

- ... The family is the place where ethics, values, and personalities are forged.
- ... Within the family world views are shaped and tyrants or saints are nurtured.
- ... Life compasses are set in this very powerful environment.
- ... What occurs in families will continue to shape the world.

The family is a series of partnerships. These partnerships are the anvil upon which raw materials are forged into steel! Husband to wife, wife to husband, father to son, father to daughter, mother to son, mother to daughter, brother to sister, sister to brother, sister to sister, brother to brother, older to younger, and younger to older are just a few of the critical partnership relationships in a family of only four! Incorporate the extended family, a previous marriage, and other life circumstances, and it is no wonder that parenting can seem so complex! Let's view a few of these key partnerships and attempt to assess their power for good.

The Couple Partnership

The strength of the family begins with the individuals and is reflected in the marriage. Our love for one another is what binds us or blinds us to the souls of our children. True compassion and caring are models that are far superior to self-centeredness and disinterest, yet both life-styles are incredibly powerful. To the degree that partners model the ability to function as a partnership, our children will understand their own role in society.

The Father and Son Partnership

"Accept me, love me, believe in me. Instruct me and even discipline me if you must, but please let me please you! Let me know that I am worth something to you. Help me to develop a sense of order in the midst of chaos. Help me to discern principles that will help me make my way in life, and give me the freedom to try and to fail and to succeed and to still be your son!"

The Father and Daughter Partnership

"Notice me, love me, believe in me. Let me know that I am special to you, that I don't repulse you, and that I am significant. Please keep loving me, please don't reject me. Please try to understand me and take me seriously. Please trust me and love me no matter what. Help me to discern principles that will help me make my way in life, and give me the freedom to try and to fail and to succeed and to still be your little girl!"

The Sibling Partnership

"Stick with me. Stick up for me. Talk to me. Honor me. Care for me because I am family. Care for me because we have been companions for life. Care for me because you are older. Let's care for each other because we are each other's flesh and blood!"

And these are just the basics! There are partnerships with the child-most-like-you, the child-most-like-your-spouse, and the child you wonder from which planet he or she arrived! How these partnerships function, are tested, and succeed or fail; all form the foundations for life. This is where we learn what a makes a team. This is where we should experience the ultimate refuge. This is the place where our world-view and significance is established. **The Family Partnership is perhaps the most important institution under all of creation!**