



# The New Growing Up Again Book

a newsletter for people who care about self-esteem

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## Dear Readers,

The new *Growing Up Again, Parenting Ourselves, Parenting Our Children* is ready! If you are familiar with the first edition of this book, you know that it is about Structure, Nurture, Denial or Discounting, and Stages of Development. When Dan Odegard of Hazelden Publishing Co. asked Connie Dawson and me if we had anything new we would like to add to a revision of the book, we said yes! Connie wanted to include a chapter on adoption and I wanted to offer some of the research that Dr. David Bredehoft and I have done on overindulgence. We assured Dan that it would be easy and it wouldn't take us long. Dan just smiled. Now I know what that smile was about. Once we got into it we not only added our new chapters, we added and added.

In this *WE* you will find a list of the new additions, two new developmental charts quoted from the book, three new sets of affirmations, and a new inclusive list of the developmental affirmations. Connie will write about adoption in a future *WE*.

One of the findings of the overindulgence research revealed that many adults who were overindulged as children did not learn what is enough. On pages six and seven you will find a new group exercise about *Enough*. This exercise is not in the book.

Connie and I found rewriting this book lots of work and also very exciting. We hope that your reading of this edition will be challenging, satisfying, and exciting for you.

Sincerely,

We are anxious to hear from readers about your response to these two additional developmental stages.

## What Is New In the New *Growing Up Again*?

- ♦ A whole section on the causes and effects of overindulgence.
- ♦ An insightful chapter on adoption with affirmations for adoptees.
- ♦ Updated examples of Nurture, Structure and Discounting.
- ♦ A Nurture/Structure Highway with David Spans' wonderful drawing to help us stay out of shame as we look at our parenting options.
- ♦ A Problem Solving Worksheet putting Nurture, Structure and Discounting together in the service of solving a vexing problem.
- ♦ Material on the hungers for Stimulation, Recognition and Certainty.
- ♦ Charts on Discounting and Double Binds. Sandy Keiser of Cincinnati insisted that we include them and Connie and I greatly appreciate her insistence and her support.
- ♦ A chapter on prenatal influences because I'm so excited about the new research.
- ♦ Two additional developmental stages, one at the beginning and one at the end of the usual seven. In this issue of *WE* you will find the charts on those two stages and the affirmations for each. We inserted the Prenatal Stage, Becoming, because we are convinced it is an important stage. We concluded with the final stage, Integration, Preparing for Death, because that is an important life stage for each of us at whatever age we experience it. Unless we die suddenly, this stage gives us the opportunity to integrate our life experiences, goals, and gifts.

## Prenatal Stage, Becoming - From Conception to Birth



The prenatal stage lays the groundwork for all the stages to follow. During these nine months, if all goes well, the baby's body is developing from the genetic gift of the egg and the sperm to a full term infant with all life support systems intact or ready to grow to full potential. Simultaneously, the

new being is making life-shaping decisions in response to the environment of the womb and the relationship experiences of the mother with other people and with the baby.

### 1. Job of the prenatal child (developmental tasks)

- \* To grow - to develop all body systems.
- \* To experience the ultimate in being separate and connected at the same time.
- \* To accept nourishment, acceptance, reassurance and love.
- \* To move - starting early, probably by week ten when still under two inches long. (By week twenty the mother can feel the movement.)
- \* To gain a familiarity with the mother.
- \* To recognize voices (father and others) and begin to learn language (at least by six months).
- \* To form some deep decisions about trust.
- \* To initiate and move through the birth process.

### 2. Typical behaviors of the prenatal child

- \* Develops a sleeping and waking rhythm.
- \* Turns away from or gives other physical responses to a bright light or a loud sound, an amniocentesis needle, or other intrusion.
- \* Stops drinking when amniotic fluid is toxic (e.g. alcohol).

- \* Learns to recognize the voice of the mother and father and other close people.
- \* May learn to respond. For example, baby kicks. If parent taps that spot three times and says, "kick again," baby may kick again.

### 3. Affirmations for becoming \*

- \* I celebrate that you are alive.
- \* Your needs and safety are important to me.
- \* We are connected and you are whole.
- \* You can make healthy decisions about your experiences.
- \* You can be born when you are ready.
- \* Your life is your own.
- \* I love you just as you are.

### 4. Helpful parent behaviors

- \* Mother gets proper nutrition, exercise and rest.
- \* Mother gets helpful prenatal medical care.
- \* Father provides for and protects mother.
- \* Both mother and father review their own prenatal experiences and resolve any leftover traumas from that period of their growth.
- \* Both parents resolve their grief from any prior miscarriage losses.
- \* Both parents examine their expectations for this child and put those aside so they can welcome this child for who he or she is.
- \* Both parents talk and sing lovingly to the child.
- \* Both parents experience joy about this child and other parts of life.
- \* Both parents prepare the extended families to welcome this child in his or her uniqueness.
- \* Both parents prepare for the birth, by setting up a crib, gathering clothing, etc.
- \* Mother arranges for a trusted female support person, a labor doula, to be present at the birth.
- \* Both parents determine how to spend the most time possible with the child after birth. If needed, they find the best surrogate parent possible.
- \* Parents identify ways they will take care of each other and help each other get needs

met after the baby is born when the majority of their caring energy and time will be directed toward the baby.

- \* Parents anticipate balancing their new roles as parents with their partnership contracts.
- \* Parents line up ongoing support for their "new family."
- \* If child is to be adopted or relinquished to adoption, see Chapter 27.

#### **5. Unhelpful parent behaviors**

- \* Mother's use of alcohol, nicotine or other harmful substances.
- \* Father's lack of support for mother's abstinence.
- \* Either parent ignoring the pregnancy, for example, neglecting sleep, nutrition and exercise needs.
- \* Either parent thinking/talking about the fetus as a burden instead of taking responsibility for the pregnancy and doing necessary problem solving.
- \* Speaking roughly to the fetus.
- \* Either parent being proud of the mother's "not showing."
- \* Physical or verbal abuse.
- \* Mother failing to get proper monitoring or medical care.
- \* Either parent failing to find a way out of emotional distress.

#### **6. Becoming tasks adults may recycle**

- \* To take excellent care of own physical health.
- \* To re-experience needs for dependency and support.
- \* To update old decisions about trust.
- \* To celebrate the joy of being alive.
- \* To grieve any mishaps during own prenatal stage or birth.

#### **7. Clues to a need for adults to grow up again**

- \* Feeling unaccounted for/incompleteness in self.
- \* Lack of joyfulness not otherwise accounted for.
- \* Stuck, not able to get started and no words to describe that feeling.
- \* Any addiction, compulsive behavior.

- \* Water - strong desire to be in water or reaction against being in water.
- \* Eating - struggle to get food or wanting to be waited on or served.
- \* Boundaries - need to sleep all curled up and tucked in or reaction against someone who gets too close.
- \* Believing you have to do everything by yourself, trying to start things and not finishing.
- \* Feelings of grandiosity or abject worthlessness.
- \* Self-destructive behaviors, recklessness, extreme risk taking.
- \* Strong and intense reactions to minor disappointments.
- \* Irrational fears or chronic anxiety not otherwise accounted for.
- \* Chronic depression.
- \* Thoughts of suicide.

#### **8. Activities that support growing up again**

- \* Suspend disbelief that pre- and perinatal experiences matter. (See Chapter 24.)
- \* Treat yourself to a therapeutic massage or body wrap.
- \* Listen to lullabies while wrapped up closely in blankets.
- \* Perform rhythmic movements, (e.g. swing in a hammock, sit in a rocking chair, row a boat).
- \* Take naps with a sheet over your face.
- \* Eat comfort foods such as bananas.
- \* Do therapy with a skillful, corrective parenting practitioner; try kinesthetic, body-memory, affective therapies.
- \* Eat 20 minutes before a warm bath so you feel satisfied in your tummy. Listen to soothing music or affirmations during your bath. (Use of hot tubs and Jacuzzis needs to be checked with medical advisor, especially during pregnancy.)
- \* Ask someone to hold you heart to heart in a nonsexual way and hum with no talking.
- \* Listening to fetal heart sounds or mother's heartbeat tapes and meditate.

- \* Thanks to Mary Boghdadi for wording the affirmation "Your life is your own," which gives the neonate permission to be born or to abort if necessary.

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## Stage 8, Integration - Toward Death

During the last part of our lives, or whenever we face death, we are called to finish putting all the pieces together. Some of us don't wait for the imminence of death to do this. We do and redo this "wrapping-up," celebrating and grieving process throughout our lives.

### 1. Job of the older adult (developmental tasks in addition to the adult developmental tasks)

- \* To prepare for death; to make conscious, ethical preparation for leaving.
- \* To explore connections with humankind and connections with a higher power.
- \* To reassess artificial barriers - the judgments that keep distance between self and others.
- \* To continue to learn and to grow each day.
- \* To experience every situation with all the senses, mind, and heart.
- \* To adjust to and grieve the loss of any physical and mental capabilities.
- \* To integrate life experience with personal beliefs and values.
- \* To be willing to share your wisdom; to be clear about what you have wisdom about and what you do not.
- \* To refine the arts of greeting, leaving, and grieving.

### 2. Signs of Avoiding the Developmental Tasks

- \* Failing to put your affairs in order.
- \* Meeting life with rigidity and flatness.
- \* Maintaining one's attitudes, beliefs and behaviors in spite of knowing they have harmful impact on self or others.
- \* Being unwilling to thoughtfully pursue an understanding of one's self.
- \* Failing to make mindful transitions from one role, career, or relationship to another.
- \* Looking back upon life with regret, and doing nothing about it.
- \* Being in denial of the aging process and mortality.

### 3. Signs of Doing the Developmental Tasks

- \* Having the courage "to see with one's own eyes" \* and speak one's own truth.
- \* Telling the truth and doing no cruelty. \*\*
- \* Feeling the fullness of life on a daily basis.
- \* Making the connection between the past and the present.
- \* Tolerating ambiguity and the tension of opposites.
- \* Facing the uncertainties without becoming immobilized by them.
- \* Planning for dying and death.
- \* Approaching death as a natural part of living.
- \* Experiencing and accommodating a range of declining physical, and perhaps mental, faculties.
- \* Asking appropriate people for help and accepting help graciously.

### 4. Affirmations (In addition to Adult Affirmations)

- \* You can grow your whole life through.
- \* You can look upon the process of dying as a natural transition.
- \* You can make your preparations for leaving and die when you are ready.
- \* You can celebrate the gifts you have received and the gifts you have given.
- \* You deserve the support that you need.
- \* You can share your wisdom in your way.
- \* You are lovable just the way you are.

\* After the title of a book of poems by Sharon Doubiago.

\*\* Brenda Ueland, unpublished manuscript.

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## *Affirmations for Becoming*

*Color these peach*

**I celebrate  
that you are  
alive.**

© J. I. Clarke

**Your needs  
and safety are  
important to  
me.**

**We are  
connected and  
you are  
whole.**

**You can make  
healthy  
decisions  
about your  
experiences.**

**You can be  
born when  
you are ready.**

**Your life is  
your own.**

**I love you just  
the way you  
are.**

## *Affirmations for Integration*

*Leave these white*

**You can grow  
your whole  
life through.**

© C. Dawson

**You can look  
upon the  
process of  
dying as a  
natural  
transition.**

**You can make  
your  
preparations  
for leaving  
and die when  
you are ready.**

**You can  
celebrate the  
gifts you have  
received and  
the gifts you  
have given.**

**You deserve  
the support  
that you need.**

**You can share  
your wisdom  
in your way.**

**You are  
lovable just  
the way you  
are.**

## *Affirmations for Adoptees*

*Color these turquoise*

**I will do my  
part to make  
a connection  
with you.**

**You can count  
on me.**

© C. Dawson

**You can push,  
but I will not  
let you push  
me away.**

**I will care for  
you and for  
myself.**

**We can both  
tell the truth  
and be  
responsible  
for our  
behaviors.**

**I support you  
in learning  
what you may  
want to know  
about your  
history and  
heritage.**

**You are  
lovable just  
the way you  
are.**

## Suggested Group Activity

### A Cupful of Enough

About Enough is a powerful open-ended exercise in which people are encouraged to think about their own understanding of the concept of *enough* and their boundaries about respecting *enough* for themselves and for other people. The activity takes about 45 minutes and is suitable for a group of ten to fifty people.

Provide half as many paper cups as people. Have extra cups for the third part of the exercise. Set out 5 or more plates of small food - crackers, peanuts, popcorn, pretzels, grapes, baby carrots, small celery sticks, animal crackers, potato chips, etc. Avoid using more than one plate of sweets as some people can't tolerate sugar.

#### Part I

1. Use the accompanying handout, *How Much is Enough?*, and ask people to work in groups of four and describe:

Too Little	Enough	Abundance	Too Much
They can talk about anything - food, toys, attention, love, etc.			

2. Briefly discuss their responses. Identify too much as overindulgence. Point out that many people who were overindulged as children do not know what is enough and that we will do an exercise to help us all think about enough.

#### Part II

3. Ask people to work in pairs. Each pair decides who will be the Giver and who will be the Receiver.
4. Explain what is on the food plates. Ask the Receivers to think about *exactly* how much they want of each food, mark that on their cups, and explain to the Giver *exactly* what they want.
5. Ask the Giver to follow directions *exactly* and present the cup willingly. Post the following sign.

#### Givers

Follow directions exactly.  
Present cup willingly and respectfully.

6. Two or three minutes after all of the Receivers have their cups, ask what both the Receivers and the Givers learned or observed. (Ex: I felt good, I felt honored, a new experience.)

#### Part III

7. For the third part of the exercise, ask the Receivers to cover their eyes while the Givers read their new directions silently. Hold up the following sign.

#### Givers

Get your Receiver to take more. Plead, demand, whine, shame - do whatever you need to do.

8. Hide the sign and ask the Receivers to open their eyes and the Givers to do their task.
9. After Receivers have been given a second cup or had their cups refilled, ask what both the Receivers and the Givers learned or observed. (Ex: It felt too familiar, I did this yesterday, It felt yucky.)
10. Ask if anyone wants to tell about how they plan to teach their children to know when they have enough.

Remind people: Abundance is often better than enough. Too much is not better than abundance.

## How Much Is Enough?

Write some words or sentences that explain your response to each of the following questions.

Too little

What is too little or scarcity?

Enough

What is enough?

Abundance

What is abundance?

Too much

What is too much or overindulgence?

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## **Opening Activity**

### **To Encourage People to Think About the Concept of *Enough***

Hand out name tags and ask people to:

- Choose a partner. Make a name tag for her and ask her to tell you about one time that she got more than she wanted of something.
- Introduce your partner and tell the group what she got too much of if she is willing for you to share that information.

## **Closing Activity**

### **To Encourage People to Claim Their Learning About *Enough***

At the end of the meeting, briefly review the activities of the meeting.

- Ask several people to share any new thoughts about the idea of enough, too much, or too little.
- Ask for Resentments. Listen to resentments, do not defend or explain.
- Ask for Appreciations.

## **Training Opportunity**

### **Facilitator Training**

A week-long workshop for people who want to learn and practice group facilitation skills.

**July 13-17, 1998**  
**Minneapolis, MN**

Contact Carole Gesme at 612 938-9163 for further information.

## **Leader Guides**

The six session Leader Guide for use by educators, *Growing Up Again, Helping Ourselves, Helping Our Children*, by Jean Illsley Clarke, is available from Daisy Press, 16535 9th Ave N, Minneapolis, Mn 55447 (612 473-1840).

The ten session Leader Guide for use by mental health professionals in a therapeutic setting, *Growing Up Again Facilitator's Manual: A Course In Being An Affirming Parent To Your Children And Yourself*, is available from Connie Dawson, PO 1765, Evergreen, CO 80437 (303 674-1352).

**WE**

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Edited by Jean Illsley Clarke

\* Ideas and activities or  
materials to use individually  
or in support groups.

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