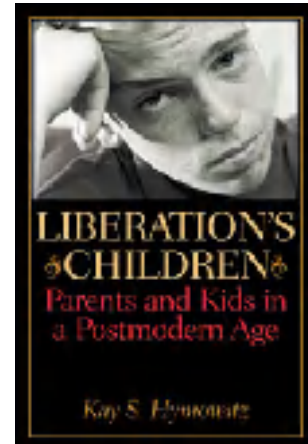


Raising Children for an Uncivil Society

Liberation's Children by Kay Hymowitz

Note that two chapters were purposely skipped in the summary; chapter 2 entitled “The Manhattan Kindergarten”; and chapter 3, “On Sesame Street; it’s all show”. This decision, of skipping some chapters, was based largely on my personal interests. Continuing then in chapter 4...

Offering a brief history of the parent's role as authoritarian, the author takes us to the *present day* - which she calls **"our era's equation is all autonomy, with no restraint."** In this description (or treatment) is a prevailing condition that children possess "natural good judgment"; thus lending to more leniency and less oversight and guidance against the traditions of discipline and other authority.



As a first example of this “no restraint” parenting, Kay points to the book, *Your Baby and Child* by Penelope Leach. Noted as a very popular book, the advice regarding a child’s temper tantrum is highly questioned and criticized by the Ms. Hymowitz. A grand-scale *acting out* by the young lad should be accepted by the parents as “willfulness” that he is growing up and feels secure enough that he can manage things on his own. As she quotes Ms. Leach: **“Open negativism toward his parents is a toddler’s way of expressing his need for independence.”**

Kay is quick to point-out that the author does suggest indulging the lad; but what may be understood – if not expressed – is that the parents should *wait-out-the-storm* in an effort to balance the expressed independence of the child with some semblance of control.

This basic theme of limited if non-existence aggression is apparently common in the contemporary teaching of parenting skills; that is, a child (or children) is much more inclined toward empathy as opposed to aggressiveness or violence. This idea or concept does not bode well in explaining “...conflict, ambivalence or the child’s taste for cruelty (unless it is caused by profound neglect or abuse).”

Kay continues with more matters of the child and of the parental relationship; whereby, the common outcome is that “good manners come naturally” thus **leading to the notion that parents can be facilitators – rather than authoritarians.** As quoted from one such source, *You Child is Smarter Than You Think*, “Simply telling your child not to do something (often said in an exasperated tone of voice) is the least effective way of helping your child learn and understand self-control. It’s an overt power play.”

Raising Children for an Uncivil Society

Liberation's Children by Kay Hymowitz

Within the realm of authority is the teaching or instruction in moral behavior. Continuing with a series of books and their authors, Kay leads the reader through some theory and concepts suggesting that children naturally develop morals during their general maturity – which may explain why teaching or instruction is not necessary in their views.

In her closing comments, Kay focuses on the ideas of one highly-respected author (and professional) who leans heavily on the concept or “myth of an autonomous child...” In her brief and final remarks (on this myth) is that we cannot live in a society and be self-made at the same time...among other contradictions.

Looking to the next chapter, “Who Killed School Discipline”, the “theme” continues in some degree: the contrast between the traditional use of authority versus the concept of self-managed and developed young folk.