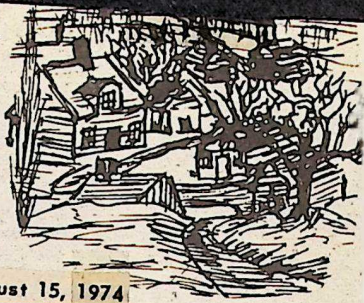


# Village

## View

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VILLAGE ADVERTISER August 15, 1974

How're things at your house?

In some families, everyone gets along nicely with everyone else most of the time. The youngsters are reasonably willing to take direction and guidance from the parents; in general the parents are pleased with their results as they raise their children.

If that's how things are in your house, you're doing fine.

In some families, though, things aren't that way at all. From early morning to late at night, it's a squabble, a pitched-battle, or an armed truce, child against child and parents against children.

Would you believe it doesn't have to be that way? Would you believe it can be changed? Even in your family, which seems sometimes to be on the verge of open bloodshed?

It's happened in other families -- thousands of them -- that a change for the better has been brought about. If you're tired of the hassles, weary of the eternal punishing and the inevitable resulting retribution, if you've had enough of trying to settle endless arguments between the children and are sick of coping with all the family conflict you're surrounded with, try it. It can't do harm to try.

Bringing family frictions under control and creating friendly family relationships doesn't necessarily call for putting everyone into psychiatric therapy. There's a "do it yourself" method that can be applied to your family by its own members.

Whether your children are pre-schoolers, pre-teeners, teenagers or young adults -- or a mixed bag -- none are too old and none are too young. If they are old enough to fight with one another and with you, they're old enough to help build a good relationship in the family.

Good family relationships -- like good personal relationships in every social situation -- can be build only on equality and respect for one another and sharing responsibilities.

We don't make friends, at school, at work, at church, at play, if we treat other people as "inferior", as undeserving of our respect and attention, and as unworthy, unable, or unwilling to do their share.

This is as important within the family as in the community. Your family can learn to treat one another with the same learned techniques they apply to those beyond the family circle.

It's not as easy, perhaps, for pre-teen-age boys or girls to be as polite to their younger siblings as to the siblings of their friends. It's quite difficult, to be sure, for a parent to give the same respectful attention to the ideas of a child, age 8 or 15, as to those of an adult member of the bridge or golf club.

There's an unfortunate impulse for adults when talking to youngsters to put their ideas or suggestions in a category that doesn't merit full attention and respectful consideration.

Nevertheless, all family members can learn to enjoy one another as people, can achieve mutual equality and respect, can give and receive pleasure and respect from one another.

How is this marvelous state arrived at?

The method is detailed in a book entitled **FAMILY COUNCIL**, published by Henry Regnery, (Cowles Book Company, 114 West Illinois Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60610.)

The book is written by the noted psycholigist, Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs, in collaboration with Mrs. Shirley Gould and Dr. Raymond Corsini; sells for \$7.95 in cloth and \$3.95 in a paper edition.

**FAMILY COUNCIL** is a complete guide to setting up, maintaining and operating a Family Council in the home.

Does it really work? Yes. If parents assume the roles of leaders, listeners and teachers, not ultimate authority figures. If parents permit children to experience a sense of their own worth as persons and give an example of how to behave in more socially acceptable ways. Then it works.

Through an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation, the family then operates with a high degree of efficiency and a minimum of conflict.

Family Council involves regularly scheduled meetings, open for full and equal participation by all persons, regardless of age, who share the household.

It may be put into operation with equal success by a nuclear family, a communal group, or a single-parent family.

Ground rules for conducting meetings are formulated in advance. Officers for each meeting are selected by rotation. A child becomes an active member of Family Council as early as he can express his feelings. He can be as young as two years; infants may attend as observers.

Meetings must be an open forum for all family members to speak without interruption, with freedom of expression, without fear of consequences, and without regard for age or status.

At the meetings, unanimous decision must be reached by the entire Council for conclusions to be binding. In discussion of any problem, be it who shall wash the car or how much allowance youngsters will receive, the unanimous decision shall stand.

Conflicts are resolved democratically by finding agreement and sharing responsibilities. Compromises are avoided, for in compromise, everyone gives up something and thereby feels a loser. Through the agreement of equals, everyone is a winner.

If agreement cannot be reached at a meeting, decisions are put off until the next one. This gives the members of the council a chance to think about the problem and seek solutions to which all may agree.

While Family Council is useful in resolving conflicts and reinforcing mutual respect and equality, there are other benefits as well. It provides a framework for the whole family to learn to share the work of family life.

Children as well as adults get the opportunity to try out new ideas, new methods, and new areas of learning. Happiness, efficiency, less need for punishment, and improvement in the quality of verbal and non-verbal communication all result.

To parents, this method offers a viable "way out" in easily understood terms. It's a workable way to deal with the trying conflicts of adolescence. It's far more effective than trying to sell kids on the mythical notion that "Childhood is the happiest time in your life because now you have no responsibilities."

In Family Council, everyone from the youngest to the oldest has responsibilities, and is respected because he makes a valuable contribution to the family, has an equal voice in how it operates and what the ground rules are.

For \$3.95 plus a 10c stamp, you can acquire a copy of this book and start applying it to the conflicts you find so exasperating to deal with in your own family constellation.

That's lots less expensive than a psychiatrist; if you'll try it, you -- like thousands of families now using Family Council -- may find the quality of your family relationships greatly improved.

I suggest to you -- it's worth trying.