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The Parents as "Prima Authors" Structures and Mechanisms of Parenting and its Effects on Child and Family Development

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Abstract

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], extensively discussed that in recent years, research has been invested in expanding an understanding of the many individual and environmental factors impacting parenting and the influences of the differences in parenting styles on child developmental consequences (Karraker and Coleman, 2006) [1].

When I (Anat) began my psychotherapeutic practice, I worked with children in their natural environment, utilizing the ReachingOut approach, including work with parents as part of the therapeutic process. Early in my practice, I identified that when parents undergo a transformation as part of the process, their children quickly respond to the transformation.

As a result, the change in children's behavior and well-being was quicker and more efficient than when I worked only with children. Following this as discussed in our previous publications, I concluded that the parent's involvement in the process was the most significant factor influencing change in children [2].

It is our basic assumption that if we wish to supply the compatible conditions to the specific needs of the child, we should shift the focus from our parenting aspirations which construct our attitudes and behaviors toward the child's specific individual needs. This shift will force the parent to engage in constant internal awareness with regard to the notion that he is always driven by his psychic needs and fantasies which although unconscious may nevertheless be crucial in guiding his decision-making process. We are therefore suggested to shift towards "conscious parenting" in terms of actions and reactions towards the children, based on a decision-making process of choosing the action and reaction which promotes in the best possible way the development of the child with his specific characteristics.

Introduction

According to Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], in recent years, research related to the issue of parenting has gained extensive attention [3,4]. Research was invested in expanding an understanding of the many individual and environmental factors impacting parenting. In addition, research explores the influences of the differences in parenting styles on child developmental consequences and the processes by which parenting is related to other features of family life [1].

The authors suggested that our knowledge and investigation related to parenting cannot be isolated from an understanding of both parents and children as individuals, as participants in a dyad, and members of a family system and a social culture [1]. Karraker and Coleman, (2006) [1] further encouraged the consideration of the interpersonal dynamics in addition to the dyadic and environmental determinants, in order to promote our

understanding of the parental process. Moreover, they called researchers to draw attention tointernal processes, such as perceptions and cognitions, to promote understanding of parenting [1].

According to Shaw (2006) [5], changing parenting attitudes and behaviours has been a central target of many programs constructed to promote young children's social and emotional development. The motivation for putting the spotlight on parenting is based on both common sense and supported by a large body of research. The literature shows associations between parenting in early childhood and a variety of later socioemotional outcomes [5].

In this context, Renken et al. (1989) [6] and Shaw et al. (2003) [7,8] claimed that it is essential to remember that various community-based programs were developed before formal research was conducted. Those programs focused on the influences of early socialization practices related to children's psychosocial development.The basic assumption of these programs focused on the dependence of young children upon their caregivers, both physically and mentally [5-7]. When I (Anat) began my psychotherapeutic practice, I worked with children in their natural environment, utilizing the ReachingOut approach, including work with parents as part of the therapeutic process. Early in my practice, I identified that when parents undergo a transformation as part of the process, their children quickly respond to the transformation. As a result, the change in children's behavior and well-being was quicker and more efficient than when I worked only with children. Thus, I concluded that the parent's involvement in the process was the most significant factor influencing change in children. Moreover, in my practice, working with parents promoted the well-being of all the family members, each of whom reported better communication and more effective relationships within the family system [2].

Today, 15 years later, after seeing hundreds of parent couples in my practice, together with Ofer, who has 30 years of practical experience, we suggest focusing upon the parents and the main challenges they are dealing with. Our perspective aligned with other literature in the field (Faith, van Horn, Appel, Burke, Carson, Franch, [9]). From our experience, in the best-case scenario, those parents will attempt to solve difficulties while seeking psychotherapeutic or psychiatric help for their children. Still, although slowly changing, there are fewer requests for parenting interventions than requests for a child's individual treatment.

Although it is well acknowledged that parents influence their children's development, at least in several domains, the exact mechanisms by which these influences are shaped are yet unknown. Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] suggested mechanisms which ranged from the purely behavioral (i.e., Parents reinforce desired child behavior and punish undesired child behavior, leading to child behavior change) to the higher cognitive and emotional (i.e., children change their behavior in response to their parents' actual or presumed thoughts and feelings). In addition, behaviors of the parents are usually grouped into behavioral patterns, such as warmth, sensitivity, hostility, control, authoritativeness, and troubled communication. Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] also related to O'Connor (2002) [10], who showed that many of these parenting behavior styles seem to influence child functioning. However, less is still known about how this influence occurs [1,10].

Traditionally, researchers such as Schaefer (1959) [11] and Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005) [12] in McCabe (2014)

[13] have classified parenting behaviors into two central areas representing warmth and control [11-13].Parental warmth relates to the emotions a parent demonstrates toward his child [13,14]. However, it is important to relate that the wide scope of warmth includes both adaptive as well as maladaptive parenting activities. For example, low warmth is characterized by parenting behaviors indicative of negative emotion such as violence, criticizing, and other physical and verbal representations of hostility and rejection [13,15].

Although according to Harris (1995) [16], there is a controversy in the literature related to the degree and/or existence of parenting's impact on child development, there is also a lot of literature indicating that low levels of maternal warmth, as well as maladaptive maternal control, are associated with negative child outcomes [17-21].

According to Grace, Hayes, and Wise (2017) [22], the study of the influence of environmental context on child development is crucial. Aligned with this view, we also believe that no matter what will be found regarding the influence genes have upon the way children will develop, we as mental health practitioners have little to do in order to modify undesirable outcomes genetically. However, as psychotherapists, educators, counsellors, parental therapists, and health and social work practitioners, we are in a position to significantly contribute to research and practice to evaluate the factors that would optimize environments for children and adolescents. In addition, we play a crucial role in the design and implementation of intervention programs for parents that can be introduced into the lives of children and families to provide support [22].

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] suggested that differences between parents and the ways they behave toward their children are presumably related to parents' character, past experiences, and social/environmental circumstances as well as to the evoked effects of children's features and their behaviors. According to the authors, extricating these impacts can be challenging. In this chapter, we propose to consider that parental behavior derives from the structures and mechanisms of what we refer to as "parental intelligence". "Parental intelligence" relates to the accumulation of the individual's personal system of symbolic forms related to the parent-child domain (Erez, Ben Salmon, and Cristall-Lilov, in press). Parental intelligence begins with the understanding that in any family situation, the "responsible adult" is the parent. Thus acknowledging the fact that a child is born to the existent situation which was constructed by his parents before his birth and without his involvement. This concept embodies the notion that the parent is a "Prima Author'' in any familial situation. "Prima Author'' was conceptualized in order to identify the extent of parents' impacts upon their children.

Berg-Nielsen and colleagues (2002) [17] define parenting as "everyday parental behavior (including cognitions, emotions, and attributions) directed toward children in addition to relevant attitudes and values". Although many current scholars define it in similar ways, O'Connor (2002) [10] cited in Berg-Nielsen, et al. (2002) [17] noted that scholars of different approaches have made emphasis upon diverse features, such as cognitive and social, as opposed to behavioral processes. Moreover, the authors noted that scholars have applied different assessment methods to measure parent and child features separately. Different approaches were also applied to evaluate synchrony, as well as mutuality and reciprocity [10,17]. Moreover, efforts to define competent and dysfunctional parenting styles have been

made over time. The agreed definition for competent parenting style is usually related to internal characteristics as well as behaviors, which are assumed to promote the development of the children in positive physical, emotional, cognitive, and social domains. In contrast, a dysfunctional parenting style refers to internal features and behaviors that have a negative impact upon a child's development [10,17].

As in any meaningful interpersonal position, an individual is motivated and directed by his psychological features. Parenthood, being one of the most complex interpersonal roles for a person, encaptures the same. This notion is supported by Belsky (2005) [23] who discussed the influence of parental psychological characteristics upon the ways parents manage their children [23,24]. In this context, Belsky (2005) [23] referred to research by Brody et al. (2002) [25] that found that parents inclined to negative emotional states, whether depression or anger, have tendencies towards less sensitive behavior, less responsiveness, and harsher activities towards their children of any ages than other parents [23,25]. In addition, Belsky (2005) [23] referred to a study by Losoya et al. (1997) [26] which noted that extroverted parents tend to be emotionally sensitive, attentive, and inspiring during the early childhood as well as later years [23,26].

Further, it is important to consider pregnancy and the process of transition to parenthood as influencing factors in both parents and child's development. Aligned with this, Deave, Johnson and Ingram (2008) [27], referred to pregnancy and the transition to parenthood as a crucial developmental period with important consequences for parents, for the infant-parent relationship, and for the development of the infant. Studies have consistently presented that the transition to parenthood is often a stressful occasion resulting in more profound changes than those at any other developmental stage of the family life-cycle [28-30]. Oakley (1980) [31] and Mercer (1987) [32] mentioned that women report great changes to lifestyles and daily routines, while easy adaptation is not usual, uniformly challenging and is not limited to any time frame [30-32].

Considering the impact of the marital relationship on parenthood, there is increasing research regarding connections of a positive couple relationship with both parents' competent parenting behaviour [33-37]. Moreover, according to Cowan, Cohn, Cowan and Pearson (1996) [38], many studies suggest that marital conflict and ineffective parenting are risk factors for the development of a child's aggressive behavior [39,40].

The following was discussed by the systems theory described by Cowan and Cowan (1992) [41] and illustrated a five aspect sequence: parent's anxiety regarding becoming a parent (the inner life), the father's need to be more involved in his childrens' life than his father was in his (the quality of relationships in the family), the career requirements experienced by the parent outside his home (stress outside the family), the new roles and decisions within the family negotiation (the quality of couplehood), and the consequences of a change in just one area (the child) [29,41]. Moreover, Cowan and Cowan (1995) [29] mentioned studies such as Belsky and his colleagues in Pennsylvania [41-44] which were directed by multi-domain theoretical models and assumed that the transition to parenthood represents a transformation of the developing family system, rather than only focusing on the parents as individuals [29,41-44]. In this context, Priel and Besser (2002) [30], Bartell (2005) [45], Ahlborg and Strandmark (2006) [46] and Belsky and Kelly (1994) [47], documented the significance that the 'transition to parenthood' has upon factors such as the mother's approach to par-

enting, the mother's parental skills, the mother's self-esteem and the mother's relationship with her partner [30,45-47].

According to Belsky (2005) [23], it is reasonable to assume that personal characteristics are the foundations upon which parenting is assembled. Personal characteristics affect the emotions parents experience as well as what they believe regarding the origins of their child's behaviour (for example: whether a parent believes crying is caused by tiredness or by a desire to manipulate the parent). Thus according to Belsky [23,48], these processes result from the way parents were raised in their childhood.

In addition, Belsky (1984) [48] suggested that parenting behavior is generated by a combination of three subsystems: the parent's psychological characteristics (e.g., parent's personality), the child's attributes (e.g., temperament), and context (e.g., quality of couple relationship, a network of social support). Belsky (1984) [48] claimed that parental personality comprised the primary factor in defining parenting behavior. According to Belsky and Barends (2002) [24] and Belsky and Jaffee (2006) [49], parental personality has an impact upon parenting behavior by influencing the other two subsystems both directly and indirectly.

In this context, Conger, Belsky and Capaldi (2009) [50] claimed that virtually all intergenerational transmission of parenting studies came to agree that child-rearing practices of one generation are causally influenced by the previous ones [50]. Belsky (2005) [23] also related to the role of child-rearing history in shaping parenting. He cited research by Capaldi et al. (2003) [51], as well as Conger, et al. (2003) [52] showing that harsh as well as supportive parenting is likely to be transferred down generational lines. He further supported this notion by research conducted by himself and Fearon and Chen and Kaplan (2001) [53], regarding the fact that this transmission occurs in both mothers and fathers [23].

In an attempt to understand the intergenerational transmission of parenting behavior, research has focused on genetic as well as on environmental attributes. Conger, Belsky and Capaldi (2009) [54] noted that recent work in molecular genetics emphasizes the need to consider the role of genes in accounting for durability as well as disruptions in the intergenerational transmission of parenting. In addition, Conger, Belsky and Capaldi (2009) [54] related to Patterson (1998) [55] and Rutter (1998) [56], who stressed the significance of feasible genetic effects in intergenerational continuities. However, Patterson's position, as mentioned by Conger, Belsky and Capaldi (2009) [54], pointed down a number of issues with conclusions about the impact of heritable features based on the modelling frequently conducted by behavioral geneticists. Conger, Belsky and Capaldi (2009) [54] noted that an inherent component of intergenerational transmission for biological organisms, including that of human beings, is the genes they inherit, which interact with environmental factors and underlie both biological and psychological processes. At the same time, the mechanisms underlying such impacts have not yet been clearly traced [54]. Moreover, recent research suggests that genes and environments are interrelated in complex relations that may have special meaning for understanding cross-generation durabilities in parenting behavior. Further, Conger, Belsky and Capaldi (2009) [54] mentioned recent studies by Cicchetti (2007) [57], Reiss and Leve (2007) [58] which investigated the interactions between social processes and specific sequences of DNA related to a wide scope of behavioral and emotional results. Furthermore, Conger, Belsky

and Capaldi, (2009) [54], discussed the work of Sheese, Voelker, Rothbart and Posner (2007) [59] illustrating that specific parenting practices interact with molecular genetic modifications to influence emotions and behaviors of developing children.

From an environmental viewpoint, evidence shows that continuity in parenting styles might also be an outcome of a family's social status or individual characteristics associated with it. For example, Bowles and Gintis (2002) [60] and Conger and Donnellan (2007) [54,61], have shown that socioeconomic status (SES) has an impact upon the quality of child-rearing. Furthermore, the authors have demonstrated that the SES is transmitted from parents to their children. Aligned with these findings, Thornberry, Freeman-Gallant, Lizotte, Krohn, and Smith concluded that the poverty of parents predicted financial burden for their adult offspring and that these indicators of SES were associated with both generation's parenting practices [54,60,61].

Some writers suggested considering the influence of child characteristics on the behavior of parents. According to Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], who discussed Scarr and McCartney (1983) [62] and Towers, et al. (2001) [63], a child's genetic attributes may influence the behavior of the parents through non-passive genotype-environment correlations. These correlations result from the influence of the child's genetically underlined features on the parent, regardless of the parent's genetic setup. The authors mentioned two structures of non-passive genotype-environment interactions. First, the evocative gene-environment interactions are the reactions of others to a genetically influenced feature of the person. Second, the active gene-environment interactions, in which the person is looking for a specific environment to exercise a genetically-based feature [1,62,63].

According to Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], genetic processes are meaningful mechanisms determining some interactions between the behavior of the parents and the behavior or characteristics of the child. However, we must note that according to the authors, these processes have only been investigated in limited contexts and often are not identified as a dependent influence on parent-child interactions [1].

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] discussed the process of gender stereotyping as a potential mechanism through which a child's gender is likely to have an impact on parenting behavior. The authors discussed research that has clearly demonstrated that parents' perceptions of male and female newborns are different [1,64]. Moreover, they cited research that claimed that adults' behavior toward male and female infants differ due to stereotypes rather than due to infant behavioral variables [1,65]. Therefore, studies illustrating differences in parental behavior with males as opposed to female infants and toddlers imply that the environments of boys and girls are different from early infancy [1,66].

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] mentioned that it is rather surprising that only a small portion of research has been dedicated to recording differences in parenting depending upon the child's age, with the majority of the published work focusing on relatively short periods of transitions [1,10]. Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] discussed Dunn and Plomin, which concluded that parental behavior aimed toward individual children presents considerable fluctuation throughout infancy and early childhood. . According to Hetherington and Clingempeel (1992) [67], as cited by Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], parental control plays a more important role in adaptive parenting during late childhood. Meanwhile, control is less central and less effective to positive parenting styles during adolescence [1,67]. We concur with the study of Allen, Hauser, Bell, and O'Connor (1994) cited in Karraker and Coleman (2006) regarding their conclusion that keeping a positive relationship as opposed to confining the adolescent's increasing desire for independence are clearly the key features of effective parenting during adolescence [1,68]. Regardless of the research notion, during our practise, we often meet parents who find it challenging to cease actively pursuing the need to control their adolescents. This behavior causes the parents distress and feelings of helplessness, as well as troubled relationships with their teenagers.

In order to understand the causes for parenting behavior, we must first explore the origins that underlie the behavior of a person in general and the foundations of his personality. We further focus our attention on child/person development. Aligned with this, McCabe (2014) [13] which referred to additional research, concluded that child development is a crucial area of investigation because of its impact on a wide scope of realms throughout the lifespan, involving social, emotional, and cognitive operations [13,69-72].

One of the earliest and continuing debates within the scope of child development, known as the 'Nature vs. Nurture's debate relates to the extent to which children are a product of their genetics or output of the environmental construction. The notion that growth and development are influenced mainly by innate processes and heredity was promoted by biological theories outlined by the work of Gesell (1950) [73]. He claimed that growth is genetically driven by 'maturation patterns', appearing in predictable modes. He further conceptualized 'milestones of development', in order to describe the stages in which kids at different ages accomplish various tasks. Nevertheless, Gessel's (1950) [73] work was criticized by Krishnan (2010) [74] for being a theory that provides an overly simplistic explanation for developmental processes as maturational ones, as insufficient in modern societies, rather than relating to the complexity of the varying processes systems, including behavioral ones [73,74].

Krishnan (2010) [74] discussed Behavioral and Social Learning Theories which focus on the significance of the environment and nurturing in the child's developmental processes. He relates to Watson's (1928) [75] view which considered children as passive humans that "can be moulded as clay". Further, Krishnan (2010) [74] referred to Skinner (1953) [76] who claimed that the learning processes occur by "operant conditioning" resulting from the organism responding to its environment or operating on it. Later on, [74,77] theorized that learning occurs through observation and imitation. Moreover, according to this theory, kids tend to be selective in behavior they imitate and they tend to imitate behavior resulting in valuable outcomes [74-76].

In addition, Krishnan, (2010) [74] related to the cognitive development theories which Jean Piaget developed in 1952 [74,78]. He focused upon children's learning processes and claimed that children understand the world based on their involvement and interactions within it [74,79].Later, as cited by Krishnan (2010) [74], Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory supported Piaget's (1952) [78] theory, claiming that children's knowledge is socially constructed. Vygotsky (1978) noted that children's acquisition of their culture's values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies is a reaction to their interaction with more knowledgeable members of society. Krishnan (2010) [74] mentioned Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the "zone of proximal development" which described the scope of activities that kids

cannot master independently but can accomplish with the guidance of and cooperation with knowledgeable others (for a detailed comparison of Piaget's, Gesell's, and Vygotsky's theories, refer to the work of Agbenyega 2009, in Krishnan 2010.

Continuing the theories related to child development, Krishnan, (2010) [74] referred to Urie Bronfenbrenner [74,80-83] who constructed the ecological systems theory in order to describe the development of a multidimensional complex system. He suggested that individuals cannot develop in isolation, but rather within a system of relationships that include family and society. According to this theory, a child's development is constructed by the various systems surrounding the child and the interrelationships between them. Bronfenbrenner (1989) [83] referred to the reciprocity in the relationship between the child and his environment and to the notion that the environment has an influence upon the child, whereas the child also influences his environment.

Patel (2011) [84] who referred to the bioecological model of child development, considered it as the idea that a child develops through processes of the complex interplay between an active child and the individuals, objects, and symbols in his immediate surroundings. Following this theory, as presented by Patel (2011) [84], in order to be effective, the interaction should occur on a regular basis over a continuous period of time.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) [81] bioecological model developed into Process-Person-Context-Time Model [1,85], suggesting a theoretical view within a contextual framework in order to understand how environmental elements interact with the individual traits of the child to differentially affect development. This model views parenting as a proximal process in development. Moreover, the impact of parenting on development, according to this model, varies in relation to the characteristics of the child. Belsky's (1984) [48] discussion of the primary impacts on the quality of parenting extended some of Bronfenbrenner's earlier notions. He claimed that the parents' psychological resources, the child's attributes, as well as environmental factors, have major influences on parenting quality.

Krishnan (2010) [74] also discussed the psychological approaches related to the process of child development. The author discussed psychoanalytic theories which postulate that development occurs in different stages and children are challenged with conflicts between biological drives and societal expectations. Two key theories grounded in this approach and mentioned by Krishnan (2010) [74] are Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory and Erik Erikson's (1980) [86] psychosocial theory. Freud emphasized that a child's personality develops under the influence of parental management of a child's sexual and aggressive drives. Erikson (1980) [86] extended Freud's work in that he included influences of society on personality development.

In the context of psychoanalytic views on child development, it is important to note the theory of Attachment, specifically in regard to its association to parent-child relationships and its impact on the development of an individual. As discussed by Collins and Read (1990) [87], Attachment theory focuses on the relationship that develops between a child and his caretaker and the effects this relationship has on the child's developing self-concept and his outlook of the social world. Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1982) [88-90], according to Collins and Read (1990) [87], was the first to define the theory of attachment which according to Ainsworth et al. (1978) [91] became an evolutionary-etholog-

ical approach. According to Bowlby's (1982) [90] perspective, infant attachment behaviors are determined by a specific, goal-directed behavioral system, which has a "set goal" of keeping closeness to a nurturing parent and a biological function of promoting the child's survival and safety. Later on, as described by Collins and Read (1990) [87] attachment researchers such as Bischof (1975) [92], Bretherton (1985) [93] and Sroufe and Waters (1977) [94], have concluded that the primary goal of the attachment system is not only the physical proximity but the assurance of "feel of security".

Priel and Besser (2002) [30] discussed attachment theory [30,88,89,95] which assumed that early infant-mother experiences affect relationships and interpersonal capabilities during childhood and later on in life. According to them, this progression is negotiated by internal working models of self and others that interpret and react to new interpersonal circumstances [30,96,97], and influence the control of distress. Moreover, according to Bowlby, 1988 [98] and Bretherton (1985) [30,93], parental sensitivity is influenced by parents' early experiences with their own attachment figures. This is aligned with our earlier discussion related to the intergenerational transmission of parenting, this time from a psychoanalytic developmental perspective.

According to Cowan, Cowan, Cohn and Pearson (1996) [38], the parent's insecure state of mind concerning attachment (dismissing, preoccupied, or unresolved) can be conceptualized as a risk factor for the quality of the parent-child relationship as well as the child's adaptation. Moreover, Cowan et al. [38] are related to the Crowell and Feldman (1988) [99] study that showed continuity between mothers' and children's attachment classifications in families with young children in therapy for behavioral issues.

In addition, McCabe (2014) [13] mentioned Plomin and Daniels, (1987) [100] who also discussed environmental factors and described them as participants in child development. McCabe (2014) [13] also referred to Collins et al. (2000) [101] who also focused a lot of attention upon maternal parenting behavior [14,101]. Over the last several decades, dialectical and contextualistic developments and theories supported the approach of an active child. One of those theories was developed by Vygotsky (1978) [102] who argued that development occurs through the process of internalization, where experiences of external events are translated by the individual into his personal, mental activity. In addition, Bidell and Fischer (1997) [103] presented the concept of constructive epigenesis, describing the child as capable of influencing his or her own development. Constructive epigenesis focuses on the primary role of self-organizing activity in the development of new skills. In sum, we can see a variety of approaches related to the origins of a child's development. These illustrate the continuum of approaches on the nature vs. nurture spectrum.

The debate of nature vs nurture has developed over time and recently, researchers and theorists in this field have agreed as Wexler (2006) [104] summarized in Grace, Hayes and Wise (2017) [22] that while children are born with their own innate traits, these features and their presentation are influenced by the environments in which each child grows. Therefore, we agree that it is more precise to approach the developing child in terms of 'Nature and Nurture' rather than "Nature vs Nurture".

When speaking about nature as the origin of personality, we accept a proposition that all personality traits of the child

are innate. When speaking about nurture, it is related to personality as a byproduct of communication and relationship with significant others surrounding the child. The crucial hidden difference between the two approaches is in the extent of "responsibility" for the behavior expressed by the child as well as his personality as a whole. While we speak about nurture, we place the responsibility upon the parents as constructors of the child's behavior. This relates mainly to the environmental setting provided to the child by his parents in order to enable optimal conditions for development. It is important to note at this point that every researcher investigating this field, including us as authors of this chapter, has his own unconscious bias when exploring this domain. Reading this text until this point, we believe that the reader can already identify what our bias is. In fact, each individual is subjectively invested and bears an unconscious predisposition in this predicament of nature vs. nurture. Needless to mention, that unconscious predisposition also exists in parenting and influences the way the parent will practice his nurturing setting.

Even if we adopt the view that personality traits are all innate, in order to optimally develop, it is our view that nature needs sufficient nurture. The nurturing process, as we see it, embeds the aspirations of the parent for the way his child should develop toward adulthood. In this view, the parent, in the nurturing process, sets the criteria for "good" and "bad", for the ways one should behave, what he should prefer as his hobbies, and for all the rest, even as far as his career choices. Indeed, parents are always human beings, before they are parents, containing the complexity of the human psyche which both consciously and mainly unconsciously underlies decision-making processes in all realms of their lives. Unconscious needs, fantasies, desires, and fears are all involved constantly in our behavior, whether we are aware of it or not. In our view, the parents' first and foremost responsibility towards the child is to become aware of the nature of his own behavior and what directs it. Thus, the parent can take ownership over what he brings into the shared space of the parent-child dyad. Our position relates to the parent being the responsible adult in the family unit, whether he acknowledges this or not. As such, the parent cannot avoid or ignore the role he has chosen when bringing a child into the world. When asking parents what they perceive as their parental role, we would usually receive quite general responses, such as "provide child's basic needs, emotional needs, the conditions for optimal development etc", however when deepening those questions and inquire as to what they see as optimal conditions and emotional needs, we will often identify that many parents have not had the chance to elaborate on those prior to their parental counselling session. Those parents come to seek our help with handling the behavior of their child, in an attempt to create better relationships with their teenager or to understand how to gain their authority and trust back. However, these parents are usually already dealing with the consequences of the way they nurtured their child without realizing it at this starting point. In this context, Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] discussed Baumrind (1991) [105] and O'Connor (2002) [10], who presented the importance of parental warmth/support, conflict or hostility/rejection, and monitoring and control of children's behavior as predictors of discrete child consequences[1,10,105].

We are not the first ones to note the importance of environmental conditions for a child's positive adaptation. According to Thomas and Chess 1977 [106], as cited in Karraker and Coleman 2006 [1], the goodness-of-fit model notes that positive development occurs when the specific individuals' characteristics match the requirements of his environment, rather than being a product of specific child traits or the particular quality of requirements proposed by the environment [1,106].

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] claimed that associations between parent and child features are exceptionally consistent across all people and all conditions. A mixture of associated factors may impact the intensity of the relations between individual parent and child characteristics, as well as the primary causal factors that generate the juxtaposition in any specific dyad. Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] related to Thomas and Chess's (1977) [106] goodness-of-fit model, which explains how child traits and characteristics of the environment can cooperate to decrease or advance growth. According to this model, adaptive child consequences are most presumed when the child's physical and behavioral features are consistent with the demands of his physical as well as social environment. Karraker and Coleman refer to Lerner (1993) [107], who claims that a child's physical uniqueness and psychological individuality will induce different feedback in parents based on their positions, values, stereotypes, and behavioral style, as well as on the physical features of the setting. Karraker and Coleman therefore concluded that children will naturally vary in the way and the degree to which they are able to meet the many requirements of their parents and the surroundings.

The social role of being a parent marks him as responsible for the provision of adequate environmental/nurturing conditions for children's growth and development. As such, parents are naturally convinced that they nurture the child according to his nature. However, parents' fantasmatic aspirations that are being inflicted on the child, can become an obstacle for the development of the child's own self according to his nature, which we believe the parent should and in many cases, consciously desires to nurture. However, from our practical experience, working with parents for more than 3 decades, we found that parents actually nurture their children according to their conscious as well as unconscious wishes and needs, rather than according to the child's characteristics and developmental needs. Moreover, the nurturing is directed by the parent's life experience, according to their individual childhood history and conflicts, as underlying features of a parent's personality. This occurs instead of relating to their child as a distinct individual with a unique emerging self.

It might be considered an unrealistic demand from any individual to distance himself from his psychic mechanisms, especially if most of those are unconscious to him. However, we postulate that becoming aware of the existence of those underlying processes which are managing and directing the parent in his behavior towards his child will enable evaluation of the parent's behavior. The evaluation will enable the parent the possibility to make a choice regarding his next behavior. By adopting this process, the parent will provide his child with a possibility to develop according to his nature and self-identity.

According to Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], parenting processes, as well as interactions between parents' and child' attributes, can be mediated and moderated by characteristics of the environment, in addition to their contribution to goodness-of-fit. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) [81] ecological model cited by Karraker and Coleman outlines a series of tiers that influence children's development ranging from proximal influences within the family, to more distanced influences caused by the community, as well as the society [1,81]. One of the basic assumptions of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) [81] theory is the understanding

that there are various connections among the structures and layers of impact with a lot of distanced factors influencing children through their impacts on parents.

In this relation, Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] referred to O'Connor (2002) [10] study, who found the moderating impacts of specific environmental factors such as exposure to different cultures and subcultures, as well as various neighborhood features, on parenting behavior and children's development. Following this notion, Chen et al. 1998 [108], (as cited by Karraker and Coleman, 2006 [1]) found that the correlation between toddler inhibition and maternal recognition as well as an inspiration of success were positive in a Chinese sample, while negative in a Canadian one. Research such as this provides important information related to the ways that relations between features of temperament distinctively affect parenting processes based upon the belief, economic, and social systems that identify specific cultures. Moreover, O'Connor illustrated that parenting differences mediate the effect of specific environmental characteristics such as economic adversity as well as peer relationships (e.g., parents encourage some relationships rather than others) on child consequences.

On the other end of the continuum related to the question of who is responsible for the way the child will develop within the relationship with his caretaker, we can find the supporters of the bi-directional model, in which the main focus is related to the ways the child is influencing his parent's behavior towards him.

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] mentioned that a great amount of correlational research has suggested strong interconnections between different parental behaviors and child features and behaviors. They claimed that it is obvious that children have an impact on their parents directly through their prompt behavior. The authors suggest that children affect their parents' behavior by looking at how they engage in either reinforcing or punishing reactions to their parent's behaviors. Moreover, Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] mention that many child behaviors evoke specific adult reactions; they exemplify this notion by referring to child distress which usually induces calming or distracting parenting behaviors.

According to Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] , mediated effects of children on parents occur when permanent child traits such as gender or looks, as well as persistent enduring temperament features, such as high activity level, influence parents' perceptions of the child. Those perceptions might modify parents' earlier cognitions or dominant ways of responding emotionally to others, which further influence parents' child-directed behavior. In order to support that notion, Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] refer to studies such as Teti and Gelfand, (1991) [109] which indicated that parents of children with behavior disorders tend to perceive themselves with low self-efficacy, compared to parents of children with no behavioral problems This conclusion illustrated the mediating role of parental cognitions.

In this context, Grusec, Hastings and Mammone (1994) mentioned by Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], claim that parents with low self-efficacy are prone to be challenged in actualizing their parenthood knowledge in practice and frequently show low levels of persistence in parenting. Moreover, it has been found by Cutrona and Troutman [110] (as cited by [1]) that mothers with low self-efficacy are more likely to experience postpartum depression more than mothers with high levels of self-efficacy. This can have a further impact on their parenting behavior.

Another phenomenon that we can identify within our practice with parents is mentioned by Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] and relates to the influence child characteristics may also have on the parents' behavior by influencing other relations and aspects of parents' life, such as a partner or relatives. Moreover, parents relate to the child as a "reason" in a parent's perception of energy level or work competence. In our view, a parent who is putting the responsibility accompanied by blame upon the child for personal wellbeing is a parent who will usually find difficulties in managing his or her parenting behavior. This approach will challenge child-parent relationships and bears further potential harm to the child's self-image and his mental well being. To this, Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] added that if the situation as such persisted, it may also cause a decrease in parental sensitivity to the child and less beneficial parenting.

In addition to the perceptions of the parent as a characteristic influencing parenting behavior toward the child, we refer to Jenkins et al. (2003) [111], cited by Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], who investigated potential distinctions in parenting behavior associated with the birth order of the child. This study showed that the oldest child was likely to receive the most positive behavior from his parents, followed by the youngest and then middle ones. Those are, in our view, motivated by the way parents perceive the meaning of the child's birth order.

Beal (1994) [66] and Maccoby (1998) [112], brought by Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], discussed the variety of ways gender of the child can influence the caregiving surroundings. For example, distinctive behavior based upon gender might influence the behavior and cognitions of parents. Literature reviews show few and relatively small gender differences in behavior during infancy, with increases in differences in early childhood, assuming the function of socialization pressure and children's elevated perception of gender roles.

Children's behavior tends to vary, with their moods and levels of cooperation and pleasing alternating frequently in response to interactions with others as well as circumstances. Although these behavioral transitions clearly have an impact on the parent's behavior, constant characteristics and behavioral dispositions of children are of most concern to the understanding of differential parenting and its consequences.

Maccoby (2001) [113] related to the controversy regarding the origin and intensity of parental influence. Maccoby mentioned the critics of Harris (1998) [114] and Rowe (1994) [115] who claimed that for many years psychologists have amplified the role of parents in determining the child's development, instead of considering other influences, such as a child's genetic makeup, his experiences with peers, or chance events, as more indicative as to the development of the child. That said, we suggest that a child's experiences with peers are also premeditated by the parent's attitudes and active reactions to the social interaction the child is sharing with him during the development. It is almost impossible to detach a child's experiences within daily life as separate from the parent's impact upon him as well as his circumstances. For example, chance events always have some association with the parent's control, and this is more explicit with children before adolescence.

According to Bronfenbrenner, (1979) [81] impacts on children's development and behavior go beyond the family of origin, to schools, peer connections, relatives, neighborhoods, communities, as well as geographical locations, all of which were operative during particular historical periods, embedded

in dynamic economic, cultural, and political systems.

On this issue, Maccoby (2001) [113] notes that we know today that parents are not the sole significant impact on children's development. According to Maccoby, there is a network of causal factors that influence children's growth and development. Parenting is only one of those factors and according to Maccoby, in contrast to our view, it is not necessarily the most important one. According to the author's view, children are influenced by their genetic makeup, the neighborhood they live in, the schools they attend, and the kind of peers they associate with. We should however remind ourselves that parents are involved in choosing their children's out-of-home surroundings as well. Therefore, although we are tempted to search for out of home influences, we often find that those are also mediated and moderated by the parents. Thus, we acknowledge our initial concept of "Prima authors".

In another attempt to ascribe parents' behavior to features other than parents' personality and behavior, Maccoby mentioned that behavior geneticists discussed how significantly children in the same house can differ. Researchers taking the genetic approach ascribe many of these differences to the genetic variables among the children. The concept of "evocative" parent-child correlation refers to a case, for example, in which an attractive child will elicit more positive parenting than an unattractive child. According to Maccoby, the assumption that children are "driving" their parents' actions can be safely attributed to the genetic component of the causal equation, determining what parents do and how their kids behave. This "safe" attribution in our view, functions as a defence mechanism which in many cases denies parents' behavioural transformation and by that cements a situation that can be dysfunctional for some members of the family.

Luster and Okagaki (2006) [116] refer to Feinberg and Hetherington, Kowal and Kramer (1997) [117], McGuire, Dunn and Plomin (1995) [118] and McHale and Pawletko (1992) [119] that presented evidence comparing parenting behavior to different children by the same parent, such as in families with more than one child. This evidence clearly suggests that individual children evoke distinctive parenting behaviors. For example, a parent might be likely to respond by a milder discipline technique to the misbehavior of an eager-to-please child who rarely misbehaves, as opposed to a less sensitive child who has a tendency towards pushing the limits. In this context, we must remember that evidence is based on evaluating existing situations describing ascribed "roles" for each of the children being "eager to please" or "less sensitive". We must refer to the notion that those patterns of a child's behaviour developed within the relationship with that same parent. If we analyze this occurrence from a social and behavioral perspective, the child's behavior is managed by operant conditioning. A child is eager to please because this behaviour was functional in getting him toward his goal - reinforced by the parent's response. Thus that child would likely repeat the behavior, and will be reinforced again. Therefore, we can note the parent's input to the current repeating situation. We are required to inquire into the origin of the existing pattern rather than concluding that a child's behaviors are unrelated to parental influence. It is also crucial to note that a child's behavior is also influenced by the way the child perceives his parent's approach towards his siblings, not only by the way the child experiences his parent's attitude towards him. Moreover, the comparison between the diverse behaviors towards the child and what he experiences towards his sibling

is one of the characteristics parents must account for in their process of introspection. In many cases, one child might adopt a behavior that is a product of accumulative experience based on the interaction between his parents and his sibling. This can take various forms, not necessarily repetitive ones.

The fact that parents behave differently with their offsprings is best illustrated by Deater-Deckard et al. (2001) [120], cited by Karraker and Colman (2006) [1], who showed that even in the case of identical twins in which physical and psychological variations between siblings are minimal, mothers adopted differential parenting with more positive parenting behaviors linked to more positive child outcomes. The mission remains, according to them, identifying the characteristics within the parent and the child that results in such differential parenting.

McCabe (2014) [13]maintained the notion that children influence their parents, while parents also influence their children. These influences occur simultaneously and constantly, and transformations parents or children undergo, as a result of these processes, further influence future interactions and courses of influence. However, this becomes more complex when we consider the role of internal mechanisms such as emotional and cognitive, as added to the behavioral ones. Child characteristics, such as appearance or gender, can have an influence on parents either by affecting either the child's, parent's, or both of their behaviors and cognitions. The behavior of the parents toward the child may therefore be influenced by their aspirations, perceptions, or assumptions about the child or stereotypes, as well as by the child's actual behavior. It is assumed, as brought by McCabe (2014) [13]that the same processes may occur in the child, however, many of these may be either simplified or nonexistent in young children. We concur with this crucial last point, since stereotypes, expectations, and beliefs are in our view, constructed by the parents within the relationship with the child, and not separated from the parent's influence as suggested by the bi-directional approach.

The exploration of parenting behavior has reasonably been the central focus of studies composed to evaluate the environmental effects on child outcomes, based on the time, energy, and emotional investment parents have in their children's lives. Essentially, all of the parenting research since before the 1960s and after was dedicated to the study of parent's influences on children's adaptation and development. Following this, relevant studies have focused on individual and environmental factors of the parenting behaviors that are possibly risking children's optimal development. However, more recent research shows that many differences that once were conceptualized in relation to the extent that parents are able to influence the lives of their offsprings are now conceptualized as related to the child's characteristics.

Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] mentioned Bell (1968) [121] and Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) [122] who stressed that recognition of the contribution of a child to parenting processes dates back to early research on socialization and Thomas, Chess, Birch, Hertzig and Korn, 1963 who studied temperament. Moreover, as cited by Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1], the notion of bi-directionality in processes of socialization was introduced formally in 1957 by Sears et al. They referred to the concept of reciprocal determinism (effects flowing from child to parent as well as from parent to child), however, Karraker and Coleman (2006) [1] argue that the concept of reciprocal determinism did not receive serious reference until the publication of Bell's (1968) [121] review of the limitations of the unidirectional approach.

In every way of existence, regardless of cultural differences, parents are parents. Any observation made in nature can easily identify that every animal who raises its offspring socializes them intuitively, based on modelling provided by his parents. Intuitive skills as such often do not require any doubt or introspection. It is one of the unique skills that we, maybe sadly, do not study in school. When a person looks at the nature around him, accumulating impressions from it, he relates to parenting as to natural ability. This natural ability might be enough for adapting to survival in a natural habitat. However, when social adaptation is required, the intuitive skills are not enough and might even prevent the child from his optimal social integration. Besides the unconscious mechanisms underlying parental projections, mentioned before in this chapter, there is another obstacle to the ability of the parent to question his actions as well as his reactions. The parent is functioning as the primary socialization agent responsible for integrating his child into the social environment. These agency mechanisms which are imposed by nature, and in the postmodern age confirmed by law, grant and validate the parent's inherent power to exercise his intuitive knowledge regarding child-rearing. Natural and intuitive parenting styles seek to integrate the offspring into his natural environment, while socializing parenting is targeted to provide the child with skills and abilities to become an individual within a social group. While the goals are inherently different, we often find that parents are acting in a social domain towards their kids, with the same emotional conviction and attitudes as we relate to survival in nature. For example, a parent can react to a child's choice of his peers and activities with stress that is associated usually with danger to his survival. The child in this case will be influenced not only emotionally for denying his choices and decisions, but also can be prone to doubt his own reality test.

It is our view that the parent consciously or unconsciously is nurturing his child, preparing him towards a certain moral position related to the social world. Even if, ideally, the child fully adopts the parent's position, the social world is changing constantly, therefore the position may soon become irrelevant. Prior to Covid-19, we might have been convinced by an illusion of stable and certain social reality. However, during the last two years, uncertainty became more primary than ever before. Thus, in a constantly changing social reality, the best we can provide for our children are the abilities and skills to evaluate the situations and conduct decision-making processes according to their needs in social situations. In addition, we must provide them with knowledge and experience of taking responsibility related to the consequences of each of the choices. Moreover, we must change the common attitude regarding the meaning of failure. Decision-making processes embed the inevitable possibility of making a stake. In fact, we can relate to mistakes as an integral part of progress. When information is available, it is always partial, therefore the mistake can reveal more information. Thus, mistakes usually occur due to knowledge gaps and adequate analysis of failure can direct the ways this gap can be bridged. Therefore, relating to our children's mistakes as an opportunity to gather more valuable and relevant information will enable them to promote their decision-making process. Those principles illustrate our practical approach to parental counselling. This approach is targeted to consider the optimal conditions for child development within his family unit.

When relating to optimal conditions, we refer to Pfaffenberger (2005) [123] who claimed that optimum development of personality has generated a relatively small portion of research in comparison to other fields of psychology. In our view, his notion is rather interesting, since, for decades, the research in the field of education and child psychology has been striving to find the optimal ways to promote positive development.

Among the few theorists who had attempted to investigate optimum development, Rogers suggested that a person may develop optimally when he experiences only "unconditional positive regard" [123]. He suggested that the need for positive regard from others and positive self-regard would fit the organismic evaluation process and the coherence between the self and the experience, resulting in full psychological adjustment. Pfaffenberger (2005) [123] referred also to Abraham Maslow (1954/1970) who presented a study demonstrating that self-actualization signifies a distinctive stage of advanced development in adulthood that is seldom accomplished. Pfaffenberger (2005) [123] referred to Cook-Greuter (1999) [124], Kegan (1994) [125] and Torbert (1994) [126], who have argued that grown-ups at higher stages of development have a special role to contribute to the field of education, organizational management, as well as social leadership since they acquire mature insight as well as intellectual flexibility notes that the predominance of cognitive approaches, as well as adherence to the medical model in contemporary psychology, neglected Maslow's theory. Following the previously mentioned notion that optimum development of personality has generated relatively little research, the reason why few people can achieve advanced stages of development and how this could be changed remains an insufficiently understood phenomenon [123].

In this context, Pfaffenberger (2005) [123]mentioned that although contemporary psychology has constructed numerous approaches to the research of personality, only the constructivist developmental theories in the neo-Piagetian approach have defined stages of advanced development, however, these also are almost never completed. He concluded that stages of development usually follow a constant hierarchical course. Pfaffenberger (2005) [123] also referred to several theorists who have assumed stage development for specific features of personality; Kohlberg (1969) [127] who studied moral development, Fowler (1981) [128] who studied the stages of faith, and Basseches (1984) [129] who theorized cognitive development beyond the formal operations stage.

Loevinger's (1976) theory of ego development mentioned also by Pfaffenberger, (2005) [123] has contributed greatly to this way of investigating personality. According to Pfaffenberger, (2005) [123], the theory of ego development is the only one of the post-Piagetian approaches that succeeded to conquer personality as a whole. Loevinger's (1976) [130] theory approaches the ego as a "master trait" which integrates both the emotional, cognitive, as well as interpersonal features of behavior. Loevinger's (1976) [130] referred to an ego stage as a frame of reference that the individual applies in order to interpret life events. Thus, Loevinger (1976) [130] referred to by Pfaffenberger, (2005) [123] defined nine stages of personality development. Pfaffenberger, (2005) [123] related to Loevinger (1976) [130] speculation that humans develop when they are exposed to interpersonal surroundings that are more complex than them.

In contrast to the mentioned note that little research has been conducted regarding conditions for optimal development, many theories had attempted to suggest models that proposed different perspectives on child's development. In our view, research has not elicited one optimal model for a child's potential

development. Due to the uniqueness of the individual needs and characteristics of each child within his unique family system, optimal conditions cannot be generalized.

In fact, when defining optimal conditions we should refer to each case of the family unit within the specific culture. Each unit entails its member's uniqueness, and distinctive emotional and cognitive qualities and needs within specific socio-economic circumstances. In our view, the current scientific position in which a generalized model is an ultimate goal is an obstacle for practitioners in a similar way that the parent's view can be an obstacle for a child. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, when it originates from a parent's own unconscious and conscious parenting models, their behavior unknowingly ignores the particular child's specific needs. Therefore, as proposed in the "parenting intelligence" conceptualization, the practitioner should strive to investigate how to approach the family situation and circumstances, rather than attempting to provide models which are not specified by definition. The practitioner, in our view, has to involve himself in the process of conscious introspection regarding is theoretical orientation, in the same way, as we suggest, parents should when requested to make a change in their attitudes when facing challenges with managing their family situations.

Cowan, Cohn, Cowan and Pearson (1996) [38] cited Gurman and Kniskern (1991) [131], and Patterson (1990) [132], regarding the notion that together with attachment theorists, family's approach theorists, therapists, and researchers hold that parents' behavior is involved in the etiology or the persistence of children's problems. Those authors also argued that the quality of the parents' relationship is the main source driving the family system. It is therefore crucial, in our view, to reconsider the parents' therapy approaches and their focus in order to promote the practice of parental counselling.

As cited by Melchert, T. P. (2013) [133], Corsini and Wedding, (2008) [134] reviewed and concluded that since Freud in (1905) defined psychotherapeutic practice, it has developed as a field of practice and research and these have produced more than four hundred published approaches. However, it remains mainly an individual process that, according to almost all approaches, is an intervention intended to promote the quality of the mental health of an individual patient. Working with children and adolescents differs in many ways from therapy for adults. In order to contextualize their wellbeing, therapy for this young population requires an understanding of their habitat and the socio-cultural environment in which their development is occurring. According to Brown (2000) [135] discussed by Salmon et al. (2020) [2], the individual grows within a social system that influences his development and self-concept, and therefore his family and especially his parents are the most meaningful agents of his development.

According to Frick (2018) [136], the concept of "parental therapy" refers to many types of interventions, which may come out in many different modes. However, he claimed the targets were agreed upon. It is acknowledged that in order to improve the well being of the child, in addition to securing the conditions of the child's individual psychotherapy, the therapists should further enable parents to start or restart a definite parenting process in order to enable, encourage and develop the outcomes of child psychotherapy.

In addition, Frick (2018) [136] further referred to the notion that the parental therapist has to be prepared to frequently change focus during the process, tuning not only to the child's development but also to the parent's ability to comprehend the child's changing psychic needs as their own capacity to provide the child with a stable environment. Therefore according to Frick, supportive, social, as well as therapeutic interventions should all be considered in parental therapy.

It is our basic assumption, aligned with Frick (2018) [136], that parents want their children's happiness, while simultaneously having their own need to maintain their defences. This is one of the main reasons that makes parents ambivalent in their pursuit of help. According to Frick, similar resistances against inner change can be found in people in individual psychotherapy. However, if we relate a child's symptoms as being a presentation of the parents' own issues, then both motivation and resistance have been located in different people and are therefore more difficult to treat.

While most of the parents we encountered during the years of our practice were convinced that they did not know what to do and requested behavioral techniques and skills enhancement [137,138] or requested to "heal the child's problem", in our experience, the behavioral aspects were not the core issue in most cases we treated. Moreover, we found that most of the parents know what to do practically in most of the cases when they encounter children, before approaching therapy. At first, most of the parents act intuitively, as is aligned with other research in the field [8,139,140]. When they fail to achieve their goal, they often try to implement different behaviors outsourced from family and friends as well as internet forums. The challenge arises when they either cannot adhere to those behaviors or simply do not "work" as they would have expected. While investigating the reasons for these futile attempts, we considered the potential factors which made the behavioral changes difficult for so many parents with motivation for change to undergo transformation. Among other things, we inquired into the issues of consistency, couple cooperation, and engagement with the process of change [8,141]. In our clinical experience, none of those factors provided a satisfactory explanation for parents' difficulties within the family situations. After inquiring about the challenge on a deeper level, implementing family psychoanalytic training [8,142] into the investigation of parental behavior and resistance to transformation, we identified the problem which prevented parents from undergoing the transformational process.

Regardlessof the notion that any process of transformation is challenging for an individual, there is specific complexity the process of parents' behavior change. Parent's are eager to receive the "one and only" ideal working model for any situation provided by a professional in the field of child education or counselling. The practitioner on the other has his own fantasy, that he has the ownership of such an ideal working model.

In this context, Cowan, Powell and Cowan, (1998) [143] discussed two types of interventions. The first is formed to attract parents who seek to learn more about parenting strategies and who have not reported about major problems in the family nor asked for a "cure" for acute problems. The second type of parenting intervention addressed families in which the psychological distress of one or more of the family members required treatment. This survey had shown that although these represent two very distinct approaches involving different assumptions and requiring qualitatively different skills, there were more similarities than differences. This represents the aspiration for a generalized theoretical approach, regardless of the family's context.

Chronologically, the conceptualisation of theoretical approaches began with the Freudian 1905, in Melchert, 2013 [133] theory and progressed with the development of the psychodynamic, behavioural, humanistic, cognitive, systemic, multicultural, and integrative approaches. Corsini and Wedding (2008) [134] as cited by Melchert (2013) [133]stated that more than 400 theoretical orientations have been developed, differing in focus and scope. Some theories focus more on their explanation for the development of personality and psychopathology, while others emphasize the therapy process. As professionals, we acknowledge that since Freud 1905, these theoretical orientations suggested by undergraduate and graduate textbooks are utilised in psychology and psychotherapy training and practice. However, Melchert (2013) [133] went on to say how these orientations have always been controversial, and there has been perpetual discussion criticizing and discussing the weakness of each. Nevertheless, educational and mental professionals strive to conceptualize the working model that will supply the ultimate framework from which we can derive any intervention related to child development.

This notion was further elaborated by Melchert (2013) [133] who suggested developing a unified scientific approach to clinical practice. This approach, in his view, would provide a replacement to the assortment of irreconcilable theoretical orientations that are applied to conceptualize cases and interventions in practice. He further referred to Mitchell (2009) [144] and Rodgers (2010) [22] who related to the complexity of the human mind and behavior. Due to this complexity, in their view, a meta-theoretical framework is required in order to provide approximate explanations of human behavior. Melchert (2013) [133] suggested that a metatheoretical framework will enable the extraction of specific models which can then be empirically tested and refined. We believe that there are various possible reasons for the fact that this unified model was not constructed since the field of psychology has existed, and for the same reasons, we do not expect it to evolve anytime soon. Among possible factors, there is the inevitable need of each of the scholars in the field to conceptualize his view and his unique proposition which will represent his individual point of view and approach to the human psyche. However, this discussion will be further elaborated in our future writings.

In addition to the discussion related to the controversy between the therapeutic orientations, Slavin-Mulford, Hilsenroth, Blagys and Blais (2011) [145] raised the profound need to examine the quality of the care provided by the practitioners in the field through research. Research into human behavior, such as that of Lang, McTeague and Bradley (2016) [146] has been able to scientifically examine measurements such as the physiological reaction of the body to anxiety, and extract conclusions from the findings using empirical research methods. Research such as the work of Marian and Filimon (2010) [147] has examined the "efficiency" of the approaches to therapy through quantitative research methodologies, in an attempt to present evidence-based approaches and models of practice. However, we observe that significant challenges remain in how practitioners relate to the concept of "evidence" and the ways in which they use it in decision-making processes in practice.

Additionally, it is crucial to remember one of the most significant features related to therapeutic practice. In this context, Norcross and Wampold (2011) [148] claimed that experienced practitioners in psychotherapy acknowledge the various factors which influence the therapy process and its outcome apart from the chosen therapy approach. They found that the most significant variable is the quality of the therapeutic alliance between the therapist and his patient, which depends upon the abilities and skills of the therapist in providing the conditions required to develop a therapeutic relationship.

Melchert (2013) [133] pointed out that psychological theoretical orientations are underlined by philosophical assumptions and worldviews of the theorists, instead of scientific evidence. He further suggested relating to the debates between advocates of different theories as to philosophical or political disputes. In our view, it resembles the conflicts between the parents in the family regarding child-rearing. In this context, Melchert (2013) [133] referred to Corsini and Wedding (2008) [134] and Truscott (2010) [149] who stated that instead of evaluating and adopting therapeutic orientations based on logical scientific analysis, practitioners tend to choose a theoretical approach based on their personality and worldview.

In our view the same mechanism is applied in a parent's unconscious choice of behavioral approach to child-rearing, which is, as we discussed through the chapter, underpinned by personal history which constructs each parent's personality and worldview.

As in parenting processes, in professional development, the attraction to the theoretical orientation based on individual perspective and worldview is inevitable. The challenge arises when those subjective choices are presented as objective ones which can be interpreted as evidence-based both by parents and practitioners. The choice of an individual in the way he approaches any issue relates mostly to his personality, and individual worldviews. however, the level of conviction in one's attitude can be experienced by the other as if views are more than solely personal, but almost as if they are agreed upon by "everyone" and based on evidence. This need to generalize the personally constructed approach of both the parent and the practitioner originates in every individual's narcissistic tendencies. An individual need for the parent to see his child as continuing his path in different ways, as a reassurance of his own self, is similar to the need of the practitioner to apply his individual approach in order to eassure his choice of orientation. This need can explain both the insistence of the parent to adhere to his personal approach and the practitioners' persistence upon his theory while ignoring the incompatibility of it with the child's or the patient's unique individual needs.

Conclusions

Based on the understanding of previously discussed notions related to the working model that needs to be constructed, as well as the optimal conditions which have to be reconsidered according to the unique and individual needs of the specific child in each family with its context, we suggest our approach. It is our basic assumption that if we wish to supply the compatible conditions to the specific needs of the child, we should shift the focus from our parenting aspirations which construct our attitudes and behaviors toward the child's specific individual needs. This shift will force the parent to engage in constant internal awareness with regard to the notion that he is always driven by his psychic needs and fantasies which although unconscious may nevertheless be crucial in guiding his decision-making process. We are therefore suggested to shift towards "conscious parenting" in terms of actions and reactions towards the children, based on a decision-making process of choosing the action and reaction which promotes in the best possible way

the development of the child with his specific characteristics. In many cases, the behavior that will then be chosen will be inherently different from the instinctive one we would apply without this process. For example, a parent who is aspiring that his child will continue his father's legacy in a computer science career might naturally direct his child from a young age to invest more in school subjects that are associated with it. In case that a child is interested in arts, the father's reaction to his interests and products will be subjected first of all by the aspirations. Without the proposed "conscious" process, the father will disregard the child's interests and might provide negative feedback. The child will experience rejection and either suppress himself and adopt the father's way, or reject the father's views, thus risking distancing himself from all of the father's influences. In both cases, the impact of the father's attitude will negatively affect both the child's development of the self and the relationship between the father and his child. When the parent adopts the suggested process of introspection regarding the discrepancies between himself and the needs of the child, while acknowledging the separate individual self of his child, he will consciously support the choice of his child's interest. In this scenario, the parent by his reaction and feedback will positively reinforce the child's choices, thus providing reassurance for the child's individual developing self.

In the same way, in the practice of working with parents in clinical practice, when a practitioner acknowledges the discrepancies between his theoretical orientation and the needs of the patients, he will be forced to abandon his theory and previous experience and attune himself with a new framework that accounts for the needs of the specific family. In sum, the best of the child, and the best of the patient should govern the intervention process. Aligned with this theory, it is our basic assumption that the practitioner in family interventions serves as a model for a responsible adult, he should refer from the same mistake and avoid any theoretical predisposition. This is supported by Putnam et al. (2002) who stated that "Any program giving prescriptions about 'the right way to do it' will clearly be deficient if it does not also direct parents' attention to individuality and to the need to be flexible in their approach to parenting".

Dedication: This chapter is dedicated to my beloved grandmothers Rosa and Larisa, who had been taken by Alzheimer's, however are always in my memories.

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