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Be the Best Parent

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This paper is about parenting styles for your children. The most popular ideas about parenting originated from the work of Diane Baumrind a clinical and developmental psychologist in the 1960s (<https://www.parentingscience.com/parenting-styles.html>). Baumrind was interested in different ways that parents attempt to control or socialize her or his children. She found three types of ways to manage a boy or girl. An authoritative parent encourages the a child to be responsible, to think for her or himself, and to consider the reasons for rules. An authoritarian parent expects the orders to be obeyed without question and rely on punishment or the threat of punishment to control a child. A permissive parent is responsive and warm but reluctant to enforce rules. The research in the early 1980s found a fourth parenting type, uninvolved (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). An uninvolved parent offers a child little emotional support and fails to enforce standards of conduct.

The science that comes from Alison Gopnik, however, found a newer and better philosophy. Gopnik is a professor of Psychology and Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley. She wrote a book called, "The Gardener and the Carpenter: What the New Science of Child Development Tells Us About the Relationship Between Parents and Children." I ask this question: are you a gardener or carpenter when it comes to parenting a child.

If a person wants to understand these two hobbies; I have to lay some groundwork of a carpenter. A carpenter can build almost anything out of wood for his or her home. The end results can range from a shed to coat hooks. In other words, a carpenter could be called a perfectionist. If we look at a totally different leisure activity (e.g., gardening) we can see some planning and organization that takes place but a final product is a diverse assortment of fruits and vegetables in varying amounts. After a garden has been planted outside, everything is at the mercy of mother nature. Plants have the opportunity to flourish or not even grow.

When a carpenter is in the workshop everything can be controlled. The humidity, the shape, the color, or size of a project but gardeners, on the other hand, have found an inability to control everything. A person cannot control the weather, sunlight, or humidity. I think that about half the variables for gardening a person has no control over. Carpenters draft plans and stick to them. Gardeners, for instance, have things that creep up on them. Surprises are what make gardening so frustrating but also are what makes it feel so rewarding. The serendipitous feeling one receives from toiling away in a the dirt by meticulously putting everything in its designed place, exactly how and where we want it. Mother nature, however, has her own plans that maybe coincide but maybe not with our goals. The two hobbies are a metaphor for something totally different. The different philosophies of a carpenter and gardener play out every day on how parents interact with children. In this paper I explore two approaches to parenting and the consequences.

Many parents, naturally, believe that "parenting" is just like going to school or work and if I just find the right technique my child will be more fortunate than the rest. I need to first, unpack this analogy of parents behaving like carpenters and gardeners. A person might observe the culture of parents and caregivers in the US of a carpenter in that if you do the right things, read the right books, and have the right skills your child might develop into a successful adult (Gopnik, 16). The idea of being a good parent is different than what the science suggests; that is much more like being a gardener. A paramount feature

of gardening is that you never know what is going to happen in your garden. The things you plan in a garden can fail but things you did not plan for do happen; making a garden a wonderful pastime.

The deeper reasoning behind being a gardener parent is it allows a person to create a more rich and nurturant, but also a variant and diverse ecosystem in which many things can happen (Rich, 2009). A garden can, for example, respond to the environment in unpredictable ways. A parent should provide rather a protective space in which unexpected things can happen rather than to give orders or demands to a child.

The term "parenting" seems to be so ambiguous with everyday life that we give little thought to its meaning. The term has not been in books till the early 1970s ([https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Parenting&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct\\_url=t1%3B%2CParenting%3B%2Cc0](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Parenting&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CParenting%3B%2Cc0)). If we even think of the word "parenting," it sounds rather strange. We do not, for example, husband our wives and certainly do not children our parents. The thing is those terms are relationships that do not have a specific goal directed activity that a person is going to achieve. In other words, being a parent is a better connection than parenting or changing a child into your idea of what he or she should become later in life.

It critical to also note that when parent is change to a verb "parenting" is somewhat changing the meaning of the relationship. For instance, we do not form a friendship saying in one to two years we better have spent X amount of hours together. We do not raise our friends to be this kind of person. As a matter-of-fact, it is when a person is struggling the most is when that friendship matters to us. For as long as we have been human we have had brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and particularly the whole village to care for the children. Everyone has had experience caring for a child and have watched a lot of other people Being compassionate for them. It is safe to say, most have had a lot of practical experience.

In the 20th century people became more mobile, families got smaller, and people started to have children later in life, and for the first time, we saw actual children and adults who had no experience in child care but had loads in school and work (Fraser, 1989). It was natural for people to think that child rearing is just like going to school or work and as a result stress and anxiety began to creep in to the relationship. As a result, emerges the billion-dollar parenting industry.

If we compare ourselves to other primates, we have an exceedingly long childhood (Bogin, 1997 & Pulla, 2014). The case might because it gives a child time to figure out in a safe environment his or her skills or niche in the world. The question then is why are children so creative and imaginative but yet awful at taking care of her or himself (Eugster, 2008).

If we think about the question, we see that the length of childhood is designed to the ideas of a gardener. If we take the mindset of a carpenter, the purpose of childhood is defeated. A parent then creates in her or himself anxieties, difficulties, and unhappiness in all sorts of ways that defeat the purpose of being a parent and a child.

The research shows, as compared to older adults, today's youth are doing a lot better, achieving more, more resilient, and less likely to take risks, less likely to get pregnant, and use drugs (Patten & Fry, 2015). These risks are associated with the carpenter model that parents are not giving children time to breathe, enjoy being a child, and preventing autonomous behavior. One consistent problem with today's parents are that children lose his or her autonomy because parents are micromanaging every aspect of life. Parents should allow a child to take risks and question the world. If parents create a safe environment where children can learn and explore and that will create less anxious, more resilient, and more likely to

deal with the variabilities in front of them, however, we live in a world where a person's physical talent is often rewarded.

Every four years the Olympics comes around and there is a lot of hype of the youngest participants. We see adolescents winning gold medals who have started the sport at a very young age. These are skills that are very specific, extremely difficult to master, and require a lot of time. If one does not invest early his or her time, dedication, and practice. Those elite skills are more difficult to master when a child is 12-16. The youngest athlete in the last games was 13-year-old Gaurika Singh, who swam in the women's 100m backstroke (<https://globalnews.ca/news/2883437/rio-2016-olympic-athletes-range-from-age-13-to-62/>). Many might say that children should discover his or her talent but it may already be too late to perform at that elite level. The question now might be are we aiming for successful versus well-adjusted children?

There is no doubt the tension between those attributes are at consistently at war with each other. The stress is always felt by parents who feel like it is a very competitive universe. The caregivers try to create small advantages (e.g., school) that are critical for one's child to be in the middle to upper class. The increase of inequality and the relationship to academic performance puts unwanted stress on the parent-child relationship.

Another similar inequality we see in today's culture are the wealthy individuals ability to pass on these privileges to one's children and increasingly effective ways. If we looked at students in the Ivy League schools. A disproportionate amount of the top 1-5% of income of families are in the schools (Aisch, Buchanan, Cox, & Quealy, 2017). This is making clear that parents are passing on that same privilege to his or her child. We send messages to parents that it is okay to be a gardener but it we will reward you more if you parents like a carpenter.

I feel once that idea of competitiveness is in a culture; it is impossible to resist. In our culture as a whole, the result is disturbing if we keep a small core group of people in the top 1-5% (DePaul, 2012). The meaning is rare for someone from the below 95% to jump into the top 5%. In other words, the same people means fewer changes from generation to generation. Does that bother anyone?

If we continue on this path we will frequently lose our flexibility as people change and are embarking on different trajectories or paths in life. As a society that is losing its potential to flourish and with that begs the question of academic incentive. I chuckle because school was designed to train people for industrial world. Similarly schools were designed for robots, in a sense, it gave skills (e.g., example) that these machines are capable of completing themselves. In a postindustrial world the skills (e.g., creativity, innovation, and risk-taking) are ones we are not encouraging in today's youth.

In conclusion, I am not saying being a carpenter or gardener your child will turn out a certain way. A child can come out in unexpected ways and features but what I am hoping for is this paper allows you to gain knowledge on how Cherish Every aspect of your child and your own. In the end, the human story of parents and children is surely more hopeful than sad. Our parents give us the past, and we hand on the future to our children. Being a parent allows the new kind of human being to come into the world, both literally and figuratively. A good parent creates an adult who can make his or her own choices. A secure, stable childhood allows children to explore. Being a good parent allows children to succeed in ways that we could have never predicted or imagined shaping.

## Resources

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