

D E V E L O P I N G
A U N I Q U E
D E S I G N

- A person has a significant decision to make about himself: Whether he places his values on people's opinions of his appearance, background, associations, and goals, or on God's opinion of his appearance, background, associations and goals. The basis of a person's self worth is directly related to this decision. The following pages give insight for achieving self worth.

THE PURPOSE OF SELF WORTH

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES AND PREREQUISITES FOR DEVELOPING SELF WORTH ARE:

1. TO ENABLE A PERSON TO LOOK AT LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW - TO SEE HIMSELF AS GOD SEES HIM.

"We are asking God that you may see things as it were from His point of view by being given spiritual insight and understanding" Col. 1:9 (Phillips)

2. TO DEVELOP A VALUE SYSTEM THAT IS BASED UPON THE VALUE GOD PLACES ON ONE'S APPEARANCE, BACKGROUND, ENVIRONMENT, AND ABILITIES, RATHER THAN THE VALUE OTHERS PLACE ON OUR APPEARANCE, BACKGROUND, ENVIRONMENT AND ABILITIES.

"Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all." Rom. 12:3 (Phillips)

3. TO GAIN A CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE FOR DESIGNING US THE WAY WE ARE

"That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ" I Peter 4:11

4. TO ALLOW GOD TO DEVELOP OUR LIFE MESSAGE: the unique message God gives each person to share with others, based on victories from previous defeats and low spots in his life; integrated with his present walk with the Lord and with insights gained from personal study of God's Word.

"For He gives us comfort in our trials so that we in turn may be able to give the same sort of strong sympathy to others in theirs" II Cor. 1:3-8 (Phillips)

5. TO OVERCOME BITTERNESS TOWARD GOD. If a person is resentful for the way God has made him, it is very easy to doubt God's personal interest in his life. This root problem oftentimes causes resentment to be transferred to others, such as blaming parents for physical deformities, etc.

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Rom. 9:20,21

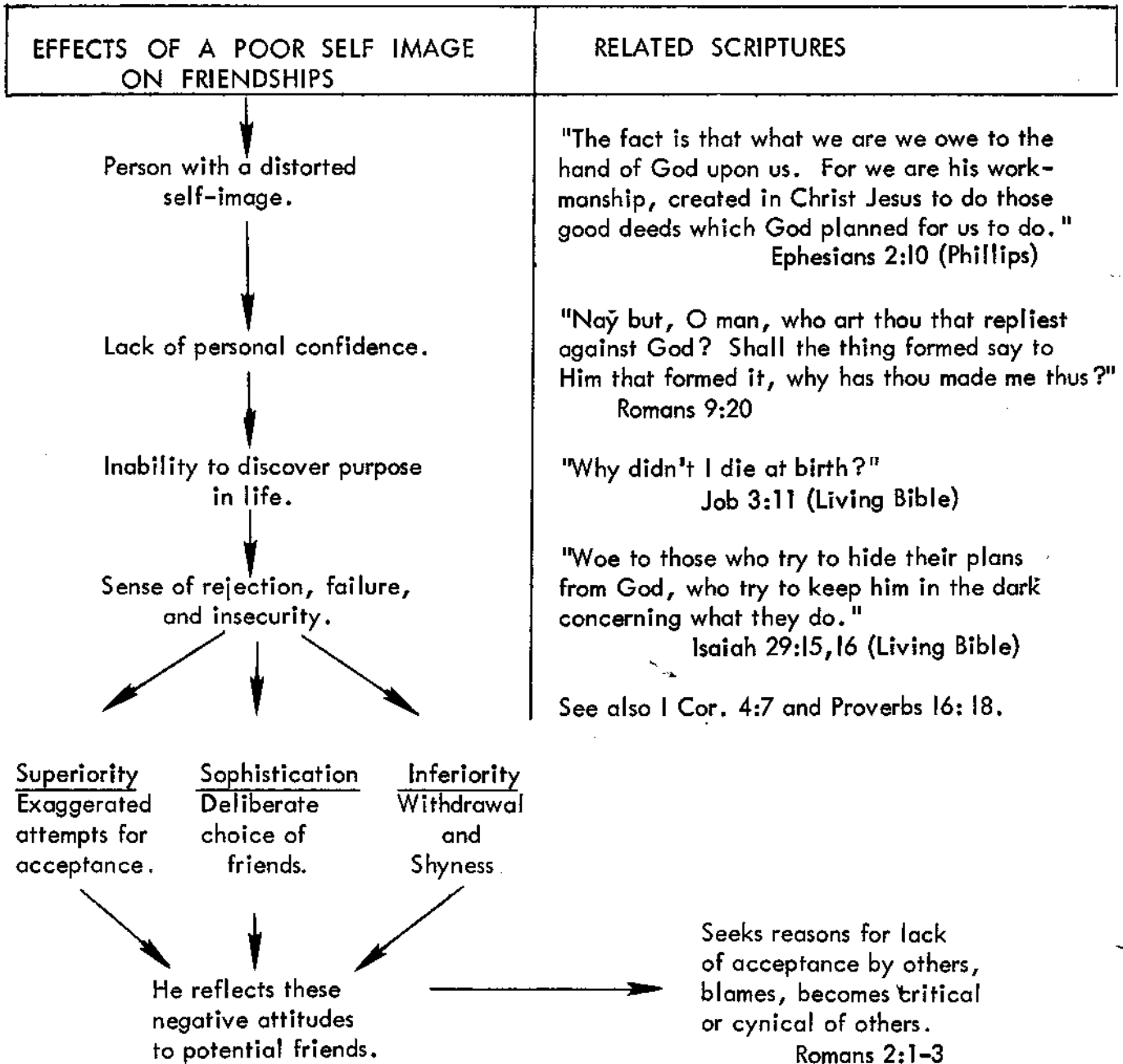
IF A NEGATIVE SELF IMAGE IS DEVELOPED - the following diagram illustrates the resulting conflicts in a person's life 

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

Matthew 19:19

● A person's inward image of his personal worth has a direct bearing on his attitude toward God, parents, environment, and other people in his life and his ability to make friends.

● AN INDIVIDUAL'S INABILITY TO MAKE FRIENDS IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD HIMSELF.



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VISIBLE SYMPTOMS OF**A NEGATIVE****SELF IMAGE**● CRITICISM OF PERSONAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

When a person is dissatisfied with unchangeable physical characteristics he will seek to compensate for his "deficiencies" by the clothes he wears. Jesus pointed this out when he asked his disciples, "Why take ye thought for raiment?" and "which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" (They were dissatisfied with their height.) Matthew 6:27,28

● CRITICISM OF THE APPEARANCE OF OTHERS.

When a person is dissatisfied with his own appearance, he will tend to concentrate on the styles and appearance of others. His thoughts are preoccupied with how they look. He seeks to compensate for his appearance by criticizing the appearance of others and the way they dress. "Who art thou that judgest another man....?" Romans 2:1-3; 14:4

● INABILITY TO DEVELOP A LASTING TRUST IN GOD.

When a person declares that there are things about his appearance he would like to change, it reveals a basic distrust in God for making him the way he is. He thinks, "If God has already messed up my life to this degree, in the future he will also mess it up to the same degree." Ephesians 2:10

● SUPERIORITY ATTITUDE - SELF ESTEEM.

He may hold a high opinion of himself, sometimes higher than is held by others. But he dismisses others' attitudes toward him by carefully selecting associations in which he will appear to excel. Romans 12:3

● FLOATING REJECTION OF AUTHORITY.

Since God is responsible for the way I look and God is responsible for my parents, resentments toward them will be manifested in an attitude of resistance to other "authorities" that appear to tell me what to do.

● INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE.

Preoccupation with what others think of him will distract a person from concentrating on the work at hand. The antithesis is also true: an extreme desire for approval.

● OVERATTENTION TO DETAIL.

An extreme desire for approval may cause a person to overcompensate by excelling in a specific area to the detriment of other important areas.

● AN EXTREME SHYNESS AND LACK OF SELF CONFIDENCE.

A fear of what others think may cause a person to withdraw. The rejection by others because of his shyness only "confirms" in his mind that he really is inferior to others. This is illustrated in the life of Moses. Exodus 4: 10

A CASE STUDY :

A college age girl came into my office to discuss a problem. She was having difficulties with her parents and especially with her father. She explained how her parents weren't getting along; they were arguing and now talking about divorce.

One year ago she had committed her life to God but for some reason she kept having doubts and couldn't keep up a consistent time reading the Scriptures.

I began to ask her some basic questions to discern where God's principles were being violated in her life. I wanted to check out the six basic areas where a teen has difficulty. (These six areas are thoroughly discussed in the course Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts.)

	BASIC QUESTIONS & INSIGHTS	GIRL'S ANSWER
FRIENDS	<p>Who would you say are your close friends?</p> <p>Have there been any past friends who have really wronged you and never made it right?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Her problem with her parents definitely revealed resentments - but to whom. Were the parents the real problem? It was not friends.</p>	<p>Well, that's another problem I wanted to talk to you about. I can't say I really have one friend.</p> <p>No, not that I can think of.</p>
PURPOSE	<p>Now that you're out of school what are your plans for the future?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Her answer here only further motivated me to discern why she had no purpose in life.</p>	<p>I don't have any. I can't get interested in anything. I have a job but it's just temporary. I use the money to buy clothes and things I need.</p>
COMMITMENT	<p>Do you recall a specific time that you committed your life to Jesus Christ?</p> <p>What was your life like after you became a Christian?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Since I was aware of her commitment and had seen genuine interest and growth in spiritual things, I knew this wasn't the real problem.</p>	<p>Oh, yes! Last February at our winter retreat.</p> <p>For awhile it was the most exciting experience! My fellowship with God was wonderful. But gradually I slipped away.</p>

	BASIC QUESTIONS & INSIGHTS	GIRL'S ANSWER
D A T I N G	<p>Do you have a boyfriend?</p> <p>Would you say your behavior then was on a par with God's standards?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The absence of a dating relationship eliminated a critical problem here. Even though there could be a problem in her thought life. At the present, it was not a major factor in her real problem.</p>	<p>No, I used to date a fellow but it wasn't anything serious.</p> <p>Oh yes, we were just friends.</p>
F A M I L Y	<p>Since your dad seems to be a major factor here, can you think of any wrong he has done to you that he has never made right?</p> <p>Well, have you ever done anything that would cause him to lose confidence in you or to distrust you?</p> <p>What about your mother?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> This was very significant. Her parents were supposed to be the real problem, but the absence of guilt or basic resentments toward them meant that the parents weren't the real problem. They were merely the objects of her bitterness. So the real question was, what has caused the deep resentments.</p>	<p>(She thought for awhile and then answered) No, not that I can think of.</p> <p>(Another pause) No not really, unless it's the way I talk back to him. I've never been in trouble or anything like that.</p> <p>No, only the way we don't get along.</p>
S E L F	<p>If you could change anything about yourself, is there anything you would change?</p> <p><u>Note:</u> There were some obvious visible scars on her face, so I didn't ask the question, "If you were to look into a mirror and had the power to change anything about yourself, is there anything about yourself, is there anything you would change?"</p>	<p>Yes, I'd change the way I treat my parents. (Then a pause and she said) I would change myself!</p> <p>(Immediately her eyes dropped and she stared down at her lap.</p> <p>The silence continued for several seconds.)</p>

BASIC QUESTIONS & INSIGHTS

GIRL'S ANSWER

Note: With the visible symptoms of this area, I had asked questions about the other five areas first to get a total picture. Her response clearly indicated that the question struck at the "nerve."

S
E
L
F

Your face really bothers you doesn't it? I imagine you have asked God a thousand times, "Why did you make me this way?"

And the people who would like to become your friends or have tried, are eventually turned away by your negative attitudes. They were merely reflecting these back to you and you were blaming them for being snobbish.

There are several key insights God wants you to see that can transform your whole life if you will allow Him.

(She began to cry and said,) Yes. (She nodded her head and continued to look down.)

Well, what can I do?

KEY INSIGHTS

- David said in Psalm 139: 14 - 16 -
"I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

with work, change?

to 2 lines

*So soul is preserved by creating
for ourselves, separate, self
interest with others.*

- 1 Samuel 16: 7 -
"But the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

we are all different

and we should be

❶ A UNIQUE DESIGN

What David is saying here is that you and I were made by God's unique design - even the parts of our body. He knew what we would look like before the worlds were ever made !

God has made you the way you are, and me the way I am, because He has a **UNIQUE PURPOSE** He wants to accomplish through each of us.

❷ WRONG VALUES

When we compare ourselves and place value on other people's opinions about us we will develop inferiority. This inferiority will manifest itself in the following ways: a **SUPERIORITY**, **SOPHISTICATED** or **INFERIORITY** attitude.

- A person with a superiority attitude is really one who has restricted his comparison to those over whom he excels.
- A sophisticated person is one who selects his associations to build up his own image yet never allows anyone to get next to him.
- A person who feels inferior is so pre-occupied with his deficiencies that he avoids people for fear of drawing further attention to his inadequacies.

● RIGHT VALUES

Therefore it is essential that we place our value on God's opinion of our worth. This is the **FIRST** step in achieving true self-acceptance.

● WE ARE REALLY GOD'S POEM !

We look at ourselves and say, "If my life is a beautiful poem, well my lines don't rhyme"! God says, "Wait until I get to the next line." It isn't fair to judge God's unfinished poem any more than it's fair to judge an artist by an unfinished picture. God is still writing - He isn't finished yet ! The verb here is in the present tense - it denotes a continuing action !

- Ephesians 2: 10 -
"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. "

- REACTION TO OUR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE INDICATES A FAILURE TO REALIZE THAT THE "REAL BEAUTY " OF A PERSON'S LIFE IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EIGHT BASIC QUALITIES WITHIN HIS LIFE THROUGH WHICH THE LIFE AND LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST ARE RADIATED. THIS IS THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH WE'VE BEEN MADE !

We have all met many "attractive" people, that is, from a physical standpoint; but after we got to know them they weren't so attractive because of their attitudes. Thus when we fully "cooperate" with God and His purposes for our lives, our outward appearance will compliment our inward beauty and people will be drawn to us because of our real beauty rather than our physical appearance.

- GOD WANTS TO DEVELOP THE INWARD QUALITIES WITHOUT ANY SCARS INSIDE !

When we react to God's plan we develop a scar of bitterness which is the real problem that must be dealt with !

STEPS TO CORRECT:

When she understood these key insights, the girl took the following steps to correct her real problem and deal with the real cause:

1 She acknowledged to God her bitterness toward Him for the way He made her.

2 She sincerely asked God's forgiveness for her bitterness.

3 Based on the insights from the Word she sincerely thanked God for the way He made her.

4 She purposed to begin to become the person God wanted her to be and cooperate with Him in the "unfinished poem".

5 She purposed to begin to help others and share with them what God had done for her.

A NEW HOPE !

When she had prayed, she looked up and a broad smile radiated from her face. She left the office saying, "I can't wait to get home. And you know, there are so many girls with the problem of accepting themselves. Maybe since I have victory, I'll be able to help them !"


RADIANT RESULTS!

Three weeks later she stopped by to tell me that she had apologized to her parents for her attitude toward them. They want to come to a seminar next month !

"I've made four new friends since I talked to you." The qualities of Jesus Christ were already evident in her new-found relationship with HIM !

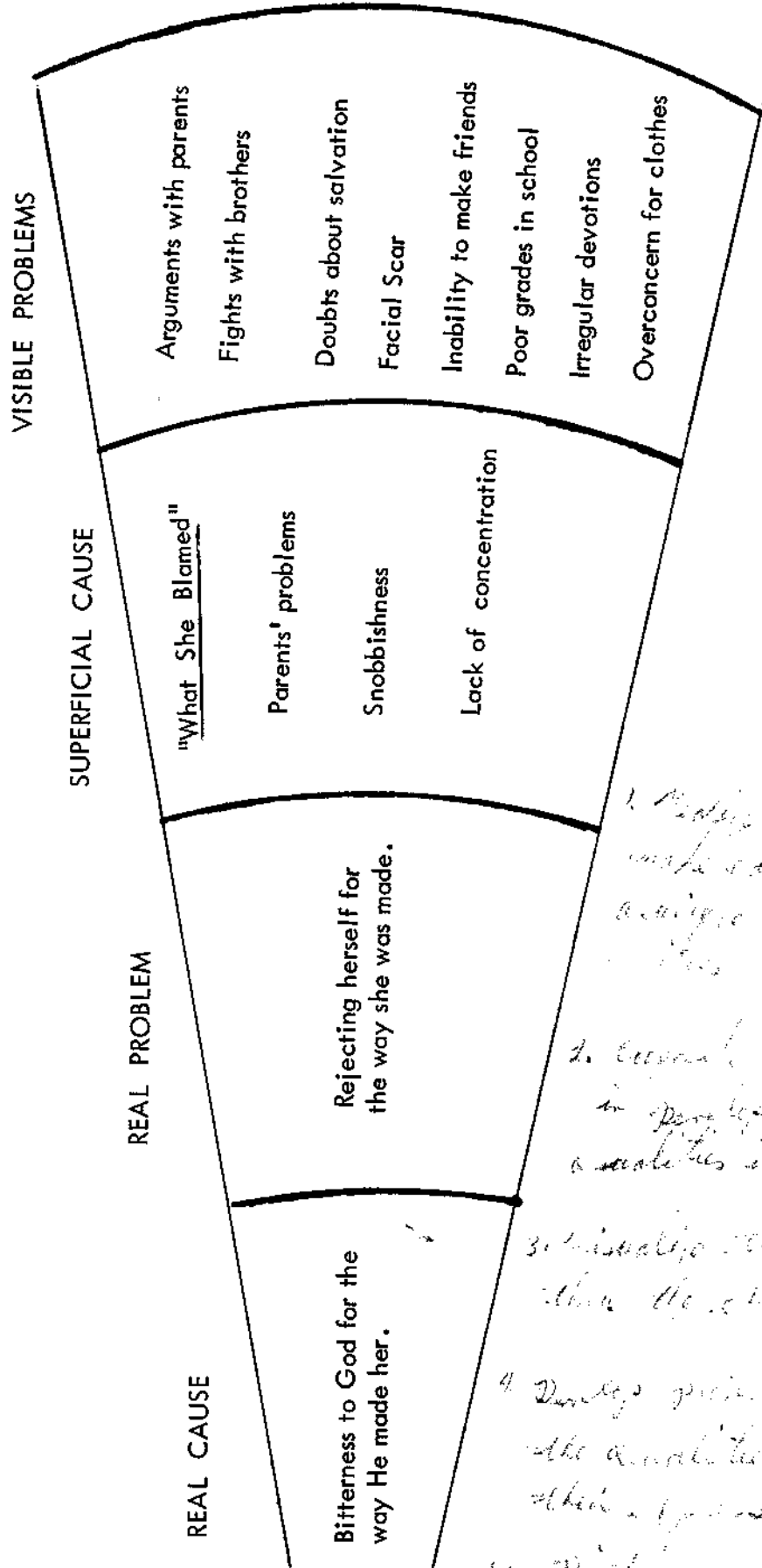
A NEW FAMILY!

Incidentally, her parents subsequently committed their lives to Christ !

The following diagram was drawn to illustrate that her resentment toward God was the "real cause" of her problems: 

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VISUALIZING THE REAL CAUSE



1. Making God pay
make each child with
a unique personality
in this
2. Connect with God
in developing inward
abilities in your child
3. Develop other inward
abilities with interest
4. Develop physical strength
with activities with joy
which is fun and interesting
5. Distinctive personality
creativity & imagination
(read, use, ponder).

PERSONAL

A UNIQUE DESIGN

EVALUATION

FOR PARENTS

YES NO

- ___ ___ Do I speak my child's name with pleasure?
- ___ ___ Do I frequently yell for/at my child when it's bedtime, etc.?
- ___ ___ Do I establish eye-contact with my child as much as I can?
- ___ ___ Do I make promises to my child and then forget to keep them?
- ___ ___ Do I call my child by his real name, rather than by a nickname?
- ___ ___ Do I compare my child with other children, or with siblings?
- ___ ___ Do I frequently mention specific actions or qualities I appreciate about my child?
- ___ ___ Do I ever find myself slipping with words like 'slowpoke', 'stupid', 'messy', 'selfish', etc.?
- ___ ___ Do I talk about my child in only positive ways when he may be listening?
- ___ ___ Do I use my best manners when with my child?
- ___ ___ Do I compliment my child on his inner qualities rather than his outward appearance?
- ___ ___ Is there something unchangeable about my child I would change if I could?
- ___ ___ Does my child actually FEEL loved by me?
- ___ ___ Do I maintain an attitude of anticipation as to what my child may become rather than expecting a particular performance for my own satisfaction?
- ___ ___ Have I assigned responsibilities within our home to my child?
- ___ ___ Do I faithfully see that he follows through with his responsibility?
- ___ ___ Do I communicate facial expressions of, "How could you do a stupid thing like that?"
- ___ ___ Do I talk about my child being shy, showing off, being slow, bossy, etc. in his presence or within his hearing?
- ___ ___ Can I honestly say that I appreciate my child?
- ___ ___ Do I guide other family members to appreciate and respect each child in our family?
- ___ ___ Do I cause my child to feel that his work is "little kid stuff?"
- ___ ___ In a fun experience, do I think, speak, or conclude FOR my child, rather than let him discover on his own?

PERSONAL EVALUATION OF THE CHILD

YES NO

- _____ _____ My child talks a lot about his physical appearance (hair, etc.).
- _____ _____ My child frequently says negative things about God, people, situations, or himself.
- _____ _____ My child has difficulty in responding to his peers.
- _____ _____ My child complains a lot.
- _____ _____ My child is not readily willing to try new things.
- _____ _____ My child resists authority.
- _____ _____ My child is developing a sophisticated attitude.
- _____ _____ My child is not sensitive or aware of other children's needs.
- _____ _____ My child makes up stories or tells lies.
- _____ _____ My child feels it is important to have lots of toys and possessions....or the best and the most.
- _____ _____ My child withdraws from groups of children.
- _____ _____ My child becomes upset when unable to accomplish a new task.
- _____ _____ My child idolizes some TV character or experiences frequent fantasy as some person or animal.
- _____ _____ My child doesn't look me in the eye when I talk with him.
- _____ _____ My child plays a particular role quite consistently (such as a baby, a dog, etc.).
- _____ _____ My child doesn't seem to like himself.
- _____ _____ My child may comment, "See how strong I am," "Know what, I can run faster than _____."
- _____ _____ My child tattles frequently.
- _____ _____ My child talks incessantly.
- _____ _____ My child bosses others frequently.
- _____ _____ My child doesn't make friends easily.

YOUR MARK ON ME . . .

Myrtes Mathias is the poet laureate of the Christian community in Brazil, South America. She attended the Seminar in Rio de Janeiro in June 1974. She has published ten books which are widely read throughout the country. The following poem, YOUR MARK ON ME, was written as a result of her hearing the illustration given in this section of the material. Though it was written in Portuguese and some of the insight was lost in the translation, the requests for copies have been numerous as we have shared this with others.

YOUR MARK ON ME

How wonderful, Lord, to discover
that this scar is your mark on me.
After so many years of bitterness,
finally, I can thank you
for having made me exactly like I am.

Because I was formed
by a pattern not considered attractive by the world,
I had to open my own way with great effort:
like a plant that springs up a rocky soil
or a seed that falls among thorns.

As the oyster reacts to its wounds,
I will give to my life
a new significance:
Unable to transmit a message
to the eyes of my neighbor,
I will speak directly to his heart.

And this I will do as brother to brother,
saying to each one who is unhappy:
I understand your disillusion,
I, also, have my scar.
I too wandered along the road of life,
searching for a solution to my problem;
until I discovered that that which tormented me
was simply the mark of ownership
that God had placed on me.

So, I want you to say with me
that almost impossible prayer:
"Thank you, Lord, for my weaknesses,
for all that you permit me to suffer.
Transform my problem into a blessing,
from tragedy help me to make a poem:
give me the grace to recognize
that I am only a part of a plan
to which I must submit myself."

To Pastor Larry Coy,
with the gratitude of his students
Conflicts of Life Seminar
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil