

Chapter 23 — The Direction of Youthful Initiative

of *Piloting Modern Youth: A Guide for Parents, Teachers, and Others Dealing with Adolescents*
(1931)

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with the collaboration of
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Source for Chapter 23, in the order in which they appear

- (1) Leta S. **Hollingsworth**, Ph.D., *The Psychology of the Adolescent* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928)
- (2) Fowler D. **Brooks**, *The Psychology of Adolescence* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929)
- (3) Frederick **Tracy**, Ph.D., *The Psychology of Adolescence* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920)
- (4) Frankwood E. **Williams**, M.D., *Adolescence: Studies in Mental Hygiene* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1930)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (or previous Sadler book) first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.

- (e) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (g) **Red** indicates an obvious error on Sadler's part, brought about, in most cases, by miscopying or misinterpreting his source.

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X X I I I — T H E D I R E C T I O N O F Y O U T H F U L I N I T I A T I V E

23:0.1 Adolescence is the age of superabundant spirits, the period of youth initiative, the time when young folks want to “go places and do things.” While play serves as a safety-valve for this overflow, much of the enthusiasm of adolescence finds expression in unprofitable or harmful channels because it is not wisely directed. Young people possess this energy, but they lack wisdom for its profitable utilization.

VII: FINDING THE SELF (Hollingworth 165)

GUIDING LINES (Hollingworth 178)

Next in importance to that of parents is the rôle of the teacher in the tacit guidance of the child by daily example (H 181).

The following were elicited from those who had been out of high school for three or four years,

when asked to describe their best teachers (H 182).

[contd] 1. The teacher of my high-school days who appealed to me most was the principal, under whom I worked for the entire four years.

23:0.2 The task of the sagacious guidance of youthful initiative falls first upon parents and then upon teachers.

High-school teachers exert a powerful influence upon their pupils.

A group of youth who had been out of high school three or four years

were recently asked to describe their best teachers.

The following responses indicate how great is the influence of these teachers:

23:0.3 1. The teacher of my high-school days who appealed to me most was the principal, under whom I worked for the entire four years.

The quality that impressed me most was his ability to maintain discipline.

The school was not an easy one to handle, and yet he always had good order, not merely in his classes, but throughout the whole school.

...

This principal also impressed me with his power as a teacher.

He taught me history and mathematics in such a way that I still take a great interest in both subjects (H 182).

[contd] 2. My best teacher was always fair and just, both in regard to our work in class and our conduct in assembly room.

She was kind when we tried and made mistakes, and never discouraged us by sarcasm (a fault very common to teachers, I think).

She was always tastefully dressed, both in school and for outside affairs.

All of these characteristics, along with her ever-readiness to help and encourage in everything that concerned us, made her a sort of model for all of us.

We used to say, "When I grow up, I am going to be just like Miss K—" (H 182).

[contd] 3. A certain teacher interested me very much, and I tried to imitate her in every way.

She was a young person, lively and pretty, and I grew to love her intensely.

I could see no faults in her and disliked to hear others speak ill of her (H 182).

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SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

X: ADOLESCENT INTERESTS (Brooks 275)

4. *Recreational and social interests* (Brooks 287)

Gangs.

Early adolescence and the years immediately preceding it are the years when boys take to gangs (B 288-90).

23:1.1 There is a tendency among youth, particularly boys, to become associated in gangs—

undoubtedly a hang-over from the tribal organization of primitive man.

If wisely directed, this may be helpful.

Adventure and nature interests.

The lure of adventure, strong in pre-adolescence, seems even stronger in the teens (B 290).

23:1.2 Some provision must be made for the satisfaction of

the lure of adventure;

The wanderlust is not, however, confined to adolescents;

the wanderlust is not confined to adolescents;

it possesses those older and those who have not reached the teens (B 290).

in many individuals it persists into adult life.

Social organizations in high school.

The social interests of adolescence manifest themselves in the popularity of high-school clubs, dances, and other similar extra-curricular group activities, not to mention extra-school organizations such as Boy and Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls, as well as church and community organizations and activities of various sorts (B 291-92).

23:1.3 The social clubs and other school organizations,

quite separate and apart from the play life and the various forms of athletics, must be given due attention.

Group activities of all kinds should be fostered.

[Camping, hiking, and other similar activities are eagerly engaged in both before and after adolescence, as well as during the teens (B 291).]

In early fall and late spring, hiking and camping should be encouraged,

either under school supervision or in cooperation with the Boy and Girl Scout organizations.

Dean Clark, at the University of Illinois, says:

Men, young and old, are social animals. All of us like to join things.

It is as difficult for me to refuse an invitation to become a member of a club or a fraternity or an organization as it is to resist the seductive talk of a book agent when he spreads his attractive wares before my eyes ... I am not arguing, however, that there is always profit in joining. Boys feel very much about joining things as men do... (B 292).

23:1.4 The adolescent is an enthusiastic “joiner.”

Boys and girls this age are ready to enlist in any and all sorts of group activities that are in the least appealing,

and this social attitude should be fostered and encouraged.

Let us remember that we are trying to cultivate the social nature of these youth; citizenship is the real goal of all our educational efforts.

VII: FINDING THE SELF (Hollingworth 165)

GUIDING LINES (Hollingworth 178)

In the same way, dramatics among adolescents

23:1.5 Amateur dramatic acting has an almost universal appeal for adolescents,

may be utilized in character formation.

The performer will tend to identify himself with the rôle assigned.

Tactful assignment of rôles must be made if dramatics are to be utilized for this purpose.

A boy or girl already somewhat villainous should scarcely be assigned to the rôle of villain in the play! (H 180)

An attractive thief, a thrilling bandit, may be chosen by certain natures, in certain environments, as a guiding line. Much criticism has been directed against the moving pictures for the kind of models which they present to the young.

and I know of no single activity that can be more profitably used to promote character formation along desirable lines.

The performer invariably tends to identify himself with the character he is playing,

and if teachers are wise and tactful in the assignment of the roles,

dramatics may serve a highly corrective purpose in bringing about the modification of certain temperamental deficiencies.

One thing is certain—

a pupil who already has somewhat villainous tendencies should not be asked to play the villain.

23:1.6 The difficulty with high-school dramatics is that the majority of plays present parts which are undesirable for these students. The wise selection of plays and the playing of the objectionable roles by the older pupils whose characters are well formed, or even by the younger instructors, will do much to overcome this unfavorable feature.

23:1.7 The same criticism must be made of motion-pictures,

for they sometimes present a brilliant character as a thief or a bandit, the very cleverness of whose machinations makes a strong appeal to adolescents.

Youth are always studying their teachers and other persons brought prominently to their notice for the purpose of choosing models; it is in this connection that

Movie actors and actresses attain great influence as heroes,

movie actors and actresses are placed upon pedestals, all but regarded as patterns and heroes by the younger people who make up a large part of their audiences.

to judge from the way in which young people try to imitate them in dress and manner,

Adolescents unconsciously copy the manners and dress of their movie heroes and heroines,

sometimes even changing their given names to that of the admired "star" (H 180).

sometimes even changing their names to those of their favorite stars.

23:1.8 I have known many high-school students, especially timid girls, to "find themselves" for the first time through dramatics. It seems to me that the desire and ability to act is inherent in the average American child, and that it is about the only art of which this can be said. American youth do not take to music as universally as do German young people; neither are they enamored of pictures and sculpture like the Italians; but with very little instruction and less urging, even pre-high-school youngsters can be introduced to dramatics.

23:1.9 I would make a strong plea for a greater place for school dramatics in our program of training youth. It is too much neglected, greatly to the hurt of our adolescents.

APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY

XI: THE APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY IN NATURE AND ART (Tracy 148)

With one apparent exception, the things that are beautiful appear to make no special impression upon the lower animal mind (T 148).

Hence to man alone belong science, art, and morality (T 148).

The aesthetic faculty, including the power to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly, to feel pleasure in the former

and to be disagreeably affected by the latter,

and to create beautiful forms as embodiments of ideas,

belongs probably to man alone among earthly beings (T 148).

But it is in youth that the capacity to appreciate beauty in all its forms make the most marked advance.... External nature awakens an interest not previously felt.

The flora and the fauna, the sky, the woods, the winds and waters, storm, sunshine, and the procession of the seasons, exert upon the soul a mystic and potent fascination.

There is in many cases a strong feeling of fellowship with the things of external nature; a feeling which seems closely akin to the religious sentiment ... (T 150).

23:2.1 I doubt very much if animals have any real sense of beauty.

It is highly probable that man alone possesses an appreciation for science, art, and morality.

By the sense of beauty we mean an understanding of, and love for, the esthetic and ennobling in both nature and art—

man's effort to materialize his inner concepts of beauty, form, and grace of action.

23:2.2 Adolescents take an extraordinary interest in all natural phenomena.

Sunshine and storm, sunset and moonlight, clear skies and clouds—all make a great appeal to them.

Their appreciation of these things borders on the mystic, almost approaching the spiritual.

Turning now from nature to art I am inclined to say, in view of all the evidence, that ... the love of the beautiful, and the enthusiasm for the creations of the artistic faculty, really awaken with the adolescent years.

It is quite true ... that pretty things, both natural and artificial, are admired by children ... But ... the love of bright colors, obvious rhymes, and rhythmic movements, will account for the greater part ... of these phenomena.

But in the adolescent years

the sources of aesthetic feeling seem to deepen and expand, so that beauty in all its forms makes a new appeal and calls forth a stronger and more intense response (T 150).

That there exists a close relation between this awakening of the aesthetic nature and the unfolding of the sex life, with which it is contemporary, there can be no doubt.

Many writers have referred to this rather obvious connexion, as well as to that between the artistic and religious instincts ... (T 156).

Likewise, the vast majority of youth, during their teens and early twenties, have a great love for the beautiful in art.

23:2.3 Smaller children enjoy bright colors and dramatic action,

but adolescents

gradually lose interest in these more vivid and spectacular manifestations,

while they develop a keen delight in grace and beauty.

This sense of the beautiful not only manifests itself in a thousand increasing appreciations of nature and art,

but it also becomes attached to both the sex

and religious emotions,

and thus affords parents and teachers an excellent opportunity for the wise direction of youthful initiative, in that

[A]rt and morals and religion draw together, and become allies in the noblest of all causes, that of emancipating the soul of youth from the bondage of sensuality, and enabling it to take hold upon the things that are unseen and eternal (T 159).

adolescents are thus the more easily diverted from the ugly, uncouth, and unclean toward the beautiful, graceful, and uplifting.

23:2.4 During adolescence, a wise use of drawing, painting, and modeling will serve to stimulate the creative longing of these rapidly developing personalities. Art can be utilized not only as an expression of creative imagination but also as a powerful contribution to personality integration. Art is valuable in that it affords the adolescent opportunity for the development of adequate self-criticism. The desire for better things is helpfully produced by his own intelligent criticism of his art efforts; he will get far more good from this than from criticism of his personal deficiencies at the hands of unsympathetic teachers or misunderstanding parents.

A MISDIRECTED LIFE

II, I: CAN YOUTH BE COERCED?
(Williams 59)

I have in mind a certain individual who is a graduate, with honors, of an important university, and who in his college days was an athlete of national reputation (W 72).

23:3.1 Henry H. was twenty-six years of age, a college graduate.

He sat in my office, a dejected and forlorn specimen of humanity.

He had brains; his I.Q. was 130,

He has been able to accomplish practically nothing since he left college (W 72).

In infancy, he, too, had this completely satisfying sense of love and security. He lost it! He reacted very strongly to this loss. The mother, who, of course, had provided this satisfaction, now becomes a wholly undependable thing. The final denial of this complete satisfaction on the part of the mother is a necessary event,

although in this instance the mother undoubtedly, but unintentionally, handled the situation that arose in the process rather badly.

Following a struggle, which he loses, to regain his place with his mother, he turns not only away from her as undependable, but upon her as hateful (W 72-73).

but just about everything had gone wrong in his life.

23:3.2 His parents understood the value of emotional home weaning—

in fact, they weaned him too rapidly and too ruthlessly.

Perhaps that was the only way his fond mother could do it. Her heartache was probably too excruciating to permit of a long process. She must either clutch at him and hold him at home or shove him out quickly and have it over with.

At any rate he was so rapidly weaned that he all but collapsed because of the sense of loss of home security and parental love; for he felt that this sudden reversal of attitude on the part of his parents meant that they did not love him as formerly.

23:3.3 Henry developed a real hate for his home and parents, particularly his mother.

Love and hate are relative, and what we love most, if we experience a reversal of affection, we come to hate most.¹

Finding individuals wholly undependable, he is driven to deal with things; people he will leave alone, they are no good; he will now deal with things instead of people—

and so as an adolescent he begins to study engineering.

But engineering does not give him the emotional outlet he requires. He finds it impossible to retain an interest in things.

People are what he needs. Things cannot hold his interest. He turns again to people.

But in the presence of people he is too insecure.

Henry grew taciturn and cynical; yes, his attitude would be better described as somber and morose.

He turned from people to things.

He avoided all social gatherings and everything religious.

He dedicated his energies to the pursuit of electrical engineering.

For four years he denied himself all emotional outlets; but after this period of shut-in living and hard study, having graduated from a technical school, he began to review his life, looking at it more from the standpoint of an adult.

He was able better to understand his parents' attitude in pushing him out of the home,

and he decided he had made a great mistake in turning away from people and spending all his time with things mechanical and material.

23:3.4 He now sought with all the power at his command to interest himself in people,

but found difficulty in making social contacts.

He was reticent and afraid, having all but developed a stage-fright complex. He suffered tremendously from feelings of inadequacy when with people in any capacity other than that of his chosen profession.

After a year of disappointments and rebuffs from his fellow men—likewise from several young ladies—he experienced a new emotional revolution. He had had four years of isolation with things, during which he avoided as far as possible all social contacts; he had just spent a year trying to make such contacts, but had largely failed; and now, in semi-despair, he simply went wild. As the result of a year of riotous living, drinking, and every other imaginable dissipation, he found himself on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and had been brought by an old friend to consult a physician.

23:3.5 I have not met a case in recent years that better illustrates the results of failing properly to direct adolescent initiative.

23:3.6 Henry went to pieces because he was oppressed by a conviction of social inadequacy. He really had an inferiority complex, and you can see how it was developed by his retreat from reality when first weaned from home security and, as he thought, from home love. This inferiority complex he largely overcame by four years of successful study and work; but it all came back when he tried for a year to return into the world of people and apparently failed. Then he sought by way of a defense reaction to show himself and others that he could make social contacts, and he succeeded.

He developed a superiority complex, but the only immediate avenue for its outlet was among questionable characters,

He turns back to things, but things do not satisfy; they cannot hold his interest. He is between the devil and the deep sea.

and he turned to them instantly.

Guilt is revived; it becomes too great for the ego to balance through compensation. Perhaps after all it is he who is different, inferior, unworthy.

Then an unfortunate way out is found in a growing tendency to punish himself—to punish himself because of his guilt....

The lengths to which this man had gone in punishing himself were both terrible and pathetic, leading not only to many unhappy things for himself, but to actual asocial conduct.... Prison sentences lie on the books against some of the things he did, had he been caught—and yet he did them.

He did them to punish himself and to be punished. He did them to **get caught**, that punishment might follow (W 74-75).

After a year of this, which, of course, was not to his taste or liking (he had been raised in a cultured home), his superiority complex was effectively deflated by

an increasing sense of **guilt**,

and, as he sat in my office, he was crestfallen and guilt-mastered.

23:3.7 I was amazed to find that he had committed a number of crimes, minor crimes, to be sure,

but major offenses when viewed from the standpoint of his standards of right and wrong; when I asked him why he had done these things, his only reply was:

“Well, I was desperate.

I guess I really wanted to **get caught** and sent to prison.

I thought it was coming to me. I felt I had made a perfect failure of my life. I don't know why I did these things unless it was that I thought I should be punished, and this would be the quickest way to get my punishment and have it over with.”

23:3.8 There is no question that, when the sense of inferiority, the conviction of guilt, becomes inordinately strong, certain types of youth plunge suddenly into some misdemeanor or crime for no other motive than to demonstrate their recognition of guilt and their willingness to accept punishment.

[He was given the usual advice of well-meaning friends—to buck up, to try to have courage, and the like (W 72).]

23:3.9 This attitude was further shown by Henry's reaction when we tried to inspire him to snap out of his depression, and start in to be somebody and get somewhere.

To our inspirational appeal he made this reply: "A fellow who has gone through what I have and done the things I have has no right to be happy. He has no right to be successful. I am now merely getting what is coming to me. I deserve all the trouble I am having and all the torment I am passing through. I knew better. I didn't have to do the things I have done. I did them, and I don't believe there is any escape from the penalties of wrong-doing." You see there was a deliberate attempt to foster despair. He certainly presented an impressive picture of what happens when the initiative and enthusiasm of youth are misdirected.

23:3.10 I think Henry will come out all right. He is now going through periods in which work alternates with either escapades or depression—brief periods of melancholia and despair. It is encouraging to note that the work periods are becoming longer while the escapades are shorter.

Within a year or two, with the help he is receiving, I think this man will find himself, effect his readjustment to life; by the time he is thirty years of age he may belatedly begin a career that could easily have been started at twenty if his youthful energies had been better directed. Ten years of a young life were lost, to say nothing about the sorrow and bitter despair of these wasted years, all because parents, teachers, and the young man himself failed to achieve the proper direction of his youthful energies through understanding sympathy and wise cooperation!²

LEADING VERSUS COERCION

23:4.1 In dealing with adolescents we should ever remember that persuasion is far more effective than compulsion. Most of them are tender-hearted,³ quick to reciprocate sympathy, and unfailingly appreciative of understanding on the part of their elders.

23:4.2 In our efforts to comprehend the problems of youth and to help in the direction of their initiative, we must always remember that, while these same adolescents crave independence of thought and more or less liberty of action,

[N]o matter who the person may be, no matter what his position, his power, his wealth, or how humble an individual he may be—there are really, when one examines intimately, just **two things** that the individual is striving for.

they are also greatly concerned about **two things**:

One is **love**, in the widest sense,

23:4.3 First, **love**.

They want the affection of parents and teachers.

and the other is a **feeling of security**; all the rest that we see is but a running about (W 70).

23:4.4 Second, **the feeling of security**.

They are panic-stricken if they are too suddenly ejected from the home that has all through childhood served as a base of supply and a protection against all that was uncertain and fearful.

[*Note:* In this paragraph, Sadler applies Williams' observations about the "mind and emotional organization of a very small child" to "many a youth". Williams wrote (p. 73-74) that small children, upon losing the constant love and security they felt as infants, become suspicious, afraid of other people, and then feel guilty and inferior. These attitudes, according to Williams, extend into adolescence and adulthood, where they manifest themselves in various behaviors. Sadler, here, seems to indicate that these attitudes begin at adolescence.]

23:4.5 The trouble with many a youth, as he finds himself about to go out and begin an independent career, is that he regards humanity outside of his home circle with suspicion. He becomes confused and afraid. A feeling of inadequacy tends to develop into inferiority or to breed panicky despair. And about this time his conflicts with corrective discipline and with theological fear, his feelings of inadequacy and inferiority as he faces an independent relationship with the world, all come to produce an exaggerated conviction of guilt. It is not strange, under such a conspiracy of circumstances, that he develops a real guilt complex. When an adolescent acquires such a complex, he almost immediately begins to look for punishment; he lives in momentary dread that the heavy hand of the law or the judgments of God are about to descend upon him.

23:4.6 The technique of preadolescent discipline has a great deal to do with the adolescent's ideas of guilt and punishment.

[See 23:6.4, below.]

If, in earlier childhood, parental correction was arbitrary, unjust, and severe, the youth is quite likely to harbor the fear of similar retribution for his sins. And so the foundation is laid—through the long entertainment of a guilt complex—for many of the miseries, so-called nervous breakdowns and blow-ups, of later years.

[See 23:6.4, below.]

In other types of youth this prolonged sense of guilt not only fosters a lifelong inferiority complex, but does even worse—tends literally to make worms of the dust out of them. They are never able to hold up their heads or accomplish anything.

[See 23:6.4, below.]

In still another group a very different and strange reaction occurs: they are gradually molded into either bigots or hypocrites, and live out most of their lives under one or another of these guises.

23:4.7 The wisdom and skill with which parents and teachers direct youthful initiative have much to do in determining whether or not a young person will successfully fight out his social battles and effect his economic adjustment, or succumb to fear and undertake to burrow in more deeply from reality, thus becoming an adult victim of continuous emotional conflict and recurrent nervous breakdowns.

23:4.8 In later adolescence, if these temperamental manifestations grow more and more pronounced, the strain becomes almost unbearable, and all sorts of erratic reactions develop.

[Source?]

Deception and lying are a part of the adolescent technique for meeting this deplorable situation.

[The boy did not dare to give way to outbursts of temper in his presence or to defy him openly. But the spirit of revolt was not quenched merely because it was so harshly held in check. On the contrary, it was probably stimulated thereby, and it impelled the boy to use the **weapon that the weak and timid have always used against the strong**. He **resorted to deception** (Milton A. Barrington, M.B., "Mental Disorder in Adolescence," in *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 364-79, April, 1920).]

Deception has always been a **weapon of the weak against the strong**,

and when adolescent boys and girls feel that they are about to lose out in the battle with parents, teachers, and the life environment, they very commonly **resort to deception** in an effort to dodge the frank admission of defeat.

23:4.9 The great problem, after all, is one of adjustment, helping these youth to grow up, to learn how to get away from home and begin life for themselves; but this is not always easy to do. It requires wise thinking, careful planning, and judicious execution on the part of parents, teachers, and the youth themselves.

CAN YOUTH BE COERCED?

23:5.1 Coercion has been tried and has always proved an unsuccessful technique for dealing with youth. A failure in past generations, it will certainly prove more so when applied under twentieth-century conditions. In discussing the problems of adolescence under this head, my colleague, **Dr. Frankwood E. Williams**, has said some very pertinent and helpful things. **I quote him:**

There is a good deal of anxiety throughout the world, apparently, over the adolescent.

23:5.2 "There is a good deal of anxiety throughout the world, apparently, over the adolescent.

People are greatly worried about him and his antics, and there is conviction on the part of some that what we need to do is to take him by the scruff of the neck and dance him along in the way he should go.

People are greatly worried about him and his antics, and there is conviction on the part of some that what we need to do is to take him by the scruff of the neck and dance him along in the way he should go.

The adolescent seems to have got out of bounds and coercion is advised to bring him back.

The adolescent seems to have got out of bounds and coercion is advised to bring him back.

Before we accept such a solution, may it not be well for us to look into the matter a little, to consider whether the thing is possible, and if so, whether it will, after all, bring about what we desire?

Before we accept such a solution, may it not be well for us to look into the matter a little, to consider whether the thing is possible, and if so, whether it will, after all, bring about what we desire?

Why are we so concerned about youth? (W 62).

23:5.3 “Why are we so concerned about youth?”

[contd] We are afraid.

23:5.4 “We are afraid.

We are afraid of what youth is doing, of what he is thinking and of what he may be planning.

We are afraid of what youth is doing, of what he is thinking and of what he may be planning.

But that is not really our fear.

But that is not really our fear.

It goes deeper than that.

It goes deeper than that.

Youth is exhibiting a good deal of “human nature” and is even daring to experiment a bit with this “nature.”

Youth is exhibiting a good deal of ‘human nature’ and is even daring to experiment a bit with this ‘nature.’

If there is anything in the world of which we are afraid it is this very “human nature.”

If there is anything in the world of which we are afraid it is this very ‘human nature.’

We have no faith in it.

We have no faith in it.

We have been counselled in the past and we know from our own experience that it is an untrustworthy thing; that if we do not keep it well in hand it will get completely out of hand.

We have been counseled in the past and we know from our own experience that it is an untrustworthy thing; that if we do not keep it well in hand it will get completely out of hand.

And so we go clucking after youth, who seems not to know this.

And so we go clucking after youth, who seems not to know this.

But do we know any such thing?

23:5.5 “But do we know any such thing?”

Do we even know that what we call “human nature” is human nature at all?

Do we even know that what we call ‘human nature’ is human nature at all?

May not what we so denominate be merely a tragic burlesque of human nature?

May not what we so denominate be merely a tragic burlesque of human nature?

May we not be frightening ourselves with the distorted shadows of the thing itself, and mistaking the one for the other, be misapplying all our efforts? (W 62-63)

May we not be frightening ourselves with the distorted shadows of the thing itself, and mistaking the one for the other, be misapplying all our efforts?

[contd] What have we to offer youth?

23:5.6 “What have we to offer youth?”

Is it ourselves?

Is it ourselves?

Is it that we wish to make youth like ourselves?

Is it that we wish to make youth like ourselves?

Have we of our generation succeeded in solving the problem of living?

Have we of our generation succeeded in solving the problem of living?

Have we the recipe for successful, full, generous, happy living? (W 63)

Have we the recipe for successful, full, generous, happy living?

[contd] As a matter of fact, if one looks about among those of one’s own generation and the older generation, one finds that most people are not living successful, full, generous, happy lives.

23:5.7 “As a matter of fact, if one looks about among those of one’s own generation and the older generation, one finds that most people are not living successful, full, generous, happy lives.

One finds that most people are living very narrow, pinched, ungenerous, distorted, twisted lives, and that they are full of fears and anxieties and insecurities (W 63).

One finds that most people are living very narrow, pinched, ungenerous, distorted, twisted lives, and that they are full of fears and anxieties and insecurities. . . .

Have we such pride in the way we have managed some of the problems that have come to us?

23:5.8 “Have we such pride in the way we have managed some of the problems that have come to us?”

Are we proud of our jealousies, our rivalries, our dishonesties, our ungenerous and suspicious attitudes towards others?

Are we proud of our jealousies, our rivalries, our dishonesties, our ungenerous and suspicious attitudes towards others?

Are we proud of our domestic life, our sexual life, our spiritual life?

Are we proud of our domestic life, our sexual life, our spiritual life?

Are we proud of our success in handling political problems, of our industrial competition, with its false values—which is a product of our generation—of our methods of handling delinquency, of our methods of dispensing charity, of our methods of dealing out justice in the courts?

Are we proud of our success in handling political problems, of our industrial competition, with its false values—which is a product of our generation—of our methods of handling delinquency, of our methods of dispensing charity, of our methods of dealing out justice in the courts?

Are we proud of the methods employed in handling international disputes, of our suspicions and fears of things we do not understand, our false pride and braggadocio? (W 63-64)

Are we proud of the methods employed in handling international disputes, of our suspicions and fears of things we do not understand, our false pride and braggadocio?

[contd] These are things that represent us.

23:5.9 “These are things that represent us.

They are us!

They are us!

They are the product of the ability of our generation to manage life.

They are the product of the ability of our generation to manage life.

Are we to coerce youth into accepting this product and all that it implies?

Are we to coerce youth into accepting this product and all that it implies?

But this is not all.

23:5.10 “But this is not all.

Youth might suffer us these things.

Youth might suffer us these things.

There is a more serious score against us.

There is a more serious score against us.

Not for a long time has a generation failed so signally as ours—our generation and the one just ahead—in the management of life.

Not for a long time has a generation failed so signally as ours—our generation and the one just ahead—in the management of life.

Has any generation ever failed more completely?

Has any generation ever failed more completely?

We have only recently finished slaughtering several million youths.

We have only recently finished slaughtering several million youths.

It was our generation that slaughtered these youths.

It was our generation that slaughtered these youths.

And why?

And why?

I do not mean what were the economic or political reasons.

I do not mean what were the economic or political reasons.

These are not the basic reasons.

These are not the basic reasons.

The Why was that we were completely unable to manage our own emotional problems, individual and collective, and not only did we get ourselves into a shamble, but the only means we could find for extricating ourselves was the slaughtering of these youths (W 64).

The Why was that we were completely unable to manage our own emotional problems, individual and collective, and not only did we get ourselves into a shamble, but the only means we could find for extricating ourselves was the slaughtering of these youths.

[contd] In the face of this, how dare we talk of coercing youth into adopting our standards of life, our ideas, our attitudes, our methods of dealing with emotional problems?

23:5.11 “In the face of this, how dare we talk of coercing youth into adopting our standards of life, our ideas, our attitudes, our methods of dealing with emotional problems?”

And yet, that is what we seem prone to do (W 64).

And yet, that is what we seem prone to do.

[contd] We must not forget that youth has just as much “brains” as we.

23:5.12 “We must not forget that youth has just as much ‘brains’ as we.

Their intellects are as good as ours, and in addition they are much more clear-headed than we; they are more courageous.

Their intellects are as good as ours, and in addition they are much more clear-headed than we; they are more courageous.

We have more worldly wisdom, which is our handicap, for like “human nature,” it frequently is not more honest, more frank, more generous, more courageous, more clear-sighted than we.

We have more worldly wisdom, which is our handicap, for like ‘human nature,’ it frequently is not more honest, more frank, more generous, more courageous, more clear-sighted than we.

They are inclined to say, when we begin to pound our breasts and be a bit oracular over some of our convictions, that it is “the bunk!” or it is “the horse’s neck.”

They are inclined to say, when we begin to pound our breasts and be a bit oracular over some of our convictions, that it is ‘the bunk!’ or it is ‘the horse’s neck.’

Now precisely what youth means when they say something is a horse's neck, I do not know, but I get their drift.

I know, in a general way, what they mean, and I have an idea that frequently when they say that something is the bunk or the horse's neck, that that is about what it is (W 64-65).

There are things which are not settled. Ethics, Morals, Religion—these are not static things that are made and fixed and that we can accept and hand to a younger generation.

Religion are dynamic things, growing things.

Instead of coercing a youth into accepting these things at the stage to which we have been able to develop them, forcing him to accept our partial product as final,

we should, realizing the potential nature of these things, permit that youth to have his own opportunity to continue growth and development in these fields (W 66-67).

[contd] We say we want him to carry out our ideals, but we are not even sure of the soundness of our own ideals.

Why not let him have a chance to form his own?

We are not so sure that we could all agree upon what our ideals are, and upon those things about which we did agree, we could not, at this stage of development, be sure that they are sound.

Youth starts with more data than we have had out of which to build, and may evolve something definitely better than what we have been able to attain (W 67).

Now precisely what youth means when they say something is a horse's neck, I do not know, but I get their drift.

I know, in a general way, what they mean, and I have an idea that frequently when they say that something is the bunk or the horse's neck, that that is about what it is.

23:5.13 "There are things which are not settled. Ethics, Morals, Religion—these are not static things that are made and fixed and that we can accept and hand to a younger generation. Ethics, Morals,

Religion are dynamic things, growing things.

Instead of coercing a youth into accepting these things at the stage to which we have been able to develop them, forcing him to accept our partial product as final,

we should, realizing the potential nature of these things, permit that youth to have his own opportunity to continue growth and development in these fields.

23:5.14 "We say we want him to carry out our ideals, but we are not even sure of the soundness of our own ideals.

Why not let him have a chance to form his own?

We are not so sure that we could all agree upon what our ideals are, and upon those things about which we did agree, we could not, at this stage of development, be sure that they are sound.

Youth starts with more data than we have had out of which to build, and may evolve something definitely better than what we have been able to attain.

[contd] But, granted that our ideals are sound, we have failed in carrying out. So what formulæ for success have we for turning over to youth?

Our attitude is like that of the grandmother who had no use for the newfangled physician called a pediatrician.

She had had ten children, of whom eight had died; when her daughter's children fell ill no pediatrician was needed, for who knew more about sick children than she?

Our attitude is much the same—insist that we should teach youth how to carry on our own standards, when we do not even know how it is that we have failed in maintaining standards (W 67).

Youth may take a bit of advice, but probably not any more readily than did we—and that is not altogether an unhealthy sign.

But whether they take advice or not they probably will make no more mistakes than we have made, and certainly will not make any more tragic mistakes than we.

Whatever we have gained of knowledge, whatever we have gained in accurate data concerning things, including human beings and human behavior, they will utilize (W 68).

Let youth start with the accumulated knowledge that the world has amassed and as free as possible from our old emotional bias, beliefs and feelings; let him build up his own beliefs and opinions and feelings about things (W 69).

23:5.15 “But, granted that our ideals are sound, we have failed in carrying out. So what formulæ for success have we for turning over to youth?

Our attitude is like that of the grandmother who had no use for the newfangled physician called a pediatrician.

She had had ten children, of whom eight had died; when her daughter's children fell ill no pediatrician was needed, for who knew more about sick children than she?

Our attitude is much the same—insist that we should teach youth how to carry on our own standards, when we do not even know how it is that we have failed in maintaining standards.

23:5.16 “Youth may take a bit of advice, but probably not any more readily than did we—and that is not altogether an unhealthy sign.

But whether they take advice or not they probably will make no more mistakes than we have made, and certainly will not make any more tragic mistakes than we.

Whatever we have gained of knowledge, whatever we have gained in accurate data concerning things, including human beings and human behavior, they will utilize.

23.5.17 “Let youth start with the accumulated knowledge that the world has amassed and as free as possible from our old emotional bias, beliefs and feelings; let him build up his own beliefs and opinions and feelings about things.

[contd] What is it we want to hand over to him—

our prejudices of race; our international suspicions; our dislike, even hatred, of people who think differently from us; our hypocrisy in regard to sex matters; our intolerance of new knowledge; our childish faith in a God who protects us and confounds those we do not like;

our puffed up feelings of pride and superiority; our bigotry; our attitude of sentimentalism in regard to women, home, and children, and our actual conduct on these relationships?

Is this what we insist you shall accept from us? (W 69)

[*Note*: Williams states that only infants experience this enjoyment, that the sense of loss begins when the nursing child is weaned.]

By the time he is weaned,

23:5.18 “What is it we want to hand over to him—

our prejudices of race; our international suspicions; our dislike, even hatred, of people who think differently from us; our hypocrisy in regard to sex matters; our intolerance of new knowledge; our childish faith in a God who protects us and confounds those we do not like;

our puffed up feelings of pride and superiority; our bigotry; our attitude of sentimentalism in regard to women, home, and children, and our actual conduct on these relationships?

Is this what we insist you shall accept from us?***

[*Adolescence: Studies in Mental Hygiene, by Frankwood E. Williams, M.D. Published by Farrar & Rinehart, New York.]

LET US BE FAIR

23:6.1 Children grow up enjoying our love and feeling perfectly secure in the shelter of the home. Later on they must lose some of this affection and all of this sense of security. It is right that they should; but through this experience there is likely to grow up an abiding fear, anxiety, revolt, dissatisfaction with society. In the presence of this dissatisfaction with things as they are, what should be the attitude of the adult generation?

23:6.2 About the time we begin the process of **psychologic** weaning,

the minds of the young folks are still more or less plastic,

anxiety and fear, through the loss of security and, in an important sense, love, are there.

Very shortly will enter in guilt and inferiority.

All the ingredients for coercion are there. Your task is light.

If you will but do what you can to emphasize what is already there, if you will do what you can to increase the amount of his anxiety, his fear, his feeling of guilt and unworthiness and his feeling of inferiority, you cannot fail (W 82).

and, as long as fear and anxiety are present,

not to mention feelings of inferiority and convictions of guilt,

it is easy to coerce them.

But is that what we want to do? Is that fair to them?

Do we want to add to their burden of fear and anxiety?

Do we want our boys and girls to go out into the world with an inferiority complex?

Certainly not. Fairness, and only fairness, should dictate our attitude. Any attempt to compel youth to follow in our footsteps will never produce strong characters, successful lives, efficient personalities. Coercion can only bring failure and disaster.

23:6.3 This is equally true of coercion that takes the form of inspirational urging. If, at this fear-harassed period, we try to inspire youth to attempt great things in life, to go out in the world and fearlessly attack its problems,

[contd] But what kind of an individual are you going to produce? There are three possibilities. You may produce an invalid. Against the fear, anxiety, guilt and inferiority you have carefully nurtured and caused to grow big, he will find it necessary to **build defense reactions** of various sorts.

These will be built into his **personality and character, which will develop along odd and queer lines.**

The more the pressure from within increases,

not knowing the source of his difficulties nor what you are carefully doing to make wax big the seeds within him,

the more must he develop his defense reactions

and eventually to name his **enemies.** These he will tend to find without in people and things who begin to take on symbolic value.

The greater the pressure,

the further he **hides behind his defense reactions**

until he is almost or entirely cut off from the world, or the more people and things become invested with symbolic value

a certain proportion of adolescents will soon begin a subconscious and even conscious process of **building up defense reactions,**

of formulating alibis which they may offer in the presence of failure to meet the high ideals of parents and teachers.

So you will see your boy or girl **developing a queer personality.**

The greater the conflict between these internal fears and the ideal which his parents and teachers set for his external achievement,

the more certain and persistent will be the youth's development of defense reactions,

and the more surely he will come to look upon the parents and teachers as his **enemies;**

the more we prod these confused victims of emotional conflict,

the more persistently they will **seek refuge in defense reactions,**

until he becomes less and less able and finally wholly unable to see people and things in any real sense at all.

He will thus build such a queer personality and character that it will be impossible for him to adjust himself to social living.

His conduct, effort at adjustment, will in certain instances be asocial ... or neurotic or psychotic.

Your first result, then, is neurosis, psychosis or asocial conduct.

Two, you may crush him until he becomes a worm.

Or, finally, you may produce quite another type of individual, one full of fear, full of anxiety, full of feelings of guilt and inferiority,

but who defends himself by inflating his ego,

manifested on the one hand by a bold exterior—hard and loud—

on the other hand by a nicely composed exterior, smug, suspicious

and ungenerous, hypocritical and bigoted (W 83).

and these in time are likely to assume one of the many forms of neuroticism.

Ultimately, such confused and fear-ridden youth come to look upon everybody and everything in a false light.

The result of all this is

the ultimate development of a personality which finds it impossible to adjust itself to modern social and commercial life.

Indeed, many such unfortunates become asocial or definitely antisocial.

23:6.4 The first result, then, of coercion is to contribute to the development of adolescent neuroses, psychoses, and other more frankly antisocial reactions.

Young folks can be domineered and brow-beaten until they become worms of the dust,

filled with fear, and suffering under an inescapable feeling of inferiority;

and in response to this they may develop a defense reaction that exhibits itself through an inflated ego

as a bully or braggart;

or perhaps they become deceptive and suspicious, maintaining a smug pose

that is wholly ungenerous and hypocritical, if not out-and-out bigoted.

23:6.5 **Dr. Williams**, already quoted, makes this additional comment:

What we need are people who are compelled neither to the right nor to the left, but who in each situation, acting freely, can act intelligently—

individuals free from compulsion, whose speech, whose acts, whose relationship to others as nearly express themselves as it is yet possible for men to make themselves known to one another.

The individual, without compulsion, can be himself—and we need not be afraid of that—can contribute to the world those things peculiarly and precisely and truly his own (W 85-86).

These are some of the problems that adolescents are struggling with, and they are our problems, too.

But it seems to me we shall understand better what the individual adolescent is doing if we will see him in this large way, as a part of the human race of a certain time, as an individual like ourselves,

who was born, who has a certain physical organization, who has a certain intellect, who has a certain group of emotional problems that have not just come vaguely from somewhere, but which are definite and specific, developed in accordance with certain definite laws.

Then if he gets out of hand, we will prepared to approach him from the right direction, knowing that he behaves so not because he is lazy and weak-willed or mean and vicious and degenerate,

23:6.6 What we need are people who are compelled neither to the right nor to the left, but who in each situation, acting freely, can act intelligently—

individuals free from compulsion, whose speech, whose acts, whose relationship to others as nearly express themselves as it is yet possible for men to make themselves known to one another.

The individual, without compulsion, can be himself—and we need not be afraid of that—can contribute to the world those things peculiarly and precisely and truly his own.

23:6.7 These are some of the problems that adolescents are struggling with, and they are our problems, too.

But it seems to me we shall understand better what the individual adolescent is doing if we will see him in this large way, as a part of the human race of a certain time, as an individual like ourselves,

who was born, who has a certain physical organization, who has a certain intellect, who has a certain group of emotional problems that have not just come vaguely from somewhere, but which are definite and specific, developed in accordance with certain definite laws.

Then if he gets out of hand, we will prepared to approach him from the right direction, knowing that he behaves so not because he is lazy and weak-willed or mean and vicious and degenerate,

but because he has become seriously entangled, and either is attempting burrow more deeply away from his difficulties or to fight his way out.

This will mean expert assistance for this particular boy, and not more coercion, on the one hand, or more guessing as to what to do with him on the other.

Just as all individuals who are in trouble physically need diagnosis and treatment, so he needs technical understanding and treatment (W 87).

[contd] As to the great body of youth, I have greater faith in their ability eventually to do something valuable in life than I have in our ability to assist either them or the world by trying to coerce them into being like ourselves.

With coercion, the best they could do would be to be like ourselves.

Without coercion, they may improve upon this

and approximate more nearly a level of adjustment and contribution expressive of their potentialities and within human reach (W 87-88).

but because he has become seriously entangled, and either is attempting burrow more deeply away from his difficulties or to fight his way out.

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Just as all individuals who are in trouble physically need diagnosis and treatment, so he needs technical understanding and treatment.

23:6.8 As to the great body of youth, I have greater faith in their ability eventually to do something valuable in life than I have in our ability to assist either them or the world by trying to coerce them into being like ourselves.

With coercion, the best they could do would be to be like ourselves.

Without coercion, they may improve upon this

and **give the things of which they are capable.**

23:6.9 Nevertheless, when all is said and done, we must maintain family and school discipline; while we refrain from applying overmuch coercion to the adolescent, likewise will we refuse to be coerced by youth into surrendering all authority and control of home life and school affairs. When our policies of friendly sympathy and benevolent guidance fail to enlist the cooperation of youth, let us not hesitate to resort to firm discipline and even mild coercion;

for it is up to us to prevent these sometimes headstrong and always inexperienced youth from inflicting lasting injury upon themselves through rash conduct. If there should be any confusion respecting my attitude on these questions, read again the chapter on Discipline and Punishment.

1. *Compare*

Love and hate are relative, and what we love most, if we experience a reversal of affection, we come to hate most.

with

And every mortal man knows full well how love, even when once genuine, can, through disappointment, jealousy, and long-continued resentment, be eventually turned into actual hate (UB177:4.11).

2. Sadler blames 'Henry's' plight on the failure of his parents, teachers and himself to direct his youthful initiative in productive channels. Williams, on the other hand, saw the young man's plight as having been caused by his intense reaction, as a very young child, to losing the infantile feeling of constant love and security upon physical weaning.

3. Sadler may have derived his remark about the tenderheartedness of most adolescents from this sentence in Williams:

The boy can then be the boy he really is, good-hearted, well-intentioned, generous, on the one hand, intelligent and keen-minded on the other (W 81).