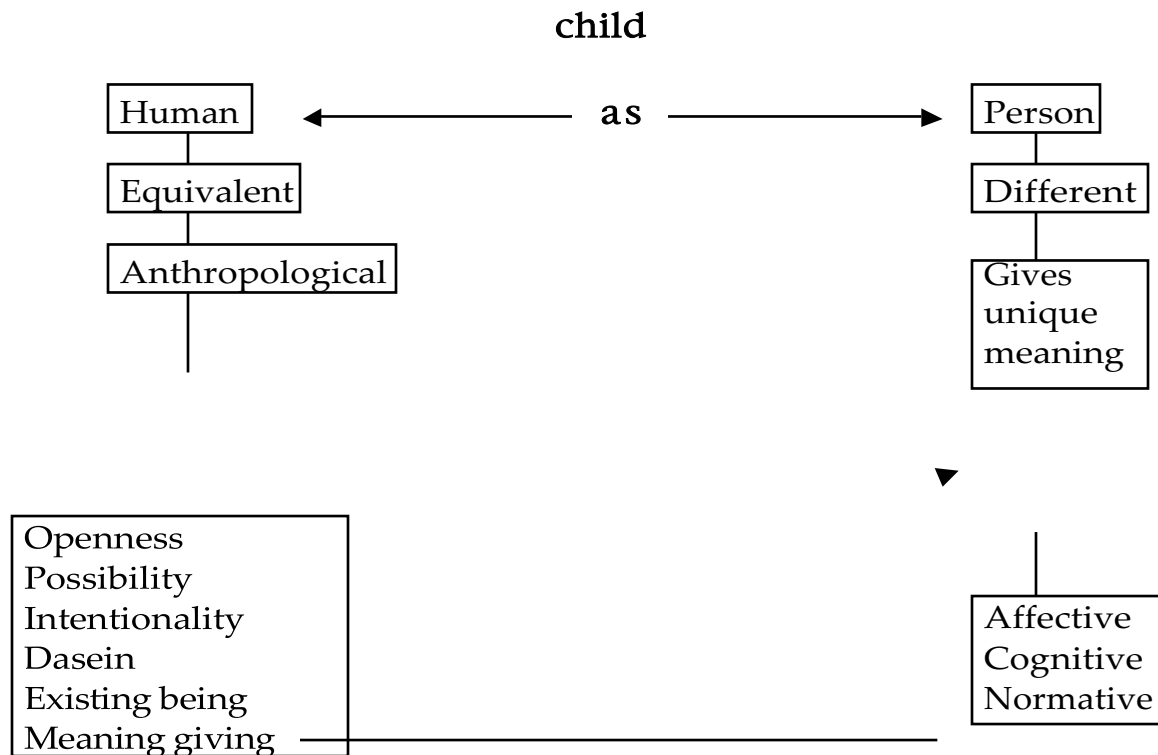# CHAPTER 3

THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

1.
2. INTRODUCTION

As a **person** and a **human being,** a child is different from other beings, including animals. The most convincing argument in this regard is that of Max Scheler (1947: 34) who in 1928 contrasts **being-a-person** with being an animal and showed that the former includes much more than merely intelligence and abilities to choose. What makes a human being a person does not lie on a level of life as manifested by the psyche and its functions, but on a spiritual level or dimension. According to Scheler, the distinction between human and animal is that, in contrast to an animal, a human has a **spiritual** dimension and, thus, is a **person.** As a person, he/she can "go outside of him/herself" into an open world and rise above him/herself as what Heidegger (1953) calls "Dasein" or "Being-in-the-world".

With reference to Scheler (1947), Nel (1968: 19) indicates that a person continually must answer the appeals from the world. His/her answers occur in accordance with his/her choices and decisions from his/her normed spirituality, as an accountable answer in agreement with his/her sense of values, a sense of what ought to be and what shouldn't be, a sense of what is fine, beautiful and true. This world-constitution is nothing other than an emotion-laden constitution. He says, "Intentional directedness, choices, decisions, appeals of conscience, feelings of guilt, joy of living all are embedded in a primordial affective ground as an inseparable part of a person's existence" (Nel [in Afrikaans], 1968: 19).

The activity center of all human involvement, also of his/her development, is his/her being a **person.** As he/she changes, each person is continuous in that he/she grows physically, his/her emotional structure does not remain

static, his/her insights are widened, and his/her hierarchy of values is broadened. See the following schematic synthesis:

child

Human ← as → Person

Equivalent / Different

Anthropological / Gives unique meaning

Openness
Possibility
Intentionality
Dasein
Existing being
Meaning giving

Affective
Cognitive
Normative

Thus, the affective, cognitive and normative figure very prominently in a person's development, and views of each are briefly considered.

3. AFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

A child's affective development always occurs in relation to the dynamics of educating and can never be explained apart from them. However, empirical research on affective development also has brought to light valuable insights, and here one thinks of the work of Erikson (1959 and 1963). He divides the period of childhood into three categories: the first is from birth to 18 months and is called the period of trust versus mistrust; the second is from 1 1/2 to 3 years which he refers to as the period of autonomy versus shame and doubt; and the third is from 3 to 6 years, the period of initiative versus guilt.

During the period of trust versus mistrust, a child has a special need for loving physical contact and emphasized are feeding, the acts of sucking, biting and salivating, and according to him, a baby will develop feelings of trust or mistrust depending on the quality of caring and feelings

associated with feeding, pampering, bathing and dressing him/her. According to Erikson, by sensing motherly care and warmth, a child discovers that he/she can trust her and the world.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 194) indicate that a mother represents practically the entire world for a young child. Through her, he/she learns that, although sometimes she disappears, she continually reappears..

During the second period, a child, to some extent, moves away from nearly complete dependency on mothering and, literally and figuratively, begins to stand on his/her own feet. This is a period of intense exploration. Overprotecting and overcontrolling lay the foundation for a child's personal sense of shame. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 197) remark [in English] that "Parents who provide an interesting, stimulating environment, talk frequently to their children, give them some initiative, and do a great deal of indirect teaching by asking questions and drawing out their perceptions and ideas, have the most positive effect on their children's developing sense of competency. Their sense of being 'doers' and of being able to control and affect the environment receives a major boost during this time".

However, the importance of always considering how the structures of educating are implemented is suggested [very indirectly] by Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 198) when they refer to the "overwhelmed" and the "zoo-keeper mother".

The overwhelmed mother is tense and generally cannot manage the situation at all. Her disorganization creates a chaotic atmosphere, which often results in authentic educational neglect. For example, she might permit other children or neighbors to raise her own children. In fact, she is the opposite of a mothering mother. The implementation of the structures of authority, trust and understanding are, thus, seriously restrained.

The "zoo-keeper" mother's painstaking execution of her scheduled program by continually going through all its facets, makes the adequate implementation of the structures of educating quite impossible. This also is the sort of mother who depends on psychology books, and if toys are discussed, than an excessive number of toys are provided, etc. The stereotypic behavior of such a mother disturbs the dynamics of educating.

During the period of initiative versus guilt, a child's identity as a boy or a girl is influenced optimally. A boy or a girl now has high regard for the assurance by his or her parents that one day he or she will be just as good or

even better than mom or dad; they long for sexual guidance, a little at a time, repeated at intervals (Erikson, 1959: 78).

Erikson refers to the period between 6 and 12 years as the **youth phase.** During this period children have a desire to master new challenges, and schoolmates and other peers have an important influence on their lives.

The best known of Erikson's phases is **adolescence**, from 12 to 18 years. With reference to Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977:208), a teenager's habitual involvement with the world is summed up as follows:

> * Differentiates one's own feelings and emotions from those of others;
> * Distinguishes between objective and subjective reality;
> * Accepts another person's views; and
> * Understands symbolic meaning and role playing in "as if" situations.

The fact that the dynamics of educating, as such, must be considered as relevant in explaining child development is underlined by Erikson's view of developmental stages.

During the stage of trust versus mistrust, the quality of loving and caring largely will determine the degree of trust or mistrust which develops in a baby. During the stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt, it is of the utmost importance to allow children to freely explore their surroundings, which also includes their own bodies without awakening feelings of shame or guilt. During the youth stage, a child's personal dynamics also are tempered by moments of the dynamics of educating outside of the family when he/she spends much of his /her "waking" hours in school. Then, the initial feelings of independence which arose in the previous periods, are tested out and extended in social relationships outside of the family situation.

Emotional guidance in terms of the dynamics of educating is precipitated by establishing and maintaining a pedagogic relationship of trust between a child and an adult from birth until his/her adulthood. The adults **offer** trust to a child by creating a warm and intimate atmosphere underlying the educative relationship. By an adult's loving and understanding care, he offers a child a

safe space by which he/she can experience feelings of safety, security and being provided for, which serve as the bases for his/her entire development.

4. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Intelligence figures very prominently in views of cognitive development. Much has been written on intelligence and views on its nature and structure have changed considerably overtime. Here the aim is not to give an overview of the wide variety of findings regarding intelligence, as such. For this, the relevant literature can be consulted (see Selz, 1935; Kohnstam, 1952; Prick and Calon, 1967; Guilford, 1969; Piaget, 1970; Cancro, 1971; Eysenck, 1972; Riegel, 1973; Vernon, 1979; De Corte, 1975 and 1981; Pyle, 1979; Prinsloo, 1982. However, a few works are noted.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1984: 469) refer to Sir Francis Galton who, more than a century ago, attempted to draw a relation between Darwin's theory of evolution and human intelligence. He purports that intelligence is the result of a person's sensory equipment which is the result of inheritance. In 1894, in a London museum he set up a test laboratory where interested parties could pay to have their hearing, vision, reaction time and other sensory-motor skills "measured".

Many definitions refer to intelligence as a cognitive ability which has to do with **an organism adjusting to its environment.**

Stern (1914), who also had invented the concept "IQ", stressed that intelligence has to do with **solving new problems** which a person faces.

Vernon (1969) emphasizes three basic meanings of intelligence, namely, a genetic capacity (completely and entirely inherited), perceived behavior (what a person does) and a test score (what a test measures).

Here, it is accepted that **intelligence is a person's potentiality to establish new situations** which, as such, is a constituent of a child's personal structure. With reference to Prinsloo (1982: 150), the actualization of intelligence is the stratum on which the psychic life is actualized in terms of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving, which also are

referred to as **modes of learning** (see Sonnekus, Van Niekerk, Ferreira, Van der Merwe and Botha, 1973: 67-93; Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1979: 104-133) by means of sensing, attending, perceiving, thinking, imagining and fantasizing, as well as remembering. Intelligence is actualized by means

of various mutually interrelated, personal ways and by which intelligence becomes observable and knowable.

Fundamentally and essentially, actualizing intelligence is an activity of attributing meaning to "unknown" contents, and is aimed at the foreignness of reality. In actualizing his/her intelligence, a child-in- educating **will,** via **experiencing.** uncover the **sense** of reality and give **meaning** to it. Out of this meaningfully experienced content flows an ordered hierarchy of meanings as possessed experience or possessed **knowledge.**

Especially Piaget's (1970) theory about intellectual development is discussed widely and he is viewed as one of the main contributors regarding intellectual and cognitive development. He believes there is an analog between biological growth and the development of the intellect.

He has observed that the intellect develops through clearly distinguishable stages in roughly the same way as biological growth. Each phase is an important pre-stage for a following one, and a following one points to meaningful differences and qualitatively more intellectual ability than the former.

He distinguishes four main stages (Van Rensburg, 1973; Piaget, 1970; Ginsberg and Opper, 1969; Kagan and Lang, 1978: 113-123;
Mussen, Conger and Kagan, 1979: 449-455).

During the sensorimotor stage (0 - 1 1/2 years), cognitive activity mainly is based on immediate experience via the senses. This includes the period of language acquisition. A child's cognitive activity is practical, and its development now goes through six relatively discrete stages.

During the intuitive or preoperational stage (1 1/2 - 7 years), the grammatical structure of language increases considerably.
Characteristic of this stage is the development of symbolic thinking and play, which contribute importantly to the memory of images and the

development of language. According to Elkind (1975: 59), the average two-year-old child understands between 200 - 300 words, and speaks in one or two word sentences. At three years, grammatically correct sentences of from eight to ten words are not unusual.

The average five-year-old understands approximately 2,000 words (see Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1977: 127). During this period, the dynamics of educating must be directed to a child's joy in imitating and using sounds by giving him/her an opportunity to test out many words. A child is not yet able to think logically, and in his/her concrete reasoning, he/she still moves from particulars to particulars, since he/she does not see the relations among the parts and a whole.

During the concrete operational phase (7 - 11 years), a child develops the ability to think logically and objectively, and to understand relationships. According to Vrey (1979: 164), an "operation" is an internalized activity which allows a child to form an idea of something for him/herself and which is reversible. A concrete operational child can classify things hierarchically into categories, what Piaget calls **classes.** The concepts **ordering** and **numbering** are part of this stage of the development of operational thinking.

During the formal operational phase (11 - 16 years), thinking is freed from concrete reality and a preoccupation with thinking, which now occurs systematically, is an important characteristic.

Each phase differs qualitatively from a previous one. There also is a quantum leap forward and a breakthrough [from one phase to another]. These results correspond to those of Bailey (Jones, Bailey, McFarlane and Honzik, 1971), who have found a considerable difference in the IQs of the same children over a long period; in other words, a person's IQ score is not permanently engraved in his/her brain at birth, but rather is a human characteristic which ebbs and flows according to the dynamics of educatin. Kohnstgam (1952) refers to this phenomenon as the **metastability** of intelligence.
Also, beyond any doubt, along with Selz (1935), he has shown that educating contributes to the elevation of IQ scores.

The metastability of intelligence relates to the fact that, in his/her development, a child, via differentiation

(maturation), especially of his/her intellectual potentialities, makes **available** for him/herself those potentialities which previously were **latent.** Thus, when a lower IQ is measured, than what a child has available, this must be ascribed to the fact that his/her given latent potentialities have not yet become available to him/her and, at this stage, he/she indeed has **available** a more limited intelligence to **actualize.**

With respect to the dynamics of educating, it is important to take note that this metastability is highest during the early years of childhood. According to Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 95) nearly two-thirds[*] of a person's ultimate cognitive potentiality is available by the time he/she is six years old. In addition, Bloom (1964) finds that, with increasing age, there is a decrease in the favorable effect of educating.

Since there is sufficient empirical evidence indicating that, with respect to his/her cognitive development, a child does not skip any stage, it is necessary that the dynamics of educating provide for adequate experiencing during each.

Empirical research on development, in general, and on intelligence also shows clear cultural differences which continually need to be considered.

With respect to the dynamics of educating, it is important to understand what the substance is of each main stage to try to ensure an optimal implementation of the other essentials of educating.

Prinsloo (1982: 73) indicates that Piaget is the only psychologist who has established a comprehensive theory of intelligence (see Sigel and Hooper, 1968: 7) and has indicated that a child's ways of thinking differ from those of an adult, and that children learn more easily if the new contents relate to their previous experiences.

She (Prinsloo, 1982: 105) also refers to the fact that knowledge of the structure of intelligence has contributed to constructing a classification scheme of ways of actualizing intelligence. In addition, she concludes that the **relationships** among **actualizing intelligence, learning** and **development,** in terms of **personal actualization, flow into a child's behaviors** which, in their turn, are discernible in a child's actualization of learning and development (Prinsloo, 1982: 169).

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* Doesn't such a statement assume that intelligence
is a finite, definable "thing"? And how can one
demonstrate the validity of such a claim?--G,D.Y.

Regarding the dynamics of educating, consideration also must be given to critical periods in a child's development. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 93) mention three critical, optimal periods during which children are the most receptive and can be most easily taught to learn motor skills. For example, when a child is learning to walk is the most opportune time to master roller- skating. However, it also is true that the development of motor skills is restrained if there is an attempt to learn them too early.

Therefore, it must be noted that (and what) earlier experiences impede the development of other skills; this, however, is an area in which much research is yet to be done. Scott (1968: 68) describes [in English] critical periods as "a time when a large effect can be produced by a smaller change in conditions than in any later or earlier period of life".

5. NORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Valuable contributions have been made regarding a child's moral development. Although the stages do not correspond precisely to specific age-levels, and especially with respect to overlapping each other, still there are clear distinctions among them. There is the **preconventional level** (phases 1 and 2: birth to 9 years), the conventional level (phases 3 and 4: 9 to 15 years) and the **postconventional** level (phases 5 and 6: 16 years to adulthood).

> * During the first phase obedience and making choices are based on simple physical and material power. Conduct is based on avoiding serious physical punishment from a stronger person. To the age of 10, 66 percent of children base their moral choices on this type of consideration, while this holds true for only 20 percent of 16-year-olds.
> * During the second phase, a child's moral choices mainly are based on the gratification of his/her own personal needs. Physical punishment continues to be avoided, but there are continual attempts to make the best of it.
> * During the third phase, a child is attuned to

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satisfying others and he/she tries to understand what others feel.

* During the fourth phase, he/she takes into account rules, directives and codes for guiding him/herself when he/she finds him/herself in a problematic situation.

* During the fifth phase, each situation is
  thoroughly studied with the aim of deducing
  general principles which hold for everyone.
  * During the sixth phase, the principles according
  to which choices are made are abstract, ethical and
  universally consistent. Essentially, he/she now
  allows him/herself to be guided by universal
  principles of justice and respect for the human
  dignity of others as individuals (Kohlberg, 1975:
  71).

The fifth and sixth phases seldom arise in young children,
and only in approximately 16 percent of 16-year-olds.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 250) indicate that an
appreciable shift might arise within the broad stages
with respect to age and gender. Thus, for example,
females between 16 and 25 usually are at stage 3, while
the moral behavior of males shows more choices based
on considerations from phase 4. Both groups, however,
remain on the level of conventional morality, but
emphasize different aspects. A female is inclined to
think about and act on moral matters with an aim of
pleasing others (level 3) while males are more inclined to
think and act according to firm and arbitrary rules and
regulations (phase 4).

From the above, however, it is inferred that moral
development does not occur automatically and is not
merely a uniform phenomenon corresponding to a child's
manifest choices. Moral development is determined by
the mutual interactions among educators and children,
and among children. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977:
258) conclude, for example, that disciplinary problems
cannot be understood and dealt with without considering
the importance of the mutual relationship between a
child and his/her teachers, a relationship which they
consider to be just as important as that between a child
and his/her parents.

Normative guidance by the educators always progresses in
accordance with affective and cognitive guidance. The
meaning which a norm holds for a child will be lived
experienced on an affective and cognitive level and,

correspondingly, ordered into his/her own hierarchy of values. A child has a need for such normative guidance because it especially provides normative security, stability and confidence (Crous, 1979: 156). A norm cannot merely be presented but, by means of emotional and cognitive guidance, it must be presented to a child in terms of the affective, cognitive and

normative dynamics of educating to allow him/her to identifywith it as meaningful-for-him/her.

6. SYNTHESIS

From the foregoing it is inferred that a child's development occursadequately when a life aim and its fulfillment make appeals to him. Development is never brought to fulfillment only by his own initiative. The developmental potentialities that have become available to a child have to be actualized adequately and this is dependent on the total person, on safety and security, on appropriate guidance by adults, and all of this occurs in terms of the dynamics of educating.

The theories regarding a child's personal becoming thus have value because many factors -- biological structures and functions, heredity, cognitive and socio-economic status -- arise in achild's development in his situation that always is an educative one.

Each theory embraces a partial truth but there is no super-theory. Thus, e.g., the laws of conditioning also are relevant because thereare many reflexes which can be conditioned within the home and school situations, e.g., fear for the father, mother, arithmetic, spelling, or any subject, and which undoubtedly have animportant role in the origin of phobias .

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When the dynamics of educating are not considered, above all, the cliché status already acquired by pronouncements such as the following cannot be dispelled: Anderson (1981) says that a goodparent is one who is sensitive to his child's needs and tries to provide for them (How?). A child must be unconditionally accepted with his potentialities or limitations (How?). He says [in English], "Children need praise and encouragement. All of us who work with children are aware of the stress and distress caused by loss or separation to children in one parent, or reconstituted families. Schools must cope with children whose emotional burdens overflow into their domain, making them less accessible to

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learning. Parents may react to a child in terms of a figure in their past, their own pathology, or as a substitute for a stillborn or dead sibling. We should all be working toward improving parenting skills,increasing the number of teaching-staff who will practice enlightened teaching methods, and channeling children for help to the appropriate agencies as soon as possible. Utopia" (Anderson, 1981).

Usually, it is suggested that a child always has a need for an educator's guidance. "At each age and stage of development, children and adolescents need continued assurance from adults inorder to accommodate themselves to and assimilate the effects of constant change" (Sprinthall and Sprinthall [in English], 1977: 85).However, what this assurance really involves, and how this affects a unique child in terms of the dynamics of educating, i.e., functionaleducative activities, is nowhere stipulated. Ordinarily, it remains nothing more than an afterthought such as, "For example, the late-maturing boy needs help in developing confidence, and assurance that before long he too will develop into full maturity" (Sprinthall and Sprinthall [in English], 1977: 85),

In accounts of success such as the Summerhill School of A. S. Neil (1969: 194-198) where reference is made to the encouragement of healthy emotional adjustment, nowhere is it indicated what the underlying dynamics of this are, or what constitutes the dynamics where each pupil participates in choosing the curriculum and where no classes, books or examinations are required.

In the following chapter, the development of the **restrained child**is discussed.

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