

Reaction paper: parenthood essay

[Family](#), [Father](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Part A](#) \n \t
2. [Part B](#) \n \t
3. [Part C](#) \n \t
4. [References](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Part A

Traditional model of parenthood is traced to a time fathers and mothers had distinct roles to play in a child's development. Fathers played a dominant role in the development of a child in the traditional western culture. Control of domestic affairs was a role left for the male of the family. The role of supervising a child continued into adulthood. The father's influence was pervasive and often outweighed the influence of the mother on a child's conduct. The father figure was the sole provider for the family. Fathers provided security for the family, thereby ensuring transcendence of their generations. They reacted to all forms of emergencies and their say was akin to the laws governing the family. In essence, a child grew to be what the father wanted of him.

The role of women in traditional western civilization was well defined too. Mothers were the glues that bound families together. They tended domestic issues. Upon provision of food by their husbands, it was the duty of the females to avail the food to the family in the form acceptable by the community. Mothers had the biggest role of ensuring continuity of the

human race through child bearing. Although this is still their primary role to date, a number of issues have changed that reduce the gravity of this role. Child bearing and taking care of children was the chief role of mothers. In addition, they had the role of responding to the desires of the children's fathers' desires.

The traditional role of fathers and mothers were shaped by necessity rather by the social environment. Upon discovery of methods of production that could incorporate men as well as women in production of economic products, these roles changed. Men died violent deaths in their quest for family necessities, leaving children orphans and wives widows. This called for mothers to take a more proactive role in taking care of their children and ensuring their rightful development. Upon the inception of Industrialization, there came several means that could allow mothers to be economically engaged in provision for their families. Over the years, the role of mothers and fathers changed. Women no longer concentrated in child bearing and taking care of the children. Fathers, even though they remained the bread winners of their families, had help from their wives. The role of taking care of children's physical and emotional needs has become a duty of both parents. Considering the events of the time, the societal framework that designed specific roles to mothers and fathers was of great significance. The scheme ensured there was continued existence of the human race to the present time. Considering the environment in which these forefathers lived, the familial order was the only way of ensuring survival. Naturally, men are stronger than women and had the capability to fend for food in the tough environment. Women are more caring and emotional. They could understand

the emotional needs of their children and help them grow and develop.

Biologically, women have the exclusive capability to bear children. The specialization in roles was indeed right and considered all the environmental and biological factors that they could not defy.

Scheme of roles for the father and the mother had several advantages over the disadvantages it posed. One of the major merits is that it took into consideration biological and environmental factors they had no control over. It provided for efficient security, food provision and care for the offspring to ensure generational succession. On the other hand, the system made the mother seem irrelevant in decision making. Although mothers were the care takers and understood the children's desires best, they did not have the voice to contribute in deciding what they thought would be right for their children. Fathers and other dominating males in the society had the final say on important decisions regarding a child's life. Nonetheless, the framework of parenthood was efficient. It may not, however, be applicable in the current society given different environmental and economic factors. Given the traditional times, it would be worthwhile changing the role of mother in decision making involving vital aspects of the child. A mother should have acquired a major role in proposing what would best suit and spur the development of her child.

Part B

A Revolution in American Fathering, an article by Jeff Gillenkirk explores the changes that have taken place in parenthood. The author gives shocking figures on the number of American families that are increasingly coming under the care of single fathers. According to Jeff Gillenkirk, there are more

than two million single father families in America today. He reiterates that this represents about 20% of the total American single families. The family affairs specialist expresses shock at the astounding changes in the face of American family structure.

According to Jeff's article, the phenomenon of single fathers was not as prevalent in 1970s. Barely 33 years back, a majority of American families that were solely dependent on single parents as sole breadwinners comprised over 90 per cent single mothers. He notes that the increasing single father families are more prevalent in minority ethnicities compared to majority ethnicities. From 1970 to 1995, the author notes that the number of single fathers among African Americans increased by a record 329 per cent. The same phenomenon showed an increase of 450 per cent among Hispanic single fathers. He notes that about 30 per cent of the working single-parent populations are fathers despite the media's concentration on single mothers when reporting.

This article portrays significance of fatherhood that has engulfed parenthood in the current years. Kathleen Stassen Berger, in her book, *The Developing Person through the Life Span* gives better insights that could help comprehend the trend of incessant father-involvement in parenting at degrees traditionally left for mothers. The author dissects the brain as a special tool in a child's development. The book provides the understanding why some children are better off living with their mothers while would rather live with their fathers for complete growth and development. He appreciates the role of genetics and cultural diversity in affecting the growth of a child. The most imperative aspect of childhood that spurs optimum growth is the

feeling of meaningfulness of life. Every form of parenthood needs to ensure it bestows a sense of meaning to every child. This way, a child grows with complete requisite emotional, physical and social influences.

As opposed to the past, both fathers and mothers can protect and provide for themselves with sufficient consistency to plan for the future of their families. Any man who tries to show traditional mindset of placing women under traditional bondage gets immediate rejection. The societal attitude has instilled a sense of independence in women. This phenomenon makes more mothers opt to take care of their children single-handedly. The independent-woman mentality has ruined the traditional family structure that consisted father, mother and children. Men who have the desire to maintain their position as the “ man of the family” no longer have a place in most marriages. Women have increasingly become dominating. Although it is not true that women are the cause of dysfunctional family units needed for the right development of children, their acquired attitude has greatly contributed to dilution of the meaning of marriage.

On a lighter side of the development, fathers have been freed from economic burdens of being the sole providers of their families. They now have more time that they can spare and spend interacting with their children. However, the economic freedom that has come by as a result of increased women engagement in economic activities has given some men the leeway to abandon family responsibility all together. A number of fathers stop engaging themselves in provision and guidance of their children as soon as they realize their wives are in a position to provide. This leads to divorces and an increase in single parent families. The worst part of this is not the

breaking of marriage, but the effect such negligence has on children. In a number of cases, irresponsible fatherhood is a source of family squabbles. The result is a family at war, violence and harsh conversations become the order of the day. A child that grows in such an environment becomes traumatized. Other than physical lack, the child becomes mentally underdeveloped and troubled.

Part C

Personally, I grew up in a dual-parent family. My father and mother did menial jobs and from the conditions in which we lived as a young child, I could sense their income was not sufficient. At the beginning, only my father worked. After attending classes and gaining skills in accountancy, my mother too joined my father in fending for the family. Life changed for me as soon as mother started working. Before, we could spend lovely afternoons taking long walks and playing in the local park. Then as soon as she started working, I would be lonely at home. They employed a house-help who could take care of me. I did not feel the love anymore.

Soon, my mother and father started coming home late. I learnt later that they both had to take extra jobs to afford the salary for nanny and the spacious house we had just moved into. They could leave home in the wee hours of the morning before I was up and come back late in the night after I was asleep. We lived in the same house, but it felt like we were worlds apart. I missed them. There was no one to satisfy my emotional needs. Although they provided for the physical needs, I felt empty. At school, I would have all the newest watches and shoes; every student's fetish at the moment. I joined peer groups that I found could replace the parental love I missed. The

group was fashionable and we engaged in all activities that fulfilled my ambitions of the moment. We abused drugs and engaged in binge drinking. It took intervention of counselors and therapists to rehabilitate my actions and place me back on the right track.

References

Berge, K. S. (2005). *The developing person through the life span*. New York: Worth

Publishers.

Gillenkirk, J. (2009, August 02). *A Revolution in American Fathering*.

Retrieved October 20,

2013, from *The Importance of Fathers*: [http://www.fathermag.](http://www.fathermag.com/topics/importance/)

[com/topics/importance/](http://www.fathermag.com/topics/importance/)