

ALI 485: The Family: A formation ground for personalities

Session three

What is one thing you would do differently for your children if you could rewind the clock?



إِذْ قَالَتْ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي
مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

When a woman of Imran said: My Lord! surely I
vow to You what is in my womb (to be devoted to
Your service), accept therefore from me, surely
You are the Hearing, the Knowing.

Sura Aale Imran, no.3, verse 35

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ انِّي وَضَعْتُهَا اُنْثَىٰ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
وَضَعْتُ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْاُنْثَىٰ ۗ وَاِنِّي سَمِيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَاِنِّي
اَعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ

So when she brought forth, she said: My Lord! Surely I have brought it forth a female - and Allah knew best what she brought forth- and the male is not like the female. And I have named it Maryam, and I commend her and her offspring into Your protection from the accursed Shaytan.

Sura Aale Imran, no.3, verse 36

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا
وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا

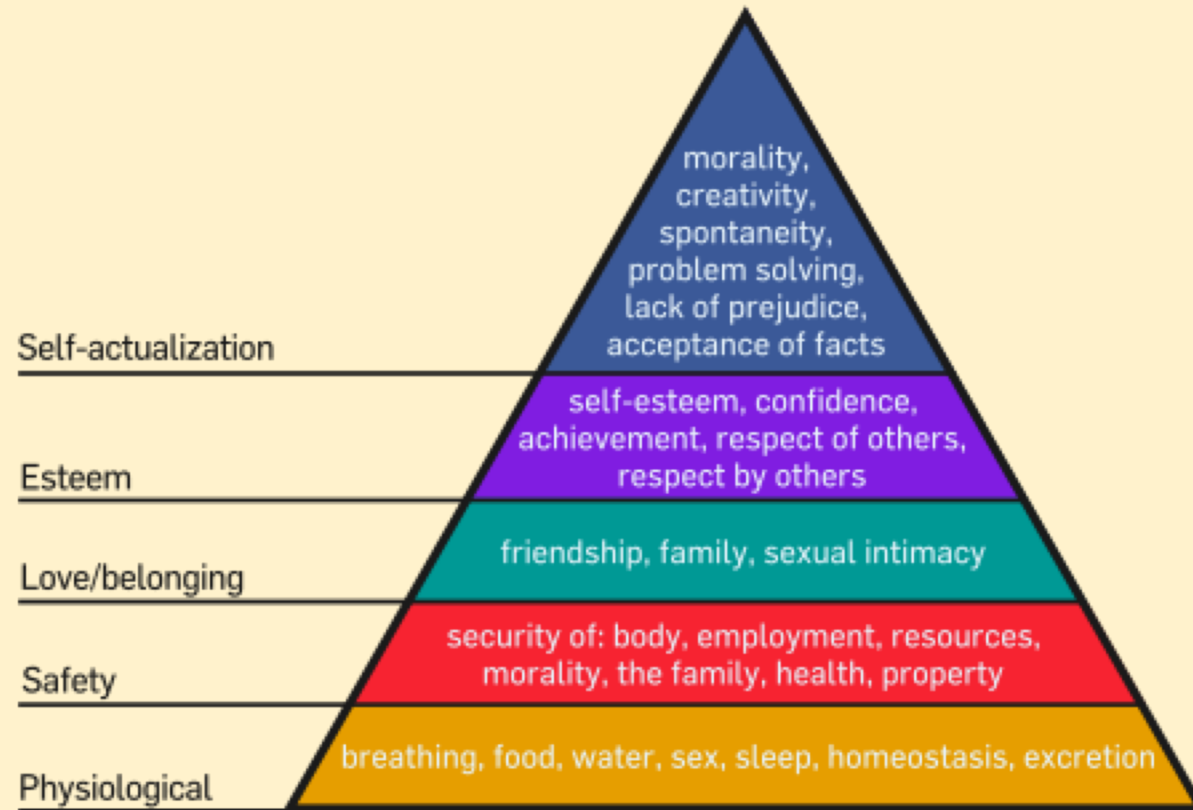
Thereupon her Lord accepted her with a gracious acceptance and made her grow up in a worthy fashion and He charged Zakaria with her care

Sura Aale Imran, no.3, verse 37

From the readings

A healthy and secure man has satisfied his basic needs sufficiently, and his fundamental motivation is 'self-actualization' - which is the constant flourishing of one's abilities, talents, and competencies throughout his life

Abraham Maslow



Five behavioural patterns indicate mental health:

1) Sense of responsibility

2) Self-confidence

3) Goal-orientation

4) Personal values; that is, one has a particular philosophy, based on his beliefs and goals, that leads to his happiness.

5) Individuality and uniqueness; that is, one distinguishes himself from others so that he neither ignorantly conforms with the demands of others nor is rejected by them.

In Islam the ideal mental health is to achieve the desired human perfection, namely proximity of God.

The purpose of the divine Prophets' call and its acceptance by people is to achieve mental development. Everyone who treads this path enjoys an ideal and healthy mentality.

Sayyid Abul Qasim Husseini

A lofty need of man is to worship; this has an inner state and an outward appearance.

The outward appearance refers to the very specific acts of worship, and its inner state consists in being sincere, attentive while performing acts of worship, remembering God and revering Him, pinning all hopes on and being attached to His divine essence, trusting and finding peace in His eternal essence, and fading before His unique essence.

Family and personality development

Healthy development depends on the quality and reliability of a young child's relationships with the important people in his or her life.

Growth-promoting relationships are based on the child's continuous give-and-take ("serve and return" interaction) with a human partner who provides what nothing else in the world can offer – experiences that are individualized to the child's unique personality style; that build on his or her own interests, capabilities, and initiative; that shape the child's self-awareness; and that stimulate the growth of his or her heart and mind.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2004/04/Young-Children-Develop-in-an-Environment-of-Relationships.pdf>

In order to develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody's got to be crazy about that kid. That's number one. First, last, and always.

Factors that stimulate personality development at home

- 1) Love and Security
- 2) Self confidence
- 3) Play and leisure

Love and Security

The need to be loved is exceptionally strong in all human beings. From childhood to old age, humans want to be loved by those around them. Love connects people in the strongest of ways.

A home without love, however orderly and organized, has not fulfilled its true purpose. A family is not just a micro-organization where the needs of members are met. This could be done by a state run facility. A family's outstanding characteristic is that members love one another, and this emotion binds them together.

Effects of Love

A child who knows he is loved has a great head start on life.

1. Happier and calmer. A child who is loved is at peace with the world, and is able to bear disappointments better.
2. More confident. The child knows that he is worthy of being loved, and that is a great boost to his self-esteem.
3. Can form better relationships with others. A loving relationship with the parents makes the child a kinder, more loving person.
4. Has a positive outlook on life. A child who is loved looks at the world with enthusiasm. He will be eager to try and experience new things. A loveless home produces a negative outlook, in which the natural curiosity and interest in life is deadened.
5. More responsive to what parents tell him. The child will be less likely to rebel or withdraw.

Kiss your children often, for every display of affection will raise your status in Heaven.
Holy Prophet (s)

Allah has mercy on a parent who loves his child greatly.
Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a)

Self-confidence

Self-confidence is an attitude which allows a person to have a positive and realistic perception of themselves.

It is characterised by personal attributes such as assertiveness, optimism, enthusiasm, affection, pride, independence, trust, the ability to handle criticism and emotional maturity.

Confidence is important for a believer. It gives strength to abide by what is right, allows a believer to aim high and creates a positive appreciation for the self.

When people feel good about themselves they are happier and will have more positive relationships. Negative emotions often stem from a lack of self-confidence. Imam as-Sadiq (a) says: *A person only acts tyrannically or arrogantly due to an inner sense of disgrace.*

Authentic self confidence is based on;

- 1) Appreciation of the self – knowing strengths and weaknesses.
- 2) Refraining from comparisons.
- 3) Fulfilling interests
- 4) Focusing on doing well in certain areas
- 5) Maturity to counter negativity from others

Play and Leisure

Play is important for children's development and for children to bond. It offers a chance to connect with your child. You are your child's first teacher and much of that teaching happens through play. Play helps your child learn the rules of your family and what is expected of him or her. As children grow, play helps them learn how to act in society.

<http://msuextension.org/publications/homehealthandfamily/mt201003hr.pdf>

Play is how children learn to socialize, to think, to solve problems, to mature and most importantly, to have fun. Play connects children with their imagination, their environment, their parents and family and the world. Parental involvement in a child's world of play is not only beneficial for the child but is extremely beneficial to the parent. Playing with children establishes and strengthens bonds that will last forever. Parent-child play opens doors for the sharing of values, increases communication, allows for teachable moments and assists in problem solving. Playtime provides opportunities for the parent and child to confront and resolve individual differences, as well as family related concerns and issues.

Family activities are important for the whole family. They help develop strong family bonds, which can last a lifetime.

Families who play together are more cooperative, supportive and have better communication

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says:

“Leave the child free to play till it is seven years old.”

The Prophet of Islam says:

“Let them play; the earth is the pasture of the children!”

Case study - Anger

Maryam has four children, two older ones who are 12 and 10 and two younger ones 4 and 1 years old. She is busy with her family and has little help from outside. Her oldest daughter is displaying signs of random anger. The anger is affecting the family and her husband believes they have been too soft with her.

- 1) What could be the causes of the anger?
- 2) How can Maryam help her child control her anger?
- 3) What strategies would diffuse the tension at home caused by the child's anger?