

Education: “For Conscious Ethical-moral Values”

Insecurity of educators leads to disorientation and lack of support among young people

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Global Research, May 08, 2023

Theme: [History](#)

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Introduction

On the basis of attacks on other people (amoktats) in the USA, Germany and Serbia, I will provide answers from the perspective of personal psychology to important questions that have not been thought through by society as a whole in the past.

In doing so, I will include a contribution to the discussion that I already wrote 21 years ago as head of the “State School Counselling Office for the Bavarian capital Munich” on the occasion of a rampage in Germany and which I still consider to be timely.

The article was entitled “For a conscious ethical-moral values education” (1).

For the time being, I will only answer the question: Should educators set limits for adolescents?

Important questions to think through!

1. Should values be taught to adolescents and if so, which ones and by whom? Or do children and adolescents have to find out for themselves what is good for them?
2. Are decency, consideration, reliability, motivation, diligence, a sense of responsibility and community still worthwhile virtues that we should teach young people? Or do they contradict the goal of “self-realisation” and only lead to blind subordination to authoritarian structures?
3. Should we set limits for children and young people? Or should they reach their limits

themselves by trying things out? Should educators intervene when children and youths want to “solve” their conflicts with violence? Or should we trust in “self-regulation”?

4. Is it good for young people to watch all kinds of violence on all channels all day long? Or does this influence have a harmful effect on their development and should therefore be stopped?

Should educators set limits for adolescents?

It is of course part of the educator’s task to set limits for the adolescent. Through the findings of research on the developmental conditions of positive social behaviour – especially the results of parenting style research – we now know which parenting style can produce a high degree of cooperativeness, helpfulness, friendliness and security in the child.

The US developmental psychologist and leading researcher in the field of child rearing **Diana Baumrind** (1927-2018) calls this parenting style “authoritative” (2). This refers to parenting practices that are characterised by warmth and affection, but also by effective control mechanisms that refrain from harshness and corporal punishment, but consistently use argumentative enforcement strategies, monitor compliance with agreed rules, intervene in cases of misbehaviour, and guide the child by example and involvement in positive social activities.

To the surprise of some supporters of so-called anti-authoritarian parenting, it has been found that the permissive, allow-it style of parenting resulted in the same uncompanionable, uncooperative and aggressive behaviour in children as the neglectful and authoritarian style of parenting.

The adult who witnesses a child’s or young person’s violent behaviour must therefore take a stand against it under all circumstances and demand redress, because the lack of a stand and a refraining from taking action will be interpreted by the young person as approval of his or her act.

An educator who permits violence disregards a fundamental human right. Also, the victim of a violent act must experience through the decisive intervention of the educator that the act is condemned, that he himself is protected and that he receives satisfaction.

A perpetrator of violence who gets away “scot-free”, i.e. who has successfully used violence, also learns through this reinforcement that violence is worthwhile and will use it again. If, on the other hand, he has to come to terms with his crime, develop a genuine way to make amends, he empathises with his victim and builds up an inhibition threshold against using violence again.

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He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Notes

1) Dr. Hänsel Rudolf (2002). For a conscious ethical-moral teaching of values. A contribution to the discussion on Erfurt. Central pedagogical-psychological counselling centre for schools in the state capital and the district of Munich.

(2) https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana_Baumrind

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