

XIII. Conflict Analysis

Kirk, Russell. "The Quickening Soul." In the Sword of Imagination: Memoirs of a Half-Century of Literary Conflict. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, pp. 12-15.

The very decision by the parents to use their authority and power over their child will cause conflict. The child is completely disoriented to ruling authority and his sinful nature will naturally resist control. Parents abdicate their ruling authority when they decide it is easier to avoid conflict than to establish control.

However, the act of creating a biological life, to which God has the option of imputing soul life, carries with it implied sacrifice. You have nine months to orient to your lost freedom and the magnitude of your responsibility.

Parents can quickly recover some of the domestic tranquility lost by the arrival of the child by establishing control early. Parents must orient to the presence of a new volition which is uncontrolled and thus easily led by the attached body's sinful nature.

The clash of volitions is inevitable and therefore the issue which is unavoidable is "who's volition will dominate—the parents' or the child's?" When conflict arises, the parents must learn to analyze the problems associated with it and then resolve them.

Resolution is found in the application of the ten problem-solving devices placed into the context of child rearing. There are three basic steps to conflict resolution. The final is the solution. We will now analyze the first two steps.

The first step is to identify the problem. It does no good to fight symptoms. To fight symptoms instead of the problem is much like fighting an aneurysm and a hematoma with an Advil.

When my mother suffered an aneurysm some two years ago it caused her to fall down a flight of steps during which she struck her head, causing a hematoma which, in her case, was the collection of hemorrhaged blood between the brain and the inner skull. This caused headaches. She asked for painkillers but was refused. For, you see, until the neurosurgeons discovered what the problems were they could not mask the symptoms. Further, until they identified and eliminated the sources of the pain, fighting the pain was not only a detriment, it was dangerous. Once the sources were discovered then they began to treat them as well as the symptoms.

To fight the symptom of a problem is much like trying to compress a balloon into a box smaller than the balloon. If you press in one area it springs up in another. If you press in all areas the balloon will burst. Therefore, fighting a symptom may result in that symptom becoming suppressed. But a new symptom will spring up to take its place.

Example: Why do adolescents take drugs? Drugs are a sublimation. The euphoria which accompanies drug use serves as a substitute for the child's failure to find happiness while off drugs. The federal, state, and local governments resolved years ago to fight the problem of drug use among teenagers. But the problem is not drugs. The problem lies inside their souls. They have no absolute principles to which they can subscribe. In fact, they are told that there are no absolutes. They search for happiness outside themselves but happiness is an inner resource. Thus, their search for happiness becomes frantic. Drugs offer periods of pseudo happiness that substitute for their lack of inner happiness.

Government action to prevent drug use may actually have worked to some degree. But they have only compressed the balloon. Misery must be assuaged. The frustrated teenager frantically searches out alternate sublimations. For example, there is an increased use among teenagers of alcohol and cigarettes, more involvement in promiscuous sex, and escape into fantasy worlds. This latter area includes religious cults, the occult, and various media. Media fantasy includes certain forms of music, movies, television, computer and video games, virtual reality, and pornography. Compress the balloon in one area, it simply pops up somewhere else.

Resolve the problem of unhappiness and you eliminate the symptoms. Remember that there are only three sources of problems in the human soul:

1. **Volition.** The child is making poor decisions. These need to stop, especially if they reflect revolution against authority.
2. **Sinful Nature.** The parents must monitor the child and identify the source of his desires and motivations. They must distinguish if these find their origin in genuine curiosity and a search for knowledge, or if they originate from the sinful nature. Trends, lust patterns, human good and evil, and personal sins emanate from the desires of the flesh to control the soul and must be controlled by inner virtue.
3. **Demon influence.** Information from outside sources may be influencing your children to think in certain ways and thus motivate unacceptable actions. Almost every aspect of our society sponsors tenured chairs on the faculty of the Cosmic Academy.

Parents must be ever vigilant to identify the source of lies, propaganda, deceit, and disinformation which are designed to manipulate their children and eliminate them from their child's environment.

The second step is to evaluate the problem and determine whether you want to solve it and if so, how you plan to do so.