules, it is not so likely to be seen in a negative light by the children. When they get to help work it out, they have to leave their self-

centered, personal realms, and gain insight into the bigger picture of family life.

Rules are often also used to prevent trespassing. ("Always knock and be invited into some else's room before entering." "Always ask before borrowing.") In many families, the line between "mine" and "ours" is a thin one and rules can help by defining this line more clearly. Later, we will see how the One Rule Plan handles this. I personally believe that pre-venting trespassing is a totally legitimate role for rules (for *the* rule).

Sometimes rules are used to spell out responsibilities and privileges. ("After you get your jobs finished, you may watch TV." "When you become totally responsible and reach age 35, you may begin dating!" "When Dad gets home from work, everyone must be quiet so he can sleep.") We certainly need some way of defining privileges and responsibilities within a home.

Again, as with schedules, I think we are better off in the long run if we can find ways to accomplish this by some means other than an endless chain of rules. Suggesting that you have a list of responsibilities and privileges may sound, at this point, as if I am using a different set of words which really means the same thing as rules. Bear with me on this one and I will develop my point more clearly after we have examined the One Rule approach, itself.

Rules have also been used to help families by keeping certain disputes from being repeated. ("If John hits Bill again, John will be grounded for one week." "If Bill does not cooperate with Jim when those two are doing dishes together, Bill will finish them all by himself.") As you can see, if a family has to establish a rule for every possible dispute that may arise, the list becomes endless. Even so, the idea of setting up a procedure for handling disputes is a good and necessary one. If rules are the only way that works, then they can be helpful to the family. The One Rule Plan should handle most of these situations for you.

HOW CAN RULES HURT FAMILIES?

I always prefer to talk in positive terms but hurt is an important and, therefore, legitimate topic, so let's spend a few pages on it, here. Just as we have seen that some rules can be quite helpful for families, others can be hurtful. Rules that are unclear often hurt families because no one is sure just what is expected. If a child does not know what is expected, he can't follow the rule. (Example: "Come home after school." This rule does not state how soon after school. It does not state if he has to check in with someone or just touch the lawn before leaving again is permitted. It is unclear.)

Rules that children feel are unfair are the ones parents hear about the most. If a rule really is unfair, perhaps it can be modified. The problem here is that children often cannot understand the big picture or the long term consequences, which form the basis for the rule. They often over- or under-estimate their own skill or self-protection competence.

In response to the rule, "Do not talk to strangers," (stated positively would become, "Only talk to people you know."), a five-year-old once told me in all sincerity, "If a stranger tried to hurt me I'd just knock him out and call the cops." Since, from his five-year-old perspective, he was truly sure that he really could do this, he felt the family's "No talking to strangers" rule was unfair. Sometimes these rules can be satisfactorily explained and sometimes not. They are not to be the source of argument, however. On some occasions the parent's response must be, “It is the rule, so follow it. When you are able to understand my reasons, I promise you I will explain it more fully." Some parents are better at explaining things than others. Practice helps but it is certainly a special skill. We will talk at length about communication skills presently.

Never keep a rule that is obviously unfair or outdated just to save face. You lose a great deal more than face - you lose the respect of your children.

There are times when rules and expectations cannot be totally 'fair'. If an older child is needed to baby-sit one night each week so a parent can work and earn money needed to support the family, and the parent really cannot afford to pay an outside baby-sitter, it may be unfair (in this case, to the older sibling). The older child may have a chance for a date or a party or need the time to study. Even though some expectations may have to be unfair in the short run, there may just be no alternative. If that is the way it has to be, then the parent must acknowledge the unfairness to the child with genuine sympathy and understanding, even though insisting on the help. (We all hope that these kinds of situations can be kept to a minimum or replaced with, more positive alternatives.)

Even the best set of rules ever devised will end up hurting the family if they are not consistently enforced. We will discuss this more fully in Section Five. For now, just let me say that unenforced rules are worse than no rules at all. Why? Because with unenforced rules the child learns that he or she really doesn't have to pay attention to rules (laws), and that child is, therefore, most certainly headed for major trouble out in the big, law-filled, World!

Equally as hurtful to a family as unenforced rules, are unenforceable rules. Here is an example: "You are never to swear, even when you are away from home." Perhaps the idea is all right if you believe swearing is always bad, but there is no way to enforce such a rule. A parent cannot know how a child talks when away from home. So, if the child chooses to swear outside of the home, the rule then becomes one of the unenforced rules we spoke about above. Rather than trying to convey a parent's belief about swearing with a rule, it would be more fruitful in the long run, I believe, for the parent to suggest his hope and desire that the child

will choose to find ways of expressing himself without resorting to swearing. The absolutely best approach, I believe, would be for the parent to be a perfect example of a non-swearer, himself. That way the child knows that you do prefer he not swear. He soon gets the idea: "We Smiths do not swear." Prohibiting any behavior that cannot be closely monitored, will, in the end, hurt the family and the child. A rule, prohibiting the use of swearwords at home is, of course, much more enforceable and can be totally appropriate if it fits your desires as a parent.

Some rules are unrealistic in other ways, and setting unrealistic rules ends up hurting, rather than helping. To make the rule: "If (average little) Johnny does not bring home all A's on his report card, such and such punishing thing will happen to him," is an unrealistic rule. Telling a five year old, “If you spill your milk you will have to eat alone on the back porch," is unrealistic because most five-year-olds will spill their drinks occasionally. (I spilled my coffee this very morning!)

Parents must realize that there will be times when most rules will, quite legitimately, not be able to be followed. In other words, no rule can always apply every single time. The important thing is that parents understand this and make appropriate allowances. To do this, parents must first listen to the child's analysis of the incident in question. Then, after hearing all the particulars and obtaining any necessary additional information, the parent can make a wise, informed judgment. (Rule: "Mary is to come home and go directly into the house after school." Event: After school a friend fell and was hurt, so Mary assisted her friend to get help before coming home herself, making her an hour late. Analysis: If the parents had not listened to the explanation but, instead, had just enforced the rule, an injustice would have perhaps occurred. Next time: It is agreed that Mary will call home next time anything similar transpires.)

Some rules become unrealistic because a child is either too young or too old or

because the parent is out of touch with how things actually are out there in the youngster's real World. This does not mean the parent caves in just because fads or styles change. It does mean, as parents, we have the responsibility to keep up with these things and take them into serious consideration as we weigh needs, rules, and long term consequences. There is no better way to keep up than by talking with and listening to your children and their friends in your home. When your children invite their friends to gather at your home, you know where they are, who they are with, and what they are doing, without having to ask.

Rules that do not expect a child to live up to his or her ability, skill, or commitments, are also hurtful. (At least this is what I believe! Some professionals seem to disagree with me on this one.) My experience suggests that the overly lenient parent is rarely doing the child a favor. It takes a thorough understanding of who and what the child is to find the delicate balance between being too lenient and too strict. In both cases, the child sees the parent as unfair, although he usually only complains on the too strict side of ledger. It seems to be ‘human nature’ to let others spoil us when given the chance, even though we may realize it is not best for us. Most of us will, however, try to resist what we perceive as the overly strict application of authority.

Families are also hurt when there are too few rules. No, let me rephrase that - Families are also hurt when the rules do not completely cover the necessary areas in appropriate ways. I'm going to suggest (eventually I really am!) that one rule can be enough when that rule covers all the bases. In some families, however, certain members really do not understand what is expected of them because the rules are not complete enough. This hurts family relationships as well as those individuals within the family.

When I was very young, I had a friend whose mother had only one rule for him: "Don't come home before dark unless you are bleeding!" [Really! That was it!]

Somehow, that one rule just wasn't enough to handle life for this boy (although at age seven, I thought it would be *great* to just have that one rule!).

Finally, as we have implied before, too many rules are always hurtful to families. In general, the more rules parents feel they need to have the more they are worried that their family life is getting out of control. For every rule that is established the parent has to spend time enforcing it. Let's say an average rule may need to be enforced just three times a day for each child. If there are three children, that is 3 X 3 = 9 times a day. Now let's say you have only twenty rules (an average is more like four dozen!). That is still 180 (20 X 9) times a day you find yourself enforcing rules. If you are with your children the typical eight at-home-and-awake hours each day (during the school year) you will be enforcing a rule every three minutes. Ever wonder where all your time goes?

One other aspect of having too many rules is that when there are lots of rules there are all the more chances some of them will not be enforced. As we have said, *un*enforced and *un*enforce*able* rules are among the leading causes of big problems for children as they grow older and begin spending more time outside of the home.

That should be more than enough about the possible, negative aspects of rules. From here on, we will be stressing the positive sides of things. In the activity that follows you will be asked to take a very close look at your present family rules. You may find that you have a set you really like and that will be great! More likely, you will find you have some you really like and others you do not like so well. It may be that you will be hard put to find many that you really like at all. Sometimes parents tell me they don't even know what the "official" rules are themselves. Regardless of your findings, take heart! We are here to help you find a way to build a healthful, happy, helpful family life, and we will begin from wherever you may find yourself right now.

Don't become upset if you are unhappy with what you find during this activity. [If you believed everything was hunky-dory, you wouldn't be reading this book in the first place, right?] It only confirms that you did do the right thing in searching through this manual for some assistance. Instead of feeling down, feel proud of yourself for coming this far and for jumping into this material and making a personal commitment to work things out. Believe me, even if it feels overwhelming at first, it is not going to be. Give this activity your best, most honest effort so we (you) can find your own realistic starting point.

ACTIVITY: Looking at your present rules

Books, typically, just present ideas, stories, or factual material. The reader is left to his or her own devices to make use of it. Manuals, on the other hand, take it a step further and help the reader organize and use those ideas and facts. The activity suggestions at the end of each section further define this volume as a manual. I hope you will find the necessary time to take full advantage of the opportunities provided here.

If there are two parents using this material, each should complete this particular activity separately.

On the left half of a sheet of paper (probably several sheets before you are finished) list the rules you think you have for the family. Take a day or so, if needed, and jot them down as they come up or as you think of them. Do this before reading further. Take your time and do a complete job.

Next, after each rule, put the initials of those children who you are sure understand that each one really is a rule. If there is only one child, you may want to write "yes" or "no" or "not sure" after each rule.

Then, divide these rules into three categories:

- In front of each of those you consider really necessary, put the letter "A".

- In front of those you are not pleased with for some reason (too hard to understand, doesn't seem to work, too outrageous, etc.) put an "X".

- In front of all others put a "C".

Now, go through the list again and circle the letters (those, which you just wrote) in front of any rules that you find are consistently difficult to enforce.

Here are several questions for you to think about and then answer. You may find it helpful to write out your answer to each so you can refer to it later if you wish, or compare it with your spouse's thoughts (if there are two of you doing this exercise).

1. How many rules do you have?
2. How many are you certain all the family members understand?
3. How many may not be understood? What problems does this tend to cause?
4. How many rules have you listed as absolutely necessary (category "A")?

5. With how many are you not pleased (category "X")?

6. How many are difficult to enforce (circled letters)?

7. How many of the absolutely necessary rules ("A") are also hard to enforce?

8. (If two parents are doing this exercise) How do the lists of the two parents differ? How are they similar? What can each parent learn from the other's list? How can you account for the differences in perspectives?

9. If any message about your rules pops out at you at this point, jot it down.

You will want to return to this material later to compare new thoughts with old. If your children are cooperating in this family fix-it undertaking, you might ask them

to list the rules they think the family has and have them rate each as helpful, sometimes helpful or not really helpful. You can talk this over later on.

SUMMARY: Section One

In Section One, we discussed the roles that rules play within families. We suggested that rules are made by the more powerful (hopefully, more knowledgeable) to control or influence the less powerful. Power arises out of fear, respect or position (just being the parent). The easiest rules to enforce are those which are stated positively and which specify exactly what will be done, by whom, when, and to what degree of perfection. There are a variety of kinds of rules that families use: formal, informal, general family expectations, routines, and schedules, to name a few. Rules can help families when they make the expectations very clear. They can hurt families when they are not enforced, are unenforceable, over-done, unclear, incomplete, or when they either expect too much or too little from any of the family members.

Review the questions posed at the beginning of this section and recall to yourself what answers were suggested. You may also want to jot down some unanswered questions that have occurred to you. Keep them in mind as you read on and as you do the remaining activities.

SECTION TWO

Let's talk about getting along

In Section Two, we will address these three questions:

1 - What kinds of people are the hardest to live with?

2 - What kinds of people are the easiest to live with?

3 - What kinds of parents probably fashion the best rules?

In the activity, you will be taking a second look at your own list of rules.

WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE THE HARDEST TO LIVE WITH?

Depending on our own personalities, we each have fairly deep feelings about what kinds of people we like and what kinds we do not like. One goal many parents have in their child-rearing plan is to produce young people who will be fairly easy to get along with both while still at home and later on in life. Toward this end, it is appropriate, I think, to begin by describing some of the types of people who are hard to live with. This demonstrates to us what we want to avoid doing to our children and perhaps indicates some of the traits within ourselves, which we may want to begin changing.

The first of these difficult personalities is *the uncooperative person*. This is one who wants things his or her way only. If it can't be approached their way, they want no part of it. They may not have any objection to how you do something by yourself if they do not have to help or be a part of it. They may even agree at first to help in some way, but when it comes right down to it, you either get no help or else they have to remodel your plans and do it their way. They often enjoy arguing, even if the point being considered does not really matter much to them. Uncooperative people are often that way because they have to believe they always win. This is their way of feeling important. Not only are they convinced that their way is best, they then go on to use that belief as justification for not having to assist with things when being done according to someone else's approach. ("If I know my way will work, why risk failure by doing it your way?") Uncooperative people are often the result of homes in which constant power struggles took place between parent and child, and the child won just often enough to make him believe lack of cooperation equaled power.

The uncooperative person is similar in many respects to *the selfish person* who

will always take care of his own needs first. He will cooperate only if it meets his own needs. Since cooperative efforts often involve compromises of a sort, the selfish or self-centered person often cannot cooperate because he feels that means his needs are no longer the most important. The selfish person often cannot compromise - it is their way or no way. The self-centered person fails to even try to see the legitimate needs of those with whom he lives and associates. The selfish personality in an adult is frequently the result of a home in which his every need was met and every wish granted, regardless of the sacrifices that were required on the part of others. As a child the selfish personality, was not typically required to consider the needs or rights of others. He grows to learn that he is a privileged being whose calling in life is to be first, to obtain the best for himself and to expect others to do his bidding. He has not been taught the rewards of saving or working toward goals. (In some instances it can be the result of just the opposite – his need to feel important was never met so he has over reacted at the opposite extreme.)

The *unreliable person*, may really be harder to live with, than the two already discussed, because you cannot count on them to do what they agree to do. They are not home on time, they are not ready on time, they do not carry out their jobs and responsibilities, and so on down a long, familiar list. They may not always be unreliable, however. Sometimes they do come through. This only adds to the difficulty of living with them because if you knew they would never be dependable, at least you could always depend on that! Unreliable personalities tend to develop when parents do not hold the child accountable for his responsibilities, or when they cover for him by shouldering his responsibilities themselves.

The *hurtful person* puts more than a little strain on a family. These people may be emotionally hurtful or physically hurtful. Sometimes they may just threaten

hurtful consequences if others do not comply with their wishes. Other times they inflict actual physical pain. Some hurtful people are only that way when they drink too much or when they find themselves under more pressure than they can tolerate. Usually, the hurtful personality develops in a home, which has its own hurtful personality. Pain inflictors come from pain inflicting homes just as loving people tend to come from loving homes. At any rate, the hurtful person is more than just difficult to live with; he is dangerous to have under the same roof.

The know-it-all is also a difficult person with whom to live. He believes, or at least implies, that anyone who doesn't realize his way is the best, is just plain dumb - even unworthy. His way is the only way. Since he knows he is right, he doesn't worry about the possible negative consequences of his acts or ideas, and doesn't seek to learn about new possibilities. There is only one way to get along with the know-it-all and that is to do things his way. They live for the moment others fail so they can say, "I told you so, dummy!" The know-it-all personality often develops in homes that encourage intolerance of other points of view. Sometimes the know-it-all approach is merely a smoke screen which, when fiercely set, discourages other points of view from being presented. In this way, one's own beliefs are not challenged. Cult and radical religious leaders often fall into this category – well, even some not so radical religious positions.

The blamer is not content until blame can be saddled on someone every time there is a problem. Blamers are seldom able to take the blame for their own errors. Once they can say, "It's *his* fault," the blamer seems to relax and feel fulfilled. Blamers typically have very low self-esteem and rush in to establish the fact that whatever bad thing happened, it was not their fault. Blamers make harmful parents, partly because they are content to stop once blame is established and punishment is meted out. Either they seldom really think about helping their children learn how to improve, or they actually believe that

punishment, by itself, somehow magically teaches the child the skills needed to do better the next time. Blamers are almost always children of blamers and or revengers (below).

The revenger is often found in the same personality as the blamer. Once the blame is established, they feel compelled to see that some revenge is taken or punishment is delivered. Revengers take some delight in seeing the bad guy get hurt. They believe that is the only fair consequence - to inflict pain on the guilty. The revenger carries a grudge forever. He never ceases trying to get back at those who he feels did him wrong. Revengers become filled with hate (though often hide it well) and usually spend their lives being extremely unhappy people, at least on the inside (and where else does it count?). Revengers often develop into hurtful people. When a punishment doesn't change someone else's behavior, all the revenger knows to do is to punish even harder the next time.

The self-hider is one who never lets others know what he is thinking or feeling. He expects you to just know. If you guess wrong, he gets upset. This personality keeps a household in constant turmoil with his forced guessing game. The self-hider will often commit himself to do something he really does not want to do or is not even capable of doing, just because he can't let others know how he feels about it. With the self-hider it is hard to cooperatively plan even simple things, let alone such major items like establishing family rules and consequences. You never know for sure how to help this kind of person, because they can't let their own needs, be seen. When we try to help, and guess wrong, it often makes things worse since self-hiders are easily upset. The self-hiders become terribly unhappy because they commit themselves to do things they really do not enjoy or, even worse, do not believe in. Deep down inside, most self-hiders are in a constant state of panic. They develop in homes where feelings are to be hidden rather than expressed.

The people-user is a con man of sorts. If he does anything nice for you he maintains a repayment schedule of some sort in the back of his head, which he expects to receive and eventually extracts. He keeps a set of mental books on who owes him how much and for what. He is often overly ambitious and uses people to climb toward the top. He is, of course, a selfish person also, only thinking of himself. To paraphrase John Kennedy, the people user, "thinks only of what others can do for him and not what he can do for others." The people user cannot develop serious, deep, positive feelings for others. He tosses people aside as soon as he has finished using them. His life plan is to advance to the top. Once he arrives there, the unexpected emptiness of life often overwhelms him. People users typically develop in homes where positive moral and ethical values are not appropriately emphasized. Some neurological disorders may also prevent a conscience from developing, but either way, the people user does not seem to be guided by a conscience.

The puter-downer person is a mild form of the hurtful person. In life there are two main ways to make oneself feel important: The positive way is to work hard and accomplish something fine (like being a great parent, a good friend, or a reliable worker). The negative way is to put others down so you can feel superior to them. This negative approach is the hallmark of the puter-downer. By belittling the accomplishments of others, their own lack of accomplishment seems less obvious (or so they think). They are not easy people to live beside. Children who are frequently belittled have a difficult time developing a positive image of themselves. Again, putter-downers have typically grown up in homes where that was the ‘success method’ of choice. Homes characterized by teasing and practical jokes also tend to promote this personality.

The pessimistic person always expects that the worst will happen. He feels there is no use in really trying this or that because it won't work out anyway. He is

often prone to depression, inactivity, and forgetfulness (why remember if it's not going to work out or happen or help anyway?). The pessimist is the ultimate wet blanket and tends to spread his gloom to all those he touches. Pessimism often hides a lack of self-confidence. It becomes an excuse for not getting in there and giving it the old college try. (No need to risk failing if you have convinced yourself that nothing would work anyway.) Pessimism breeds pessimism in homes.

Finally, let's look at *the Pollyanna*. A Pollyanna is overly and unrealistically optimistic. He believes everything will turn out peachy keen even without raising a hand himself to influence the outcome. Why go to any trouble to forestall or solve a problem if you know it is really going to turn out fine? We could say that these folks are hurtful by omission. By not doing what is needed, unpleasant consequences often follow. In a home setting, the Pollyanna tends to make promises and get hopes up about things that can never really happen. Feeling helpless themselves, they try to wish things into existence. Life just pushes them around because they don't dig in their heels and take a stand. Many Pollyannas come from extremely unhappy homes, in which the child could find no way of controlling or even predicting, how things would go. Pollyannas often feel quite helpless deep down inside. They seek strong, indulgent companions.

There are other difficult personalities of course - the criminal, the unfaithful, the habitual liar, the alcoholic, the sex addict - the list goes on and on. But these twelve represent the majority of difficult personalities found in ordinary family situations. Your library will have helpful books and other information about other types.

WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE THE EASIEST TO LIVE WITH?

In this question, the word "easiest" may not be the best choice, because the

easiest kind of person may not really be the most appropriate or helpful for us *to* live with. Some might think, for example, that the easiest type of person to get along with is the one who says, "Whatever you want is fine with me. Let's just do it your way." An easy family member? Perhaps, but what does this person contribute? He has no ideas. He has no needs to be met. He takes no initiative. He doesn't get involved in the necessary give-and-take conversations. He up life to avoid all personal responsibility. This type of person just can't help others grow. So, let's change the word "easiest" to "beneficial" so the heading of this section will now read:

WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE THE MOST BENEFICIAL TO LIVE WITH?

In general, we can just list the opposites of the difficult types mentioned above:

Uncooperative, becomes, cooperative

Selfish, becomes, altruistic (puts others first)

Unreliable, becomes, reliable

Hurtful, becomes, caring

Know-it-all, becomes, open-minded

Revenger, becomes, teacher

Blamer, becomes, problem solver

Self-hider, becomes, open/non-defensive

People user, becomes, helper

Puter-downer, becomes, builder-upper

Pessimist, becomes, optimist

Pollyanna, becomes, realistic

Let me back track for a moment. Most of the traits, which we have listed under the "hard to live with" category, are traits those people probably acquired in their own homes as they were growing up. In other words, they learned from their own particular set of circumstances to become those kinds of people. That is sad, of course, but there is good news. Look at the other list - the one on the right above. All of the people who have those beneficial traits, most likely learned to be those positive ways, from their own family life experiences, also.

Our task as parents, then, is not to spend time fretting about the fact that we see some of those negative traits in ourselves, or that in the past we may have been unintentionally nudging our children toward some of those same less desirable traits. Instead, let's say, *"Well, this is the place I find myself and my family today, and from here on out, I'm going to make my best effort to provide the kind of family life experiences that will produce youngsters having the more beneficial personality traits.*

[Sometimes, a child picks a personality style just to be different, unique from everybody else at home so he stands out. Parents will work to nip the negative styles in the bud by helping children find positive ways of asserting their self-worth.]

Another piece of good news is that it is really not as hard to accomplish this as you might expect it to be. Just relax about it now, and read on. I will walk you through it, step by step, later on.

Now, back to the task at hand. Look down that list of beneficial personalities again. They may be thought of not only as beneficial personalities but also the most beneficial *personality traits*. In a general way, they define the mentally healthy person. I imagine you will agree that life will be more beneficial to us when we are surrounded by people who are happy, mentally healthy, and well

adjusting, than if we are surrounded by the other kinds. Therefore, one of the goals I propose for you to consider for your family is that each member does his part to assist all of the other members to stay, or become, happy and well adjusting people. If this makes sense to you, we're ready to move on and add a few other traits to our positive list.

I need to take one more short *Side Trip* with you and explain in more detail a concept I introduced earlier. As I indicated in the Introduction, the word "adjusted" has always bothered me because it implies that once adjusted, no further changes or growth needs to take place. That is just not true! Every day we seem to run across new problems or challenges that need adjusting to. So, I think a better way of thinking about the mentally healthy person is to say that he is *well adjusting*. This suggests that he is capable of handling new obstacles that occur, and that he can even find new ways of doing so when needed. We are all constantly adjusting to new situations. Some are adjusting poorly while others are adjusting well. Therefore, I will be using the term <u>well adjusting,</u> to remind us that 'good adjustment' is a constantly changing process, which requires no small amount of flexibility. From that perspective I suppose the 'well adjusted' – static – person is maladjusted. Hmm. [End]

Thank you for following along with me on these several, side trips. Well-planned side trips are an important feature of a successful family life plan. In Section Five, I will show you how you can use them effectively.

WHAT KINDS OF PARENTS PROBABLY FASHION THE BEST RULES?

You already know a major part of my answer to this question. Of course, happy, well adjusting people are best able to fashion good rules. Why happy? Well, in

many of the families that I have seen, the opposite of happy often is actually *angry* rather than sad and angry people are seldom able to keep the long-term welfare of others in mind.

I recognize that many parents have lots of things to be sad or angry about (so do our children). The secret is to keep our focus on all those things we have to be happy and pleased about. Don't deny that the unpleasant side of life exists. Just don't forget the positive side is also there. If you have difficulty focusing on happy, keep a slip of paper and a pencil with you throughout the day. As something happens or occurs to you that could be considered happy, jot it down. Review it after several days have passed. I imagine that you will have a sizeable list if you have really looked for things like smiles, kind words, sunshine, family, friends, laughter, pleasant memories, health, goals, and the like.

I usually ask parents who come to me for consultation to keep a daily log whenever they get to feeling down about things. In this log, they are to *only* enter positive things about themselves and their families. These may include the things one feels they have done better as a parent today than yesterday, some kindness shown between family members, smiles seen, kind words and laughter heard, helpfulness, those moments where growth has been seen, those times when they have been able to teach that little step, the growth of patience and tolerance, children really living the values you prize, and so on.

If you find yourself feeling down about being a parent or about family-life in general, I suggest that you keep *A Good Stuff Diary*, also. Find a time each day (bedtime is often best) to make your positive entries. Date each entry. Remember, just the good stuff - some about you and some about your family. Each day before you make your new entries review a few of the entries you made earlier. This helps us focus on progress and proves to ourselves that things are truly improving - something that is easy to lose sight of in the busy

hustle and bustle of everyday family life. (Do you have five minutes a day to help yourself feel better?)

So, we agree (I hope) that happy, well adjusting people have the best chance to be good rule makers. What are some of the other traits good rule makers possess?

One very important trait, I think, is that good family rule makers take time to learn as much as they can about normal child growth and development. If we know, for example, that nine year old boys often find their homes utterly useless (except to provide food and allowances), it makes it easier to construct and enforce rules and expectations which are appropriate for nine year old boys. If we know that two year olds should never be asked a question that can be answered "yes" or "no", because they will always answer "NO!", then again, good rule making becomes easier. (By good I mean beneficial - rules that will help children grow in the desired direction without adding to their normal problems).

Today there are many, excellent, child development books available. Any bookstore has a shelf full. I strongly encourage you to carefully read and study one of them. Neither you nor I would trust our cars to a mechanic who had never studied car care, now would we! If our child had any say in the matter, do you suppose he would want to trust his own upbringing to a parent who had not studied children? [I am referring her to books about normal developmental trends in physical, mental, emotional, and philosophical growth. They may sport names such as, ‘Child Development’ or ‘Adolescent Development’.]

It is essential for all parents to understand what is normal and what is not generally normal at each age level (even though that tends to vary widely). Without having this knowledge, the parent really can't know what kinds of things should and should not be reasonably expected of children at each age level. For

example, until a child reaches the age of two or two and a half, he cannot consistently transfer what he learns is prohibited in one situation to other similar situations (No No's). You may teach him not to touch the pretty vase on the coffee table at Grandma's, but that does not also teach him about not touching the pretty vase on the piano at Grandma's. Also, if he learns to leave it alone today, he probably won't know he is also expected to do that on the next visit or even later that same day. The two-year-old's brain can't make that big leap. Yet, how many little hands have been uselessly slapped over just this type of thing because parents hadn't taken time to learn about normal child development? Enough severe punishment will, of course, stifle all initiative in a child so he may seem to 'know how to behave' because he offers no inquisitiveness.

My point is that in addition to being happy and well adjusting people, the best rule makers (and parents) make it a point to become knowledgeable about the basic child development characteristics. So much is already known that there is no need for each parent to reinvent the wheel.

Good rule makers are also good communicators. A good communicator uses words and examples he knows for a fact the other person will easily understand. If he is not sure, he finds out. He says what he has to say in a direct, non-threatening, composed manner. A good communicator is a good observer. It is not until you see how someone else reacts to what you have said that you really know they have received the same message you intended to send. A good communicator never assumes other people mean exactly the same thing as he means by any given word.

A good communicator is a great listener. He gathers all the opinions and explanations (and excuses!) ***first***, before reacting himself. He listens between the lines. What is not being said is often as important as what is being said. The good communicator matches the inflection and tone of his voice to the meaning

of his message. If we want to be believed when we say, "I love you," we have to use a very different tone and inflection than when we say, "I hate you." Try it. Say, "I hate you!" out loud as if you really mean it. Now, using that very same tone and inflection say it again, substituting the word "love" for the word "hate". Which do kids believe: the words or the tone? You're right! Kids almost always believe the tone, especially when the tone doesn't reflect the usual meaning of the words.

A good communicator does not have to probe by asking direct questions when exploring touchy subjects. He just gets the other person talking about that subject and then listens for the answers as they appear. For example, instead of asking, "How do you like your new teacher?" (to which some children will feel obliged to say, "She's a witch!"), you just open up the topic. "Tell me about your teacher?" or, "What kind of a family does your new teacher have?" Use open ended questions that can't be answered yes or no or with one word. Once the topic is open listen to the words. Feel the real tone. Watch the expression. Understand that I am not saying direct questions aren't often just fine. I'm only saying the good communicator knows when they are appropriate and when they are probably not appropriate. At certain ages, all direct questions from Mother (even, "How was your day?") are construed as being "grilled" or put on the spot, or having one's privacy invaded. These are the stages when just listening gives you many more answers than you will ever receive from direct questions.

Side Trip: Teenagers become experts at getting a parent's opinion or other information without ever asking a question themselves. Adolescents often feel that adults and others assume that teenagers are supposed to know all the answers. Therefore, to have to ask certain questions would be to reveal a personal flaw - something many teens would die before doing. So, what do they do instead of asking? They make a bold statement to their parents ("I don't think

there is anything wrong with smoking pot!"). Then they just sit back and listen to the response such a statement is bound to extract! In their response, parents usually provide more than enough information or opinions so the teen can get the answer to his "real question" (which in this case may be, "Do you think it is Ok to smoke pot?" or "What are the real effects of smoking pot?"). [End]

Good communicators also find ways of letting others know how they are feeling without letting that feeling take over and run things. To be able to say, "That really makes me angry," (and sound sincerely angry) may be appropriate, but to yell it out while flailing one's arms about and stomping around the room is usually inappropriate. The emotion has taken over. It does not lead to solving the problem. Instead, it implants fear and tension in others. Emotion tends to stifle clear thinking in both the person being emotional and in the person toward whom the wayward emotion is directed.

One final characteristic of the good communicator, which I will suggest here, is known as the Agreement Frame of Reference. It may be the most important skill needed when dealing with problems and disputes between family members or when trying to influence the way another person thinks. It simply means that after listening to another's viewpoint we try to find something about it that we can accept before stating our own point of view. Some professional arbitrators call this, *The 'and', not, 'but' rule.*

Rather than saying, "I've heard you say that before but I think it is such and such instead," or "I hear what you are saying but I believe it's more reasonable to believe such and such," try something like, "That's an interesting point of view and I think this idea may also be of interest to you." Or try, "I respect your right to think that way and I'd like you to just hear this viewpoint." "I agree that may sometimes seem to be the case and I also think it is often this way." "I respect your right to believe that way and I believe there is also another way to look at it

that may interest you."

In accepting some aspect of what the other person has said, you tend to make him comfortable rather than defensive. The word, "but," puts up a barrier to comfort and is like waving a red flag at the defensive and argumentative parts of our minds. The word "and" continues a flow of ideas based on what the other has already said, thereby not initiating a defensive, argumentative, or hostile reaction. In other words, "and" encourages a person to listen to your message (since it is based on what he has just said), while "but" immediately turns off the intent to listen and, instead, encourages the other person to spend the time while you are speaking, mentally mustering arguments to rescue and support his own position.

There are at least three separate levels at which you can accept something from the other person's comment.

The Content Level: Here there is some part of the message itself with which you can agree. This situation is probably the easiest in which to use the Agreement Frame of Reference. "I agree with what you say about the chip on your little brother's shoulder and I think I may be able to help you understand it a bit better." "I like your general idea and I think this information may help you improve it."

The Method Level: Here you let the speaker know that you appreciate the way in which the message was delivered - straight forward, honestly, well organized, clearly, in a friendly way, in a positive way, etc. "I appreciate the clear way in which you stated your viewpoint and I will try to do as well now as you listen to mine." "I admire your honesty in that statement, and I want to make this suggestion." Although we can't agree with the content or the meaning of the message, we can support the method in which it was delivered. In so doing, and

by incorporating our "and" approach, we still maintain the flow of mental openness rather than cutting it off.

The Rights Level: Here the other person's right to hold and state his viewpoint is acknowledged even though you find absolutely nothing acceptable to you in its content and perhaps not even in his method of delivery. "You certainly have every right to express that viewpoint and I am sure that you will now extend me that same privilege." "You have the right to hold your own beliefs, and I think you will be interested in hearing those I hold on the subject."

Using this *Agreement Frame of Reference* approach takes practice and demands that one shed any tendency to *need* to put the other person down or to brow beat him. Our goal becomes a fair exchange of ideas, which cannot occur if both parties do not listen with an open mind. A mind cannot be open if it is closed ahead of time by the conjunction "but," which tends to signal the idea, "I most certainly think you are dead wrong, Buster!" (Hmm! 'Butting heads!)

After you hear yourself making a "but" statement, I encourage you to privately practice restating it in the form suggested by the Agreement Frame of Reference. Think about where an "and" statement may have allowed your conversation to go, and how that was prohibited by the use of the "but" statement. Using the Agreement Frame of Reference is similar to using the Positive Outlook Approach on those with whom you deal. Both take practice and a positive conception of relationships. When one approaches life from the basic premise that he wishes to improve the way others feel about themselves and their World (The Positive Outlook Approach), and when one truly wants to understand what others believe and give them access to your feelings (Agreement Frame of Reference), then both of these practices become second nature.

A good rule maker doesn't forget how it was to be a child - what seemed fair and

unfair (the biggie in most family disputes!), what was scary or funny, what was hard or easy to do, what one dreamed of doing or being, etc. Even though no child will have exactly the same picture of things that you had or develop the same feelings about things that you did at the same age, I know you'll find it helpful to pause from time to time and try to remember the way it was. The most effective parents are the ones who can and do remember how it really was – who never lose the child within them. We must also remember that the brain is not fully developed until a person reaches age 20 or even 25, and the final areas to develop have to do with making good, safe, logical judgments and decisions for the long run.

A good rule maker likes children and wants to help guide them toward their own happy, well adjusting life style. Another way of saying this is that good rule makers see themselves as teachers or facilitators rather than controllers or punishers. People who really like children try to help children come to like themselves. This means we build them up (realistically) and refrain from unnecessarily putting them down. Realistic criticism is delivered with kindness and is phrased in ways that will help it be *con*structive not *des*tructive.

The best rule makers are problem solvers rather than blamers. Rules must help guide children around possible pitfalls rather than just being there to catch the child when he falls in and misbehaves.

When a problem arises the good problem solver automatically asks himself, "What can I (we) do to help this child see to it that this doesn't have to happen again?" Even better, "What additional information does this child need to gain so this same problem does not have to occur again?" (And then, of course, the parent helps provide it!)

The blamer's first thought is to ask, "Whose fault is it?" The concept, "Whose

fault is it?" most often is followed immediately by, "Since it is your fault, you will get punished." Seeking fault, leads to punishment, which leads to hurt and fear and probably little change in attitude (except perhaps to dislike or fear the punisher even more). *One thing is for sure, punishment seldom produces the needed change in* skill *for handling similar situations in the future.*

Searching for the cause of the problem leads to fixing what's wrong, which in turn, leads to helping the child practice his new, needed skill. This, in turn, produces a positive attitude toward both the adult and the child himself.

A bit of personal opinion here! Some “experts” will tell you that the intention or the cause of misbehavior is irrelevant, or that the only important thing is to keep it from happening again. It appears to me that this is a whole lot like bringing a temperature down with aspirin and cold compresses while letting the underlying infection go uninvestigated. Stop the treatment and the temperature recurs. Understanding the child's perception of what he was trying to accomplish is essential if we are to help him discover ways that will reduce the likelihood of his finding himself in that same difficulty over and over again. A system of rewards and punishments will certainly control *behavior* when the child is within view of the dispenser of the rewards and punishments, but does nothing to help the child learn how to make wise decisions and apply his personal values when on his own. (Well, *I* feel better now! Thanks for listening.)

Being the model problem solver is not always an easy task, even for those who are most practiced and talented at it. On some days the parent may be upset for some totally unrelated reason. On some days the child seems to be defying your authority for sport. Sometimes a parent's own problems have to take precedence over the child's problems. Some days, parents do not feel well, and so on. Even though all of that may be true, in such situations, problem solvers are still better rule makers and rule enforcers than are the blamers. I hope that over the long

haul you strive to become more and more like problem solvers, and less and less like blamers.

Although Section Five is really the place where we will get specific about how to make all these ideas work for you, let's take time here to illustrate the typical difference between the results from a blamer and a problem solver. Let's say we have two six-year-old boys playing with a ball and bat in the back yard. One tosses it up and whammoo! - he really connects. It sails right through (and breaks) the garage window. At the sound of shattering glass, the blamer-dad comes running out of the house, sees the broken window and asks what? Right! "Who broke the window?" Johnny says, "Billy did it," and Billy hangs his head in an act of admission. "Billy, go to your room. You're grounded until you're thirty-seven!" (Well, you know what I mean!) Or, “I’m going to spank you.”

Had Billy intended to break the window? Of course, not. Therefore, it was an accident, wasn't it? (Careless, perhaps, but an accident.) What does Billy learn from the blamer? He learns you get punished for having unintentional accidents. (That'll teach him not to try new things!) He also learns he is sometimes the cause of making Dad very mad (as well as turning Johnny into a snitch!). Does Billy learn anything about how to prevent this same event another time? Does he learn why it probably happened? Does he learn anything about responsibility? I have a feeling Billy learns very little that is helpful and much that is distressing from this scenario.

Now enter the problem-solver parent. (I know, he's already wearing a big white hat, but bear with me, anyway!) He also hears the crash. He also hurries out to see what has happened. Seeing the boys with the bat and finding the broken window, he immediately understands the situation. "Looks like we had an accident!" he says. (The boys are already feeling some relief, just from Dad's calm tone of voice.) "You must have really whacked it a good one, didn't you?"

(The boy's profuse sweating even stops!) The boys begin explaining what happened. "Why do you suppose your ball playing plan didn't work out so well back here today?" Dad asks. In about thirty seconds the boys think it through and suggest they should have been further from the garage and house and that next time, they should play somewhere else, such as the lot next door or down at the park. (They have constructed a mini-rule for themselves.) "Good thinking, guys," says Dad. "Now, who do you suppose should help me repair that window?" The boys readily agree that they both should help. In so doing they demonstrate that they are accepting the natural consequences of their misjudgment, even though it *had* been an accident. This whole series of events ends with the boys respecting the Dad, the window getting fixed (and the boys experiencing just what a difficult and time consuming job that is!), and, of course, the boys have learned good lessons in judging distances, thinking ahead, and being careful the next time.

The blamer may still say, "If Billy did something wrong he should be punished - plain and simple." I ask the blamer, "How does punishment *help anything*?" The problem solver goes back inside feeling great about helping the boys grow up a bit today. The blamer goes back inside, mad at his child and at the inconvenience he has been caused. Is the problem solver happy the window was broken and he had to use an hour of his time to fix it? Of course, not. But, knowing children as well as he does, he expects times like this and he understands it is all an important part of his job as a father. Some parents, I'm afraid, come home from work and forget they have arrived at their other and most important job of all - parenting. This job also has its regular responsibilities and payoffs, doesn't it?

Finally, good rule makers (and enforcers) think first about what the offender's intention was and only secondly about what happened. I was visiting a home

once in which there was a very smart four-year-old. I was in the living room talking with his mother. The boy listened and watched while playing on the floor with a truck. As I was having trouble getting my pen to write, the child suddenly climbed up on the piano bench, lost his balance, grabbed the cloth, which covered the piano top, and everything came crashing down. At first take, it might appear that the child undoubtedly knew he should not have climbed onto the furniture, and that if he hadn't, the problem would not have occurred. In other words, he had disobeyed a rule and that caused the problem.

In talking with him, however, this very wise mother learned he had seen the problem I was having with my pen and, knowing his mother kept extra pencils in a glass on top of the piano, had taken it upon himself to go get one for me. His intention, then, was to be helpful and regardless of any other action the mother was going to take, she first praised him for wanting to be helpful. If she hadn't searched first for his intentions, ("Why were you climbing on the piano?") the boy might have learned that it is just not worth trying to be helpful when all it does is get you into trouble.

So, the good rule makers and rule enforcers take into account what the child thinks he or she is doing or trying to do, rather than merely looking at the end result.

ACTIVITY

Taking a second look at your present rules

Look back at your list of rules from Section One: (Some may fit into more than one category so enter them multiple places.)

How many relate to selfishness? _____

How many relate to arguing? _____

How many relate to hurting one another? _____

How many relate to uncooperative behavior? _____

How many relate to controlling others? _____

How many relate to negative ("bad") behaviors? _____

How many are stated in the negative ("You won't," "You must not," "Never," "Don't," etc.)? _____

How many are stated in the positive ("Always try to be helpful," "Always hang up your coat," "Always wash your hands before dinner," etc.)? _____

To what, do the rest of your rules apply? (Write it out.)

Looking over your answers to these questions, would you say the reasons for your rules seem to be more for controlling "bad" behavior or for teaching "good" behaviors?

Try to restate the negative rules in a positive form by stating what is allowed or expected. It's amazing how doing just this one thing can change one's basic concept as to what parenting is really all about.

SUMMARY OF SECTION TWO

We discussed several of the most common types of personalities that would be considered hard to live with. (Can you remember them?) We then described their opposites - personalities that are almost always easier to live with. (Can you remember them?)

We talked about some of the characteristics possessed by parents who are best suited to create beneficial rules for families. I suggested they would be happy, well adjusting people, knowledgeable about child development and have

excellent communication skills. (What were some of the characteristics of good communicators? What were some of the other traits found in the best rule makers and rule enforcers?) We also discussed the Positive Frame of Reference, in which a person always accepts something from the other person's message before going ahead and stating his own.

It might be a helpful exercise for you to go through the list of hard to live with people and write down any of their traits, which you feel too often apply to yourself. (We all slip into some of them occasionally!) Then, next to each of these, list an opposite trait you would like to see in yourself, instead. Go through the list of easier to live with people and list those positive traits, which you feel you already possess. Each day, pick one of the positive traits from these lists and make it your mission to demonstrate it in your behavior, both to yourself and toward others that day. In other words, *practice* them! Each week refer back to this "mini-plan" to see how you are doing and to find out which traits remain to be practiced. You will soon begin feeling comfortable about using (or expanding) those positive traits and they will eventually just come to be there when you need them. (Perhaps you can interest other family members in doing the same activity themselves - privately, of course.)

In the next section, we **finally** really do get down to stating the *ONE RULE PLAN FOR FAMILY HAPPINESS*.

SECTION THREE

Let's talk about the One Rule Plan

In Section Three, we will address these seven questions:

At last! What is this One Rule?

What do all these words really mean?

How about some illustrative examples?

Is this really different from multi-rule plans?

Whose responsibility is it to make the One Rule Plan work?

How does this One Rule Plan compare with the Golden Rule?

May I clarify one important point?

In the Activity, you are asked to analyze your responses to the Parent Inventory.

FINALLY! WHAT IS THIS ONE RULE?

So far, we have been leading up to the One Rule, which I suggested could change your family's life. In this section, we will state that rule and talk about it – arranging it and rearranging it to make it most meaningful and useful. Then, the remaining sections of the manual will be devoted to showing you how to write your own One Rule Plan, making it consistent with your own personal values, and learning how to go about making it work within your family.

[At this point take a moment to realize how much you have learned on our way to defining and extablishing this One Rule concept.]

At first, this rule often appears far too simple to work. It seems like it could not possibly handle the many different situations that come up in the typical home. Then, upon further examination, it begins to seem so complicated and complex, that you will wonder if it really can be used by you and your family. Those are just words of warning - *words of preparation* - really, so you will not dismiss it at first glance as being either too simple or too complicated. You have come this far with me. Hang in there just a bit longer. It will change your life!

Here is one simple way of stating the One Rule (Later on, we will modify it a bit).

"We only do to or for each family member, those things that will be helpful to him or her in the long-run."

See, I said it was both simple and complex. To really understand what it means and all that it involves, we need to examine the exact meaning of the words contained in it.

WHAT DO ALL THOSE WORDS REALLY MEAN ?

Let's examine the key words one at a time, so we all will understand them in the same way.

WE - We refers to every family member who is regularly involved in the family's life - Mom, Dad, Children, and anyone else living as a family member. The word *we*, implies that this is going to be a cooperative effort to which everyone is expected to contribute. *We* implies a team effort - a championship team effort!

ONLY - *Only* limits what can and cannot be done. *Only* means that nothing else is allowed other than the message to follow. It provides a focus by saying that out of all the things that could take place, we are just going to focus on this or these few things (the things stated later on in the rule).

DO TO - *Do to*, is the action part of this rule and it directs that WE are going to exert some influence (do to) on the family members. Since there is no way people can live together without influencing one another, I am sure this idea makes sense. The word *TO*, suggests something will be delivered to or imposed upon them. (We talk *to* them, we give food *to* them, we deliver praise *to* them, etc.)

DO FOR - Here again, it is part of the action, but *do for* implies more than just doing something to someone. *For* implies a helpful act of some kind. Tying a four-year-old's shoe is doing *for* and not *to*. Disciplining a child, in order to help him or her grow and learn more acceptable ways of behaving, is really doing *for* rather than *to*. If discipline stops at *doing to* the child, how can it be beneficial (*for*)?

EACH FAMILY MEMBER - This means all family members including one's self. "I'll do something to or for him or her or me." This defines the limits of responsibility. We all have to be thinking of the ways in which our own behavior influences everybody in the family, including our self. It means we often have to find the necessary balance between "their" needs and "my" needs.

THINGS - This word covers both processes (such as talk, play, emotions, ideas,

etc.) and concrete items (such as toys, books, food, clothes, etc.).

HELPFUL - *Helpful* is a positive term and is being used here as the opposite of two separate ideas. Of course, it is the opposite of hurtful. That is an important element here - we do not hurt others if we are pledged to help them. *Help*, however, is a long-term effect (we will talk about the long run in a moment), so what may be most *helpfu*l in the long run, may sometimes seem a bit hurtful at the moment (in the short run).

The other term I want us to include as an opposite of helpful is, *indifferent*. *Indifference* is often stated as, "I could care less." It means unconcerned or neutral. There is no lack of concern and no neutrality when we use this One Rule! Helpful demands concern and involvement, and implies that we freely help, repair, comfort or assist one another.

In Section Four, we are going to help you define, for yourself, what you believe will be helpful to your family (what you value). You see, what I think will be helpful and what Aunt Mary thinks will be helpful, may not be at all like what you think will be helpful. What you will and will not consider as helpful, really depends on what you value as good, right and wonderful. If something assists the family members toward one of the ends that you value, then you will feel it is helpful. As I said, Section Four is devoted to expanding on this concept and individualizing the One Rule just for YOU.

IN THE LONG RUN - *In the long run*, really means later on for the rest of one's life! That is a big order isn't it - to be sure that what you are doing today will really be beneficial to this person two, ten, twenty, or even eighty years from now? Whether we like to think about it or not, we can't escape the fact that what we do to and for others *does* have long term effects on them. Even when we *don't do* certain things it can have long term effects (don't praise, don't love, don't

have time for, don't correct, etc.). So, since one way or another we WILL influence the future of our family members, doesn't it make sense to PLAN our daily interactions in a way that seems to have the best possible chance of being truly helpful down the line? I think it does. I imagine you do also.

This brings into sharp focus the tremendous responsibility each of us has as we interact with our family members and with other people in general. More specifically however, it demonstrates the vital and undeniable role we play as parents of youngsters who are still being molded and influenced by ALL that goes on around them.

The other side of this responsibility is the joyous reward a parent receives each time he or she sees that his or her influence is really working to produce a happy, healthy, productive, cooperative, successful youngster. And, *Oh*, the satisfaction that fills a parent's entire being when you see that your little ones have grown into wonderful adult human beings! There is nothing that can compare with that!

Now, let's not forget that kids do have some options in all of this. They may choose not to accept your best efforts at helpfulness or your carefully studied guidance. When a child makes that choice, the parents who know they have done the best they could at the time (knowing what they knew at that time), need not feel responsible for a child's ultimate condition or predicament.

I feel it necessary to add one of my personal biases here. I believe, that the parent who does not make an honest effort to understand the well-established principles of child development or to find out what is known about raising mentally healthy, well adjusting children, probably *does* have to bear a large portion of the responsibility for such unhappy outcomes, since they did not make the necessary effort to learn how to become an adequate parent. That doesn't automatically appear inside us when a child is born or given into our custody.

[End of bias – well, that one, at least!]

We all know the old saying, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Old sayings are not necessarily always true. In Section Five, I will present a wide variety of ways to influence children's values and behaviors. A good knowledge of these methods will go a long way toward preventing those down-the-road heartaches.

Now that we have spent this time defining and discussing the words used in the One Rule Plan, let's look at it again:

We only do to or for each family member those things that will be helpful to him or her in the long run.

I imagine it is much clearer this time through, isn't it! If you are still unclear about the meaning of any of the word, re-read its description. It is vitally important that you understand it, because if you decide to use the One Rule Plan, you will be referring to it time and time again each and every day, and will eventually be explaining it to your family. (I'll show you how. No need to panic!)

HOW ABOUT SOME ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES?

Let's begin by seeing how we might replace four rules that are commonly found in many homes with just this One Rule.

FIRST RULE: "Don't tease."

Children tease for a wide variety of reasons. They may be jealous of a sibling so they tease to get back. They may dislike a sibling, so they tease to hurt him. They may simply delight in seeing the older teenage brother revert to the four-year-old stage when he explodes while being teased. Sometimes teasing is a way to get someone's attention when other, more positive ways have not worked. I am sure there are many other reasons for teasing, but this should be enough to

illustrate the point here. Why have I even taken the time to list this many? As I have emphasized earlier, it is often quite important to understand the intention behind the act. How is the teasing getting the desired result for the teaser? What's the payoff (what was the intention)?

Let’s move on to the illustration. Older brother John is observed by mother teasing younger sister, Beth. Since we no longer have the specific "no teasing" rule, Mother might ask John, "How is teasing Beth helping her?" Now John may come up with some smart answer ("She needs to get tougher."), but that is overlooked, and Mom presses John until she sees he understands that he is not helping her.

Later, Mother should sit down with John and ask, "So, John, you must have thought that teasing Beth was actually helping you in some way?" If John gives this question some honest thought, he may realize something like this: The coach got on his back at practice and he was just letting off steam (inappropriately) by getting on Beth's case. Or Mom might hear, "Mom, the only time you pay any attention to me anymore is when I'm in trouble." Or, "It's fun to see Beth get mad." This, of course, requires further attention: "So, making Beth mad provides you with entertainment. I can see, then, that Beth's being mad is helping YOU, but how is that also helping Beth? Since we only do things that are helpful for all, Beth as well as you, teasing her was inappropriate, wasn't it? What else could you and Beth do that could be entertaining for both of you? What other things can you do to entertain yourself that are not done at the expense of someone else?" And finally, the most important growth producing question: "The next time you feel the urge to tease Beth, what will you do instead?"

SECOND RULE: "Always close the outside door."

As children hurry through life from one personally important event to the next, they often do not have time to think about the routine tasks that need doing in between. Their thoughts are on themselves and their own activities. Usually, when they fail to carry out some routine expectation like closing the door or hanging up their coat, it is not intentional rule breaking so much as it is just not tuning in at the moment to what is important *to all concerned*.

John comes into the house after his paper route and leaves the outside door slightly ajar in fifteen degree January weather. He proceeds to his room to do the next important item on his agenda - something he has been planning all the while he has been out of the house on the paper route.

Now, since we no longer have a "close the outside door" rule, how does Dad approach this situation? "John, I'd like to hear your version of how leaving the door open just now, helps us become a happy, healthy, wealthy family?" John comes back and closes the door. He may apologize (Apologies seldom indicate a real change in feelings or attitude. By merely encouraging the child to say he is sorry when he isn't forces him to lie). During the discussion, John eventually says something like. "I know you can't be happy and healthy when the cold air blows in on you and it wastes fuel that costs money." John has had to think about how what he did had affected the family (health, comfort, finances, etc.). He understands Dad is not mad at him, but that he does expect John to act responsibly. The whole discussion was focused on change and not punishment. It may even have been done in such way as to give them both a good chuckle. However, the point is made, the door gets closed, and John knows he has not been called on the carpet merely because he broke a rule, but because of how he negatively affected the family as a whole.

It would have been much easier, time-wise and mentally, to just enforce a "close the door" rule. "John, come back here and close the door and then stay in your

room till supper!" (All too likely delivered in an angry voice.) John does not have to think about how what he did (or didn't do, in this case) affected anything, and he gets to go to his room which is where he wanted to be in the first place. John did learn, in this second case, that he had angered Dad (again?!). This also adds one more, "John made me angry," entry on Dad's list of encounters with his son. All in all, it was not a very "helpful" experience for anyone.

THIRD RULE: "Be home on time."

The concept of being home on time is essential, but we do not need that specific rule anymore. In cases like this, either there can be a set schedule of times to be home (like curfew) or it is a specific instance when the child was asked to be home at a specific time. (Schedules are different from rules and we will go into this in helpful detail later on.)

Sixteen-year-old John is expected to be home on Friday nights by midnight. He arrives at 12:45 AM instead, to find his mother and father waiting up for him. Under the old rule (be in by midnight or suffer the consequences), John might have been forbidden to go out for the next four Friday nights (to teach him a lesson!).

Without reference to a "Be home on time" rule, John immediately realized several things. He has kept his parents up too late and knows Dad has to go to work on Saturday morning. His Dad says, "Talk to me about this, John. What has happened here?" John has to explore how he has worried his folks, inconvenienced them, made them miss needed sleep, and made himself appear less than responsible. John has to think through and recognize how he has affected his family and his own reputation.

Now, if there is a good reason for the late return without a phone call to his parents, he has been given an opportunity to explain, up front (Dad said, "Talk to

me about this."). No one just assumed from the start that the boy was misbehaving or was being irresponsible. All the facts were gathered first.

The next step is not really important in terms of our illustration here, but several things might take place. Perhaps the matter is closed after this discussion, since the car had a flat miles from a phone, or, since it was the first time John had ever been late and they felt the point had been made. Perhaps the parents did set some consequence to help John remember next time. ("Since you were forty-five minutes late tonight, next Friday night we expect you to get in forty-five minutes early - 11:15." This would be my least favorite response because it tends to teach the child if you're willing to pay the consequence you can pretty much do whatever you want to do. More later.)

FOURTH RULE: "You shall not smoke."

This is an instance when an informational side trip can help. Whether you are a smoker or non-smoker, I am sure you are informed enough, as an intelligent adult, to understand that smoking physically harms the smoker. We also know that smoke blown out into the air to be inhaled by non-smokers, also physically harms *them*, especially children. Add to this the tremendous cost of the habit, and we have several good ways of applying our One Rule. Smoking is not helpful, in the long-run, to anyone (the smoker himself or those around him who must breath the smoke). So why do our children know they are not to smoke? Not because of a rule that prohibits it (and therefore, almost certainly makes it seem desirable to many children), but because smoking does not follow our One Rule to be helpful (that is, not harmful) to all family members. As a result, we are a healthier family and have more money available for other things (books, trips, clothes, games, treats, etc.).

Another, short, Side Trip. When rules are set up in a form such as, "If you do X,

then unpleasant thing Y will happen to you," ("If you are late you get grounded for a week"), the child has really been given a choice whether or not to abide by the rule. If it is worth being grounded for a week in order to stay out late and go to that party, then it is seen by the youngster as a legitimate trade off. When children begin seeing rules as tradeoffs (being allowed to break them if they are willing to take the punishment or consequence), then, the focus is no longer on learning to do the right thing. The focus is on whether "being bad" is worth the price the child has to pay in that specific instance. I believe that this is a built-in weakness of most rule enforcement and behavior management programs. Kids come to believe it is all right to break the rule if you are willing to take the punishment. Isn't that a scary idea? It may be inevitable with certain children, but I believe you will come to see how it is minimized with the One Rule Plan. [End]

IS THIS REALLY DIFFERENT FROM MULTI-RULE PLANS?

You may be patiently wondering, "How is all this really different from having a list of specific rules?" Let me just as patiently give you my answer. For one thing, a parent cannot possibly have a rule on the list for every single problem or situation that might arise. The One Rule, however, applies to all cases. (Well, almost all cases, as we will see a bit later.)

Secondly, the One Rule approach greatly changes the focus of "behaving oneself." Instead of behaving oneself so they don't get caught and then punished, children come to "behave" because it is best for all concerned (*themselves included*).

Third, with the One Rule approach, the child learns a different, broader way of thinking. He learns to take other's needs and feelings into consideration in

addition to just his own. Instead of, "I don't tease Beth because I'll get into trouble," it becomes, "I don't do things to Beth that aren't helpful to her in the long run and, by the way, having a reputation as a teaser won't really help me in the long run either."

This leads to number four which is, perhaps, the most important of all. The child living by this One Rule has to begin thinking about and deciding which things he personally believes are helpful and right, and which things are not. In other words, *he has to begin exploring and establishing his own set of* portable *values*. (Portable = he always has them with him, even when out of sight of rule enforcers.)

With the One Rule Plan, no one (children or parents) ever has to learn and remember a lot of rules. This means that, no one can claim they forgot the rule. At best, they may claim, in a healthy and reasonable way, that they need help learning how to apply the rule appropriately in certain situations. (And don't we all!)

You ask, "How am I, as a busy parent, ever going to find the time to do all of this?" In the long run (sound like a familiar phrase yet?), the parent may find it takes less time than it previously did to enforce dozens of separate rules (and certainly less ‘book keeping’ time). Since you are freed from keeping accounts on who broke which rule and what disciplinary measure you meted out and for how long, you have more time to help your children learn how to apply The Rule for themselves. You find that you have more time to help them learn how to think through (ahead of time) the consequences of their behavior, and more time to teach and model the positive and useful sides of really important things such as values, relationships, responsibility, privileges, self-esteem and the "family feeling."

Like most things that are worthwhile in life, this too takes practice, and as in acquiring any new skill, some trial and error learning will take place on everyone's part. Patience and consistency are probably the key words, especially during the first month - patience with everyone's errors (including your own) and consistency, day in, day out, just keep plugging away at following this new system. Give no indication to the family you will back off from this new approach once it begins. "This WILL be the way we do things now, so everyone SHALL give it their best shot. (Why? Because it will best for all concerned in the long run.)"

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO MAKE THE ONE RULE PLAN WORK?

By now, you have probably already answered this question yourself. *It is everyone's responsibility to make it work.* Obviously, the parents have the ultimate responsibility to set the basic family values and goals toward which the One Rule Plan is aimed. The parents must be the best possible models of all aspects of the plan. They must explain it and be ready to help the others master it and use it themselves. This often means providing information (such as the effects of tobacco, as in an example above), and formulating meaningful leading questions ("How is this helping our family in the long run?").

The parents need to monitor progress and encourage and support other family members. From time to time parents might need to make minor adjustments to keep the plan humming along - adjusting expectations for maturation levels, ages, problems, skills, unforeseen circumstances such as illness, and so forth.

The children have the responsibility to apply this knowledge about values and relationships, and use and practice the helpful and necessary procedures they are taught. They must understand that learning to work as a family unit toward

the goals of their One Rule Plan doesn't happen all at once. This is one of the greatest functions of healthy families - to give us a place to practice such skills with people who understand that all this growing up stuff happens gradually and not without errors and problems. We each learn more about growing up every single day. The home must be a place where we are loved regardless of our errors. Many places in our world are just NOT that way!

A final comment before leaving this topic. I have often been asked: "What's in all this for the kids? Why should they buy into it? Why shouldn't they just refuse to go along with it?" Excellent questions and I'll ask you to think about it this way: How often does a child find himself in a loving, caring, situation, where he knows that if he helps those around him get what they need, he too will be guaranteed (virtually) the things he needs? That is an offer it is just impossible not to try on for size!

HOW DOES THIS ONE RULE PLAN COMPARE WITH THE GOLDEN RULES?

I say rule**s**, because most religions and great philosophies of the World have their own version of the Christian's Golden Rule. They are stated in various ways, but basically they all say something like this: "Treat other people the way you would like them to treat you." Now, if by, "the way you would like them to treat you," one really means, "Do to me and for me, that which, in the long-run, will be most helpful to me," and if the term "helpful" is defined as we defined it earlier (doing what we need and not necessarily what we want), THEN there is not much difference between the One Rule and the various Golden Rules. Unfortunately, the second halves of the Golden Rules are often interpreted as meaning, "I'd have you do to me just exactly what I WANT, whether it's best for me in the long run or not."

A second important difference, I think, is that if we apply the Golden Rules at face value, we have to assume the other person's needs are identical to our own and ours to his. That is often – usually, in fact - not actually true. One person may really need a very strict schedule because he is prone to waste away his time. Another person may really need a more flexible schedule so he can develop his creative talents or meet his relaxation needs.

Now, please, don't take me wrong here. I am not knocking anybody's Golden Rule. I am just suggesting that if one does not carefully consider it from several viewpoints, even a Golden Rule can be misapplied and cause long term, hurt and pain to others.

I have included this section as an afterthought, primarily, because when I hold workshops, and speak to groups about the One Rule Plan, this "Golden Rule" question inevitably arises. I hope this explanation and discussion helps answer the questions you may have had. As with most rules, it is not the words themselves, but the interpretation of those words that tend to cause disagreements. I have given you my best interpretations, and now you must find those interpretations that make sense to you.

LET ME CLARIFY ONE IMPORTANT POINT

The One Rule says we only do those things to and for others, which are helpful for them. By this I do not mean to imply that everything one does in life has to be planned so it has an effect on one's family. Much of what we do may not affect the family at all. It is just that when something one does, will indeed affect the family, it should be helpful in nature.

John can join a bowling team, for example, and bowl his heart out if it is not placing an inappropriate imposition on his family. The bowling itself, though,

need not be specifically helpful to the family. Also, please notice that I said "inappropriate" imposition on the family. Sometimes certain family members must be willing to accept a bit of an imposition when it is for the good of another. If John needs to get out and bowl for the exercise or to meet other kids or to find a sport in which he can excel or just to have something in life that he can enjoy, then others in the family may need to take up the slack a bit around the house on Thursday evenings so he can go bowling. Perhaps Beth does "John's" dishes on bowling night or Mom takes time to drive him to the bowling alley. Perhaps, Sarah baby-sits, Beth, while Mom is doing the transporting of John. A family team pitches in and helps one another. People can't be expected to live with one another and not cause some impositions. John will get his chance to repay the kindness (eagerly and appreciatively, we hope).

Let me try this one more way. We all need and deserve a life away from the family (yes, Mom, you too!). Kids need this to practice being independent from Mom and Dad and to experience other sets of values and beliefs. Parents need it to keep their sanity and a sense of perspective, to enjoy grown-up activities, and to associate with their adult friends. So long as our being away from home, doing our own thing (legal and value-appropriate), doesn't impose unreasonable hardship on the family, we have every right to it, even if it isn't specifically helpful in any way to the rest of the family.

ACTIVITY: Looking over the Parenting Inventory

The Parenting Inventory is in three sections. In the first you were asked to fill in the "I'm at" space, with the number of the phrase that fits you best right now. Next, within each set of traits (sets A through E) find the phrase you wish were true about you, and put that number in the "I want" space. After each of the five

sets of phrases have been completed, you need to subtract, in each set, the smaller number from the larger number.

Example: I'm at 4

I want 6

Diff. = 2 (6 - 4 = 2)

Each Difference Score (the 2 in this example) suggests how far you have to go to reach your goal. For each goal (A through E) write yourself a short list of behaviors, which, when you see them happening in yourself, will show you that you are progressing toward the goal. For example, in Set "B", let's say a parent is at step 5 and wants to get to step 8. (The Difference score = 8 - 5 =3)

Goal: To think that being a parent is wonderful and to love it!

Behaviors:

1- Every night I will be able to list some things I enjoyed about being a parent that day.

2- I will find myself stopping during the day and feeling good about how some parenting task is going.

3- I will stop almost all of my complaining to friends about being a parent.

This process will take some time and a lot of thought. If you have difficulty getting started, list the things you do that make you think you are really at such and such a step.

Example: "Today I told my friend Jane I never should have become a parent. It's just too hard!"

Then, write down the opposite of that:

"I will hear myself telling Jane that I like being a parent at least a bit more these days."

This, then, becomes one of your goals. Review these goals no more than once each week or two. Do so too often, and you will not give yourself time for growth to take place.

In the second section of the Parenting Inventory, there is a long list of statements. These are characteristics, which the most effective parents can say are true about them. Look over the list to see which ones you felt were true about yourself. Read each one aloud and pat yourself on the back each time. Nice job!!!! Now, not forgetting those great responses, look over the list again. Find those you did not feel were true about yourself. Pick one or two a week (no more) and work on them specifically. You may be surprised that with just a week's work, they will have become a part of your parenting style. Then move on to another one or two and so on down the list. *Be patient with yourself*.

The third section contains things many parents do occasionally, but not on a regular basis. You were asked to circle the minus (-) sign in front of any statement you think is frequently true of you. Now, first of all, don't get down on yourself if many items were circled. Give yourself credit for being brave enough to mark them honestly in the first place. How else can you know where to start!

Again, pick one or two to work on, this time for two weeks each. It often takes longer to break old habits than to form new ones. Don't be in a big hurry to fix everything at once. Just take it one sure step at a time.

You will notice that eight of the minus signs are in bold print. If you have circled any of those, you may want to consider talking with a professional counselor. Those responses usually indicate that the parent is carrying a burden far greater than anyone should have to carry all by oneself. There is help available from

private practice social workers, psychologists, counselors, clergymen or psychiatrists, and from inexpensive or even free local or county mental health clinics. These people really care and want to help you. They are not there to blame or embarrass you. Everybody needs someone to talk to sometimes. A bold minus sign may indicate that this may be your time.

SUMMARY: Section Three

In Section Three, we finally stated the One Rule. (Can you repeat it now?) We defined the important words in the Rule and illustrated how to use the rule in replacing four typical family rules. We talked about how all the family members must work together to make the One Rule work. We showed how, through mutually helpful activities, each person grows in his ability to be considerate of others, and in his own decision making skills. We talked about how one's values are basic to the One Rule Plan and that this manual will expand on that topic in the next section.

SECTION FOUR

Let's talk about making your own One Rule Plan

In Section Four, we will address these eleven questions:

What are the first big decisions for the parents?

How is the Value Inventory Scored?

What do your Value Inventory results show you?

Are there changes you want to make in your own values?

How does one change a value?

How does one get from values to goals?

Should parents really force their own values onto their children?

Should parents protect their children from exposure to differing values?

How does one know if their values are the right values?

How do you write your own One Rule?

What are some other frequently valued aspects of life?

In the Activity, you will write your own complete One Rule Plan.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST BIG DECISIONS FOR THE PARENTS?

First, as the parent, ***you*** must decide exactly what you mean by the word "helpful". Toward *what,* do you want to help your children strive? What are you trying to help your children learn about being a successful person? When other people describe your child's personality, what do you want to hear them say? Once you know what product you want to produce, you provide those experiences that will guide the children in that direction. First, however, you have to set your goals based on what you value most.

For example (as a most negative possibility!): If a parent decides he or she wants the child to become a scared, uncertain, self-doubting person, the prescription is simple. Beat him and / or put him down for apparently no particular reason, and do so at unpredictable intervals, which he has no way of influencing or preventing. I'll guarantee a mentally ill child as the result!

How about a positive example! Let's aim to produce a self-confident, outgoing, loving person. In this case we let him try out his own ideas, we praise him and support him through both his successes and failures, and surround him with accepting, open people who listen to his ideas and questions with genuine interest and seek out his opinions and ideas. Now, granted, it is a lot easier to produce an unhappy misfit than a well adjusting person. In fact, misfits usually happen with absolutely no planning at all. Having a well adjusting family takes continuous planning, and then re-planning as people and situations change.

So, the question remains. Toward what goals do you want to help your children move? Basically, it comes down to the question: what in life do you really value? Perhaps, wealth? Fame? Success? Often, I find, many parents aren't really sure what they value most - what they really do want for their children in the long run.

Since this is so common, I developed the Value Inventory. It is an informal way

to help sort through several of the values that are most often found to be important to parents. Once you have completed the Inventory (you probably did that earlier), we will discuss how to use what you found. If you have not yet done so, complete the inventory before you read further. When completing it, be as honest with yourself as possible. After all, you are the only one who needs to see it, but to write your own One Rule Plan, you do need to see it.

HOW IS THE VALUE INVENTORY SCORED?

Score may be the wrong word, because that term often implies one can receive either a good score or a poor score. Good and bad results are not the point of this inventory. It just attempts to help show you understand how you feel about certain things - in this case, *values*. You may decide that you "like" or "dislike" what the results show, but that will be your interpretation and not that of the Inventory itself. Tabulate the scores according the previous instructions.

WHAT DOES YOUR VALUE INVENTORY SHOW YOU?

In the Value Inventory, every value was matched one time with every other value and you chose the one that seemed more important. Sometimes (perhaps even often) the choice was hard to make because both seemed about equally important or unimportant. Even so, since so many choices were made, in the end you very likely have a good sample of your feelings.

Keep the Value Inventory Importance List handy as we discuss the results. You now have a list of eleven values generally considered to be of importance in family life. There are, of course, many other things that may be valued and pursued in life besides those included in this Inventory. I will list some of them toward the end of this section. You may find that some of them seem to be even

more important to you than certain ones that were included in the Inventory, and you may therefore decide to use them in your plan.

Those values toward the top of your Importance List (ranks from 1 down to 5 or 6) are those which the Inventory suggests you value the most. Those toward the bottom of the list are those, which you seem to value the least. Now, just because a value is at or near the bottom of this list does not mean it may not be important to you. All eleven of them may be very important to you. Being toward the bottom only means it is of less value in relation to those at or near the top.

Similarly, if this inventory did not include descriptions of any of those things that you truly value, then even a high scoring value here, may not really be of much importance to you. For example, let us suppose the thing you personally value most - that is want the most for your children - is for them to be free from any and all addictions (not addicted to drugs, food, alcohol, tobacco, etc.). Since "Addiction Free" was not an item in this inventory, it cannot show up on your Value Importance List. This is why I suggested that you might find some of those values (listed later) that are more important to you. You'll have to decide where to slot them in your own personal Value Importance List.

Over the years, however, I have found that the eleven values included in this inventory are those, which are valued most by 90% or more of the families with whom I have worked. You will notice that many of the additional values listed later in this section could be considered sub-types of one or another of the eleven we have used.

For example, a person valuing (and achieving) self-confidence, integrity and love, will almost always be addiction-free.

Let's examine what the spread of scores may mean. By spread, I refer to the pattern of the total score size received by these eleven values. A large spread

pattern, for example, would have some high scores (8, 9, 10), some lower scores (0,1, 2, 3) and some middle scores (4, 5, 6, 7).

A pattern of small spread might have all the values clumped around 4, 5 and 6, for example. Clumped scores suggest that no one or two values appear to really be more important than the others. When this pattern exists, it is hard to describe a family in terms of what is really *most* important to them. It is also often difficult for the children in that family to get a clear idea of what being a "Smith" is all about. On the other hand, when one or two values stand out above the rest, it is pretty easy to describe a family's approach to life, and the children also soon catch on that being a "Smith" means we do or believe such and such. For example: If happiness and success are both 9's and the other nine values rank 6 and below, it is probably easy for a youngster to know that being a Smith means we have a lot of fun but still work hard at our jobs.

Overly careful or less secure parents often develop an equally careful, middle of the road (clumped) set of values so they won't stand out from the pack. This way they don't ever have to defend their beliefs. They also don't fit into any obvious category from which others might either require them to get involved, or decide to shun them. For example, a family whose actions clearly demonstrate to the community that they are high in the love/friendship value might be asked to volunteer for an MD telethon or to become a foster family. One obviously high in social acceptance might be asked to help raise funds for a community project. Clumped values are one way of hiding in the pack and not standing out to be noticed (or admired, either, I suppose!).

What is your first reaction to your Value Importance List? Does it seem to fit the picture you have of yourself? If not, you need to take some time and think about why that may be. Are you pleased with the results? Are your high-ranking values, the ones you want to see rank high? Are you troubled by the results?

Does the inventory suggest you value things you don't really want to value? Are there changes you want to make in your own values?

Honest choices while completing the inventory, and honest soul searching about its results, often lead parents to try making some changes in what they seem to value.

I remember one mother who achieved a strong rating (10) on the "fame" value, and was bothered that it seemed so important to her. At first, she thought the Inventory was dead wrong. However, after watching herself in action with her children over a period of several weeks, she began to see how she really did emphasize those things which were aimed at urging her daughter to be more than merely just popular - to practice the violin so she could one day become a famous concert violinist revered by thousands. She then had to decide if having that value at the top of her list was acceptable to her. In this case, she came to see that, although quite talented, her daughter was really not gifted enough to become one of the very best violinists in the World. Once fame moved down a few notches, happiness seemed to move up a few. Family life improved remarkably. Tension was reduced, and there was more time for mutually enjoyable mother-daughter activities.

So, sometimes parents do find that knowing how to change or play down one of the values that seems to be getting in the way, can increase family happiness.

HOW DOES ONE CHANGE A VALUE?

Often, just realizing that you may have been over emphasizing one value, is enough to make you change what you stress within your family setting. Other times, however, it takes a bit more work than that.

I often suggest that parents, who find themselves in this spot, write out a

Personal Value and Behavior Change Plan. The first step is simple. Just fill in the blanks in the following Value Change Formula.

Instead of stressing _____

I would like to start stressing _____.

The mother in my violin example just above wrote "Fame" in the first blank and "Happiness/contentment" in the second.

Once parents have written out their Value Change Formula in this way, they are ready for step two: Pulling in the reins. In this step you write down as many answers as you can find to this question:

*What things do **I** do that tend to emphasize this over-stressed value to my family?*

As you go about the normal processes of interacting with your family on a regular day-to-day basis, you may begin noticing other things you also do, and you will want to add those to this list as well. Often, just becoming aware of the ways you have been encouraging the over-stressed value, is enough to help you stop doing it (or cut back on it to a more reasonable level). One great way to find out what you do is to ask the kids. Believe me, they *will* know!

Step three asks you to formulate and write down some ideas that answer this question:

What things can I now begin doing that will stress the replacement value (the new one that you want to develop)?

Spend a few minutes each night remembering and listing the times you kept from pushing the old, over-stressed value, and also those times you were able to emphasize or model the new, replacement value. Think about times that may be coming up in which you will have the opportunity to stress the new one, or times in which you may have to be extra careful not to emphasize the old one.

Some values are harder to change than others. It is especially hard to change those that were well learned when we were very young. The violinist's mother, for example, was the daughter of a "stage Mother" - a mother who dragged her daughter (this mother) from one audition to another from the time she was three years old, trying to get her into show business. This made her into one who valued fame at a very young age and then later, as a mother herself, she was unconsciously stressing the very same value to her own daughter.

The general rule is: *The earlier a value is learned the harder it is to change*. This will hold for our children as well. The older children in a family may have more difficulty handling a family value change than the younger ones. Why? It is simply because, the older ones learned it when they were young, and have therefore practiced and accepted it longer.

Another reason that very early learning is so difficult to change, is that the earliest beliefs are often learned at a feeling or emotional level rather than through words. When a baby is left wet and cold or hungry, it learns the World is an uncomfortable, hurtful place - not with words, of course, because it can't use or understand words yet. It learns through feelings. Later on in life, it is difficult to talk oneself out of early impressions about the World because they were not acquired through talk, but through feelings. Counseling for such problems often involves non-verbal, feeling level approaches, rather than just talking about it. On the other hand, if the infant is kept warm and dry, is fed, held and talked to, it learns (again at a feeling level) that this World is one that meets his needs, is comfortable, and filled with pleasant, caring people.

Parents who have been trying to change a family value often find that teenagers have the hardest times. This puzzles parents, since it seems that teens are often found to automatically rebel against family values. I would point out one big difference here. An adolescent normally tests (rebels against, if you like) the

parent's value system to see if, indeed, it is actually going to handle life better for him than the alternative value systems he encounters elsewhere. This is not giving up a value learned at home. It is more like putting it on hold while trying out some new ways. Keeping a value on hold means the teen still has the security of falling back on it if he sees that it is needed or best. And you know what? He almost always does return to it eventually. Dozens of studies and thousands of dissertations show it to be true.

Now, when the parents come right out and suggest the family start playing down a long held value or belief in favor of a new (perhaps foreign) one, this tends to become quite threatening to the teen. They wonder," Well if *that* particular old value was not good, then what about all the rest of the family's values?" If that value or impression about the World was learned at a non-verbal level, the parents must work overtime to demonstrate the new value at a feeling level rather than merely using words. Hugging and touching and tucking-in and pampering are physical activities that might be used to counteract early feeling-based learning that the World is hurtful or cannot be trusted to meet your needs.

This problem of resistance to value changes frequently surfaces in the case of changing churches. Mom and Dad have grown out of one set of beliefs and into another set all more or less comfortably. The teen may not have done this at all. In this case, the teen's value system is not only threatened by the new religion, but he begins to question the long-term value of everything his parents have taught him.

With that illustration, am I suggesting families shouldn't change values (or religion)? NO! Most certainly not! I am just warning that it will require careful planning and specific inclusion of, and preparation of, the children (especially the older ones) if it is to be successful.

HOW DOES ONE GET FROM VALUES TO GOALS?

Goals are behaviors you want to see on a regular basis in the child.

Example: If you value wealth, some goals you could state might be these:

Goal one: Jerome will fill his piggy bank at least once each month. (This would be a short-term goal. It would let you see him taking steps in the desired direction.)

Goal two: Jerome will be worth a million dollars by the time he is twenty-five. (This is a long-term goal. Many intermediate goals will be needed to help Jerome reach this long-term goal.)

Let's slow down a bit right here. Remember, we are trying to get that One Rule to work in your family. In the long run, one rule rather than many **will** simplify life. Even more than that, this particular One Rule trains your youngsters how to think things through, from their first awareness of a situation, to planning the best possible outcome for all concerned. This is a skill which most unhappy adults have not learned (and therefor, of course, neither have their children)!

We have said that in order to use this One Rule Plan you need to have a very good idea about what you want your family life to be like, and what kind of people you want your children to become. This is based on what you value, isn't it? It sounds like a tall order, and it is. But just follow along and soon you'll know exactly where you are headed and how you are going to get there.

From the results of the inventory, which you completed, and from the thought you have given to the topic of values, you already have a good understanding of what things you value. You also now have an idea of which values you want to pursue within your family. Those values are the ones you will want to use as your guide here. (Integrity, love, fame, or power - whatever you decide). Once you have

listed these, (let's just take them one value at a time at first), you are ready to state a few major goals. Remember a goal is the ***behavior*** you want to see in the children. When you see this behavior, you have a pretty good idea that they are learning the value.

For example, let's say self-confidence is something you value and want your children to develop. For a four-year-old child you might state this as your goal:

"Jenny will teeter-totter at the park with a friend while I sit a long way away."

When she accomplishes this, it suggests to you that Jenny is self-assured enough that the parent doesn't have to be right there beside her.

For a ten-year-old you might state this goal:

"Tony will run errands in the neighborhood (assuming it is a safe neighborhood) without my help."

For a sixteen-year-old it might be:

"Doug will try out for the team or the play (have enough self-confidence to risk the try-out).

These examples suggest several things. First, your goals are set according to the child's current level of skill. Age often plays a major part in this, but at any age, you have to set your goal just *one little step beyond* where the child is at the moment.

If Jenny (the four-year-old) still clings to Mom in all new situations, you might need to start with a goal such as: "Jenny will teeter-totter at the park with Mom on one end and Jenny on the other." Then gradually state some small step separation goals before you can state the original one used in the example above. ("She will teeter with a friend while Mom stands beside her." "She will teeter with a friend while Mom sits over on the bench," etc.)

In general, self-confidence is learned from several kinds of experiences: It is learned from being allowed to (encouraged to) try things by oneself, and learning that failing isn't bad. It is just a sign you need a new approach or more practice or additional information (provided the goal is realistic for that particular child). Success breeds self-confidence, so setting a child up with tasks at which he can succeed, becomes an important part of the plan. Don't ask for too much too soon. Don't ask for too little, ever. “If my parents don’t think I’m capable then I’m probably not!”)

Ok, having said all this, let us get back to our One Rule. Again, that rule says:

"We only do to or for each family member those things that will be helpful (build self-confidence, in this Jenny example) to him or her in the long run."

First, children learn from you, through discussions and especially from your example, that helping one another to become more self-confident is something this family truly values. Therefore family members work to help build it in one another. Then, they come to realize that they are expected to make their behaviors reflect this value. And, wonder of all wonders, they see that they actually can!

Does older brother, Jim, make fun of younger sister, Jill, when she spills her milk? No! Why? Not because there is a specific rule about not putting down others for spilling things or making mistakes, but because of the One Rule that guides us toward our values - in this instance, building self-confidence (or self-esteem).

We now understand that what the original form of our One Rule meant by the term "helpful," was to move the family toward its over-all values. In light of this, we can now restate our One Rule in this way:

We only do to or for each family member those things, which are in accordance

with our values.

Putting down Jill is not in accordance with our values. Putting her boots on for her once she is able to do it for herself, is also not in accordance with our values, since doing it herself will help build her self-confidence. There is no need for a specific rule ("Don't put Jill's boots on for her") once we have our well understood One Rule built upon our equally well understood value system.

Let's say Tony gets impatient waiting for Jill to get her boots on. Now being impatient is quite normal for a sixteen-year-old like Tony. Taking a long time with the boots is also quite normal for a four or five year old like Jill. Being impatient, Tony starts to force his help on Jenny to hurry things up. Mom sees all this and faces a dilemma. How can she deal with both Jenny and Tony without damaging the self-confidence in either one? (Jill wanting to get her boots on all by herself and feel good about it, and Tony feeling he is doing the right thing by helping, in order to speed up the process so the family can leave sooner.) Mom might say, "Tony, it would help me if you'd back the car out of the garage for us," or "Tony, would you please take Johnny out to the car and belt him" (put on his seat belt, that is!). "We'll be right along." In either of these ways, Tony's impatience and need to help are handled, and so is Jenney's need to be left alone to work on those boots.

"Wow! This is not going to be easy," you say. Not at first, but give yourself some credit. It is not nearly as difficult as learning to talk, or walk, or read, and you probably mastered most of those skills. Right? We're going to take things one step at a time. I haven't asked you to try any of this with the family yet. We're still just thinking it all through together and making it clear in our own minds first. Relax and just imagine how wonderful it will be to get family living strategies straightened out, once and for all. Also, credit yourself with sticking to the process this far. The best is still to come!

One reason it will not be as difficult as it may seem, is that once you know your goals for each child, then all you do is respond according to those each time. You never have to wonder if you are doing the "right" thing: You are, if you are moving the child toward one of your goals (based on one of your values).

Let us take a moment here and review all that we have learned so far: As a parent, you value several things that can guide you in raising your family. The clearer these values are to you, the easier it is to direct the children's development. By using those values, you can set short term and long term goals for each of your children. A goal is a behavior you will see happening regularly enough to show you the child is achieving what you value. The One Rule Plan helps children become aware of your values and learn how to use them in thinking through and reacting appropriately to everyday situations without needing a lot of specific rules. Children can, in fact, face totally new problems that Mom and Dad never anticipated, and using their One Rule, go ahead and handle them in fine fashion. The children "behave", if you will, because they know what is expected of them in the larger sense, and in general why it is expected of them (because of the values you are sharing with them).

The task of translating values into specific goals may at first seem to be a baffling undertaking, so I will list some starter suggestions for each value on the inventory. You may feel comfortable using some of these directly, or you may want to use them only to get an idea of how to go about writing goals, and then prepare your own. For each value, I will list some goals for three developmental levels. Remember goals are the behaviors you want to see. Behaviors may be physical activities (teeter-tottering, grooming, dancing, closing doors, fist fights), verbal activities (bad vs good language, listening to what others have to say, using words that can be understood by the one being spoken to, the kinds of things one says about himself or about others, pessimistic or optimistic phrases,

good conversation habits), emotional activities (speaking calmly vs yelling, crying, laughing, staying down in the dumps, being cheerful, being positive, showing love and affection, anger, deceitfulness) or spatial activities (drawn to things he can see and touch, likes gifts, likes the opportunity to use things and gadgets, may like math). Some might add spiritual or philosophical activities as a fifth type of behavior, though these are usually composed of the others.

You will want to tailor-make your goals in terms that fit the personality style of each child (physical, verbal, emotional, spatial), matching your goal to what style motivates and communicates best to him or her. Since this is such an important concept, let me illustrate it further by suggesting some of the ways each of these types of children might prefer to be involved with music.

The physical child really gets into the movement suggested by the rhythm. He may even walk differently when music is playing. He sees music as something one moves to and dances to, and drums on the table to, rather than merely listening, or fiddling with the equipment or tuning into the feelings it may produce. He may prefer to make music by playing an instrument rather than merely listening to it or writing it.

The Verbal child knows the words to all the songs and gets into singing them (regardless of his vocal talent!). He may write song lyrics - often very creative ones that use the play on words technique or that make use of an interesting rhyme scheme. He may like to read or write about music related topics. When a new stereo arrives, he will read the manual first, rather than just trying to figure out how it works.

The spatial child might design album covers and easily visualize just how it would look when finished. He may designs music videos complete with staging, performers and exploding guitars. He is less into the feelings produced by the

music, or the equipment itself, or his own personal movement to music. He will always twist the knobs before giving in and reading the manual that accompanied that new stereo.

The emotional child focuses on the feelings the music brings to him. Sad music makes him sad. Happy music makes him happy. Violent music makes him violent. He tends to put on certain music, to put himself into the mood he wants to be feeling. (Many teens tend to become at least a bit this way, perhaps due to some hormone-emotion relationships.) He is less into the words, or the movement or the equipment. If the stereo looks or sounds great, he'll "flip" over it.

Physical children are doers, athletes, and musicians, and tend to protect their own things. Coupled with a spatial bent, they may become fine athletes. Coupled with an emotional bent, they may become fine musicians (or street fighters!). Coupled with a verbal bent, may become Mohammed Ali or Richard Sanders. Physical children tend to act and react first and talk later.

Spatial children are organizers and inventors or mathematicians, and have a strong need to protect their own "territory". They would rather show you how something is done than have to tell you. They are *pilers* contrasted with verbal children who tend to be *filers*. Spatial children have a pile for everything and everything is in its pile. Out of sight, out of mind is their trademark (therefore, a file system or drawers are actually of little value to them). Quite often engineers or dress designers are spatial people. Coupled with an emotional bent, they may display fine artistic talent. Coupled with a physical bent, they could be topnotch ice skaters. (Couple those last two tendencies with an emotional bent, and you just might build a hockey or football player.)

Verbal children tend to file things away out of sight, but can find anything on a

moment's notice. They enjoy describing things and relating stories or events. Verbal children are given to word-based creativity; public speaking, writing, and when coupled with the emotional, acting. They tend to logically protect their ideas in discussions and disputes. Couple verbal with strong spatial skills and you may have a play by play announcer for basketball or boxing.

Emotional children have intense relationships with others, are cause-joiners, devoted friends (or mortal enemies), and may protect their own rights through the most illogical kinds of arguments or outbursts. Coupled with a verbal bent, they may become fine writers, speakers, singers or actors. Coupled with a spatial bent, they may become outstanding artists. Many emotional children have no idea whatsoever where their things are! They may seem forgetful. Coupled with a verbal bent, they may also become worrywarts or incessant chatterboxes. Coupled with the spatial, they may become successful drivers in the demolition derby. (I know, that’s every Mother's dream come true!)

In the illustrations below, I will use the term child to indicate ages up to about eight; the term youth to indicate those from about nine through twelve; and the term teen, to indicate adolescents from age thirteen and older. Please recognize that these are arbitrary boundaries and some children may need planning done in either a higher or lower level, depending on their particular stage of maturity, intellectual capacity, and other necessary related skills.

Sample Goals (for the Value in each heading)

Self confidence:

Child:

Will try new games, toys, foods.

Will go and stay in new places (with parent's approval).

Youth:

Will volunteer to take on new projects.

Will freely show parents his school work (good or poor).

Will join clubs and activities.

Will put himself on the line for things he believes are right and just.

Teen: Will begin to date.

Will make positive statements about the future.

Will make realistic plans for now and for the future.

Will work to become very good at some skill.

Will run for class officer.

Will find a part time job on his own.

A**ltruism**:

Child:

Will share his things.

Will cooperate.

Will help take care of other family members.

Youth:

Will be freely helpful within the family setting

Will be helpful to neighbors and older people.

Will speak about the good feeling he gets from helping others.

Will show concern for the less fortunate.

Teen:

Will participate in "causes" for the oppressed or ill or under-dog.

Will contribute money and time to charities.

Will talk with compassion about those in need or the less fortunate.

Will volunteer at hospitals, children's homes, nursing homes.

Will coach little league or assist a brownie or scout leader.

Integrity:

Child:

Will tell the truth.

Will learn to not hurt others.

Will ask before borrowing.

Youth:

Will refrain from stealing or copying things from others.

Will do his homework with minimal reminding.

Will demonstrate he knows right from wrong.

Will stress fairness over personal gain or prestige.

Teen:

Will act on the side of justice.

Will state and strive to live up to a set of personal values.

Will treat others with fairness and concern for their wellbeing.

Will seek the truth in all matters.

Will do what he thinks is right even in the face of peer pressure.

(Remember, when it comes to boy/girl things, teen boys are prone to tell magnificent whoppers. In its usual form it's not a big concern.)

Happiness / Contentment:

Child:

Will laugh and smile and hug.

Will enjoy the simple pleasures available to him.

Youth:

Will treat family members positively, pleasantly.

Will joke and focus on what is right and fun and feels good.

Will seek out friends and entertaining group activities.

Teen:

Will *generally* present a sunny disposition.

Will talk positively about his relations with others.

Will have good peer and family relations.

Will state and demonstrate that he or she enjoys life.

Knowledge / Understanding:

Child:

Will want to be read to and read for himself when old enough.

Will want to try to figure things out himself first.

Will ask questions and listen to the answers when given.

Youth:

Will invent things, write stories, look things up in the encyclopedia and the internet.

Will find topics on which he wants to become expert.

Will seek out programs on TV that provide information.

Teen:

Will talk about ideas and plans rather than just "who did what with and to whom".

Will seek advice, opinions and sources of knowledge.

Will work to resolve contradictions and controversies.

Will attend seminars, institutes, and other extra learning activities.

Will make plans about his own further education.

Will engage in discussions just for the fun of it.

Love / Friendship:

Child:

Will seek out peers and interact cooperatively.

Will hug and kiss family members.

Will tell others he loves them.

Will allow himself to be physically hugged and touched in friendship.

Youth:

Will tell you he is lovable, and tell others he loves them.

Will act pleased to hear that others like and love him.

Will spend happy times with his peers and family.

Will have best friends of both genders (depends on age).

Teen:

Will seek a circle of comfortable friends with interests similar to his.

Will date and enjoy romantic and affectionate relationships.

Will accept non-public displays of affection from family members.

Will treat others as he wishes to be treated.

Will discover and fit comfortably into his sexual role.

Job Success:

Child:

Will clean up toys and his own messes.

Will carry out appropriately simple tasks within the home.

Will engage in self-care appropriate to his age.

Youth:

Will do extra jobs well for extra compensation.

Will demonstrate pride in his work at school and elsewhere.

Will investigate and speculate about various lines of work.

Will demonstrate a cooperative attitude with supervisors.

Teen:

Will successfully complete home, school, and extra responsibilities.

Will successfully try out various types of employment.

Will seriously investigate self-appropriate, long-term, vocational opportunities.

Social Acceptance:

Child:

Will have age appropriate, cooperative peer relationships.

Will have other children seek him out for play relationships.

Youth:

Will get along well with peers and family members.

Will be invited to be a part of formal and informal social groups.

Will be described by others as a "good kid".

Teen:

Will be sought out as a friend by same and opposite sex peers.

Will possess valued social skills (manners, dancing, driving, etc.).

Will be described as "fun and level headed" in social situations.

Will be able to have fun safely and ‘sensibly’.

Power Over Others:

Child:

Will be the leader within his play group.

Will learn ways to get what he wants from his parents.

Youth:

Will form clubs and definitely be the leader.

Will develop ways of convincing others to his way of thinking.

Will form useful coalitions with others whose power he needs to use.

Teen:

Will seek and be elected only to the highest student and other offices.

Will be undisputed leader of his social group or won't be a part of it.

Will see to it that he is selected as foreman, etc. at his job.

Will be in charge whether others like it or not.

Fame:

Child:

Will seek the spotlight and center of attention (most do, to some extent)

Will perform at the drop of an opening

Youth:

Will practice skills needed to be famous (music, sports, studies, etc.).

Will be an outgoing person.

Will be intrigued by famous people.

Will model himself after a famous person - do as he did.

Teen:

Will know how to make contacts to benefit his own success.

Will be steadfastly persistent in his attempts to be recognized.

Will gain some degree of recognition in some area of endeavor.

Will work relentlessly toward his goal to be recognized.

These sample goals will give you a place to begin. They demonstrate the kinds of possible behaviors you may want to encourage along the way, as your youngster moves toward one or more of the values you hope he will incorporate as his own.

We have already covered many of the essential basic ideas, and you understand them pretty well, now, don't you! Don't expect to understand them fully yet. Like any other worthwhile goal, having a great family life takes work, practice and persistence. Let's make certain we know where we are going and how we are

going to get there before we become concerned about putting all of this into practice.

Speaking of practice, it helps to remember that as we learn any new skill (say bike riding or bed making) we all make many errors before we finally gain mastery of the skill. So, it is with parents learning a new approach to family life. Something may not work the first time (or the second, or the ...!). That only tells you to think through what went wrong and look for a new approach to try next time. You will find it if you don't give up too soon. The children won't pick up all the skills right away either, but then, gradually (patiently) helping them learn to do all of this is really what defines being a parent. We usually have between seventeen and nineteen years to work at it for each child. In that many years, both the parents and kids have time to become pretty skillful!

A wise man once told me that when we make a mistake we should respond to it by saying, "Ah, Wonderful," because we have just learned something that is truly helpful - how *not* to proceed on the next attempt. I use that system every day of my life and it certainly tends to make learning a positive – even humorous – experience! You may want to keep it in mind for yourself or your children. I urge you to give it a try. Tomorrow, instead of responding with "Drat it," or "@#$&%#", just try saying, "Ah, Wonderful!" It really does change one's perspective on errors or mistakes *in a hurry*! It calls for no instant shot of adrenalin like getting upset does – just the calming feeling you've learned to associate with the idea, "Ah, wonderful. (And the looks you get from those within earshot make it worth the effort!)

Helping children make quality decisions about their behavior and understanding how it affects others will occur as a gradual shift. Some will make it more easily and quickly than others. When kids are trying, but still fall short, try to first find something that was appropriate about what they did (and let them know you

recognize it), and then help them discover how to do it better next time. (What did we call this approach, earlier? Oh, yes, The Agreement Frame of Reference.)

Example: "I can see you were really trying to be helpful, Tony, and I appreciate that. Why do you suppose it didn't work real well? What could you try next time that might have a better chance of working?"

Asking gentle, non-threatening, leading questions is superior to telling someone how something should be done. What we discover on our own we tend to accept and remember. What is forced upon us we tend to shed at the first opportunity!

SHOULD PARENTS REALLY FORCE THEIR OWN VALUES ONTO THEIR CHILDREN?

This question takes careful consideration. Some parents answer with a resounding "No!" because they believe everyone should be free to make up their own minds about which values they will have. Others state a definite "Yes!" because they believe that as parents they do possess the one right set of values that will continue to be right many years down the line, even when their children have grown into adulthood.

Most parents, I believe, would answer partly "yes" and partly "no." Most parents (especially successful parents) would say something like this: "I'd like to think my kids will value what I believe, so I'm going to make sure they see how well my values work for me and those whose lives I affect. But in the end, they should make up their own minds and be free to change, since I can't possibly know now, just what will be required in their future."

I, personally, believe that at all ages, youngsters must believe in something. That "something" may change from time to time, but at any given moment, we all

need to believe in some values. Belief in a value and its related goals is what makes life purposeful rather than meaningless. Children *will* come to believe in something. Will you agree that it is better for your children to believe in your values, than in those they may pick up from Slick Sam down the street?

SHOULD PARENTS PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN FROM EXPOSURE TO DIFFERING VALUES?

Again, some parents will say, "Yes. Kids are too young and overly impressionable. We must protect them from ways of thinking that are contrary to ours." Others will say, "No, or not entirely. The more values they encounter, the better chance they will have to find the ones just right for themselves and will have important chances to compare ours with others."

My experience makes me tilt toward the second view. I suppose, though, that you must make up your own mind. (What else could a person who tilts toward this second view say?) If my values don't obviously stand up well when compared with others, then perhaps I need to reevaluate them. I have known some children who were so protected, that when they left home to go to college or vocational school, they were blown away by the fact that everyone did not think like they did. A more gradual exposure to differences would have eased the shock and saved a multitude of major problems. It also promotes both tolerance and acceptance of others – a plus in the minds of some parents and a negative in the minds of others. In a culture that is rapidly becoming so diverse, it appears to me tolerance and acceptance is a basically imperative for all of us to possess – otherwise we'll end up killing each other off.

Healthy teenagers always try out other ways in order to compare their relative soundness and usefulness. If they don't already know the alternatives while still

at home, they will go looking for them later, and this can be terribly dangerous during the late teen years when Mom and Dad are no longer around to provide guidance and support. Practicing failing and learning how to recover, is an important developmental task of middle adolescence. It may be one of the most difficult aspects of child rearing a parent has to face. It would be so easy to tell the kid what he should do and spare him the pain. But learning about pain and one's own competence can't be learned except through personal experiences.

In a book that I wrote when I was sixteen, I wondered why it was that every generation of teenagers feels they must invent the "adolescence-wheel" all over again. It seemed to me, back then, that adolescence was the one period in a person's life when no one ever seemed able to learn from the lessons of history. Each teen just had to go out and prove everything all over again for himself. *Prove* may be exactly the correct term, since once the older adolescent has put himself through all of this agony, he typically, and without fanfare, quietly accepts the values of his upbringing. [I'm not sure if that was a side trip or not. You may decide!]

There are all too many neighborhoods in which the families are surrounded by people who pose a constant threat to their values and to their preferred way of life – to their very lives, even. In these difficult situations, the parents must go out of their way to demonstrate to their children that their own values can absolutely overwhelm those seen in the streets. Not an easy task, I know. There may well be times and places where younger children should be shielded from dissimilar values and beliefs, because they are not yet capable of understanding them or of making adequate judgments about them. The exposure might merely upset the child or make him more difficult to handle. These are such difficult and important decisions, aren't they!

HOW DOES ONE KNOW IF THEIR VALUES ARE *THE RIGHT* VALUES?

For some folks this probably seems like a silly question, because they are absolutely sure their values are the right ones. That certainly makes writing a plan like this easier, doesn't it?

Many, if not most of us, are not quite so sure. I am hard put to answer the question I have posed above, because I am personally not sure there is *just* one right set of values. In my own case I ask, "Would the World become and remain a better place for others and myself if we all shared this same value?" When, after due deliberation and investigation, I can answer with a fair amount of comfort, "Yes, probably so," I feel Ok about that value. Another test question I often ask is this: "Is anyone, including myself, likely to be hurt if people in general would be guided by this value?" In this case, a "No, probably not," answer, tends to encourage me. The answer to this big question has to rest in each of our hearts. I don't know how to provide a "correct" answer.

Once we have taken the necessary steps to gather the best and most reliable information available about our task (establishing values, being a parent, being a spouse, being a mechanic, a counselor, or whatever), and then, we do the best job we can possibly do, based on that information, I think we have done all that we can rightfully ask of ourselves. As I mentioned earlier, *I do have problems about folks who just "do their best" without making a legitimate attempt to first seek out important, reliable, proven information.*

Obviously, you are one who searches for necessary information or you wouldn't be reading this page in this book, would you? With this little side trip under our belt, let us proceed to find out how to write your One Rule Plan.

HOW DO YOU WRITE YOUR OWN ONE RULE?

More accurately, I suppose, what we will do here is to help you define your One Rule, since I am only suggesting one way to actually write the rule itself. The uniqueness for you comes not in the rule statement, but in the values, which you choose to use in defining the "helpfulness" element in the rule statement.

(1) First, you will need to select the three or four values, which are most important to you. These may or may not be the same as the ones you found ranking highest on your Value Inventory results. One way or another, select three or four values on which you feel comfortable building your family's life. Write them each at the top of a separate page. (There are examples at the end of this section.)

Example of a value statement: "I value moral and ethical behavior and want to instill this value in the members of my family."

(2) Under that statement, describe what that value means to you.

Example of a definition: "I deal with people in ways that are right, just and fair."

(3) Then state your general family goal that is based on that value.

Example of my general family goal: "Each member will behave in ways that are right, just and fair to all concerned - including himself."

(4) Next, list some things you can do to model this value, yourself.

Example: My own modeling behavior:

"I can listen to another's side of any controversy or request with an open and impartial mind." "I can let the family see that I am attempting to learn more about child development so I will be able to be more realistic and fair in my expectations of each child."

(5) List each child (or family member) and leave space to jot down:

(A) Specific things each person does that shows he or she is already

demonstrating some aspects of this value, and

(B) Specific things that demonstrate he or she is having trouble with it.

The Value: _____

Positive behaviors now seen: _____

Behavior needing replacement: _____

(6) Below this, write from one to three goals for each child based on the areas needing work. The model form for writing these goals might look like this:

(Child's name) WILL (New behavior you want to see)

EXAMPLES:

John WILL hug family members more often

Jill WILL show Mom even poor school papers

Tony WILL talk to Mom more about daily activities and plans

Mary WILL tell the truth more often

Keep these goal statements positive whenever possible.

All of this may take several pages per value. You may want to do the same step on all three or four values at once. That is, state each value on its own page; then define each one on its own page; then how you'll model it, etc. (A ring binder works well, allowing the addition of pages where needed.)

Once all this is complete, let it just sit for a day or so. Read *Section Five* and then later in the week come back and re-read what you wrote. You will probably be pretty impressed with most of it. At that point you can change anything you feel needs modifying.

Make sure that the first goal for a youngster begins close enough to the level of his behavior at that moment. Remember, setting and then achieving several

small steps is the surest way to reach the ultimate goal. Don't ask for too large a change (too big a step) all at once. This results in resistance to change, to arguments, and sets the child up for failure.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER FREQUENTLY VALUED ASPECTS OF LIFE?

I imagine one could list many thousands of things that people value. Here are some that I have found to be important to the parents with whom I have worked. Feel free to add your own values to this list if you find that what you value most has been omitted.

financial success

happiness

love (ability to love)

togetherness

independence

self sufficiency

creativity

law abider

friendship

power

romance

knowledge

education

health

beauty

wisdom

emotional stability

social acceptance

at ease with people

honesty

integrity

addiction free

helpful

positive pastimes

vocational success

nice person

protector of nature

protector of what is right

liberal

conservative

gentle

tough

strong of body

strong of character

sensitive

brave

pessimistic

optimistic

dependable

be own person

responsible

good worker

forgiving

revenge taker

accepting

understanding

selfless

self-centered

organized

free spirit

predictable

unpredictable

open to new ideas

appreciates beauty

appreciates nature

appreciates the arts

athletic

teaser

yeller

fighter

self confident

willing to share

willing to protect the weaker

trusting

skeptical

altruistic

erratic

even tempered

ACTIVITY

Outline for writing your own One Rule Plan

Set up your page like this:

Value: I value_____ and want to instill this value in my family members.

My definition of the value:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The general family goal that follows from this value is:

Each family member will behave in ways that demonstrate

_____

_____

_____

_____

Here are some things that I can do daily to be a good model of this value to my family:

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

Current behaviors related to this value now seen in each family member:

Name: _____

Positive Behaviors now seen. Behavior needing replacement

Specific goals for individual family members:

(Child's name) WILL (New behavior you want to see)

_____ WILL _____

_____ WILL _____

_____ WILL _____

_____ WILL _____

SUMMARY OF SECTION FOUR

Making your own One Rule requires only that you know what you value and that you know how to pass that value along to the family members. We rewrote The One Rule to read:

We only do to or for each family member those things, which are in accordance with our values?

So, when a child has to confront the question, "What should I do in this situation?" he merely refers to the values his parents have made plain to him and acts accordingly. Not every answer is so obvious as to make these decisions easy. This is one reason parents have their children around for eighteen years or so - to help them practice and to refine and improve these skills.

I suggest you review the questions at the beginning of this Section and make sure you understand the answers to each before proceeding to Section Five.

SECTION FIVE

Let's talk about making your plan work

In Section Five, we will address these six questions:

Will it work like magic?

How can parents encourage and promote their goals?

How can side trips, be used?

Are specific rules ever needed?

What should parents know about problem solving skills?

How do parents enforce their One Rule?

In the Activity, you will actually practice applying all of this to real life situations in your family.

WILL IT WORK LIKE MAGIC?

I wish I could promise that once you lay out this new plan for your family, that life will, from that point on, be great and wonderful for ever and ever more. It won't happen that way, but then, you knew that all along. Life with children is not intended to happen that way. Remember no plan can keep normal problems from occurring. But a useful and effective plan will help provide a framework through which families can learn to skillfully and humanely solve life's problems as they arise. *The One Rule Plan is one in which every member of the family shares the responsibility for making things go well for themselves as well as the others.*

As with most new procedures, you may expect certain children to test this one to its limits until they believe you are ready to stick by it and that you mean what you say. This will be particularly true in families where a wide variety of parenting plans have been tried and discarded in the past. This is an easy plan for you to believe in. After all, *it is yours* - based on *your* values and directed toward *your* personal goals. It is easy to stick with because it is so simple. Children usually come to like it because your new plan gives them credit for being intelligent and able to learn how to make good, thoughtful decisions, and not just follow rules like a trained seal.

HOW CAN PARENTS ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THEIR GOALS?

Remember how we defined a goal - a behavior that you want to see happening in certain situations. In order to obtain these behaviors you may need to do several things.

The first thing, you have already done: you have written some goals for yourself and for the children - goals that grew directly out of the several values you

decided would form the basis of your family plan.

Next you must make it obvious to the family just exactly what the goals are. There are several ways to go about this. With your older or more mature children, you can sit down and talk with them about it quite directly. In the example that follows, the parent has selected self-confidence / self-esteem and happiness / contentment as the two beginning goals for her family.

"Amber, I think you realize things haven't been going as well in our family recently as we'd all like. We just aren't a happy family anymore. I have decided this is partly because we are not all working together to help each other feel good about ourselves."

"I've been doing a lot of thinking and planning and have come up with a plan which I know will help. There are several goals I really want our family to work toward, and I feel that I must not have made those clear enough to you in the past. First, I think we all could use a big dose of self-confidence, so I want us to begin helping one another become more that way. How do you suppose that you could help Jill gain more self-confidence?" (As you talk about this, help Amber begin to understand what self-confidence is all about - what kinds of experiences bring it about.) "Those are great ideas, Amber. I know you are going to be a big help. Now, what are some things the rest of us might do to help you build your self-confidence?" (Encourage her to explore her current level of self-confidence and examine ways to improve it if that seems appropriate.)

"Another area we need to work on *is helping this home be a happy place*. What could I do to help start things in that direction for you?" (Listen, perhaps even take notes. Underscore the best suggestions by asking Amber more questions about them, and perhaps making some plans together for a happy outing, event, or activity. It is *not* the time to allow her to try to take advantage of your apparent

positive frame of mind.)

"For right now these two goals are the really big ones I think - building self confidence in all of us and producing consistently happy times together as a family. On next Sunday, we will have a family meeting (gathering, get together, whatever) and I'll talk with everyone together. I'm going to erase all the old rules we've had around here, and replace them with just one. I've written it down for you. I'd like you to think about it between now and Sunday, and at that time, I'll answer any questions that you have about it. Feel free to talk with your brother and sister about this if you like. I'll have this same kind of one-on-one talks with each of them later today. Any questions right now?" (If so, either respond to them right then or tell her you will deal with that one at the meeting. Let her see you write it down! This could buy you some time to think through the really tough ones teenagers seem to be able to ask at this point!)

This general type of conversation helps get things started. More follow-up conversations with Amber will be needed to see how she feels about the family's progress and for you to hear any suggestions, questions, or complaints she may have. These chats also give the parent the chance to let Amber know that it seems obvious she is trying to help, and how much that is appreciated. Weekly private talks with each child about the new plan are appropriate until things get well on their way. Then perhaps less frequently, just touching base, if only for five minutes a week, seems like an excellent idea to me. (I don't mean that private, one on one talks about general, routine things of life should not continue to be a daily occurrence, understand.)

For your younger children, in addition to the first, sit-down explanatory conversation and the follow-up family meeting, you may need to provide more subtle guidance. The two general 'rules' here are:

1- Catch the child while he is doing what you want to see him doing, and let him know how great you think that is. (Talk to the verbal child. Hug the emotional or physical child, etc.)

2- Catch the child exhibiting a positive behavior, which is incompatible with a behavior that you want to get rid of, and praise him for that.

Let me explain. By *in*compatible, I mean a behavior, which when being done, won't allow the unwanted behavior to take place. Let us use a truly elegant example. Say you want your six year old child to stop picking his nose in public. You can, of course, just tell him to stop when you see him doing it. Actually, that doesn't change a behavior as well as a lot of folks seem to think. Calling attention to it sometimes actually increases the frequency of a behavior such as this. An alternate approach would be to find those times when the child is *not* picking his nose and let him know how much more pleasant he looks that way. A little hug or a gentle squeeze on the shoulder adds some physical reinforcement to those children who seem to appreciate that kind of thing.

"Johnny, I've noticed you haven't picked your nose all evening and that sure makes it more pleasant to be around you. Nice going for remembering about that."

To make Rule 2 work, you must first decide what behavior is "the opposite" from the unwanted behavior. Then reward the opposite, acceptable behavior (in this case, not picking the nose behavior is the opposite).

Let's talk a little more about ways to create appropriate behavior through the reward procedures we touched on in earlier sections. When we gently guide a behavior change through a series of several small steps, we usually obtain a

more permanent change and many fewer objections, than when we try to change it all in one huge jump. For example, a mother I once knew became upset when she realized her three children had developed poor (I mean pig sty, vultures after road-kill poor!) table manners. She was afraid to let them eat at their friends' homes because of it.

Here is what we did. We established and posted, "Our Eight Week Plan, For Table Manner Improvement." The evening meal on each Wednesday was set aside as "Proper Manners Night." During the meal on the first Wednesday, the mother and father discussed the reasons behind the training program. "Up to this point in this family we haven't stressed the kind of table manners most families stress. Therefore, through no fault of yours, you often go about eating a meal in ways that many folks would find improper and, quite honestly, downright disgusting. (Every-one laughed, which seemed both normal and appropriate.) Since we don't want you to have to be embarrassed in public by not knowing what proper table manners are we are going to practice them one night each week. At this meal each Wednesday we will all practice one or two new things together. So, tonight we are going to talk about how the table should be set and the use of each utensil. Next week we will expect you each to set your own place properly and we'll add two more skills to practice. The following week we expect you to set your place properly and use the two skills you learned during the second week. Then, we will also practice two more, new skills. We will continue this for eight Wednesday evenings, after which time you will know just about all you need to know about good table manners. We would like you to practice them during the days in between, but we won't make a big deal about it. This way you will know what is considered proper if and when you decide you want to do it that way." See how the big task was cut up into eight sets of just a few changes at a time. See how no blame was ever placed on the children for

having lousy table manners.

Here is another example. Jill, a five-year-old, got into the habit of having to sleep with Mom and Dad every night. She became terrified when forced to sleep in her own room alone. So, for several nights Mom or Dad slept with her in her own room. Then for a week, one of them would lay down on top of the covers (after she was all tucked in) and remain there until she was asleep. During the next week, one of the parents sat in a chair, just inside the door to her room, until she fell asleep. Finally they would tuck her in, sit beside her on the bed and talk for a few minutes and then leave the room (door open), coming to check on her at five minute intervals until she was found to be asleep. No amount of requests from her asking the parents to come in sooner, were acknowledged. In this way, it didn't take long to wean her totally away from Mom and Dad's bed, and happily back into her own. If, instead, the parents had insisted that, as of some arbitrary night, she was going to have to begin sleeping alone in her own room (the big one step!), not only would she have probably grown even more terrified of being alone, but the problem would have turned into a terribly unpleasant, ongoing battle of wills. (From the outset letting the child choose some music to be playing during going to sleep time often helps.)

Still, another example: Jimmy is nine years old and forgets (or refuses, without constant supervision and threatening) to make his bed each morning. Mom says, "Jimmy, the dust in the air, even in a clean house like ours, tends to get sheets extra dirty if the bed isn't made up. Since that makes more washing for me and it isn't healthful for you to sleep on dusty sheets, making the bed each morning is something you need to do." (Note the use of the one rule plan. The rule isn't, "You shall make you bed or else ...," but instead, referring to the One Rule, “Making your bed helps the family and keeps you well in the long run.")

Mom continues: "I'll come up before breakfast every morning for a few days and

we will make it together until you get the hang of doing it." For several days, Mom helped her son, demonstrating exactly how it was to be done, while actually talking about something else entirely (the game, after school plans, supper menu, etc.). This kept the bed making from becoming the center of a possible daily hassle. He liked the conversation. After a few days of this, Mom helped him get started and then left to make his breakfast. He called her when he was finished. She accepted anything close to an average job and complimented him on the aspects of the job that were truly well done. She also picked out just one easy thing to improve on (smoothing the bedspread or positioning the pillow, etc.) and as she complimented him or talked about other things, she quickly fixed that one thing herself (without comment). This way he got an idea of how to improve the bed making without being put down for his weakness. During the next few days Mom looked for any improvements she could find and specifically mentioned them to him ("I like the way you fixed the pillow today!"). Within two weeks Jimmy was doing the bed all by himself and Mom only occasionally dropped in to see how it was being done but Johnny did knew that she would drop in sometimes - just not when. Beauty was not the goal here. Getting the bedding all arranged in an orderly manner that covered the bed, was the goal. If you would have a more involved goal than this, then you might continue to suggest small step improvements until that goal has been reached.

In these ways, Mom taught the skill in gradual steps, noticed the improvements, and kept the progress alive by occasionally dropping back to check. An added incentive could have been supplied by having Mom offer to take Johnny shopping for a new Spiderman bedspread he would like - this offer being made only after he was on the right (cooperative) track. Why was the bedspread a reward and not a bribe? Because it came *after* the progress. Was it an anticipated or unanticipated reward? Unanticipated, because no promise was

made about it ahead of time. It could have been set up ahead of time to be an anticipated reward that Johnny was working toward by learning to improve his bed making skill. Nothing is wrong with that if it was needed to get the job done. In this case, it was not. In busy households, both Mom and Johnny may need to get up ten minutes early to work this undertaking into their schedule, but then that is part of being a parent. Isn't it? (And, anyway, what is 140 minutes – 10 minutes X 14 days – in the life span of a parent?)

So, let's summarize a few things here. We have shown two ways to make your goals (values) obvious to the family. One, tell them directly, and two, positively point out to the child when he or she is found to be acting in accordance with your goal for the family. Throughout all of this, reward gradual steps of improvement, especially when the expected behavior is a really big change from previous expectations.

Now for the third, and I believe the very best (though not always the easiest) way of making your values obvious to the family - use yourself as the model of appropriate behavior. *Children take their cues from what they see their parents doing*. Modeling is the most powerful method available to the parent. Often it works pretty well in the short run (today, next week, or next month), but it almost always works very, very well in the long run (next year, ten years from now). The long-term carry-over is great even when its effect isn't always noticeable in the short run.

When you set yourself up as a model (and really, just being the parent, automatically sets one up as the model), little eyes are on you at all times. They are watching to see if there are ever times when a certain value or rule doesn't apply for you or isn't used by you. (They don't think of it in exactly those terms, of course.) Parents really have to be on their toes at all times. Am I asking you to be superhuman? I'll answer that with a question. Do you think you are asking

your kids to be superhuman when you request that they always abide by a rule or value you have set for them? We all slip sometimes. It is important to remember just how tough it is for you to always be a perfect model. Then, you can be more understanding when other family members occasionally fall short.

Fortunately, you can spread this modeling responsibility around. If there is a second parent in the household, you should have some automatic built-in help there (I hope!). But there are other resources also. Organized activities are available that have leaders you can respect and count on to be good (if not exact) models - Scouts, Little League, 4-H, youth church groups, YMCA, YWCA, boys and girls clubs, coaches, band directors, library programs, and of course the school teachers.

I know that in certain circumstances, it seems that the models who are available in your real-World are mostly not what you want. Then you have to shield the younger children a bit. Encourage interests that keep them somewhat isolated. This is a lot like Rule 2 above; find an interest, which, when followed, keeps the child away from unacceptable models and influences. An interest in family activities is a great one to kindle first - board games, reading together, picture puzzles, cooking together, outings and, of course, the best ones, conversation and reading together.

So often over the years parents have said to me, "I just don't know how to talk with my child." Admittedly, this may seem to become harder as the child grows older, but the basic formula is easy. Avoid the go-nowhere question, ("What did you do today?") and instead *ask for opinions and ideas* that require more than one word answers; ("What do you think about such and such?" or "How you do suppose I could do or fix such and such?") Kids usually hate relating what they've already done - that is behind them (unless they can relate something that makes themselves look pretty good!). Anyway, most of it is just the same as

what took place yesterday and the day before that.

Requesting their opinions and expert advice, on the other hand, almost always gets a conversation flowing freely within seconds, unless the child fears he will be put down for his ideas or thinks the parent will argue with him or try to show him he is wrong. But, when parents just listen, that makes the child feel important and valued. In general, unless you're asked for an opinion or judgment, don't offer one! If you hear things that bother you, plan to subtly deal with them later, and do so in ways not obviously tied directly to that conversation. *Conversing with your kids is a precious time. Don't risk killing it with negative comments or unfulfilling topics.*

A relatively recent (2009) study found that most children spend five hours a day watching TV and only seven minutes a day talking with their father (four minutes of which is disciplinary in nature). I truly doubt if that is because most children would not welcome good comfortable conversation with that parent. Of course, some children enjoy talking more than others, and some are better at it. Such things must be taken into consideration.

Many years after a quiet, uncommunicative, teenage foster son had left our home, he reported to me how much he always treasured the talks we used to have by the fireplace after the little kids had gone to bed. Now, if memory serves me, we often didn't say ten sentences to one another in a half-hour period. Obviously for him, that was a great and comforting conversation. I am glad I was smart enough not to insist on a continuous flow of words! (Well, at least we'll *say* it was because I was so smart, OK!) We are each different!

I guess we just took a short side trip about conversations. Back to talking about the development of those interests which tend to move a child away from inappropriate influences. Hobbies and crafts are great examples and need not

be expensive. These interests may change with the wind or may last for years. It really does not matter so long as at any given time the child has some all-consuming active interest. *Active meaning he does something*, compared with passive, in which he watches others doing things - TV watching, sports watching.

When I was growing up I lived in a most loving, but relatively money-poor home. Mom taught me that since we didn't have lots of money, I had been given a tremendous advantage over the rich kids who lived in the big houses up on the hill. I got to make my own things and have all the fun and enjoyment of planning, designing and building them. (Bikes, wagons, bunk beds, etc.) On the other hand, the 'poor rich kids' just had to go out and buy them. Bless her heart! To this day I would rather tinker around and make something myself than have to give in and go buy it!

A Side Trip about wealth (or the lack thereof!). Growing up poor was, for me, a stimulating, wonder-filled, growth producing experience, because the parents who raised me did so with such love and understanding and good common sense. In a book that I wrote back when I was sixteen, I named that kind of poor, *posipoor* (from positive and poor). Butchy lived across town in a home that was almost as poor, but a home without love, laughter, understanding, or positive growth producing values. They were bitter, hopeless, miserable people. I termed that kind of poor, *negapoor* (from negative and poor). Wealth need not have anything to do with what I am talking about in this manual. Values are values - rich or poor. Beliefs are beliefs - rich or poor. Planning for, and providing positive family life experiences and positive child-training procedures, are not related to being rich or poor, or to having lots of stuff or only minimal possessions. One just does not need to have bunches of stuff in order to be a happy, nice, well adjusting, productive person!

What I had not understood at sixteen, was that there are also two kinds of rich,

and I suppose we could term them *posirich* and *negarich*. What we are speaking about transcends one's financial situation. Why even bring it up? Too often I have had money-poor parents tell me they can't afford to try this One Rule Plan because they can't provide for their children, the things which they value. *Values are free*. Passing on values is free. Its only cost is time. I know if the parent is working two jobs time becomes precious. But, even so, one's children have to have top priority for whatever time there is. [End of side trip - sermon - whatever!]

Looking back on my own life, at any given moment I always had a goal to work toward. Many were never achieved, but often that was not even the point. I always knew what was important to me at the moment even though that changed from time to time. I guess without realizing it, I had learned that we all need a goal to pull us along and that without it, we stop growing and may even find that life becomes meaningless. I guess I believe *that to give a child the gift of the search* (always wanting to seek after something), *is one of the most important gifts of all.*

To kindle a spark of interest in the first place, we may have to present a number of options - try out several different things. Let the child sample various activities until something catches his or her interest. It often helps to work (play) alongside our child at the outset until he finds a special topic, idea, pursuit or skill that appeals to him.

We are talking about ways to make your plan work and especially ways to sell the family on the values and subsequent goals you have set up. There is a formal approach to helping children learn certain behaviors and to avoid doing other behaviors. I would like to mention just a few of the methods, which I have found to be most helpful. (You will recognize many of them from examples I have already used.)

The first I call the POSITIVE PAYOFF. Most everything we do has some sort of pay off. When we work at a paying job, the major payoff is probably our check at the end of the week. When we work hard training for the big game and we win, the payoff is the win (or in doing well). When we do our homework well, we receive both a good grade and increased knowledge as the payoffs.

These are all examples of positive payoffs and they are the best way to keep a behavior going. (How many of us would go to work every day if we were not at all certain that we were going to get paid?) In families, praise and appreciation are typical positive payoffs for jobs well done. I urge you to train yourself until you just automatically dispense positive payoffs for the behaviors that show your values are being followed. Verbal praise, a pat on the back, bragging to Dad, a celebration, even a special smile. These are all positive payoffs. Since each child reacts differently, it is important that you try to match the payoff to the child. Some, especially the younger ones, enjoy public praise where others can hear. Others, especially older ones, usually prefer it privately, since public praise is often embarrassing. Some children need physical rewards because they are physical beings. Some children need verbal praise, because words mean the most to them. Some need an emotionally thrilling reward, because they have emotionally-based personalities. We need to know what motivates each child so we can dispense the praise or rewards in ways *they* see as meaningful. To pat a kid on the back when he needs to hear the words won't work very well. To make a big emotional deal over it, to the youngster who just needs a hug, can't be expected to work very well. So, *the positive payoff, matched to the child's particular personal style, is a major tool at our disposal for changing old behaviors and building and maintaining new ones.*

A second tool is NO PAYOFF. This works especially well when a child seems to be acting *in*appropriately just to annoy you or possibly just to get your attention

focused back on him. Ignore those unwanted behaviors and usually they will stop (not always, but usually). "Ignore" means to ignore the behavior totally, always, and under all possible circumstances. Just one slip can actually strengthen that behavior and undo the influence of all the good ignoring you have done. When you suspect the child may be annoying you just to get your attention, it means he feels he needs more than he is receiving. Try providing some extra one-on-one time, making sure it does not appear to come as a direct result of the annoying behavior (or else the child learns, "When I annoy people enough, they pay attention to me!").

Another example of using the NO PAYOFF method is merely to separate children who aren't getting along. The message here is, "You wanted to be together, but you can't be when you act this way." The payoff they were originally seeking was to be together. Separation turns it into a no payoff situation.

Third is the PRACTICE PAYOFF. When we ask or require that a child stop doing something in an unacceptable way and actually have him practice doing it in an acceptable way, we are using the practice payoff. John always slams the door, so we require that John practice closing the door quietly twenty-five or one hundred times. We find Amber has not been doing her algebra homework so, every night for a week, she sits at the kitchen table (where you can observe from a distance, and occasionally at close range) and she completes the algebra homework.

Joey, a five-year-old, begins spouting "bad language" he has picked up at play. We explain there are certain words we don't say. Either tell him what the words mean, or tell him you'll explain them to him when he is older. Help him think up words he can use instead (darn, shoot, bippityboppityboo, etc.) and have him practice saying them when he slips, or makes a mistake, or gets riled up. One of

our formerly foul mouthed foster sons reports that to this day (some fifty four years later) he still says "Humperdinkle" in place of the string of four letter words he spewed prior to "our discussions" about profanity.

The forth is what we can call a NEGATIVE PAYOFF. This means something unpleasant happens as a consequence of the child's inappropriate behavior. Although beating a child falls into this general category, I am thinking of strictly non-violent and far more effective measures than that. The more naturally (closely) these consequences can be tied to the inappropriate act, the better the result will usually be. John comes in two hours after curfew Saturday night, so next Saturday night he must come in two (or four) hours before curfew. If that fails to help him, the next Saturday night he doesn't get to go out at all (and if that doesn't help, he is grounded for a week, etc.). This demonstrates one of the major weaknesses of the negative payoff approach. It often develops into a battle of wills and makes situations worse in a very short time. Negative sanctions of any kind tend to automatically produce anger and resentment aimed at the enforcer (the parent, in this case). Now we all know that being a parent is never to be thought of as a popularity contest. Even so, we want our corrective procedures to help improve family life and not disrupt it further.

Sometimes a negative payoff seems to be the only alternative at the moment. Remember these two things when administering a negative payoff:

1- Negative payoffs work better with children between the ages of five and thirteen than with children older or younger than that.

2- Use the least amount of negative payoff possible to achieve your goal.

If children are so out of control by adolescence that they can't be handled by

positive means, the parents have a major problem. Therefore, work very hard with your younger children to help them accept your expectations and live by your values early in life. Then, when adolescence arrives at your house, it should not be so openly defiant. We will talk more about this adolescent period in other examples.

I am going to add, here, a third thing to remember when using negative payoffs.

3- Never use them alone. Always combine them with some other ways of reaching the child.

If he is grounded (the negative payoff) this gives you more than the usual amount of time to be with him. Use praise (for what is really praiseworthy), use modeling, and use no payoff (when he tries to talk you out of the grounding). Attempt to build, extend or rekindle your relationship with him. If you can find a way to help him feel positive about even some small aspect of his relationship with you, you're on your way. Some may say that grounding should be punishment and that therefore we should not make it any fun. In general that may be the policy of choice, but in instances where you need to rebuild a relationship, is it really so bad to help the child come to enjoy being with you, talking with you, and coming to realize that it can be a positive experience? I tend to think it is a good thing!

A short Side Trip about lecturing. DON'T! After (I said, ***AFTER***) you listen to his side of the story, you can briefly (I said ***BRIEFLY***) explain what was inappropriate and what you expect instead. Then drop it. He knows how you feel. He knows you think what he did was dumb or wrong or whatever. He knows everything you could possibly be upset about. Lecturing him, only serves to further "put him down" and make him defensive and give him reason to get angrier, while not doing a thing to help solve or correct the problem. Lecture? No! Never! Please! [End]

The most effective Negative Payoffs are withdrawal of privileges (TV, having friends over, going out, air to breath, etc.). Take care not to put the child in the position of having to shirk responsibilities to which he is committed outside of the home. If he has made a commitment to the band or the team, they are counting on him. If you bar him from those things, you are really hurting the band or the team, and they should not be punished for your child's misbehavior. If you want your children to become responsible citizens, you will see to it that they carry out those kinds of commitments.

Let me say just a word about physical punishment. You must, of course, be the one who decides. But please listen to these real life responses I have heard from many dozens of children over the years. Think about what they were really learning from the physical punishment they received.

"The principal spanked me to teach me not to hit kids on the playground."

"The only time I can get Dad to touch me is when I can get him mad enough to beat me."

"I can hardly wait till I am grown up so I can get away with beating up guys I don't like." (That, from a frail, little, physically abused, seven year old boy.)

"You'd better believe that when I'm big enough, I'll beat the @#%&* out of my old man." (And I understand that he did.)

"Dad thinks he's helping me when he beats me, but he's just proving how ignorant he is."

"What have I learned from all my beatings? I've learned that the only thing that's really important is to be big and mean!"

When asked to describe what kinds of things his mother liked, a six-year-old boy, after due deliberation, once told me: "I think most of all she really likes to hurt little kids."

There is one more kind of payoff I suggest you consider avoiding altogether. It could be called the WITHDRAWAL PAYOFF. It involves making the child think you are withdrawing your love and affection from him, because you don't like what he did, or, even more devastating, because you don't like him. *Few things impose deeper emotional scars, I think, than indicating to a youngster that he or she is no longer loved.* Kids immediately translate this into "I am not lovable," which some equate with, "I am bad," and for still others, "I am worthless." And they know it is true because the most important person in their World told them so - their parent.

Another Side Trip: Children spend the first three or four years of their lives listening to what people say and think about them. This is how a child first learns who and what he or she is. If he hears, "You're a lovable guy with a lot of great ideas," he forms one picture of himself. If he hears, "You're a bother and a trouble maker," he forms a very different picture of himself. So, the first three or four years build a child's basic self-image. He then spends the rest of his life trying to live up to it.

This concept is both wonderful and terrifying for parents. It is wonderful, if upon a child's fifth birthday, you can say, "Look there, we've built a kid here who is happy and eager and kind and loves himself and us." (Depending on your goals, of course.) It is terrifying if instead we find ourselves asking, "How did this unhappy, unpleasant, obnoxious youngster ever come to be?"

Even in the latter case, all is not lost, because with careful guidance people can change. Kids remain fairly malleable (moldable) and can be helped to change in many great ways when they see their parents really trying to help them. It is upon this possibility for change that this book is based.

Parents can change. Kids can change. Even spouses can change! Change for

the better seldom takes place by itself, however. There needs to be a plan, some guidance, some goals and some appropriate payoffs. All the things you are preparing yourself to provide! [End]

HOW CAN SIDE TRIPS BE USED?

This seems like a good spot to talk about side trips. By now, you have figured out all by yourself that side trips are designed to provide information that is helpful or necessary in order to understand something else which you are leading up to. So far, you have been on numerous side trips with me. One was about conversations and another about how children gain their personality style, and many others.

When I use these side trips, I have to guess about what you may or may not already know because I am not personally acquainted with you. For many of you, my side trips may have been merely a review of things you already knew. For others, they may have presented brand new ideas. In either case, they were presented to help build a common base from which I could then present some other topic or idea.

You, however, as the child's parent, probably have a pretty good idea about what he does and does not know. When you find it being difficult to make a point, step back and think, "Is there some basic information that would help him understand this better? Is there a foundation of information that needs to be built first?" If there is, take him on a side trip. One caution, side trips aren't permitted to be used as, pity-poor-Mama-trips, nor can they be, Dad's lecture-number-248-trips. Side trips, which are kept strictly informal, are often the best. Let's examine some examples.

Earlier we spoke about the five-year-old who came home spouting a string of bad

words which you find offensive. A side trip here could take several paths. One would be to get the child engaged in a conversation about those kinds of words. Have him tell you where he hears them and where he doesn't hear them. If they are words, he doesn't hear at home, then it is easy to show him that, "those just aren't words our family uses."

Another path could be to ask him what he thinks those words mean. What are you feeling when you use these words? What other words do Mom and Dad use instead when they feel that way? If appropriate, explain the real meaning of the words. That is usually enough to stop their use among the younger child since what they thought they were saying is nothing like what the words actually mean. Expect some eye-popping reactions! (Never, of course, move beyond information that is age appropriate – sexual based phrases, for example.)

Here is another example. Twelve-year-old Beth says, "I don't know why you're always on my case and treat my little brother so much nicer. He's the pain! Why don't you ever get on his case?" This is a good opening for a side trip about ways younger siblings have of getting attention from older siblings who are important to them. How an investment of a little one-on-one time with her younger brother might be all it takes to keep him off her back in general. How younger family members look up to, and learn from older ones. How yelling back at the little brother when he is being a pain, is probably giving him exactly what he wants (attention), and how playing into his hands that way is helping him learn very inappropriate ways of getting recognition, attention, etc.

You see, side trips are like stepping back a pace or two from the actual problem to provide information that can help a child see the situation from a new and more useful perspective - information that can help turn the situation into a learning or growing experience.

When problems or disruptions arise, ask yourself, "If one or both parties to this problem knew something they don't seem to know now, would that help them handle it better themselves?" The answer may be, “Yes, Beth needs to understand some reasons little brothers may make themselves into pests," or "Yes, little brother needs to learn some more appropriate ways of getting attention."

One more example about the use of side trips. Remember the five-year-old lad I mentioned earlier who told me that if a stranger ever tried to take him or hurt him he'd just knock him out and call the cops? A side trip, of sorts, occurred for him when I asked him to show me exactly how he would stop me from picking him up and leaving the room with him. Of course, he couldn't. (I was younger, then!) This exercise provided new information for him. Even if unspoken it helped him realize, "Gee, I really can't stop a big guy, can I?"

Although informal side trips are often the most successful because they don't tend to make it into a "hairy big deal" (as one of our foster kids used to say), sometimes more formal approaches can be useful. Providing a good book for the child on a related topic may prove helpful, especially if it is a topic that might produce either tension or embarrassment for either the child or the parent if it were to be initially handled face to face. Even books and articles, though, should be followed up with an informal chat to provide time for discussion or questions. I have found this approach helpful in areas such as sexual topics, growing-up body change topics, and helping older siblings understand younger siblings (a book on the pre-adolescent boy may help an older teenage sister better understand and therefore interact more appropriately with her eleven year old brother).

There are other times, of course, when new information, whether delivered formally or informally, may be of no help at all. As the parent, you have to make your best call in each case. When outside of the head information doesn't seem

to have a chance of helping, sometimes *inside of the head information* will. Role playing is an example of helping a child gain inside of the head information.

Role playing is a special kind of side trip. The process is to have those who are experiencing problems with one another (brother/sister, teen/dad, etc.) trade places (roles) and play out a similar pretend situation.

"Ok, John. I'll be the teenage son who came home late. You be the Dad. You show me how you'd handle it, remembering that as the father it is your job to make things work smoothly and fairly for all family members. I will act the way it seems to me that you act and I will try to feel the same way you must feel."

In role playing you don't put down another's performance. You just listen and watch. Then, when all is calm again, you sit down and talk about it. Did anything you said when you were the other person surprise you? How were you feeling? What did you want to hear from the other person playing your part? Did a light bulb go on over your head as you understood something about the other person for the first time? There are many good books on role playing available. You will find some at your library. It is a very useful procedure. Perhaps you could have a psychologist or social worker give a program on role playing at P T A or a parent group at church.

Side trips, well used, can short circuit many problems by providing needed background information or even insights from the inside out. Sometimes when a parent is experiencing difficulty understanding a youngster’s explanation or point of view, it may be helpful to ask the youngster, "What am I missing here? Fill me in on something I need to know. Why is such and such so important to you?" This gives the child an opportunity to conduct you on a side trip so (open minded) you can gain new and important information. These are fantastic times to put the Agreement Frame of Reference to work for you.

Finally, there is *the self-assigned side trip.* Let me illustrate this with a personal example. Some time ago a ten year old boy moved into my neighborhood. He is an avid stamp collector; in fact, his stamps seem to be his only friends. Stamps are all he seems to be able to talk about - a very shallow, one-sided personality (even for a ten year old boy!). I was pleased he felt comfortable visiting with me with me on the steps out back, but sensed he was soon getting bored because I knew so little about stamps. I assigned myself a side trip to learn more about stamps and stamp collecting. I obtained several books and soon could converse more intelligently. (Incidentally, I also got him a book on the life of Teddy Roosevelt. He had a prized Teddy Roosevelt stamp but didn't know a thing about the person it represented. He found the book enjoyable and is now an avid biography reader as well as stamp collector. We each had a useful and enjoyable side trip.)

Self-assigned side trips can be used by parents to read books or articles that improve their own understanding about things such as developmental stages or specific problems like arguing, stealing, lying, fighting, popular music of the day. When you feel more information on some topic will be helpful, head for the library, internet, or the bookstore. (I hope everyone in your family has a library card.)

ARE SPECIFIC RULES EVER NEEDED?

Remember back in the Introduction we were talking about trends in parent-child relations. I suggested there that younger children could not be expected to fully implement the One Rule Plan because their thinking processes were still immature. For these very young children there will have to be some rules or understandings. As an example, safety rules may be needed such as, "Don't

leave the yard alone," "Don't touch the knives or scissors," "Don't turn on the stove," etc. (By the way, just for practice, can you restate these in positive terms?) These basic rules need to be explained in terms of your One Rule just as soon as the child can begin to understand how that One Rule applies to the relevant area of life. By the time the child is four or five, he or she should be hearing you begin to explain the rules in terms of the values upon which you base each rule. By the time the child is five or six, he or she can begin understanding the most basic aspects of your One Rule. From there, you begin abandoning the temporary specific rules according to the child's level of understanding and skill at decision making. It is important to give specific explanations about what you are doing and what you will be expecting when changes are made.

Another appropriate use of temporary specific rules (I prefer to call these *prompts*) is when a child is having difficulty applying the One Rule in some important area. Then we set up a prompt that tells him specifically what he should or should not do. For example; six year old Jimmy is as immodest as they come, perfectly content to roam the house stark naked after his bath. This frequently embarrasses his twelve year old sister, especially when she has girl friends at the house. So a prompt is stated for Jimmy on those occasions. Unless you are in your room with the door closed or in the bathroom, you are to wear pants. That is short, simple and to the point! In discussions with him, help him make the connection that since his nudity bothers (that is, doesn't help) his sister, he needs to consider her feelings in this case and cover up. This specific prompt can be dropped once the pants aren't!

Setting schedules in place of rules is a useful and often necessary procedure. Set a schedule for regular events:

Breakfast at 7:00 AM,

Dinner at 5:30 PM,

Leave for Church Sunday at 9:30 AM

Leave for music lesson at 4:15 PM, W, F

Mom and Dad like to go to sleep at 11:00 PM

Jimmy in bed by 8:00 PM

Jenny in bed by 9:00PM.

Why, you may ask, would Mom's and Dad's bed time be on this schedule? Not to force *them* to stick to it, of course (and the kids need to understand that). But, since that is the preferred bed time of the parents, and seventeen year old Bill knows his parents can't sleep well before he is home at night, this schedule suggests something Bill needs to consider in order to "be helpful" - get in before eleven PM.

Setting up *written routines* also helps*. A routine merely states the steps to be used when something specific is done*. Grocery shopping is a good example of a simple Routine:

Saturday, 8AM to 9 AM

Beth baby-sits Jenny

Bill drives and helps Mother shop

Bill helps put groceries away

Getting off to school may be so complex that instead of a routine, you set up a

schedule. *Schedules state specific times specific things are to occur.*

6:30 Beth has use of the bathroom

6:50 Bill has use of the bathroom

7:10 Jimmy has use of the bathroom

7:20 all beds made/rooms picked up/book bags packed

7:25 Breakfast together as a family

7:45 Everyone helps clean up the breakfast dishes

7:50 Beth and Bill leave for school / Jimmy studies spelling with Mom

8:20 Jimmy leaves for school (remember book bag! Leave toads and turtles at home.)

A setting-the-table routine might include a list, in order, of everything to be done to set the table for dinner. A going-to-bed routine, lists, in order, everything to be done to get ready for and into bed.

Eventually these routines just become habit. They are followed because in the long run they are helpful to family life. Other areas in which routines are often found to be helpful include; house cleaning, doing dishes, meal or sack lunch preparation, after school routine (change clothes, homework, play, etc.).

While I encourage the regular and frequent use of Routines and Schedules, I would caution not to over-use the Prompt. Prompts can be helpful, but can easily lead back to a system of rules and regulations that require no thinking, no decision making practice, and no personal growth on anyone's part other than Mom and Dad.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS?

Good problem solving skills are quite important for at least two reasons. You, as the parent, need to use them effectively to handle the problems that normally arise in a household. Also, you want to be able to teach your children how to appreciate and use these same skills to meet and deal with their own problems. (Your good modeling their use will be of inestimable value, won't it?)

Eventually, most of the disputes which arise at home can be solved by the children without parent intervention, once the children are well practiced in applying good problem solving techniques. So, let's review some of the important steps and see if we can organize them into a workable system for you and your family.

The first important skill we have already discussed - having a problem solving personality-set, rather than a blamer-punisher personality-set. You will remember that we described these two approaches as opposites. The blamer's first response to a problem, mistake or dispute is to determine whose fault it was. His second, and usually final, step is to then punish the "guilty" party. By making the punishment severe enough, the blamer-punisher believes that children will learn not to misbehave again. This is leadership through fear - fear of being caught, which leads children into dishonesty, sneakiness and a desire to stay away from home so they won't be seen doing things that are prohibited in the home.

The blaming-punishing approach does nothing to help a youngster learn what he should do instead of what he did. Nor does it help him learn how to meet whatever personal need he was trying to fulfill by the misbehavior. In fact, since children learn to fear and distance themselves from blaming-punishing parents, they are further separated from the very person who should be the one the child can reach out to for help in such situations. Since most children have strong needs for a relationship with an adult (or, at least someone older than

themselves), they will seek that influential person elsewhere. Who knows what kind of person *that* may be!

The problem solvers, on the other hand, build respect for themselves and forge a closer bond with their children. This comes about as the parent is seen (in the long run) as a wise and helpful person. By merely emphasizing the problem solving life style over the blaming-punishing lifestyle, the children will tend to approach problems and disputes from an entirely different standpoint. Since pointing an accusing finger at the other party will never get you anywhere (their "fault" or not), they soon figure they might as well skip that and speed up the whole process by beginning to work toward a solution right away. Believe me folks, the children's attitude surrounding these aspects of life does an immediate, about face.

The good problem solver works through the following seven steps, each time a problem (dispute) arises. (They will make more sense a bit later when they are explained in detail.)

A- Determine what, if any, immediate safety/ housekeeping steps need to be taken and by whom. (Cleanup step)

B- Determine what happened. (Event clarification step)

C- Determine what the individual or individuals involved were trying to do (Discovery of intention step)

D- Determine what needs to be done differently next time so this problem won't reoccur? (Planning for change step)

E- Determine what training procedures, other changes or alternative approaches need to be initiated to implement step "D" above. (Intervention step)

F- Determine what auxiliary plans might help - Prompts, routines, schedules, consequences, etc. (Add-on step)

Let us follow through with an example. (Mother appears in the living room after hearing a crash - Jimmy is bleeding.)

A- Clean up step:

l. Clean and bandage Jimmy's cut hand (Mom)

2. Vacuum up broken light bulb (Older kids)

3. Obtain and install a new bulb (Kids)

B- Determine What Happened: Living room lamp light bulb got broken during a scuffle between Jimmy and Beth.

C- Intention Step: Jimmy says he wanted to continue looking at the pictures in Beth's history book which he had earlier found in Beth's room. Beth says she needed the book herself and tried to take it away from him and he resisted. In the scuffle, the lamp was knocked over and the bulb broken.

D- Change needed: "Jimmy, what can you do differently next time so this kind of thing won't have to happen again?" Mother asks. "I can ask Beth first before I borrow her things." "Beth, what can you do differently next time so this kind of result won't have to happen?" "I can ask nicely to get my things back instead of grabbing for them, or I can ask for help from a parent."

E- Intervention step:

1. Jimmy is helped to find another source of history information (encyclopedia, internet, library books, etc.).

2. Beth agrees that if he asks, Jimmy may look at her book for one hour at a time, when she does not need it.

F- Add On Step: A prompt is set up for Jimmy in the form of a sign, *temporarily* placed on Beth's bedroom door -"Jimmy - no trespassing!"

Let's briefly contrast this problem solving approach with what might have happened using the blame-punishment approach. (Mom appears on the scene just after the crash and finds Jimmy bleeding.)

Beth: "Jimmy took my book without asking."

Jimmy: "Beth hit me and broke the lamp with my head!"

Mother: "Jimmy, it was obviously your fault. If you hadn't taken Beth's book none of this would have happened."

Jimmy then gets punished and must clean up the mess by himself. He is then sent to his room and told to stay there until Mom says he can come out. (Of course, the wound is tended to at some point.)

Who learns anything that is helpful? Do they each now know what to do the next time such a dispute arises in order to avoid a repeat of this problem? Have they learned how to avoid such a dispute in the future? Are any of the real underlying concerns and needs dealt with (Beth's need for privacy; Beth's need to know she will have her book when needs it, Jimmy's interest in history books, learning a cooperative method of dealing with one another)?

Let's run through another kind of problem situation using our 6 step (A to F) plan.

Bobby (age six) is late for supper again (third time that week). Previous encouragement to get home on time hasn't worked.

A- Cleanup: Wash up for supper.

B- Determine What Happened: Late for supper again (Obvious)

C- Intention Step: Bob explains: "I wanted to stay at the park and play ball until I got up to bat. I like to bat, but the big guys won't let me until our team is five runs ahead."

D- Change needed: Dad helps Bobby understand that the big guys (the ten year olds) are just using him to field the balls for them and have no intention of letting him bat. If he wants to bat, some new arrangement will need to be worked out so he won't have to continue trying to play with them and end up being late for supper.

E- Intervention Step: The family part of this problem is having Bobby get home on time for supper, so Dad provides an anticipated reward: "If you still want to play with the big kids you may, but you must get yourself home on time for supper. When you do, you and I will have time to go out in the back yard later on and you can hit me lots of balls."

F- Add on step: Dad decides he will call some other Dads of children Bobby's age and see if they would like to play some Saturday afternoon games at the park without the big guys around. The Dads will supervise. This solves the family problem and begins to deal with Bobby's real problem - wanting to really play ball.

Let's try one more. Jimmy (age six) and Billy (age sixteen) seem to be arguing lately whenever they get within ten feet of one another. This is a brand new behavior and has become a constant source of irritation to *all* other family members.

A- Cleanup: (none required)

B- Determine what happened: (In this case, Mom hears all.) Billy comes home from school. Jimmy calls, "Hi, Billy!" Billy ignores him and goes to the stairs. Jimmy yells, "Hey, Billy, you been smoking at the water tower again?" Billy yells back, "Shut up you little fart. Shut up or I'll kill you!"

C-Intention step: Billy, who had just taken on an after school job, had begun feeling pressed for time - school, homework, job, social life, etc. He didn't think he had time for small talk with little brother. All of a sudden, Jimmy felt left out now that Billy wasn't around home much. He missed doing all the little things he used to do with his big brother, so he was searching for ways to get Billy to pay attention to him. He had been pretty successful - at least in not letting himself be ignored by big brother, but not so successful at regaining a good relationship. (Dad and Mom determined all this by sitting down separately with each boy and listening to what was going on inside their heads.)

D- Change needed: The parents and the two boys then sat down together to talk over what was happening. "Do you guys really hate each other?" "No, of course we don't." The group discussion brought out all the things listed above (in C) and helped Bill and Jimmy understand where the other one was coming from.

E- Intervention: Jimmy said he didn't really want to keep making Bill mad. He just wanted them to talk like they had always done before. He felt Bill had stopped liking him. Bill said he had been so tied up in all his own responsibilities and activities that he had just overlooked Jimmy. He assured Jimmy that he did still like him.

They devised this plan. When Bill came home from school, he needed to hurry and get changed into his fast food uniform for work. Jimmy would help him get ready and they could talk together during that time.

F. Add on step: It soon got to the place that by the time Bill got home from school, Jimmy (his own idea) had Bill's uniform all laid out for him on the bed and often had his shoes polished for him. Jimmy felt good he was helping (and Bill made him feel appreciated for it). Bill began to feel close to and comfortable again with Jimmy. On his days off from work, Bill often (well, sometimes, at least) took Jimmy out for a burger and fries. The whole family benefited and grew from this solution.

Now, these may seem like ideal situations and solutions that don't come up in your family. I know, and even though these three examples were taken from real life happenings (as are all of the examples in this manual), they may be different - in fact probably are different from yours. The very same principles apply, however, and these principles have worked thousands of times already. Remember, we said it takes practice, and that every attempt may not work out just the way you want. But if we don't try, we don't stand any chance at all of improving things.

When one of your attempts to solve a family problem doesn't seem to be working, go through the A through F steps again, focusing on how you went about trying to arrive at a solution:

A- Cleanup: (often doesn't apply, but must be handled first when it does.)

B- What happened: What happened inappropriately instead of what you wished had happened? Describe it in terms that *just talk about the behavior* or the activity itself.

C- Intention: Do you think you really understand what all the parties involved need or are trying to accomplish here? Think it through again. Talk with them each again and *LISTEN to what they <u>need</u>, not to what they* say.

Remember, often the kids themselves don't really know what they may need, so

you have to help them discover it.

D and E- Change needed and intervention: If the changes you first proposed didn't work, go back to the drawing board. Find some new changes and try them out (as ideas) on the principal players in this situation. Let them make suggestions. You, of course, make the final decisions! When both seem to need the exact same thing at the exact same time, work out a plan of alternation (like in the history book example). If they cannot do two-man jobs cooperatively, one does the entire job on one day and the other does the entire job the next day. If one cannot refrain from tormenting the other one during cooperative undertakings, the tormentor may be asked to do the job all by himself with no help at all for a period of time.

F- Add on: Perhaps a temporary prompt or more permanent schedules or routines could be set up. Temporarily separate the warring parties while they are in the house so they break the fighting habit. Plan appropriate side trips to provide missing information or skills.

Throughout the several problem-solving processes, you must keep your family goals and values, in focus. When your proposed solutions don't seem to be representing your values and goals, then immediately search for alternatives. Remember you will find that for most problems, steps B, C, D, and E will be all you really need. (You would surely do A anyway, and F is really just an afterthought implementation of D.)

When formulating the alternatives in step D, you may want to present several possible plans to the parties involved and see if they can cooperatively agree on which one to try. (Any of these alternatives must be acceptable to you, otherwise you wouldn't offer them as possible choices.) (Also, Mom, becoming a nun is an unacceptable add on solution at this time!)

A fine help step, however, could be to get together with a small group of other parents once or twice a month to share ideas and successes and to gain new perspectives. Many parents find such support groups to be a great help. (You might even start one to teach this One Rule Plan, now that you are becoming such an expert!) You seldom learn something as well as when you teach it!

HOW DO YOU ENFORCE YOUR ONE RULE?

The dictionary informs us that the word *enforce* is, "a verb meaning to compel or to put into effect, as a law." This definition doesn't say who does it, and that leads me to a point I want to be sure to make. The most successful rules (or laws), are those which are self-imposed. In the case of a family, we would say enforced by each family member upon himself and not solely by the parents.

Let's put this same idea into an entirely different set of words. Once I am convinced that a law or a rule is a good one that will make life better for all concerned, then I will do my best to follow it. When you arrive at the place where your family members are saying *that* about your One Rule, then you have it made!

Self-enforcement also takes place in so called honor systems, like those used at the military academies or in some religious organizations. One big difference here, however, is that in the honor system, one may give his or her word that the rule will be followed, but this doesn't mean that person necessarily agrees with it's worth as a rule. ("I'll do it even though I don't like it.") What we are striving for is a rule that makes so much sense that every family member wants to follow it (or at least sees the legitimacy and necessity of it). This is the highest form of self-enforcement.

Realistically, however, there will be times when the rule isn't followed. You may

find certain family members have more difficulty following it (perhaps accepting it) than others. In these instances, the parents need some enforcement measures at their disposal.

Here are some guidelines for successful rule enforcement:

l. Use the least amount of encouragement (force) possible to attain the goal.

2. Enforce a rule infringement immediately, not later on.

3. Keep the consequences tied as closely as possible to the offense (natural consequences).

4. Keep your consequences in harmony with your family values.

5. Don't enter into prolonged discussions with the child about what is fair and what is not fair. (Stated positively, talk only about things other than the fairness of the consequence or the rule, itself.)

6. NEVER try to discover who really started the problem between two or more family members. (Stated positively, emphasize steps that will work toward a solution and that will be more helpful than trying to determine who started the problem.)

Examining these guidelines one at a time, we will begin considering the amount of force needed. (Number one, above). Just as a landscape engineer would never use a bulldozer to spade a small flower garden, a parent must also use his or her tools according to the requirements of the job. If you use your heavy equipment first, you have nothing to fall back on if needed later. When a frown from Mom will get the job done, there is no need to ground the child for a week. When a problem is solved by having a child spend ten minutes, practicing the proper way to close a door, there is no need to disrupt the entire household by requiring him to knock and then be let in each time he needs to enter (although

the latter can be used as a very effective fall back measure if the easier, practice approach, fails to work).

It is important to keep the connection between infringement and consequence as close as possible in time. This gives the consequence its full impact (there is a useful exception I will discuss below.)

I feel we probably need another short Side Trip here. In our culture, many of us are used to the automatically assumed connection between crime and punishment. (It has been called the blamer-punisher mentality.) I have been using the term *consequence* instead of punishment or discipline. I think there is good reason for having done this. In the One Rule system of correcting children's behavior, we don't punish, as such, but we do see that the child experiences certain consequences that are a direct and obvious result of his "crime" or rule breaking behavior. Punishment, in its hurtful sense, doesn't fit this approach (unless to hurt kids, happens to one of the values you have decided to have your family work toward.).

For example; what is the natural consequence of not putting our money in a safe place and it gets lost? The natural consequence is to go without the money if it were ours, or having to work to repay it, if it belonged to someone else. How would the use of punishment, instead, achieve these ends? I don't think it would!

Back in Section Three we gave a few examples of using the One Rule Plan and demonstrated there how consequences can be applied to help the children abide by the family values. We will also provide additional examples later. [End of side trip]

Now, back from that side trip to the idea of keeping the consequence close in time to the rule infringement. The following is a real (though admittedly very sick) example. In one family who came to me, it was the practice of the mother to

keep track of the number of times each child misbehaved during the day. Then, when the father came home from work at night, she gave him the totals and, for each misbehavior, he administered one lick with a belt to the bare behind of the child.

I told you it was sick. But it illustrates, quite well, the exact opposite of the point I am trying to make. In the first place, the children didn't know what they had done wrong. Mom just quietly added another hatch mark to the pad by the phone as they misbehaved, never commenting about it to them. (She was afraid they would throw a fit.) In the second place, the interval between the misbehavior and the consequence (in this case physical punishment) was often many hours long. When I talked with them, all the poor kids seemed to know was that some days (more licks) they must have been worse people than on other days (fewer licks). They had no idea what they needed to do differently. The four-year-old girl in the family did solve the problem. She withdrew and sat motionless in a corner all day long so she couldn't misbehave. It was her "sudden backwardness," as the parents put it that caused them to seek out my services. Understand that these parents truly believed they were doing things by the right method. In their own ways, they loved their children. They were trying to raise good kids. They were totally unaware that there even existed such a thing as a body of proven information about how to raise emotionally healthy children. (I hear this so frequently it frightens me. How can schools have our children for thirteen years and still fail to convey this vital piece of information?)

I hope that example made my point about tying the misdeed and the consequences close together. I also hope it helps make you feel like an absolutely super parent by comparison. I am sure you are!

I said there was one exception to this general rule. There are times when a child needs to have some time to think about what he or she did, while waiting for the

decision about consequences. A lot of good thinking can take place in such an interval if it is set up properly.

"James, we both know that what you just did is not to be done in this family. How can we make certain it won't happen again? Go to your room and stay there until you come up with a plan you think I will buy; one that will help you keep from ever doing this same thing again. If I don't think yours will work, we will use mine."

See how this still ties the time of the act and the consequence together, even though much time may elapse. It does several interesting things. The child sets the length of time he will spend in his room. It depends on how long it takes him to think things through and formulate a plan (which should be written down if the child is skilled enough to do that). It also encourages the child to be realistic in the plan (and not just try to get by). If he is not realistic, Mom's or Dad's plan, which could be much "worse" (I even shudder to think about it!), will be used.

Let's also contrast this to the situation where Mom might just send Johnny to his room until she decides what to do. In this second case, Johnny is not required to use his time constructively. He is to go to his room, where allhis favorite thing are kept, so he can play with them. Mom has all the responsibility and power for decision making (And she probably does not really need the practice as much as Johnny. Does she?). Johnny isn't helped to grow. He may sweat it out a bit (straightforward punishment), but he is given a feeling of helplessness rather than of control or responsibility.

Guideline three talks about using natural consequences - consequences truly connected in some way to the offense. If Jimmy can't close the door quietly, it would be a natural consequence to practice closing it quietly. It would not be a naturally connected consequence to be sent to his room or to get a spanking.

If Bill comes in after curfew on Saturday night, a consequence, which resets curfew back to 9:00 from 11:00 for a while, is natural. Grounding would not be as natural a relationship, though closer by far, than doing dishes for a week or making him quit the basketball team (both straightforward and unrelated punishments).

Jenny fights with her friends when she has them over (and she always seems to want them over). A natural consequence is not to allow them over for a while or having them leave when Jenny gets out of hand. Sending her to her room or making her make all the beds for a week wouldn't make the naturally helpful connection.

Why am I pushing natural consequences? A natural consequence emphasizes, retrains, or restricts in some way the very thing the child was involved with in the problem. If curfew is abused then curfew is used in the consequence (but no more than needed). If closing doors is involved then that is a part of the consequence. A consequence tied to the misdeed is far easier to remember. It will make the point far longer than one that is not so closely tied. If Jim always gets sent to his room no matter what his offense, he has no easy way of remembering what he is supposed to do differently next time. There is no obvious connection. If he has to practice closing that door for ten minutes, you better believe he will remember which behavior he needs to change.

Sometimes the natural consequence grows out of the intention rather than from the misdeed. The little brother, who wants sister's history book, must learn to ask permission to obtain it. Asking permission is a natural consequence of his original misdeed.

The fourth guideline says to keep the consequence and enforcement method in harmony with your own family values. Parental rule enforcement becomes a

major, and very visible, value-modeling occasion for the children. The most obvious example, though arguably not the best, is this one: if a family values non-violent solutions to problems, then the parent does not yell at or hit the children when disciplining them (setting consequences for them).

Time for another Side Trip: You may have noticed I have, up until now, refrained from using the word, discipline, very often. This is not because it is not a fine term, but because its meaning is often thought to be synonymous with punishment; most usually, physical punishment. Again, our friend the dictionary defines discipline as "training that strengthens; a method for maintaining order; a system of rules for conduct." If these are the things one means when using the term discipline, I certainly have no problem with its use. To some extent, that definition describes a large part of the content of this manual. Training that strengthens; a System of rule for conduct.

Frequently, I find that the term is redefined so the concept of training is replaced by the concept of punishment, which often includes the idea of breaking a bad habit. In other words, it is transformed into a negative, rather than remaining the positive concept it is intended to be.

As long as you and I understand what I mean when I say discipline, I can use the term here as I just did before this side trip. [End]

Back to being true to ones values. Children detect inconsistencies quite readily. When young, they may ask things such as, "Why can Daddy swear but I can't." As they grow older and wiser, they learn not to stir up such parental, hornet's nests, by calling attention to them. The older child, though quiet about it, doesn't stop wondering about the inconsistencies he sees. He usually assumes they mean the parent really isn't sure himself about those things, or that the parent is just keeping the good stuff for himself. This can be really scary to a child

because, "If Dad and Mom don't know what's what, how can I possibly know?" And if something is so good that Dad keeps it for himself, "I certainly *do* want to try it, and the sooner the better!"

Guideline number five speaks of fairness. Children are really into what is fair and what is not. Fair to them often means that everyone should be treated exactly the same. "It's not fair to ground me for coming in late. All you did to Beth was change her curfew for one night a week." In the view of this One Rule Approach, fair means, "Doing that which, in the long run, will probably be most helpful for this particular individual and the family as a whole." It wouldn't be fair to do less than what one believes is best for each individual. That last sentence, in fact, often helps children finally understand this idea of what "fair" now means. The thing that is, fair, is to make our point so clearly, that the problem doesn't have to ever arise again for that particular child. What would be unfair, would be to use the same consequence as was used with another child, but which we feel certain would not bring about the change that is needed. What action may make the point clear for Jimmy may not come close to making it clear for Beth.

So, when the kids call, "Foul, that's not fair," smile to yourself. Don't feel that you need to defend yourself (so long as you feel confident that it is fair according to our new definition). To help the children understand you are in fact being fair (new definition), you are probably obliged to explain to them your reasoning, based upon your past experiences with the children involved, but not to discuss it further. *In this approach the focus of fair is on the change and not on the punishment,* as it so often is in other approaches.

The final guideline relates to successful rule enforcement (discipline, as a positive concept, if you prefer). Never try to discover who started it! In the first place, according to our One Rule Plan, who started it is almost never important anyway. Our focus becomes what we are going to do to make certain that it

does not happen again – so things get back to being good for all concerned. In the second place, and this is really the point I want to make, *you will never ever in any way shape or form really find out, who started it!* Each party really does believe it was the other one's fault. I mean they really do believe this, and neither you nor I nor the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will ever change that. So, why waste time trying, when it's not essential in the first place?

Let me give an illustration I am sure will sound all too familiar:

Jim: "Bob hit me."

Bob: "But Jim took my sweater."

Jim: "But this morning Bob used my towel."

Bob: "But last night Jim messed up my bed."

Jim "But Sunday Bob wrinkled my good shirt."

Bob: "But when you were three years old, Jim, you .....!"

If not stopped, this discussion would continue until they got back in time to the point where Bob says, "But you've made me miserable ever since they day you were born."

Take it from someone who has raised twenty plus foster children over the years. **Never** try to establish who started it! Once each child has convinced himself that it was indeed the other's fault, any consequence will be seen as unfair and unjustified, and you'll be a witch for initiating it! Just don't set yourself up to lose. After all, it wasn't your fault (or did we just hear Bob say, "But Mom always liked you best, even before you were born!").

This doesn't mean that if you suspect one child is picking on or doing harm to another that you shouldn't keep an eye on things and initiate a plan for change. Most certainly, you should.

In a general way, here is what you say and do when applying the One Rule Plan to handle a dispute or a problem behavior: Ask those involved if what they just did is going to help their brother / sister / parent in the long run? If so how? Listen and see if the explanation tells you something important. If there is a glimmer of sense in it, use it somehow to make the transgressor feel capable. Then ask that transgressor how he / she could have gone about handling the situation in a better way that would have met everyone's needs more fully and appropriately (both his and the one he transgressed against.)? If the original exploration doesn't make a whole lot of sense, skip the "feel capable" part and get right to the main idea - "What can and will you do differently next time?"

The parent always has to listen between the lines and see if the child is demonstrating that he really needs something which he is not receiving. If so, how can you try to begin providing it (or having it provided)?

ACTIVITY

Practice using the One Rule

I think you will find this exercise most helpful in two ways. First, practice makes perfect (Well, at least approaches perfect more nearly than without practice). Second, you will find you can already do it! At the top of a page, jot down a problem with which you have had to deal recently. Using all that you have learned here, write out how you would apply and use the One Rule Plan to handle that same problem. Keep your values, beliefs and goals in the forefront of your mind. Use the following routine as a guide, if you like.

Cues: A- Cleanup?

B- What happened?

C- Intentions?

D- Changes needed?

E. Intervention?

F. Add-on?

Include exactly what the parent does and what each child does. Then, if rule enforcement is required:

1. What "force" level is probably *just* enough?
2. How do you deliver an *immediate* consequence?
3. What is the *natural* consequence of the misdeed? Can it be used?
4. What parental action will be *in harmony* with your values and beliefs?
5. Is it fair in terms of the long term gains for the particular child(ren) involved?
6. Refrain from the temptation of trying to find out who started it!

The first practice run-through of the process is the hardest. Recall a second and third and fourth incident and do the same complete exercise (dry runs) with each. Continue until you feel fairly comfortable. Refer back to the text and re-read those sections about which you feel less confident.

Practice, practice, practice! If you really want to master this approach, teach it to a friend (or a group of parents). We never learn anything as well as when we are put on the spot to teach it. Make sure they have their own materials – book, notebook, and so on.

SUMMARY: Section Five

In Section Five, we have covered six major areas, which will assist you in making your One Rule Plan work smoothly with your family.

Do not expect magical results. This approach takes planning, work, practice and re-planning. Once you have designed a plan, and have practiced how to use it (in your mind and on paper or in discussions with your spouse or a friend), you present it to the family; individually, in a family meeting, more subtly by behavior shaping methods, by modeling it yourself, by exposing the child(ren) to appropriate outside models, and by fostering value-related interests and activities. (Remember, pre-teen boys love blood and guts. They should grow out of it without a parent prohibiting the interest.)

We discussed four more specific and appropriate ways of influencing family behavior; positive payoff, no payoff, practice payoff, and negative pay off. I warned us to steer clear of payoff withdrawal (withdrawal of love, affection, etc.). I also suggested that our grand goal is to learn how to fix things without having to resort to negative consequences whenever possible.

I suggested how side trips, can be important ways of providing missing or basic information that will help a child, spouse, or yourself, make a better decision next time. Role-playing was suggested as a specific type of side trip. It is especially good to provide an appreciation for the other party's feelings and point of view.

The uses of temporary specific rules (which I called Prompts) and Schedules and Routines were presented. (A schedule usually includes specific times. A routine just lists the steps to be used and the order in which they are to be performed.)

We spent considerable time discussing and illustrating the use of problem solving techniques and methods of rule enforcement for families. Can you remember the steps in each? If not, you may want to turn back and re-study them. It is important to have this available at all times right at the forefront of your thoughts.

I wish you and your loved ones much success and happiness as you continue traveling your particular road to family happiness.

SECTION SIX

Let's talk about what we have talked about?

In Section Six, we will address these topics:

What have we said here?

Some final thoughts, hopes and wishes.

WHAT HAVE WE SAID HERE?

In this manual I have tried to provide a proven, simple plan, which, when followed and practiced, works to help family life become an exciting, congenial, cooperative, growth producing experience for all concerned.

The One Rule Plan, as it is called, is simply an extension of the parent's own individual basic values and beliefs. This plan differs from most others in that it assists you in formulating your very own individualized Family Living Plan. Along the way, we have taken numerous side trips, which have provided background information generally agreed to be basic to the task of parenting. Let me provide a handy summary for you of the five main components of this plan.

COMPONENT I. The One Rule

We only do to and for each family member those things that will be helpful to him or her in the long run.

The Rule [*The Definition*]

- **We** [*all of us in the family and immediate extended family*]

- **only do to and for** [*includes all of our activities or interactions, that cause an effect on any family member*]
- **each family member** [*this includes oneself*]
- **those things that will be helpful** [b*e in accordance with this family's unique set of basic family values and the goals based on them*]

- **<u>to him or her in the long run.</u>** [*will make a positive difference for the rest of our lives*]

COMPONENT II: Clarification of Parental Values

While all of one's values are important and must eventually influence family life and children's attitudes and beliefs, begin by selecting three to five values that rank high on your list of importance. They may be found on the following list, from the Parent Value Inventory, or they may focus on other areas. The essential element is that they are values you truly believe to be of utmost importance.

A. Self-confidence / self esteem [*To believe in the genuine positive worth and capability of oneself*.]

B. Altruism [*Being almost totally unselfish toward others*.]

C. Integrity [*Moral and ethical beliefs supporting what is right and fair in human conduct*.]

D. Happiness / Contentment [*Enjoying and being satisfied with ones life and with the relationships and other common aspects that make it up*.]

E. Knowledge / understanding [*To learn a lot of things and being able to see how those things fit and work together*.]

F. Love / Friendship [*Feeling liked and loved by people who are important to you, and feeling you are actually a lovable, likeable person*.]

G. Success in job [*Being known as one of the very best there is at doing what you do*.]

H. Social acceptance [*In general, having the people of your community really like to have you around them, so they include you in their plans and activities*.]

I. Power over others [*Having and wielding great power or authority over others in order to obtain what you want*.]

J. Fame [*Being widely known and easily recognizable most everywhere one goes*.]

K. Wealth [*Having accumulated great sums of money or other symbols of wealth*.]

As the parent, I select these four values as our beginning point:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

COMPONENT III: Defining helpful

Defining the concept, "helpful," in the One Rule is the step that makes it truly Your One Rule.

For *my* family helpful means those things that guide us toward cherishing, developing and demonstrating behaviors that are in harmony with the four values listed in Component II above.

COMPONENT IV: Establishing family goals

Supporting these values requires a set of family goals. These goals are specific behaviors which, when seen, demonstrate progress toward these values. Specific goals related to each family value are written for each family member. Why do I suggest separate goals for each family member? It is because, typically, each person is at a different spot on the road toward living each value.

For each value, set up a Growth Plan Outline as follows:

Value: I value _____ and want to instill this value in my family.

Definition of the value: (What does this value mean to you?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

The General Goal (which flows from this value) for my family as a whole is: Each family member will behave in ways that display _____. (Whatever general behavior related to this value that you want to see.)

Here are some things I can do each day to be a good model of this value to my family:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4._____

Each family member currently displays behavior related in some way to this value. For each family member list those behaviors that: (1) now represent this value and, (2) those that tend to represent the opposite of this value. Make a

separate chart (like the one below) for each family member.)

Name:_____

Positively related behaviors now seen.	*Inappropriate* behaviors now seen.
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Specific goals (behaviors you want to see) for this person related to this value:

Value: _____

Name:_____

This family member will demonstrate:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

COMPONENT IV: Encouraging and enforcing the values through the One Rule Plan.

1. Basic questions to ask in case of apparent value (rule) infringement:

"How does what you just did, help our family, including you, in the long run?"

2. Useful variations on the basic question:

A. "Help me understand how _____(what was just done) is going to

help _____(name of person who was infringed upon) or our family as a whole?"

B. "What you just did does not appear to be helpful to our family life. What were really trying to accomplish?" (assuming he probably knows.)

C. "It is obvious that what you just did cannot be helpful to our family life. What do you suppose you were really trying to accomplish by it?" (This is intended to explore his *intention* and find possible unmet needs.)

3. Ways of influencing behavior:

A. Direct discussion (one-on-one, family meeting, informal chats, daily give and take conversations)

B. Modeling (parent, outside adults, older siblings, close friends, other peers)

C. Fostering value-related interests and activities.

D. Formal behavior change procedures:

(l) Positive payoff (reward given for appropriate behavior, after is occurs.)

(2) No payoff (Consistently ignoring unwanted behavior)

(3) Practice payoff (massed practice in replacing the unacceptable behavior with an appropriate one)

(4) Negative payoff (withdrawal of privilege, but never withdrawal of love or affection)

(5) Gradual shaping (recognize and reward small steps in the desired direction rather than waiting until the whole big change has been accomplished)

(6) Prompts (temporary specific rules used as reminders)

(7) Routines (lists of exact steps to be used in doing some task)

(8) Schedules (lists by time and day, showing who does what and when.

E. Guidelines to follow when enforcement is required:

(1) Use just enough "force" to accomplish the desired result.

(2) Enforce immediately

(3) Use natural consequence (those closely related to the topic of infringement)

(4) Only use methods which are in harmony with your own family values.

(5) Refrain from discussions about fairness? (To listen to a short statement from the child is acceptable, but no discussion.)

(6) Never try to determine who started it! (It truly always is the other guy!)

4. A problem solving routine for families:

A. Clean up step. (What, if any, immediate safety/housekeeping steps need to be taken and by whom?)

B. What happened step. (State objectively what took place. For example, Bob and Jim had a fight in the living room about something that was said.)

C. Discovery of intentions step. (Let each party briefly explain what he or she was trying to accomplish, and why.)

D. Planning for change step. (What needs to be done differently next time to avoid a similar problem? This is the parent's decision, although cooperatively agreed upon suggestions from the party or parties involved in the problem are encouraged and considered.)

E. Intervention step. (What training procedures, alternative approaches or other changes need to be initiated to implement step "D" above?)

F. Add on step. (What auxiliary plans need to be made to see that the needed changes do take place? Usually this step is only used after steps D and E have been shown to be less than fully successful. Often involves prompts, schedules, routines or other enforcement measures.)

These five components summarize the essence of *The One Rule Plan for Family Happiness* and its use. In addition, I encourage each parent to develop a positive outlook so you can always find yourself assuming the best, rather than assuming the worst. Remain willing, in fact eager, to hear what each child's intentions are. A child's intentions define that child's needs. When you discover a need that may not be being met you can formulate a way to help. (Remember, 'Ah, Wonderful'. Problems provide a parent with a wonderful chance to teach helpful things to their children.) Using the following formula may solve 99% of all interpersonal problems within the family.

First, discover Intentions, which

Second, demonstrate those needs, which

Third, when met more fully at home, or

Fourth, are appropriately handled by these methods,

Fifth, tend to prevent similar problem behavior from having to occur in the future.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS, HOPES AND WISHES

No book or manual can do everything for everyone. This one has provided a broad outline of one method that a great many families are finding works well for them. I sincerely hope that some or all of what has been said here will be helpful to you. It takes commitment and patience along with much trial and error learning on everyone's part. *Once established, it should last forever.*

Perhaps you already have a system that is working well for you, and you read this book more out of curiosity than need. If what you are doing now is being successful, don't mess with it. Perhaps you will want to consider a new angle here or there, but don't remodel that which does not need remodeling.

All parents must find a system for raising their family that fits their own personality style and that feels comfortable for them (so long as it accommodates what is known about raising mentally healthy children). The One Rule Plan is designed to adapt easily to meet these essential requirements. Beyond that, however, I believe it is every parent's responsibility to keep learning about children and families, and about all kinds of related things that will help you be able to do a better job of parenting. I encourage you to read widely, to use the wonderful resources available on TV, to seek out people you respect and learn from and share with them, and please, never ever get so comfortable with your system that you stop trying to grow.

Through the years I have met many dozens of parents who have said to me, "Doctor, we've tried everything, and nothing seems to work!" I imagine their basic problem was just that. They tried everything but nothing long enough and consistently enough to mold it into a comfortable way of life for their family. Children don't have an easy time if they are frequently required to adjust to new

procedures, expectations or regulations. A semi-good system, consistently utilized, is undoubtedly better than a half dozen great programs tried and tossed away time after time. Consistency, unconditional love, honest cooperative effort, and basic knowledge about child development are, I think, the keys to parenting success. (Go ahead. Memorize that last sentence!) It also helps immensely if the parenting plan fits the parent's own style. And finally, the more simple the plan, the better chance it has of being successful. (Basically one rule just has to be better than fifty!)

The One Rule Plan is based on the premise that when a family's values are clearly defined and made obvious to all, each family member can then make good judgments about what his or her own behavior should be. We can then ask, "Is this what my values tell me I should do?" The answer, though often not totally clear, is certainly clearer when the youngster knows what he and his family believe. The key to the simplicity of this One Rule Plan is just that. All the little specific, often picky and outdated, rules are collapsed into one: *We only do to or for each family member, those things that will be helpful to him or her in the long run (that is, those things that are in accord with our family values.)*

It is, of course, every parent's hope that the good things children learn at home are taken with them when they leave. As young people mature they come to understand that "family," in its broader sense, means the "*Family of Man*." Once this enlightenment occurs, all these home taught lessons automatically follow your child into every relationship and circumstance for the rest of his or her life.

We hear so often that the World has left behind the "Father knows best" and the "Leave it to Beaver," type of family life. Perhaps, but let's not use that as an excuse to stop trying to re-focus family life and all interpersonal relations back onto the cooperative, caring, responsible, value-based family model. It still works. I do hope you find it so.

ACTIVITY

Have a rewarding and fruitful family life experience. (Joyfully, practice this exercise every day, for the rest of your life!)

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are those which are used in the body of the manual. Since, once defined or explained, they are then used again frequently, it may be helpful to have this quick reference section to refresh your memory as needed. They are presented in alphabetical order. It has been found that reading through them from time to time offers a fine 'refresher course' on what has been presented here.

ADJUSTING: A term used to signify that becoming a mentally healthy person is actually an ongoing process rather than a state than is actually ever reached.

AFTER THE FACT. Rules made up and enforced after a misbehavior occurs, rather than before. Never recommended!

AGREEMENT FRAME OF REFERENCE. A communication skill in which you always find something acceptable in what the other person has just said, before suggesting your own position or information.

ALTRUISM. Being virtually unselfish toward others.

BEHAVIOR SHAPING. Changing an unwanted behavior, or establishing a new behavior through the rewarding of very small steps rather than trying to make a large change all at once in one step.

BLAMER. A personality that is never content until the blame for some problem has been saddled on the guilty party.

BUILDER-UPPER PERSONALITY. Opposite of the putter-downer. A personality that freely makes others feel good about themselves, and points out their good or strong points.

CARING PERSONALITY. Opposite of hurtful personality. Genuinely wants things to go well for others and takes what steps he can to assist.

COMMON SENSE RULES. Things people just do out of common sense rather needing any set rules to suggest them. (Stop fighting in the living room before blood is drawn.)

COOPERATIVE PERSON. Opposite of uncooperative personality. Goes out of his way to get along and to assist someone else with the completion of that other person's plans or projects.

DISCIPLINE. Training that strengthens someone. Maintain-ing order. A system of positive rules for conduct. (It is a positive term and does not herein refer to punishment.)

EARNABLES. A privilege one may earn, contrasted with free-bees which are privileges automatically given to one just because he is a child.

EMOTIONAL CHILD STYLE. The child who is motivated by the emotional elements and feeling aspects of situations or things.

EMPATHY. Being able to feel the way another feels. To put yourself in his emotional shoes, so to speak. (Contrast with sympathy.)

ENFORCEMENT BY DESIGNATION. Temporarily handing over authority to some parental substitute such as an older sibling or a baby-sitter.

FAMILY. Most basically, at least one parent and one child (for the purposes of this book). More generally, all those relatives living together in a way where they interact as an interdependent collection of people.

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS. General ways of behaving that all family members know are just expected because you are a member of that particular family.

FAMILY FEELING. That set of feelings that gives one a definite sense of

belonging and importance to a given family.

FAMOUS. Wildly known in a good way and easily recognized. (The opposite is infamous, known for unsavory reasons.)

FORMAL RULES. Long-term rules that are stated clearly and usually written down and posted.

FREE-BEES. A privilege or right that comes without having to earn it. (Right to shelter, food, clothing, etc.)

GOOD STUFF DIARY. A journal kept by someone containing only the good, happy and positive things that occur in their own life.

GRANDPA'S RULE: You work *before* you play!

HELPFUL PERSONALITY. A personality type that is the opposite of indifferent and hurtful. It demands concern and involvement and implies that we freely help, repair, comfort or assist one another.

HELPER PERSONALITY. Opposite of the people-user personality. Does what he reasonably can to benefit those he encounters each day.

HURTFUL PERSONALITY. Opposite of helpful personality. Inflicts physical and/ or emotional pain on others - even those he supposedly loves.

INCOMPATIBLE BEHAVIOR. A behavior, which, when being done, will not allow an unwanted behavior to occur. (Standing is incompatible with sitting.)

INFORMAL RULES. Rules that are not formally stated. Common sense rules and family expectations would be examples.

INTANGIBLE REWARD. Things one cannot hold, touch, or do in the typical sense, but which are still important. Smiles, praise, respect, and being appreciated are examples.

INTEGRITY. Moral and ethical behaviors based on doing that which one

believes is right and fair in the conduct of human relationships. Living up to ones highest, positive, values.

INTENTIONS. The *real* result one is seeking by initiating some action. (To be given attention as a result of intentionally breaking Mother's vase.)

INTERVENTION. Stepping in and taking charge. Making some change to help control or modify [a child's] behavior.

INVENTORY. A document, usually having questions which one answers to provide information about some trait or belief. Compared with tests (which usually have right and wrong answers) the inventory usually has no right or wrong answers.

KNOW-IT-ALL PERSONALITY. Opposite of the open/ non-defensive personality. Believes his ways and ideas are the only correct ones. Often found in politicians and religious leaders.

KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING. Means that one values learning a large number of things, and knowing how those things fit and work together.

LOVE/FRIENDSHIP. A value. Feeling liked and loved by the people who are important to you and feeling you are actually a lovable, likeable person.

MODELING. Demonstrating, through one's own behavior, just exactly how something is to be done, or what one believes. (Being honest, kind, etc.)

MOMENTARY RULE. See mini-rule.

MINI-RULE. A temporary, short term rule that only covers one specific small situation.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES. A learning act or behavior changing act that is closely related to the misdeed. (Changing curfew from 11:00 PM to 8:00 PM after son comes in late.)

NEGAPOOR. Allowing the negative aspects of being financially poor to influence or dissuade one from being a good, upstanding person. (see posipoor)

NEGATIVE PAYOFF. A behavior control method. Something unwanted or punishing is made to occur as a consequence of one's misbehavior. (grounding, spanking)

NEGATIVE RULE. A rule stated in such a way as to say what shall not be done (contrast with Positive Rule).

NO PAYOFF. Behavior control by ignoring a behavior one does not want to see in someone else.

OPEN-MINDED PERSONALITY. Opposite of the know-it-all personality. Willing to examine all points of view and new information without undue bias.

OPEN / NON-DEFENSIVE PERSONALITY. Opposite of self-hider personality. Willing to tell things like they are and express his own honest opinions without fear of how they will be received by others.

ONE RULE. As the basis of this book, it states: We only do to or for each family member those things which are helpful, that is, which are in accordance with our values.

OPTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. A non-required responsibil-ity, taken on voluntarily.

OPTIMIST. Opposite of pessimist. Sees and focuses on the positive aspects of life. More realistic than the Pollyanna, (see) though less willing to acknowledge the possible negative side than the realist (see).

PARENT INVENTORY. An inventory (see) of traits so parents may compare their own characteristics and beliefs with those of parents rated excellent and others rated poor.

PEOPLE USER PERSONALITY. Opposite of helper person-ality. A con man who sees people only as a way to get what he wants.

PESSIMIST. Opposite of optimist. Always looks on the dark or down sides of life.

PHYSICAL CHILD STYLE: Motivated by doing things with his body. Activity and physical skill development are experienced as being rewarding.

POSIPOOR. Not letting the state of being poor financially, stand in the way of becoming a great person in all possible ways. (Compare with negapoor.)

POSITIVE PAY OFF. A reward method in which getting something one really wants happens as a direct result of properly performing some task.

POLLYANNA PERSONALITY. Opposite personality type from realist. Unrealistically believes everything will turn out fine all by itself.

POWER. A value. To have and use great power and authority over others to obtain what one wants for himself.

PRACTICE PAYOFF: Practicing something the correct way over and over again so it will be done that way in the future. A behavior correcting measure.

PRIVILEGE. A special advantage or right.

PROBLEM SOLVER PERSONALITY. Opposite of the blamer personality. Focuses on determining what needs to be done the next time so the same problem that occurred this time need not be repeated.

PROMPTS. Mini-rules (see) set up for the short run, to help emphasize a behavior that is needed or prohibited. Prompts are withdrawn once the appropriate or acceptable behavior is seen to be occurring regularly (naturally).

POSITIVE RULES. Rules stated in such a way as to indicate what *shall* be done (contrast with negative rules).

PUTTER-DOWNER PERSONALITY. Opposite of the builder-upper. Makes himself feel superior to others by belittling them and their achievements, rather than working to actually improve himself.

REMINDER LISTS. Posted lists of things established for the purpose of reminding someone what he needs to do or take along.

RESPECT. As used herein, a child thinks you are a great model and wants to be like you. He thinks you are wise and feels affection for you. Frequently confused with making a child fear you, which actually produces the opposite effects.

RESPONSIBILITY. A task one must complete.

REVENGER PERSONALITY. Opposite of teacher and facilitator personalitys. Believes that all misdeeds must be punished.

REWARD. Something coming *after* a deed is completed, that tends to increase the likelihood that deed will be repeated in the future. (pay check for a week's work.)

ROUTINE. A list of an ordered group of tasks or steps to be performed.

RULE. A statement that something shall or shall not take place.

REQUIRED RESPONSIBILITY. An act that must be done just because one has a certain right or privilege.

SCHEDULE. A list of things to be done which states the day and the time they are to be accomplished.

SELF CONFIDENCE / SELF ESTEEM. A value meaning to believe in the genuine positive worth and capability of oneself.

SELF-HIDER PERSONALITY. Opposite of the open/non-defensive personality. Seldom lets others know how he feels or what he really thinks or believes.

SHAPING. See Behavior Shaping

SIDE TRIP. Providing needed basic or background information before pursuing the next step in some activity or learning sequence.

SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE. A value. In general, the people of one's community really like to have this person around them.

SPATIAL CHILD STYLE. Motivated by, and interested in how things work out in the real world, and how objects relate to, and affect one another.

SUCCESS IN JOB. A value. To be known as one of the very best there is at doing what you do.

SYMPATHY. Feeling sorry for someone else, though not really feeling their hurt yourself. (contrast with empathy)

TANGIBLE REWARD. Things one can see, hold, touch or do (toys, trips, watch TV).

TEACHER PERSONALITY. Opposite of the revenger personality. Focuses on helping the child learn an appropriate new set of responses or behaviors to replace those less appropriate ones that cause the child difficulties.

TRADES. The shifting of responsibilities between two parties with the approval of both of those parties and of the parents.

TRIAL AND ERROR LEARNING. When faced with a new learning task, one tries a variety of responses until he finds those that succeed. Many errors are made along the way, but each error is positive in that it helps the learner know what not to do on the next trial.

UNCOOPERATIVE PERSONALITY. Opposite of the cooperative personality (Big surprise, Huh!) Wants things to be his way only, and will not willingly do things any other way, even for friends or loved ones.

UNRELIABLE PERSONALITY. Opposite of the reliable personality. (Bet you

had that figured out!) Cannot be counted on to do his fair share, even when he has agreed to do so.

VALUE CHANGE FORMULA. Instead of stressing _____(unwanted old value), I would like to start stressing _____(desired new value).

VALUE INVENTORY. A document providing a means for a parent to determine which of the eleven values included, are of most and least importance to him or her.

VALUE SYSTEM. All the beliefs one holds about what is really important in life, and their order of importance from least to most.

VERBAL CHILD STYLE. Is motivated by words, and enjoys word-based activities and rewards.

WEALTH. A value. The accumulation of great sums of money or other symbols of wealth.

WITHDRAWL PAYOFF. A behavior control method in which the parent withdraws love in order to punish (or straighten out) a child for his misdeed. Never recommended by the author.