



Developing a Positive Personality

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Abstract:

While there is still controversy as to which factor ranks higher in affecting personality development, all experts agree that high-quality parenting plays a critical role in the development of a child's personality. When parents understand how their child responds to certain situations, they can anticipate issues that might be problematic for their child. They can prepare the child for the situation or in some cases they may avoid a potentially difficult situation altogether. Parents who know how to adapt their parenting approach to the particular temperament of their child can best provide guidance and ensure the successful development of their child's personality. Finally, the third component of personality is character—the set of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural patterns learned from experience that determines how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. A person's character continues to evolve throughout life, although much depends on inborn traits and early experiences. Character is also dependent on a person's moral development. The stages that significantly influence personality development are infancy, toddlerhood, pre-school, school-age and adolescence. Here the discussion regarding this article.

Keywords: Child, Development, Personality

1. Introduction

Personality is like a building. Just as a building can exist only when it has a strong foundation, a personality can impress others only when it has a formidable basis. Strong foundation is supplied by character and behaviour. If personality is developed on the solid base of values and ethics, it will last forever. A positive personality is developed by improvement of behaviour, communication skills, interpersonal relationships, attitude towards life and ethics. Personality has several components: temperament, environment, and character. Temperament is the set of genetically determined traits that determine the child's approach to the world and how the child learns about the world. There are no genes that specify personality traits, but some genes do control the development of the nervous system, which in turn controls behaviour. A second component of personality comes from adaptive patterns related to one's specific environment. Most psychologists agree that these two factors—temperament and environment—influence the development of a person's personality the most. Temperament, with its dependence on genetic factors, is sometimes referred to as "nature," while the environmental factors are called "nurture."

2. Infancy

During the first two years of life, an infant goes through the first stage: Learning Basic Trust or Mistrust (Hope). Well-nurtured and loved, the infant develops trust and security and a basic optimism. Badly handled, the infant becomes insecure and learns "basic mistrust."

3. Toddlerhood

The second stage occurs during early childhood, between about 18 months to two years and three to four years of age. It deals with Learning Autonomy or Shame (Will). Well-parented, the child emerges from this stage with self-confidence, elated with his or her newly found control. The early part of this stage can also include stormy tantrums, stubbornness, and negativism, depending on the child's temperament.

4. Preschool

The third stage occurs during the "play age," or the later preschool years from about three to entry into formal school. The developing child goes through Learning Initiative or Guilt (Purpose). The child learns to use imagination; to broaden skills through active play and fantasy; to cooperate with others; and to lead as well as to follow. If unsuccessful, the child becomes fearful, is unable to join groups, and harbors guilty feelings. The child depends excessively on adults and is restricted both in the development of play skills and in imagination.

5. School Age

The fourth stage, Learning Industry or Inferiority (Competence), occurs during school age, up to and possibly including junior high school. The child learns to master more formal skills:

- Relating with peers according to rules
- Progressing from free play to play that is structured by rules and requires teamwork (team sports)
- Learning basic intellectual skills (reading, arithmetic)

At this stage, the need for self-discipline increases every year. The child who, because of his or her successful passage through earlier stages, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative, will quickly learn to be industrious. However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future and will feel inferior.

6. Adolescence

The fifth stage, Learning Identity or Identity Diffusion (Fidelity), occurs during adolescence from age 13 or 14. Maturity starts developing during this time; the young person acquires self-certainty as opposed to self-doubt and experiments with different constructive roles rather than adopting a negative identity, such as delinquency. The well-adjusted adolescent actually looks forward to achievement, and, in later adolescence, clear sexual identity is established. The adolescent seeks leadership (someone to inspire him or her), and gradually develops a set of ideals to live by.

The Child Development Institute (CDI) rightfully points out that very little knowledge is available on the type of specific environment that will result, for example, in traits of trust being more developed in a person's personality. Helping the child through the various stages of emotional and personality development is a complex and difficult task. Searching for the best ways of accomplishing this task accounts for most of the research carried out in the field of child development today.

Renowned psychologist Carl Rogers emphasized how childhood experiences affect personality development. Many psychologists believe that there are certain critical periods in personality development—periods when the child will be more sensitive to certain environmental factors. Most experts believe that a child's experiences in the family are important for his or her personality development. Child's needs should to be met in the family environment. For example, children who are toilet trained too early or have their toilet training carried out too strictly may become rebellious.

Another environmental factor of importance is culture. Researchers comparing cultural groups for specific personality types have found some important differences. For example, Northern European countries and the United States have individualistic cultures that put more emphasis on individual needs and accomplishments. In contrast, Asian, African, Central American, and South American countries are characterized more by community-centered cultures that focus on belonging to a larger group, such as a family, or nation. In these cultures, cooperation is considered a more important value than competitiveness, which will necessarily affect personality development.

7. Observation

Infants who are just a few weeks old display differences between each other in how active they are, how responsive they are to change, and how irritable they are. Some infants cry constantly while others seem happy and stay fairly quiet. Child development research conducted by the CDI has identified nine temperamental traits that may contribute to a child's personality development being challenging or difficult:

- activity level (how active the child is generally)
- distractibility (degree of concentration and paying attention when the child is not particularly interested)
- intensity (how loud the child is)
- regularity (the predictability of biological functions like appetite and sleep)
- sensory threshold (how sensitive the child is to physical stimuli : touch, taste, smell, sound, light)
- approach/withdrawal (characteristic responses of a child to a new situation or to strangers)
- adaptability (how easily the child adapts to transitions and changes such as switching to a new activity)
- persistence (stubbornness, inability to give up)
- mood (tendency to react to the world primarily in a positive or negative way)

Temperamental traits are enduring personality characteristics that are neither "good" nor "bad." Early on, parents can work with the child's temperamental traits rather than oppose them. Later, as the child grows up, parents can help the child to adapt to his or her own world in spite of inborn temperament. Today, personality is considered the "Brand Image" of an individual. In simple terms it is made up of three aspects namely: Character, Behaviour and Attitude. Many people mistake the physical appearance and various external characteristics of an individual and his or her personality. As they talk about a marvelous personality they may refer to the height, weight, stature and complexion. Well, if you think that it is just the appearance of the physique of a person that determines the personality, it is time to have a rethink. It is true that physical appearance does matter. However, since most of them are beyond our power and control, it is useless to waste our time and energy thinking on them. Though physical appearance can help, there are many other aspects that contribute greatly to one's personality. Basically, personality development is the improvement of behaviour, communication skills, interpersonal relationships, attitude towards life and ethics.

8. Discussion

8.1 Psychological and Philosophical Basis of Personality Development

8.1.1 Necessity to know our mind

We intend to do many things – make resolutions to cultivate good habits, to kick certain bad habits, to study with concentration, to do something with a concentrated mind. Very often our mind rebels, forcing us to beat a retreat from our efforts at implementing our resolutions. A book is open before us, and our eyes are open. But the mind has started wandering, thinking about some past events or some future plans. The same thing happens when we sit for a few minutes trying to pray or think of a divine name or form. Says swami Vivekananda: "Free! We who cannot for a moment govern our own minds, nay, cannot hold our minds on a subject, focus it on a point to the exclusion of everything else for a moment! Yet we call ourselves free. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the undisciplined mind acts as our enemy, whereas a trained mind acts as our friend. So we need to have a clear idea of the mechanism of our mind. The fourfold functions of the mind:

- Memory: The storehouse of memory and impressions of our past experiences presents various possibilities before the mind. This storehouse called chitta. It is in this storehouse that the impressions of our thoughts and actions – good and bad – are stored. The sum total of these impressions determines our character. This chitta, again, is what is known as our subconscious mind.

- Deliberation and conceptualization: Not yet, sure, the mind examines the many options presented before it. It deliberates on several things. This faculty of the mind is called manas. Imagination and formation of concepts are also functions of the manas.
- Determination and Decision-making: Buddhi is the faculty responsible for decision-making. It has the capacity to judge the pros and cons of things and find what is more desirable. It is also the discriminative faculty in a person, which enables him to discriminate between the real and the unreal, between what is to be done and what is to be avoided, what is morally right and what is wrong. It is also the seat of will-power so essential for personality development and hence this aspect of the mind concerns us the most.
- "I" consciousness: Appropriating to oneself all physical and mental activity eg, 'I eat', 'I see', 'I talk', 'I hear', 'I am confused', etc, is called ahamkara or 'I' consciousness. As long as the 'I' identifies itself with the undisciplined body-mind complex, human life is dictated by events and circumstances of the world; we become happy with pleasurable events and miserable with adverse circumstances. More the mind gets refined and disciplined, more does one get to know the real source of 'I' consciousness. Correspondingly, a person becomes more balanced and equipoised in his daily life. Such a person is no longer swayed by any event or circumstances of life.
- Important activity of the mind that concerns personality development is our emotions. More the emotions are under control, healthier becomes one's personality. Emotions can be broadly classified into two types. Viz attraction and repulsion. Love, admiration, aspiration, sympathy, joy, veneration, pride and the like indicate attraction. Hate, anger, fear, sorrow, jealousy, disgust, shame, etc., are the nature of repulsion. As long as one is entangled with the undisciplined mind, one's personality does not really develop. Buddhi, the charioteer, serves as an effective instrument of self-development by controlling the emotions and raising the higher self from the hold of the lower mind.

9. Play - an Essential Element

Play forms one of the important elements of child's personality development. It is a medium that provides the child an opportunity for fullest self-expression, freedom and pleasure. It is also a creative activity. Moreover, play is refreshing and rejuvenating. It is helpful in developing habit of sharing cooperation, mixing up with others, being assertive and leadership quality. A child who takes part in the sports and others competitions, may have to go different places with the team. Quite naturally while staying with the fellow players in a camp or in some hostel he/she learns all these qualities of sharing, co-operation and so on.

10. Personality and Sports

The growing knowledge about aptitude, abilities, and skills has just begun to explain performance differences, in terms of depending to some extent on the individual's unique and personal and behavioural dispositions. Such dispositions that an individual brings to a performance are not fully understood, neither as to the nature of the predisposition nor as to the predictive value. This is not surprising, given that the field of personality trait theories within psychology is a complex and imprecise science. Yet these theories purport to deal with such issues as the permanence of personality states, the effects of cognitive and perceptual styles, the nature of motivation, and the individual's mode of interpreting learning experiences. The physical education literature dealing with personality factors and their effects on performance is heavy with implied and stated links between personality development and involvement in appropriately conducted programs of planned physical activity, games and dance.

A sportsman is motivated to achieve and has the determination and perseverance to do whatever work is necessary. This person is more a leader than a follower and may object more than most when restricted or prevented from doing things in his or her own way. There is a close relationship between sports and personality. Swimmers were not as aggressive as cyclists or triathletes, and they were not as carefree as runners or triathletes. They were more concerned with bodily safety than were the triathletes, and they

were more autonomous than runners. Triathletes scored significantly lower than runners and swimmers but did not differ from cyclists on the "harm avoidance" scale.

11. Inherent and Added Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity

The inherent and added benefits of sport and physical activity are;

Element	Objectives	Potential benefits
Disease prevention	To use sport and physical activity as forms of preventive medicine,	Reduction of a person's risk of life-threatening diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity and mental health disorders (Heart Health Coalition, 1998).
Psychological Well-Being, Learning and Productivity	To use Sport and physical activity to promote psychological health and well-being; To eliminate stereotyping and social stigmatization of individuals who are differently able.	Reduction of anxiety, depression and tension; enhancement of self-esteem, self-confidence and perceived physical competence ; an excellent antidote to stress ; increased sense of community involvement and reintegration into the mainstream.
Health promotion and Poverty Alleviation	To use Sport and physical activity to promote basic health; To gather people together for the purpose of playing a sport or being physically active, as well as discussing health and social issues such as AIDS, nutrition and family planning.	Raising awareness of health issues and engendering healthier life-long practices People who are healthy are better able to take care of themselves and their families, and to contribute to the economic, social and political lives of their nations. Direct and indirect provision of a range of employment/self -employment opportunities.
Reaching out to youth at Risk	To use Sport and physical activity to offer positive alternatives to anti-social behaviours such as drug use and crime; and the problems that stem from a lack of self-esteem, boredom, idleness, alienation and poverty.	Increased individual and community participation, ethical and democratic practices and racial tolerance; better family interactions and peer influence; behavioural standards and goals that contribute to positive social relations and the motivation to succeed; better use of free time. Individuals who are regularly active demonstrate improved academic performance and are more likely to stay in/return to school . Sport is an effective behaviour change methodology.
Identifying talented athletes	To identify and select individuals with the potential to become high performance athletes	Excellence in sport inspires athletes to try harder, and winning of medals inspires national pride.

The many benefits of sports are,

- Sport, recreation and play are a fun way to learn values and lessons that will last a life time. They promote friendship and fair play. They teach team work, discipline, respect, and the coping skills

necessary to ensure that children develop into caring individuals. They help prepare young people to meet the challenges they will face and to take leadership roles within their communities.

- Sports are very essential for personality development, national, integration and to create a sense of discipline. It not only makes a man active, healthy and sound in mind and spirit, sportsmen should not play for defeat or win but they should play with true sportsmanship.
- UNICEF recognizes the critical role of sport and physical play in children's lives. At the most fundamental level, sport and play are a child's right, as detailed in article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: States shall "recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." regular physical activity is essential for the physical, mental, psychological and social development of children and adolescents. Involvement in sport can boost children's health, improve academic performance and help reduce crime. sport can be an effective programmatic tool to help achieve goals in health, education, gender equality, child development. That is the concept of sport for development – that sport is not just an end in itself, but also an effective tool to help improve the lives of children, families and communities.

12. Conclusions

Most children experience healthy personality development. However, some parents worry as to whether their infant, child, or teenager has a personality disorder. Parents are usually the first to recognize that their child has a problem with emotions or behaviours that may point to a personality disorder. Children with personality disorder have great difficulty dealing with other people. They tend for sure whether there is a disorder, and if so, what treatment can best help the child. Child and adolescent psychiatrists are trained to help parents sort out whether their child's personality development is normal. Good behaviour and co-operation makes a man popular. As a result the possibilities of his progress and success are much more. Different people have different opinions about what makes a man's personality complete. There are several scientists who have the view point that character does not form a part of personality, but Seven Covey, one of the all time great authors and motivators says the best personality should be based on the solid foundation of character. The person who wants to improve his personality has to have a desire and determination; he has to identify the direction for his goals to achieve it. Once all the above three steps are taken he has to dedicate himself to the task of achieving his goal. Every human being is a unique creature. Therefore, in addition to the various common components, each one should develop his or her characteristics of personality. Always remember that blindly following someone else who is successful will never take you in the direction right for you. There are immense possibilities within you to develop your personality with strong character you must recognize and understand them. The key to success is hidden with you. The wealth you have earned is not important but what is important is the means you have adopted for acquiring that wealth. Your personality, your capabilities, your thoughts and your ideals are all very important in determining your character. Sport and recreation programs are creating environments that are safe and promote stable relationships between children and adults, and among children themselves. They are providing children of all ages with opportunities to express themselves, to contribute their voice, opinions and ideas, and to become agents for change. They are helping to build communities and are contributing to a positive personality development.

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