



Paref Southcrest School, Inc.

Perducere semitas ad astra

Parents' Guide

Guide topics on how to be a
BETTER SPOUSE,
PARENT, and PERSON for a
BETTER MARRIAGE



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What is PAREF Cebu School For Parents?

The PAREF Southcrest Cebu School for Parents is an innovative way of equipping PAREF Parents to carry out the most important task of taking care of their marriage and family and of educating their children in virtue and in the faith.

The School for Parents offers courses, seminars, Family Congresses, mentoring and guidance, peer coaching, retreats, spiritual direction and confession as a way to accompany and support parents all throughout their stay in PAREF.

Goals of parent formation and peer coaching

Through the parent formation program and peer coaching, the new parent is helped to *consciously and deliberately choose to become*:

- 1) a ***better spouse*** (continuous spousal courtship)
- 2) a ***better parent*** to her children (parenting development), by
 - Developing virtues in the children
 - Maintaining a virtuous home environment
 - Collaborating effectively with the school
- 3) a ***better person*** and to develop a close relationship with God (character and faith development)

It should be emphasized that peer coaching is successful when the PAREF mothers move towards the goals on their own volition and with clear convictions for self-improvement.

Role of Peer Coaches

The role of the PAREF peer coach is to be a friend of the new parent who:

- orients the new parents in the PAREF philosophy of education and the ways of the school of their child, and
- helps the parents to fulfill their role as primary educators of their children, so they can create a home environment that will make their children become people of virtue, men and women of character, and who accomplish their purposes of loving God above all and loving others as themselves.

HOW TO BE A BETTER SPOUSE:

CONTINUOUS SPOUSAL COURTSHIP

I. *Stages of Marriage*

The psychologist Paul Tournier said, “*I’ve been married six times - all to the same woman.*” Tournier explained that he never got divorced, but rather his marriage transitioned from one stage to another.

All healthy marriages experience change and transition. That’s what keeps them alive and growing. Some of the stages of growth are predictable, others are not.

For simplicity, we’ve divided marriage into the chronological time frames of:

- ⇒ **Newly Married** (0 - 5 years)
- ⇒ **Middle Years** (6 - 25 years), which usually coincides with the active parenting stage
- ⇒ **Later Years** (26+ years), also known as the “empty nest” years

Not all marriages fit neatly into these categories. Some marriages may find times shortened; however, certain developmental tasks generally take place during each stage.

Another way of looking at transitions in marriage is through cycles of growth. Most relationships move through cycles that include:

- ⇒ **Romance**
- ⇒ **Disillusionment**
- ⇒ **Mature Love**

In this framework, the stages emerge more quickly, with disillusionment often coming soon after the honeymoon. Mature love evolves-hopefully-after several years of marriage.

In *The 7 Stages of Marriage* (2007), Harrar and DeMaria identify the stages as:

- **Passion**
- **Realization**
- **Rebellion**
- **Cooperation**
- **Reunion**
- **Explosion**
- **Completion**

The essential point is that a marriage is a process. It evolves. It helps to know what to expect at the various stages. Otherwise, normal transitions may be misinterpreted as loss of love or reasons to separate or end the relationship.

What Makes Marriage Work

Communication

What is the one indispensable ingredient for making marriages work? Family life educators usually answer: communication.

Effective communication can be learned. Skills such as active listening, using “I” statements, paying attention to my feelings and those of my spouse, and learning tips for “fighting fair” make marriage easier. Some couples use these skills intuitively because they saw them modeled in their own upbringing. Others can learn them through classes, workshops and reading.

Commitment and Common Values: Some ingredients, if missing, can doom a relationship from the start. Two primary ones are **commitment** and **common values**.

Commitment bonds a couple together when you are tired, annoyed, or angry with each other. Sometimes, remembering your vows can prompt you to push past these problems and try to forgive and start again.

Common values are important. If you aren’t together on basic values such as children, honesty, fidelity, and putting family before work, no amount of learning or effort of the will can resolve the conflict. For example, constant tension will result if one spouse wants to live simply while the other wants life’s luxuries.

Spirituality/Faith

Anyone who seeks the deeper meaning of life, and not a life focused on personal pleasure, operates out of a spiritual sense. Here one joins with others to worship God and work for the common good.

Although being a person of faith is not essential to making your marriage work, it’s a bonus. Certainly good people throughout the ages have had happy marriages and not all of them have been religious. But it helps to have faith principles to guide you and a faith community to encourage your commitment.

Grade Your Marriage

In this spirit, we invite you to assess where you are in your marriage.

- Identify the issues that you agree on and are working smoothly for you.
- Identify the issues that you disagree on and need to work out a compromise.
- Identify the issues that you haven't gotten around to talking about - but you should.

All this can add up to a blueprint for deepening your marriage and helping you reach your full marriage potential. The following categories can get you started:

On a scale of 1 - 10 rate your satisfaction with your marriage in the areas of:

1. Shared Values _____
 2. Commitment to each other _____
 3. Communication Skills _____
 4. Conflict Resolution Skills _____
 5. Intimacy/Sexuality _____
 6. Spirituality/Faith _____
 7. Money Management _____
 8. Appreciation/Affection _____
 9. Lifestyle _____
 10. Recreation _____
 11. Decision Making _____
 12. Parenthood _____
 13. Household chores / gender differences _____
 14. Careers _____
 15. Balancing Time _____
- TOTAL:** _____

Since this isn't a test, but rather a map for you to use for further discussion, your total is not based on 100%. If your self-ratings on a specific topic are:

8-10: You are quite happy with this aspect of your marriage. This could be because you are generally an optimistic person and easy going, or you've been very intentional about working on your marriage.

4-7: You are sliding along in your marriage, perhaps not paying much attention to it or avoiding areas of conflict. It's also possible that you have high expectations and are not an easy grader.

1-3: You are pretty dissatisfied with this aspect of your marriage. Check out the other areas of this website that address this topic.

Another way of assessing whether you need to pay more attention to certain areas of your marriage is by comparing answers with your spouse. If your ratings on any given topic differ by more than three points, you'll want to discuss why.

Finally, if both you and your spouse have total scores of:

100 + Give yourself an **A** - but don't get proud or complacent.

75-99 Give yourself a **B** - you're in good shape and can pinpoint those areas you'll want to discuss further.

50-74 Give yourself a **C** - You may have much to discuss or one of you may be more dissatisfied than the other. Check it out.

15-49 Looks like trouble. The fact that you are visiting this website and have filled out this self-assessment, however, is a good sign. You haven't given up; you want to make your marriage better. Now get to work on it.

II. The Gift of Marriage : Love and Life in the Divine Plan

"Marriage is about man & woman walking together, wherein the husband helps his wife to become ever more a woman, and wherein the woman has the task of helping her husband to become ever more a man."

- Pope Francis

1. Unique Union of a Man and a Woman & Communion of Love and Life

- 1.1** Men and women are equal in dignity
- 1.2** Both sexes are necessary for God's plan
- 1.3** The differences between men and women are more than biological. They are also evident in the ways that men and women think, act, and communicate.
- 1.4** Only a man and a woman can form the intimate union of love and life called marriage.
 - The couple is called to love like God by giving themselves to each other.
 - Their union is unique because of its potential to bring new life into the world.

1.5 Marriage is a unique communion of persons:

- Brings together the totality of a man and a woman:
 Body, mind, soul
- For two, inseparable purposes: unitive (love-giving) and
 procreative (life-giving)

1.6 Sexual intercourse signifies the marital covenant; each act must be open to life. Contraception is wrong because it separates the unitive and the procreative purposes of marriage. Natural methods of family planning respect God's design for married love.

2. Marriage is a vocation and the Foundation of the Family and Society

2.1 It is a necessary and authentic as other vocations in the Church and is an imitation of Christ's self-giving love

2.2 Marital love is life-giving to:

- children, the supreme gift of marriage
- extended family
- neighbors and the wider community

2.3 Husband and wife create a "domestic church" that mirrors
 the gathered Church:

- Characterized by care for each other and growth in faith
- Children are taught how to pray, follow the commandments,
 and grow in virtue

Through service to society, the family helps to build up the Kingdom of God.

HOW TO BE A BETTER PARENT:

DEVELOPING VIRTUES IN CHILDREN AND MAINTAINING A VIRTUOUS HOME ENVIRONMENT

"We talk a lot about the future , about the kind of world we want to leave to our children, the kind of society we want for them. Let us leave behind a world with families. No doubt about it . The perfect family does not exist; there are no perfect husbands , perfect wives, perfect parents, perfect children, but this does not prevent families from being the answer for the future, so let us care for our families, true schools for the future!"

- Pope Francis

1. Teaching Children How to Love: Aim of the Educational Mission of Parents

-The family is the only place where persons are loved not for what they possess, or what they know or can produce but simply for their being members of the family: spouses, parents, children, brothers and sisters.

-The most basic element in the parents' right and duty to educate their children is parental love. The education of the children is a consequence of the love between spouses. The mutual love of parents is the first school of love for the children. Through their parents' example, the children receive at a young age the ability to love truly.

-St. Josemaria Escriva once told married couples: *“Love each other a lot for God is very happy when you love each other. And when the years go by—don’t be afraid. Your love won’t weaken but rather it will grow stronger and ardent like the affection of your courtship once again. If there is love between the parents, the children will breathe in an atmosphere of self-giving and generosity.”*

-Since educating children is a necessary continuation of paternity and maternity, the mutual participation of the spouses is needed. Each spouse shares in the paternity or maternity of the other spouse. Both parents have to take an active role in building up the atmosphere of a home. God gives his grace to make up for the unavoidable absence of one of the spouses but what can never happen is that either spouse renounces or is half-hearted in this task.

-Love always knows how to give priority to family over work and is inventive in finding ways to make up for lack of time.

-Parents teach their children mainly through their own conduct. The goal should be to help children to experience in the family home the reality that it is only in sincerely giving oneself to others that we can be happy.

-Schools, parishes, youth clubs and other organizations who assist in the task of education do so as collaborators of the parents. Their help is a prolongation but never a substitution of the home.

-Parents need to teach fearlessly all the good values they consider essential for their children’s happiness (e.g., importance of temperance or moderation in one’s actions, thoughts, words, and desires, always telling the truth, the importance of hard work and study, loyalty, prayer and frequenting the sacraments, living holy purity and modesty, order, humility etc.).

-In education, rewards and punishments can sometimes be effective but above all one ought to speak about the goodness or badness of actions and the kind of life these acts build up.

-St. Josemaria said that the ideal attitude of parents lies more in becoming their children's friends—friends who will be willing to share their anxieties, who will listen to their problems, who will help them in an effective and agreeable way. To make this a reality, parents need to spend time with their children, speaking with and listening to each one. They need to speak with them calmly about the facts of life and the crises that come during adolescence, courtship and the vocation God destines each person to.

-Parents should never be afraid to speak with their children about anything, nor to admit that they too made mistakes when they were young. Far from taking away their authority, these confidences will better enable them to carry out their educational mission.

-Being a parent is a person's first job and raising children is the parent's business. The prayer of a father or a mother when they pray to God for their children is very powerful. Put them under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, be a good friend of St. Joseph who was a wonderful father, and have a lot of devotion to the guardian angel of your children.

2. Educating in friendship

-Parents need to keep in mind that especially in the first stages of development, education has a strong component of affectivity.

The will and the intellect do not develop apart from sentiment and emotions. Emotional or affective balance is needed for the intellect and the will to develop properly. Without this balance, personality

-To attain this balance in your children's emotional framework, **it is vital to create trust.** The Apostle recommends: Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Rebuking children too harshly make children fearful and lacking in daring, afraid to assume responsibility.

-**Creating trust has a lot to do with friendship thus parents must try to be friends with their children.** St. Josemaria once said: *"Imposing things by force, in an authoritarian manner, is not the right way to teach."*

-**Children receive much more from their parents than they in turn could give back.** They can never repay what they owe their parents. Parents usually don't think that they are sacrificing themselves for their children, although in fact they are. They would give their life for their children.

-**A family atmosphere has to be worked at;** it is not given. It means being attentive to small details, knowing how to show with deeds the love found in one's heart.

-As far as upbringing is concerned, it is crucial that parents are in agreement. **Should parents contradict each other, they are raising the children badly.**

-**Quarrels among siblings can turn out to be formative and help parents teach their kids how to get along with others.** They are a chance to teach the child to want the good of others, to forgive, to know how to yield or give in, or to refuse to budge when needed.

-The friendship between spouses also needs reinforcing.

Arguments that arise between husband and wife are often due to a lack of communication. The causes can be varied: different ways of seeing things, letting routine creep in daily life, allowing outbursts of bad temper etc. Whatever the cause, the thread of dialogue is lost. The solution is to always own up to one's faults, to apologize and forgive.

-What children really want is to see their parents love and respect one another and that they love and respect their children.

-One of the greatest gifts parents can give their children is time, to be physically present and close by, to have time to play with them. Play contributes to building up trust that develops the friendship between parents and children.

-Parents should know how to intervene in a positive way—smiling, asking questions, correcting without discouraging or humiliating. Parents mature as parents in the measure that they view with joy their children's growth and their becoming less dependent on them.

3. Educating in Freedom

-Loving one's children means loving their freedom which entails a risk of exposing oneself to their children's freedom. But this is the only way that their children can grow in a mature and responsible way.

-Respect for persons and their freedom does not mean taking as valid everything they think and do. Parents have to dialogue with their children about what is good and what is best, and to correct if needed. **The positive features each person possesses are always greater than their defects**, and these good qualities are what make them lovable. Correct behavior is often the result of many corrections and these will be more effective if done in a positive way.

-**Educating in freedom is possible only in a climate of trust** and to trust means to have faith, to give credit to someone, considering that person capable of protecting and living up to the truth. Trust given fosters gratitude because one knows one has received a gift and also a sense of responsibility. If someone trusts me, I feel moved to meet their expectations. Trusting in people is a very effective way of entrusting something to them.

-Trust is given, is won, is attained; it cannot be imposed or demanded. **One becomes worthy of trust by giving an example of integrity.** When young people are given tasks to do like helping care for younger siblings, or accompanying grandparents for meals, or visiting sick relatives etc., within a relatively short time, children mature faster.

-**After giving their advice and suggestions, parents who sincerely love and seek the good of their children should step tactfully into the background to educate their children in freedom.** Parents have to remember that God himself has wanted to be loved and served with freedom and He always respects our personal decisions.

-When children ask for permission for the plans they have made, it might be suitable to reply that it is up to them to decide for themselves, after a due consideration of the circumstances. But **children should be encouraged to ask themselves whether the request they are making is really appropriate**, helping them to distinguish between a true need and a mere whim, and to understand that it would not be fair to spend money on what many would not be able to afford.

-Parents ought to require of their children, according to their ages, a respect for certain limits. At times, punishments may become necessary, applying it with prudence and moderation, giving suitable reasons and not resorting to violence.

The best results are obtained by offering support and encouragement, while showing patience.

-Even in extreme cases when a young person makes a decision that the parents have good reason to consider mistaken, and might lead to future unhappiness, the answer is not in force but in understanding, knowing how to stand by their child so as to help him overcome the difficulties.

4. Passing On the Faith

-**Bringing up a child in the Catholic faith** requires transmitting a way of life. Seeing their parents pray on their knees, or read the Bible, or go to confession help children understand the value of living their faith. Sometimes children only have to see their parents' joy after going to confession for faith to take firmer root in their hearts.

-**Transmitting the faith is the effort to help each child discover God's plan for his or her life.** To achieve this, parents should foster a life of prayer in the family, closeness to God in prayer and the sacraments, learning the doctrine of the faith through reading spiritual books.

-Parents need to pray diligently for their children and to ask help from the Holy Spirit to help them see God's will for each one. **Parents should feel that holy pride if they are able to bring forth vocations for the Church.** The merit of the parents is even greater than the child since God has asked them to give up what they love most and they do so joyfully. St. Josemaria said: *"Make sure you are open to vocations in your family. Pray that as a sign of special love God may deign to call one or more members of your family to serve Him. Be generous if your son or daughter decides to follow Christ by a special path. Help their vocation to take root and grow."*

5. Leisure and Free Time

-It is important to develop and use to advantage the free time of the young and direct their energies. Parents need to value the free time of their children. **All education is an education in freedom and free time is a time for freedom, a time for freely enjoyed activities, for beauty and dialogue, a time for all those things which are not necessary but without which it is impossible to live.**

-Parents should not be overly focused on their children's academic formation that time after school is a continuation of school. **It is advisable for parents to consider how the different activities of the week contribute to their children's harmonious development with a balance between rest and formation.**

-A tight schedule means that children will do many things but perhaps won't learn to manage their time well. If children are to develop virtues, parents need to allow them to experiment with their own freedom. If they are not allowed to choose their favorite activities or are barred in practice from playing or spending time with friends, there is a risk that as they grow older they will not learn how to enjoy free time in a healthy way.

-Parents should offer their children leisure activities that match their interests and abilities. When kids are still quite young, they are open to what their parents suggest. Parents should limit activities that use up an inordinate amount of time or lead young people to isolate themselves as happens when they spend hours in front of the TV or on the internet. **It is better to encourage activities that foster friendship such as sports, outings, games with other children etc.** Free time does not mean that these are moments to escape or be entertained but are ways to relax in activities that require less effort while learning new things, cultivating friendships, and strengthening family life.

-Play is the basic test for learning how to socialize. The pedagogical value of play resides in linking affections to actions. That is why playing together unites parents and children. Play is also important because children should learn how to face life and its challenges with a certain sense of playfulness.

A person who knows how to play well learns how to relativize the outcome, the success or failure and discover the value of play as such.

-The epitome of free time is found in festive celebrations. **The monotony of everyday life is overcome in celebrating events or feasts. For Catholics, it is to celebrate the Lord's Day every Sunday as a family, and make it holy by giving time for God.** Celebrating Holy Mass on Sundays and feast days should be seen as a gift and blessing, and not something bothersome. Trips or outings should be planned to ensure attendance at the Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation.

-Parents can also work with other parents to look for sites which are formative and which do not foster frivolity or superficiality.

-It is advisable not to give children a lot of economic resources (money) thus teaching them the value of money and the need to earn it on their own.

6. How to Teach Virtues in Children

How To Teach Virtues To Your Child? BE YOUR CHILD'S BEST FRIEND!

We all want to be happy and the best way to be happy is to pursue what is good and true. This means that we need to act well and acquire virtues.

Virtue is about doing the right thing because doing the right thing makes us happy.

Teaching a child to practice virtues builds a relationship between parent and child. A parent cannot know a child's heart and mind fully, and the most, a parent can do is to shape a child's decision.

Here are some tips on how to teach the cardinal virtues in your child.

1. VIRTUE OF PRUDENCE : Helping Kids Make Good Decisions

Prudence is the ability to look at a concrete situation and know what ought to be done. It is the ability to make right judgments. One of the crises in the world today is we go for feelings instead of truth. Prudence is about TRUTH, the truth of what is and what must be done, when it must be done, and how it must be done.

1.1 The first stage of prudence is deliberation, to gather all relevant information starting with the MORAL PRINCIPLES which the Catholic Church teaches about life, marriage, family, education, work, laws, health, women etc. When one fails to deliberate, one falls into rashness, acting without thinking. Imprudent people follow this maxim: “Don’t think. Just trust your feelings.”

It is good to discuss fundamental questions about life based on objective reality or truth, and help your child not use her feelings as basis for what she thinks is good or bad.

Help children remember events or honest facts as they are, without falsifying one’s memory or leaving out what is difficult or uncomfortable or painful to confront. There is a danger in remembering things incorrectly. A child needs to learn to honestly remember what objectively happened in reality, without retouching it or omitting certain facts. Honest remembrance is needed for making good decisions because good decisions cannot be based on error or on what is not true.

For example, a child has a conflict with another child. The first step is to help your child remember the reality of the confrontation. What is his role in the conflict? What was the conflict or issue about? Was it provoked by anything your child said or did?

Teach children why it is important to be honest with oneself about what really happened before deciding how to act. They need to learn how to deliberate about the event, make a judgment, decide and act on what has been decided.

In the example given above, a parent can help the child deliberate and decide what to do next. A parent can take time to explain each of the following options and the corresponding consequences of each decision:

Is it prudent to wait for a few days and calm down? Is it prudent to apologize for his own wrong-doing or misconduct? Is it prudent to give the other child the benefit of the doubt? Is it prudent to avoid any further contact? Is it prudent to involve school authorities? Is it prudent to fight back?

1.2 The second stage of prudence is judgment, to weigh all the evidence and figure out the best course of action. Judgment separates relevant information from irrelevant ones.

Failure to make a judgment is indecision or procrastination. Thinking about an issue without arriving at a practical result does no one good.

1.3 The third stage of prudence is execution. Once we judge the right thing to do, we have got to act. Failure to carry out what you believe to be the proper decision is called irresoluteness.

A lot of people make decisions or resolutions to be better but fail to do them. This makes them inconstant and undependable.

1.4 Every practical decision entails risk; there is no security that a good decision will not result in difficult consequences. But we must be able to make decisions and act with trust in God and in His providence.

1.5 It is important that our judgments and actions are not reactions to strong emotions like:

ANGER. A prudent man will avoid making a decision when he is angry. Decisions should be arrived at calmly;

DISCOURAGEMENT. After suffering from a failure or setback or humiliation, and we are discouraged, our decisions will be based on error.

1.6 Prudence is allowing the truth, not feelings to determine our choices.

2. VIRTUE OF JUSTICE: BE FAIR!

Justice is the virtue which is primarily concerned with the other. It answers the question: What I have to do for you? It is related to one's obligations and duty to another.

2.1 We need to respect and defend the rights of people like:

-right to life

-right to certain material possessions (stealing is unjust; not sharing one's possessions to the needy is unjust)

- right to a good name or reputation (gossip or spreading lies is unjust)
- right to be treated courteously (rudeness is unjust)
- right to be treated with respect (making fun of someone or belittling someone is unjust)
- right to one's spiritual dignity (making fun of other's religious beliefs is unjust)
- right to our good example (giving bad example or scandal is unjust)
- right to the truth (lying or deception or cheating is unjust)
- right to work and duty to work well (when one is a student, not to study is unjust)
- right to privacy and intimacy

Children need to learn how to respect rules out of consideration for others.

2.2 Family members also have certain rights and duties. Children owe their parents gratitude, respect and deference. Children owe their siblings special affection and loyalty. Children owe their families time.

Parents must make time for their family. For a parent to forsake his family or becomes uninvolved in his family is unjust.

2.3 We also have rights and duties as members of our church, school, community, nation and the world. We need to regard the world as our common home which we need to protect and preserve.

3. VIRTUE OF FORTITUDE: BE BRAVE!

Fortitude helps us overcome danger or fear to pursue a greater good. It is not the brashness of a man who undertakes risks or charges into danger that could have been avoided. There is nothing virtuous about needlessly courting danger.

3.1 One lacks fortitude or courage if he is a coward. Cowardice is refusing to take prudent risks or making prudent sacrifice because of fear. It is the abandonment of a greater good due to the terror of sustaining loss or hurt.

Thus a soldier who abandons the battle out of fear is a coward. A student who abandons studying out of fear of getting a low grade in an exam is a coward.

3.2 There are **two forms of courage: attack and endurance.**

Attack is the holy outrage against a certain atrocity of evil like abortion, pornography, extra-judicial killing, bullying. It requires courage to stand up for what is right.

Endurance is to suffer patiently and endure the trials that beset us in pursuing a greater good. It helps children endure disappointment, failure, sustained studying and working.

For example, a child is getting irritated at a sibling whom she finds annoying. After her sibling is corrected by a parent, she has to learn to be patient and to pray for her sibling so that she gets to overcome an annoying defect. To be easily irritated and annoyed at the defects of others is a lack of courage and fortitude.

Complaining is also a symptom of a lack of fortitude.

4. VIRTUE OF TEMPERANCE OR SELF-CONTROL:

BE MASTERS OF YOURSELVES!

The expression “well-tempered” is often used to express the idea of solidity, consistency. **Temperance is self-mastery** which is achieved when one is aware that not everything we experience in our bodies and souls should be given free reign.

Not everything we can do should be done, as there is a need to moderate our natural impulses.

-An **intemperate person has lost self-control** and is bent on seeking ever new sensations and pleasures. Addictions, obsessions, inappropriate reactions, sentimentality, prolonged state of sadness are normally the result of intemperance.

-**To teach temperance, parents should have the fortitude in living by example—to deny themselves in the things they like—** while fostering the freedom of their children. The right approach is to permit children to make their own decisions in a way that is in keeping with their age, and to teach them to learn to choose by making them see the consequences of their actions. It is best to foster the principle of respect for freedom; it is preferable to err in some cases rather than to always impose one's judgment, even more so when the children perceive it to be unreasonable or even arbitrary.

-**Parents should have the courage to teach their children austerity**, to lead a somewhat 'spartan' and Christian life. If not, one cannot accomplish anything. Children should see their parents denying themselves in things that they like e.g., to choose to play with their children even if they prefer to watch their favorite game or TV program.

One can live temperance in these areas:

4.1 Temperance in Food and Drink. Children can be taught not to be picky or choosy or not be attached to certain food or drink. They need to learn to eat what is served, to get less of what they like, or not to get the best piece.

4.2 Reactions. Anger can be intemperate when it is inappropriate for the circumstances or when it is too long or too intense, or when one seeks to hurt others or get revenge

4.3 Desires and Actions. Manifestations of intemperance: always wanting to get one's own way, always wanting to have the last say, arguing loudly, bad manners, always seeking to be singled out, always wanting to be praised, attention- seeking, vanity etc.

4.4 Entertainment/Gadgets. There is a need for a genuine recreation and rest and to engage in some stress-relieving activities which are worthwhile and are not morally offensive. Children should be engaged in frequent rigorous physical exercises and play and be helped to develop healthy living.

There is a lack of temperance in one's leisure and rest when it detracts from one's family and religious duties (not able to hear Mass on Sunday because of an outing or trip), when one is addicted to low-grade entertainment like inane sitcoms or soap operas or to the use of gadgets and internet.

4.5 Interpersonal relationships which are normally divided into three categories: courtesy, affection and intimacy.

Courteous relationships are the basis of civilized behavior: greeting someone we meet in school or at home, saying "please," "thank you," or "sorry;" not making fun of a person who is different due to his race, religion, color, physical attributes, intelligence or lack of it etc.

Affection is mostly associated with family and close healthy friendships as it is more intense than courtesy but includes it. A handshake is courteous but a gentle kiss is affectionate.

Intimate relationships are deeper and more intense and are normally shown within the context of marriage and privacy.

It is good to know that there can be appropriate or inappropriate show of affection even within the family or among friends.

Not showing affection to family members and friends is also a lack of temperance since it is insensibility. It is normal to be attracted to the good things in the world but to do so with temperance and attachment.

Parents should show their mutual affection in front of their children but should reserve certain gestures for moment of intimacy.

4.6 Modesty and decency are parts of the virtue of temperance. Modesty encourages moderation in loving relationships. The widespread trivialization of human sexuality makes it important to pay special attention to television, internet, books, concerts, video games, etc. seeing them as educational opportunities. To be good example of temperance, children should see their parents change the television channel when something inappropriate or off-color appears in the news, ad or movie, or even check the moral content of a movie or book, or not look at bad ads along the streets. Elegance, good taste, cleanliness and good grooming are the first manifestations of modesty.

HOW TO BE A BETTER PERSON

"Love means more than sweet sentiments. Real love means the willingness and the ability to endure hardship, difficulty, sacrificial struggle for the sake of someone else's welfare and happiness. Love is sacrifice. A life lived in this way, giving one's whole self to others, is mankind's most noble achievement, and a sure road to real happiness. "

-James Stenson

How to Grow in Holiness with our God-given Temperaments

Self-knowledge is critical if we want to understand ourselves and others. Part of knowing oneself is knowing one's temperament.

The temperaments are part of our human nature.

They are given in our being, and they influence our personality, motivation and lives. However our temperament should never be used as an excuse for bad behavior.

Self-knowledge is a virtue that must never be neglected, and genuine self-knowledge results in humility, never in complacency. By better understanding ourselves and our loved ones, we will be able to improve ourselves and grow in our spiritual lives, and help others like our spouse and children to become successful and holy.

When we understand our temperaments, we can begin to master those inclinations or untoward reactions that may thwart our growth in virtue and in love.

Every temperament is in itself good, and with each one, man can do good and work out his salvation. Let us now take a quick snapshot of each of the four classic temperaments: *choleric, melancholic, sanguine and phlegmatic*.

These are the pure ideal of each temperament but in reality, each one of us is a mix or combination of two temperaments, with one dominating.

THE CHOLERIC: THE POWERFUL

Enthusiasm, energy, intelligence and a strong will are what define a choleric. Whether at home or on the job, the choleric will take charge and get many things accomplished in a short time. The choleric reacts quickly and intensely; decisiveness is his hallmark. He is extraverted, confident, comfortable in taking charge of people as well as situations. Opposition is a further incentive to action. Dynamic and direct, the choleric has a keen mind and thinks independently, and will always let you know what he is thinking.

The choleric thrives on activity; work invigorates him.

He is optimistic and magnanimous; he values success in his endeavors and sets high goals. He is comfortable with power and blossoms in competition.

The choleric is eminently rational; they expect to hear good reasons for any argument. Even as children, they will not accept: "Because I say so" as sufficient reason for doing something. The choleric can grasp the big picture, communicate the vision to others. They are natural organizers and tend to rise to positions of authority. They hate to waste time on meetings, employee relations and small details. They tend not to delegate since they think they can do it better and faster and because they enjoy their own productivity.

The downside to this driven and intense personality is that he is quick to judge, to form an opinion and to charge ahead stubbornly—often without proper reflection and at times without compassion for people in his way.

His intelligence, decisiveness and productivity make the choleric impatient with those who are less talented. He can be domineering, obstinate, dictatorial, overly ambitious and hard-hearted. He is prone to anger and pride. A choleric who does not try to grow in virtue will end up using people to his advantage.

The choleric may fear intimacy in personal relationships; he is too independent, impatient and insensitive. He can be rash and imprudent in his decisions and does not want to admit mistakes or errors in judgment. He tends to hide his insecurities and tends to blame others for his mistakes.

In work, they are valuable since they are self-motivated, task-oriented, quick-thinking, pragmatic and energetic. They enjoy their work. They enjoy leading projects and people.

A spiritual life marked by strict discipline and obedience is critical for a choleric to help him overcome his tendencies to pride, anger and obstinacy. He will need to develop compassion, humility, tenderness and understanding in dealing with others. He will grow in humility when he realizes that all his talents are gifts from God, and not something he personally earned or deserved.

THE MELANCHOLIC: THE PERFECTIONIST

The melancholy tends to value the ideal—be it truth, beauty, justice, and all that is noble. He can be thoughtful, pious, compassionate, given to solitude and reflection. Sensitive and idealistic, he is deeply concerned about injustice and vice. Great writers, artists and composers have been of this temperament.

The melancholic is principled, consistent, faithful and persevering. He is orderly, diligent and attentive to detail. He appreciates the mystery and depth of life. But the idealism of the melancholic causes him to become critical or judgmental of others who do not measure up, hence he tends to be impractical and not be a team player.

Because of their slowness to react and their tendency to introversion, melancholics base much of their decision-making on ideals. They long for perfection yet few people meet their dreams and expectations.

They form relationships very slowly and are content to be left alone. They do not initiate relationships and takes a long time for them to really trust. When they form a relationship, they will be faithful and true; yet if their trust is violated, they can be relentless and unforgiving.

The melancholic tends to note all the difficulties of a new venture or project, worry about all the possible negative outcomes and pinpoint errors and injustices. The effort can paralyze the melancholic. Because of the tendency to reflect on and weigh every pro and con, he may appear to be irresolute and indecisive. He may spend too much time on planning and preparing, and too little time putting their plans into action. They often do not know how to convey enthusiasm for a project even if they have it.

Since he longs for perfection and sees that he is unable to attain it, he may begin to lose self-confidence. He sees problems where others see challenges and opportunities. Because of his tendency to introversion and pessimism, he may become excessively self-absorbed. He can be overly cautious to the point that he has no courage.

A melancholic has to learn how to put his trust in God, be attentive and generous to others and fight the tendency to self-pity. He has to be encouraged to exercise regularly, to eat well, to learn to develop confidence, enthusiasm and optimism.

On the job, he is a great asset in any work requiring precision, detail, consistency, organization and in-depth analysis. In his spiritual life, he has to focus on his intimacy with God because his nature is drawn to the highest of ideals.

THE SANGUINE: THE PLEASER

Creative, fun-loving, friendly, communicative, outgoing, curious, spirited, seeing the bright side, enjoys adventure and being with people, enthusiastic, enterprising—these are what define a sanguine.

The sanguine has an optimistic and joyful attitude to life because of his ability to live in the present moment, not dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. He is attuned to his five senses which gives him a good eye for detail and attention to appearance and may be easily drawn to sensible pleasures and external attractions.

Relationships are extremely important to a sanguine. They are warm-hearted, accepting of others and are eager to please. They love the limelight, and love being the center of attention.

They prefer quantity and not quality of friendships. They want to make others happy or at least get a big laugh.

Although his emotions are short-lived, he is given to rashness, impulsivity and imprudence. He learns quickly but might have problems memorizing. Continually discovering some new interest, the sanguine may find it difficult to attain great depth in one area of study because their attention is easily captured by something new.

The weaknesses of the sanguine include the tendency toward superficiality due to the immediacy of their reactions and their creative imaginations, inconstancy due to the short duration of their impressions, and sensuality since they lack the perseverance to withstand temptations once their passions are aroused. Because he places such a high value on relationships and pleasing others, a sanguine is often tempted to forsake what he knows is right in order to fit in with the crowd.

The love of the limelight makes them prone to exaggeration, rash words and teasing others. Their tendency to act before they think puts them into trouble but they normally find it easy to apologize.

The sanguine is likely to enjoy a job that highlights dealing with people and which has a lot of creativity. He prioritizes relationships and freedom of expression which may lead him to use his personal preferences as basis for his beliefs.

THE PHLEGMATIC: THE PEACEMAKER

Reserved, easy-going, considerate, prudent, sensible, reflective, respectful, dependable, loyal, committed, tolerant, supportive, not easily insulted or provoked, not given to exuberance or exaggeration, possessing a lot of common sense and mental balance are what define a phlegmatic. They can diffuse tense situations so they make superb diplomats and military strategists. They excel in jobs where being calm under pressure is the key.

They tend to be clear, concise and thoughtful in speech and writing. They are excellent listeners and have great empathy for others. They are supportive friends and are patient with difficult people and situations. They are accepting of traditions and rules.

They do not like conflict or confrontation. They bring harmony to any group. Their introversion and the importance they place in relationships attract them to high ideals. But they are reluctant leaders. They prefer a job with security and routine rather than one that is demanding and high-achieving. They have the patience to deal with kids.

They tend to be dispassionate, unassertive, lacking enthusiasm and spontaneity. Since they want to avoid conflict, they may become overly conciliatory to the point that their desires are not known or they defer to peer pressure

The phlegmatic is characterized with avoiding things: conflict among people, demanding job, deadlines etc.

In the spiritual life, a phlegmatic finds it easy to accept the teachings of the Church but needs help to internalize and personalize his faith, and to take an active role in the apostolate of the Church.

KNOWING YOUR TEMPERAMENT may be difficult if you lack self-knowledge, or if one is immature or wants to impress someone else, or if you have given in to habitual sins or you may have had a dysfunctional upbringing or a mental illness. Also a job that demands that you act in a way different from your natural temperament may also make it difficult for you to identify it. Also a growth in holiness makes one exhibit few of the weaknesses of his particular temperament. St. Ignatius of Loyola was passionately choleric yet became meek and humble that people thought he was phlegmatic. Yet knowing one's temperament is the key to know oneself, to get along with others and to be closer to God.

7 Great Virtues

Persons mature when they struggle to form their character or what the ancients called the "virtues." In today's terms these are called "strengths of character." We know them when we see them in others. They are the habitual deeply rooted powers of mind and will that direct the course of a life nobly lived.

1. Faith

-This is belief in God and in all that He has revealed about Himself and mankind.

It includes a deep understanding of who we are (beloved children of God), where we are ultimately headed (heaven or hell), and what we are called to carry out here on Earth (service to Him by service to others, starting with our family and friends).

2. Hope

- This is the confidence that God will give us the means for our salvation, and that He watches over all our affairs with loving Providence. It is the confidence in God's all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful protection.

3. Charity

- This is the love for God, sincerely beloved as a Father and all-forgiving Friend. Here the question is one of priority and intimacy. The love for God comes absolutely first, ahead even of one's own life -
- as it was with the Christian martyrs, who surrendered everything good in life rather than offend God, their first love. This love for God is deepened, made internal in mind and heart, through prayer and personal sacrifice.

4. Prudence

- Today we call this "sound judgment." This means many things. It is the acquired ability to accurately assess people, events, issues, ideas. It is the ability to evaluate human affairs in terms of causes and implications. In a broad sense, it is a commitment to truth, the ability to recognize propaganda and lies when we see them.

5. Justice

- Today we would call this “responsibility”. This means giving others what is due to them as a matter of right, starting with God. It is the habitual understanding that the existence of others' rights imposes obligations on us. It is what children call “fairness,” one of the strongest and earliest developed moral senses in children. Combined with the virtue of sound judgment, and specially sound conscience, it is a habitual understanding of the interplay between rights and duties between authority and responsibility in our dealings with family and society, and especially in our dealings with God. It therefore implies respect for others' dignity, freedom, and feelings.

6. Fortitude

- This character-strength goes by other names: courage, perseverance, personal toughness, “guts.” It is the ability to either endure or overcome pain, inconvenience, disappointment, setbacks, tedium for the sake of some higher good. For example, one's duties to God and others, starting with our family.

7. Temperance

- This is what our society calls “self-control,” “self- discipline,” “self- mastery.” Closely related to personal toughness, this is the ability to dominate one's passions, appetites, and “feelings” for the sake of some higher good. It is a mastery over our lower inclinations, including the ever-present temptations toward laziness, sensuality, greed, pride and vanity. It is also the ability to enjoy the good delights of life in moderation.

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