

REACHING FULFILLED ADULTHOOD

“Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6 (NASB)

In Chapter One we identified certain desirable qualities to be developed into a child. We examined how the various parenting types affected the outcome of those qualities. This chapter focuses on what it takes specifically to see those qualities developed in a child by the time he or she reaches adulthood.

Acceptance and accountability remain as the essential ingredients.

We introduced these qualities as:

Internal values of:

- Motivation and confidence
- Integrity

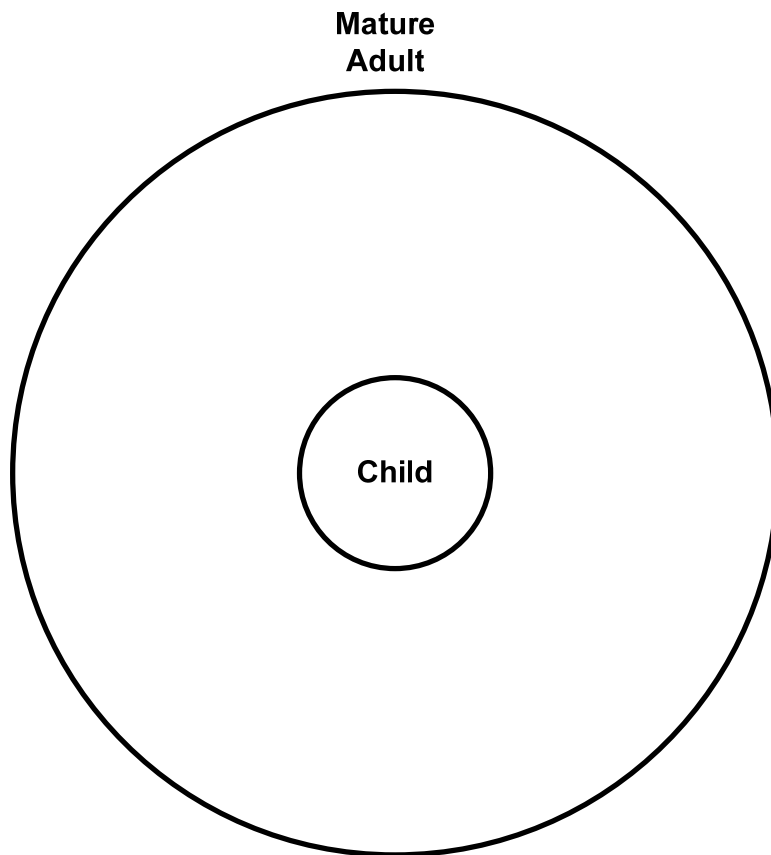
External behaviors of:

- Respect for Authority
- Love for God and others

Acceptance always comes first, and then accountability. Both ingredients are necessary, in that order, to building the above qualities into a young person.

From Child to Adult

For the purposes of this lesson, think of your child as having undeveloped potential. Consider the inner circle below as representing your child while he or she is still young and the outer circle representing your child that has grown into an adult.



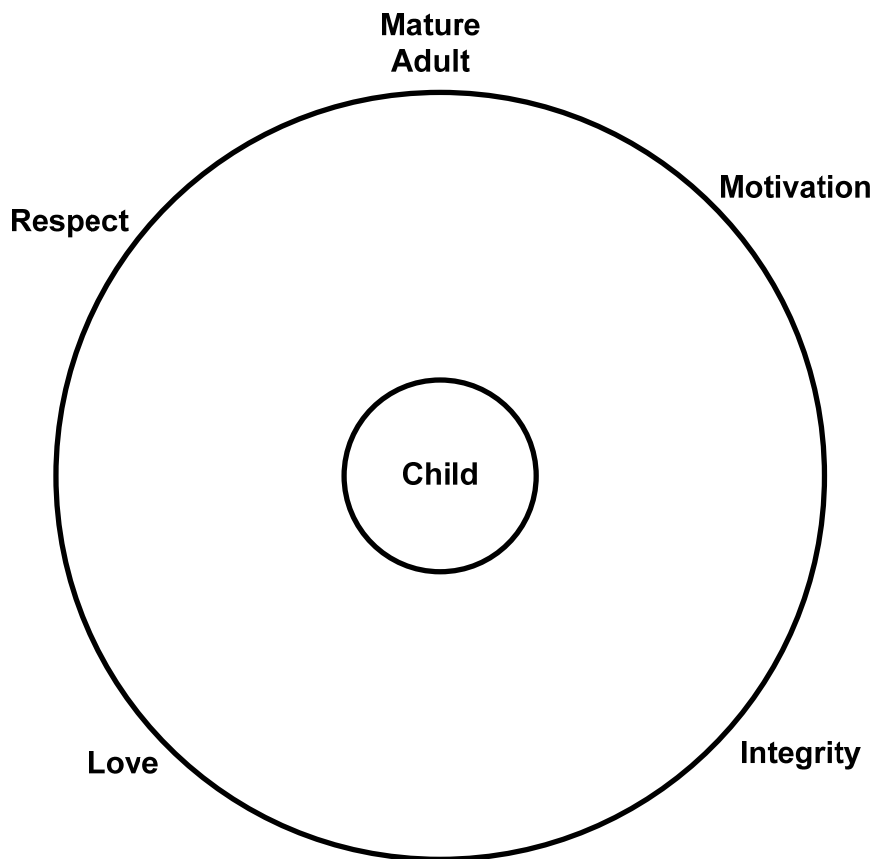
Think of those elements you would like to see developed in your child as objectives that round out his or her life. There are two things to consider: Where your child is now? Where you want him or her to be?

Remember, these objectives are:

- Motivation and confidence
- Integrity
- Love for God and others
- Respect for authority

These objectives indicate what we would like to see true of our children when they become adults. We know that these things do not just

happen. There is much prayer, work, care, patience, and persistence required on the part of the parent – but these objectives must be kept in mind as the years pass. They are shown as *motivation, integrity, love, and respect*.



Motivation

Motivation and confidence enable your children to function effectively wherever God leads them. Motivation and confidence are required for the ability to study, to fit into the working world with skill, to manage one's home and children, to contribute to the community, or to make a positive impact on one's generation.

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might..." **Ecclesiastes 9:10** (NASB)

- Q1.** What is it that develops a child's motivation and confidence?

Encouragement

Encouragement gives your child the motivation to use his or her God-given talents. Your child will have the confidence to do whatever he or she is given to do. A child must be allowed to risk failure in his/her endeavors and learn that it is "safe" to fail. That is, if he/she fails in a creative attempt, encouragement rather than criticism or rebuke will be given. To lift a child up through praise and encouragement will ensure a positive outcome more than any amount of critical instruction.

*"So **encourage** each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NLT)*

- Q2.** What is a specific area in which you want to see your child grow in motivation and confidence?
- Q3.** What can you do to encourage your child in that area? Describe.
- Q4.** What is it that hinders growth in motivation and confidence?

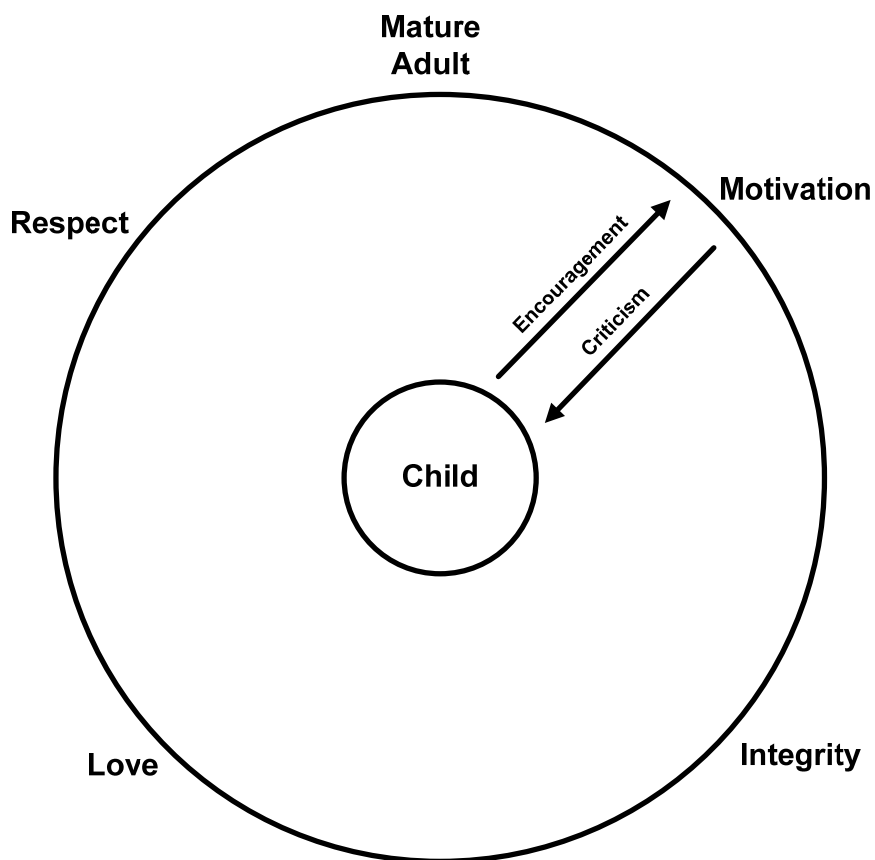
Criticism

To *criticize* is to "find fault with." Criticism focuses on the negative part of what is being done. Just as encouragement builds up a child's motivation and confidence, criticism tears it down.

Criticism stifles creativity and leads to frustration and anger on the part of the child. Whenever a child fails, instead of getting encouragement from the parents, if he or she gets criticism, it adds insult to injury.

*"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a **harsh** word stirs up anger." Proverbs 15:1 (NASB)*

- Q5.** When you are attempting to help your child develop, would your child see your efforts as critical or encouraging?
- Q6.** If you believe your child would characterize you as critical, ask the Lord to show you what you can do to be encouraging. Write down what He shows you.



Notice that providing *encouragement* results in a mature adult who has *motivation* and confidence. The arrow pointing back to the child indicates under development of those qualities due to *criticism*.

Integrity

Integrity is a commitment to the truth. To speak and act truthfully represents the strongest evidence of strength of character. Truthful behavior is a rare quality in a world where “every man has his price.”

Therefore to develop integrity in a child requires a deep commitment by the parent.

“Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.”
Proverbs 3:3 (NASB)

Q7. What is it that develops a child's integrity?

Honesty

If parents want their children to have integrity, they need to model *honesty*. This requires a parent's own commitment to integrity.

For example, when you make a commitment to do something, you do it. You tell the truth. You live the way you want your child to live. Children must be able to see the parents' model what they teach.

*“Happy are people of **integrity**, who follow the law of the LORD...Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your principles!”* **Psalms 119:1, 5** (NLT)

Maturing children do not expect their parents to be perfect. They know that is not realistic. However, they want to know that their parents believe what they are telling them to believe. Being honest about your failures creates a bond with your children.

“But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”
1 John 1:7 (NASB)

Q8. What are some truths that you want to see your children committed to as they grow up?

Q9. What have you done to lead them in that commitment? Describe.

- Q10.** What do you do that undermines the development of integrity in your child?

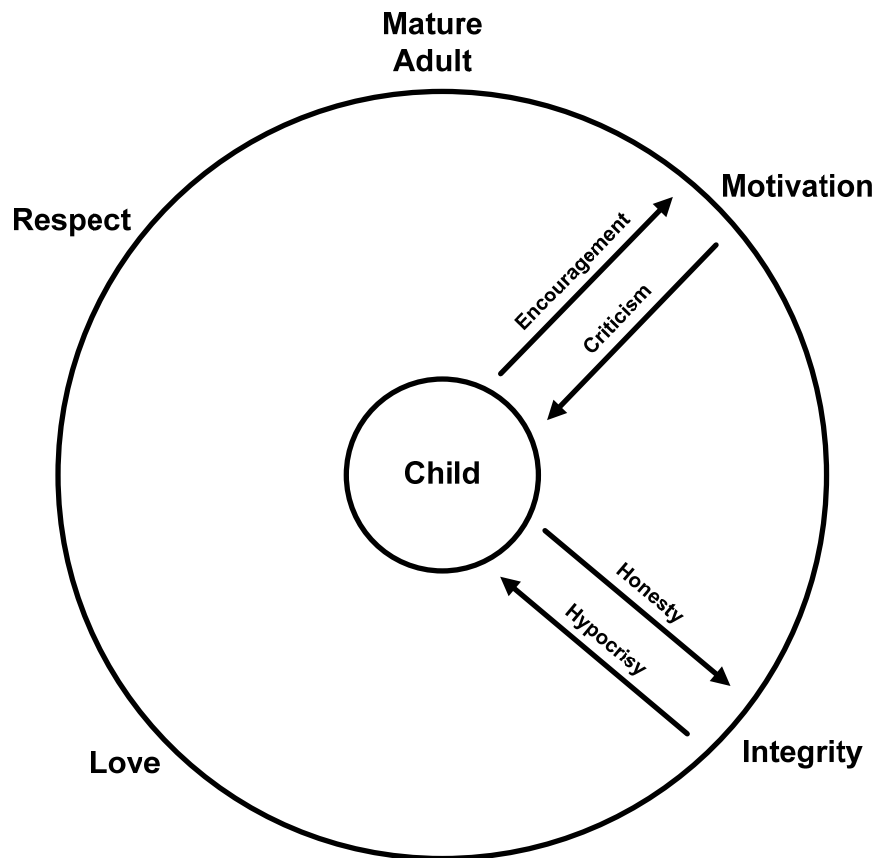
Hypocrisy

Perhaps the greatest complaint that children have toward their parents is “they don’t practice what they preach.” If children don’t see their parents being honest, they won’t be either.

*“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without **hypocrisy**.” James 3:17 (NASB)*

It is important for a child to hear a parent admit “**I was wrong**, I should have...” whenever the parent realizes an action was not a good modeling of his or her teaching.

- Q11.** Do you believe the truths that you want to see your children committed to as they grow up?
- Q12.** Would your child agree that you are committed to those truths in your own life?
- Q13.** If your answer is no, ask God to help you make a course correction in your own life to be committed to His truth. Write down anything He shows you here.



Love

All Biblical commands can be summed up in loving God completely and loving others unselfishly. Attending church and memorizing scripture are excellent disciplines but those alone don't develop these qualities in a child.

*"...You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

Matthew 22:37, 39 (NASB)

Q14. What develops a child's love for God and others?

Acceptance

God's love communicated by the parent through acceptance of the child during the growing-up years provides the child with a sense of security. This sense of security enables the grown child to give freely with no sense of loss, and to love maturely without requiring anything in return. The following scripture illustrates God's love for His children, the same love you are to demonstrate to your children.

"Oh! Ephraim is my dear, dear son, my child in whom I take pleasure! Every time I mention his name, my heart bursts with longing for him! Everything in me cries out for him. Softly and tenderly I wait for him."

Jeremiah 31:20 (MSG)

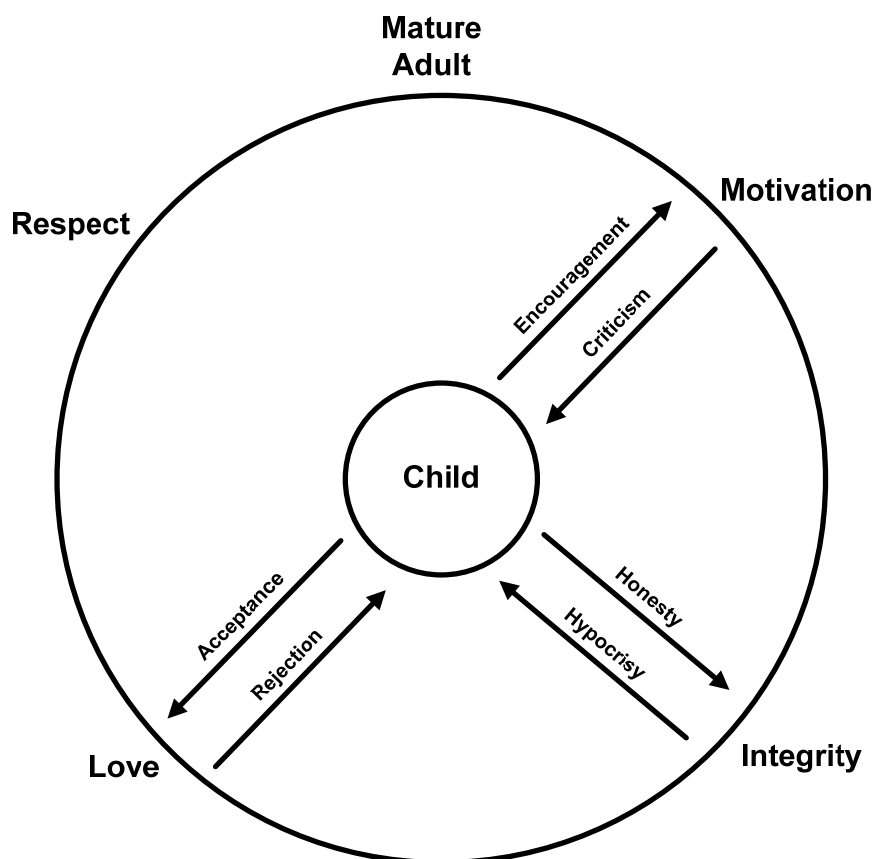
Q15. How are you communicating love and acceptance to your child?

Q16. What undermines a child's love for God and others?

Rejection

Rejection, on the other hand, undermines the child's sense of acceptance by parents and by God. Rejection can be quite subtle or be openly expressed. It is depreciating the child's worth by belittling, ignoring, reneging, interrupting, ridiculing, sarcasm, or discrediting.

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart." **Colossians 3:21** (NASB)



Respect

God places every child under the authority of his or her parents. The success of that child's life will have much to do with how he/she relates to future authorities. Your child will need to show respect to teachers, bosses, governmental officials, and God. Prepare your child by training him or her to respect you.

"Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you..."

Deuteronomy 5:16 (NASB)

Q17. How are you training your child to grow in the area of respect for authority?

Discipline

Giving fair and clear limits in the home grows a child's respect for authority. Limits need to be provided that take into account the child's safety physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Limits need to be given clearly without threats and shouting. This is the same kind of *discipline* God gives you.

The limits need to reflect sensitivity to the child's abilities, friendships, and needs. Time must be taken to ensure the child understands the limit/s. If these limits are broken, the correction needs to be age and situation appropriate.

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Q18. How do you communicate fair and clear limits in your home?

Q19. What undermines a child's respect for authority?

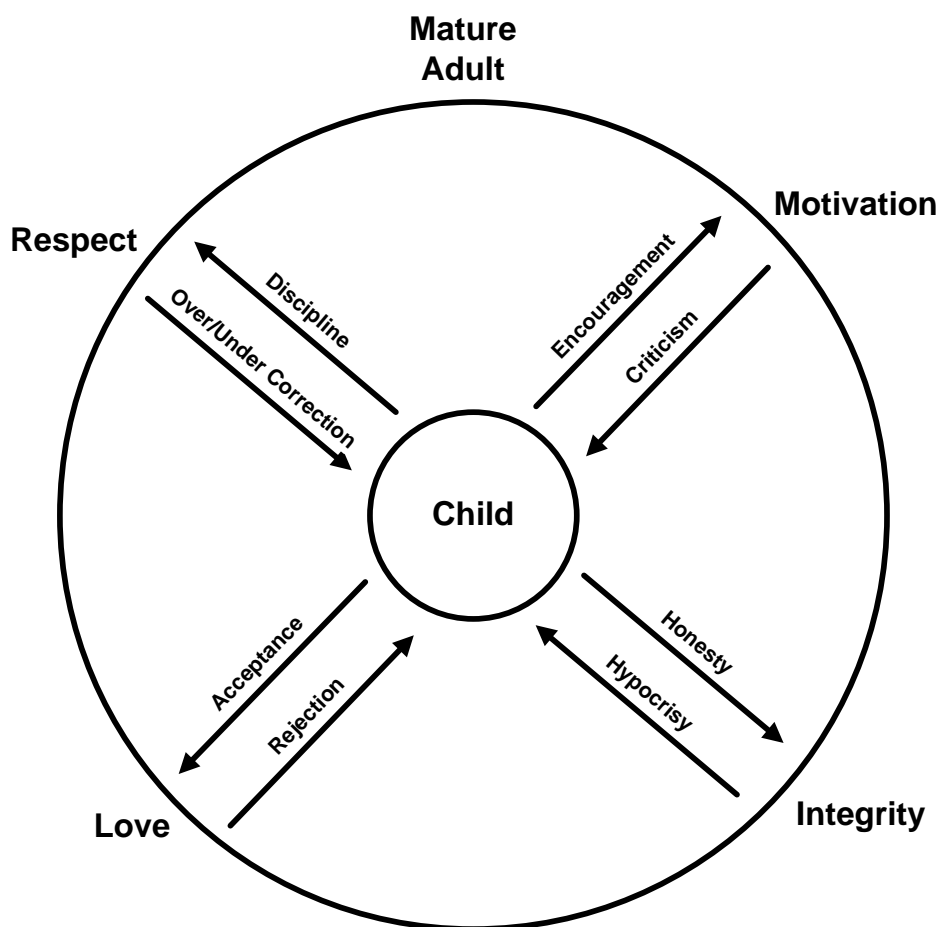
Over or Under Correction

Overcorrecting and undercorrecting undermine respect for authority. Overcorrecting is correction that is inflexible, demanding, arbitrary, and authoritarian.

*"Your own soul is nourished when you are kind, but you destroy yourself when you are **cruel**."*
Proverbs 11:17 (NLT)

Undercorrecting is either a failure to correct or a failure to insist that correction be obeyed.

*"You must teach these things and encourage your people to do them, correcting them when necessary. You have the **authority** to do this, so don't let anyone ignore you or disregard what you say."* **Titus 2:15** (NLT)



The arrows are pointing at the qualities that help your child to grow into an effective, mature adult. The arrows pointing back to the child, indicating the lack of development of those qualities.

Personal Application

Ask God to show you what you have been practicing in your parenting.

Circle the arrows that describe your parenting.

If you circled any arrows that keep your child from developing, **ask God** to help you begin to do the things that benefit your child.

Write what He shows you.

Reaching Fulfilled Adulthood

Diagram

Notes