



Parenting for a Peaceful World

Written by **Robin Grille**

(Reviewed by Anitra Carr)

"When we parent a child, we are parenting the world and its future." Robin Grille (author, psychologist and psychotherapist).

This is a book for all parents, teachers and child health professionals. It is based on the evolution of parenting to what is now known as natural or attachment parenting. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this wonderfully informative book.

Parenting for a Peaceful world is vast in its scope, yet is written in a clear, easy to read style, and is very well referenced.

Robin Grille spent five years researching and writing Parenting for a Peaceful World. According to Robin *"Many of the experiences we have in childhood leave a lasting emotional impression, even if we don't consciously recall them. Since our childhood experiences so strongly influence our emotional health, the way we raise our children is of profound consequence."*

Robin begins the book by exploring 'childhood through the ages'. He discusses in detail the six different stages or modes of childrearing. Most of us were brought up via 'the socialising mode' which emerged in the late 19th century. This stage is also known as 'authoritarian' parenting and is characterised by disciplining and controlling the child via corporal punishment, shaming and manipulation.

Shaming that involves comparisons, moralising, put-downs and age/gender/competency-based expectations can have profoundly negative effects on the growing child. When I read this section I could see not only myself, but also many other family members exhibiting the symptoms of having been shamed and manipulated as children.

I was surprised, however, to learn that not only rewards, but also praise, can be used as a form of manipulation and, thus, potentially harmful to the child's emotional development. However, Robin gives practical advice on how to treat your child positively without resorting to rewards and praise as forms of manipulation.

Many of us are now trying to parent via what Robin terms 'the helping mode' whereby the emotional needs of the child are attended to empathically and sensitively. I find this mode of parenting can sometimes be difficult as we have not necessarily had the appropriate role models, and it can also be difficult for our (grand)parents as we are seen to be rejecting their mode of parenting.

Robin gives numerous examples of how changes in child rearing practices around the world have affected those societies as well as major world events. It appears that Sweden is leading the way in child rearing reform as they were the first country to ban corporal punishment and are the only country to provide 450 days of fully paid maternity leave. As a result, Sweden is reaping the benefits, such as the lowest infant mortality and child homicide rates in the world.

Robin discusses 'emotional intelligence' and explores the five stages of early childhood emotional development, from the beginning of the baby's life to about six or seven years old. He covers areas such as the emotional needs of the baby or child at each stage and the effects of wounding experiences, not only on the child, but also on society as a result. I found this section of the book very enlightening and thought provoking, especially since my children have not yet passed through all the stages.

The first stage, 'the right to exist' is probably the most relevant for members of the home birth association as Robin gives examples of the emotional needs of the newborn, which most of us try to fulfil as much as possible. These include; to be talked to in the womb, to have a natural and gentle birth, to be tenderly welcomed into the family, to be in a gentle and peaceful home environment, to sleep close to mum and dad, to be held throughout the day, to have loving eye contact, to be free of imposed routines, and to be responded to promptly.

I was interested to learn that the reason we don't co-sleep as a culture is because co-sleeping with infants was legally banned several centuries ago in Western Europe in order to prevent the prevalent problem of nocturnal infanticide and also reduce the high incidence of incest occurring during those times.

I have heard that it takes five adults to raise a child, although Robin contends that it 'takes a whole village', *i.e.*, parenting a child should be a communal responsibility, rather than the sole responsibility of the mother and father. The resultant benefits to society of appropriately supported parents and nurtured children are immeasurable.

Finally, it is nice to see that \$1 from the sale of each book in Australia will be donated to the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

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