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PROF. LÁSZLÓ MÁRKI

MATEMATYK, PROFESOR PROWADZĄCY BADANIA W INSTYTUCIE MATEMATYKI IM. ALFRÉDA RÉNYIEGO WĘGERSKIEJ AKADEMII NAUK. PEŁNIŁ RÓŻNE FUNKCJE W WĘGERSKIEJ I MIĘDZYNARODOWEJ SPOŁECZNOŚCI MATEMATYCZNEJ, W LATACH 1992–96 BYŁ WICE-PRZEWODNICZĄCYM EUROPEJSKIEGO STOWARZYSZENIA MATEMATYCZNEGO. OD 1989 ROKU JEST AKTYWNYM CZŁONKIEM KRAJOWEGO STOWARZYSZENIA DUŻYCH RODZIN (NOE), W LATACH 1996–2000 BYŁ JEGO WICE-PRZEWODNICZĄCYM, A W LATACH 2000–04 JEGO PRZEWODNICZĄCYM. BYŁ JEDNYM Z GŁÓWNYCH ORGANIZATORÓW ODBYWAJĄCEGO SIĘ CO DWA LATA KONGRESU RODZIN NOE W OKRESIE OD 1992 DO 2006 ROKU. Z RAMIENIA NOE UCZESTNICZYŁ W PRACACH RÓŻNYCH MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH ORGANIZACJI, A W LATACH 2004–2014 BYŁ WICE-PRZEWODNICZĄCYM, A OD 2014 ROKU JEST PRZEWODNICZĄCYM EUROPEJSKIEJ KONFEDERACJI DUŻYCH RODZIN.

PARENTING – TIME AND PRESENCE OF PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

In the system of law, rights and obligations have their proper place. In the social context, however, a third category that plays an important role is responsibility. Responsible behaviour, responsible way of life can be best acquired in a family.

In the communist system, families were the main places of resistance against an oppressing ideology. Is this still possible in the present crisis of society? „The family has become the „Achilles’ heel’ of our time”¹.

„Western society as we know it is not sustainable for very long within the ever more threatening construct of increasing divorce, cohabitation without marriage, fatherless homes, births to single women, rising abortions, and falling birth rates. Each of these trends, even by itself, threatens the very roots of our society.

¹ L. Mlčoch, *Economic of the Family: Theories, Institutions, Policies and Values* (Amersfoort: Sallux, 2017), p. 10.

Statistics abound showing the negative impact of divorce on childhood socioeconomic status and eventual wealth attainment; on quality of parent-child relationships; and on children's academic achievement, education attainment, communication skills, social connections, perceived social support from others, and anxiety in personal relationships. In short, nearly everything takes a hit².

² R. and L. Eyre, *The Turning. Why the State of the Family Matters, and What the World Can Do About It* (Sanger: Familius, 2014), pp. 21-22.

„Statistics show alarming problems in the state of health, mental state, state of knowledge of children. Compared with the situation 15 years ago,

- every fifth child suffers from some mental disorder,
- the number of attention deficit disorders has increased by 43%,
- the number of depression during puberty has increased by 37%,
- the rate of suicide among children aged 10-14 has increased to

200% of the figure 15 years ago.

What can we do in face of this situation? Suggesting that the possibilities of diagnostics should be improved, or stating that this is how our children are born, or claiming that this is the fault of the school system, are all inappropriate answers.

We, parents, must admit that we are the culprits, that all this is largely our fault. We must help our children.

What is at the core of these problems? Children in our time do not get the experience of a healthy childhood – that would require, among others,

- available and emotionally accessible parents,
- well-defined limits and moral example,
- responsibility,
- balanced diet as well as sufficient length and quality of sleep,
- appropriate amount of outdoor activities,
- creative games, spending leisure time with others.

Instead of these, what do many children experience nowadays?

- parents who are always busy,
- coddling parents who allow their children to do everything,
- the feeling that ‘nobody wants you’,
- unbalanced diet and insufficient sleep,
- stay-at-home way of life.

In addition: unlimited stimulation, a host of entertaining devices based on technology, instant gratification, that is, the immediate satisfaction of wishes. How could a child grow up in mental health under such conditions? Of course, this is hardly possible...

Human nature cannot be betrayed: parental education cannot be circumvented. As we see, its absence leads to horrible things. For the loss of true childhood or for not living it, the victim will later pay an enormous price: its emotional well-being gets endangered.

What can we do? If we wish that our children had a really healthy and full childhood, then we must get back to the foundations. It is not too late for this! Here is what parents must do:

- Put limitations, not forgetting that we are parents and not friends of our children.
- Make sure that the children get what they need and not what they long for. We should not be afraid to say ‘no’ to their wishes if they are contrary to their real needs.
- Provide them with healthy food and limit snacks.
- Spend with them at least an hour a day outdoors.
- Care for having common family dinner.
- There should be no unnecessary objects on the table while eating.
- Do not surround the children with gadgets and technical devices in order to avoid their being bored. They should play proper board games or party games.
- The child should have a task every day, like making the bed, collecting the toys after playing, hanging the laundry after washing, making the school-bag, setting the table, etc.
- The child should go to bed at the same time every day, and should not take to bed any gadgets.
- Teach the children responsibility and self-reliance. Do not make their school-bag or carry it for them. Do not bring to school food, homework, etc. that they have left at home. When they are over 5 years old, do not peel the banana for them. Do not protect them from small failures. In this way, you teach them to cope with difficulties, to overcome obstacles.
- They should learn patience. Give them the chance to spend their leisure time really freely. If they feel somewhat bored with it, that will urge them to turn to creative activities.
- Their life should not be filled with entertainment.
- Be available for the children not only physically, but also emotionally. Teach them social skills.
- Don’t stick to your phone while you are with your children. Talk with them.
- Teach your child how to cope with anger and annoyance.
- Teach the child to shake hands, yield place, share something; teach compassion, appropriate behaviour at the table or in conversation.
- Keep emotional contact with the children: smile at them, give them hugs and kisses, tickle them, read to them, dance and skip about with them.

We must change our attitude, otherwise the forthcoming generation will live on pills. It is not too late, but time is getting shorter and shorter (...)³.

³ “The silent tragedy about which nobody speaks although it concerns our children” (in Hungarian). www.bidista.com, 24 June 2017.

However, we must help our children also in another matter. Nowadays, many false paradigms about the family are spread in the society, often by powerful and influential groups, as well as large institutions, originally created to help the family. They make further and further moves to gradually take over more and more functions of the family. We must resist to these tendencies. How can we do this?

„Most of us, as parents, know that the thing we have the best chance of influencing, is our own families. After all, we are with them on a daily basis, and we have the most influence on change when we operate in our own sphere. We also know, deep down, that if we put forth the effort, seek the right help, and persist, we can be the predominant influence in our own families and with our own children, countering, preempting, and superseding the negative influences of peer groups, larger institutions, and false paradigms. We must create a family atmosphere strong enough to resist the dangers posed by the larger institutions and false paradigms”⁴.

4 R. and L. Eyre, *The Turning...*, p. 179.

„We must turn our hearts to our children and our families. We must come to understand that the larger institutions that were created to serve us are now demanding too much service from us, as well as too much time and too much allegiance. We must, as parents, make a conscious decision to give those institutions less of our time and to give them none of our hearts. Our personal tradeoffs must favor the family. As we turn our hearts, we will also turn our minds, our priorities, and our time”⁵.

5 R. and L. Eyre, *The Turning...*, p. 180.

„Here are seven direct and effective approaches to strengthening, protecting, and preserving our families. These approaches have always been important, but now, in the face of all that is happening to the family, they are more crucial and more necessary than ever before”⁶.

6 R. and L. Eyre, *The Turning...*, p. 181.

1. „Make a conscious, personal recommitment to the priority of marriage and family and the functions of family. ... Truly turn your heart (your priority, your focus, and your passion) to your children.

2. Teach and live by correct principles, which oppose, overcome, and supersede false paradigms. Recognize the error and danger in many of society’s attitudes and „norms”, and see the wisdom in true and enduring principles as you teach them to your children.

3. Reinvent time management and balance with the priority and emphasis on spouse and children. As you plan your day or your week, set aside and reserve time for family. Set relationship goals and help children understand that relationships are ultimately more important than achievements.

4. Teach understanding and selective use of larger institutions. Teach children to recognize the good and the bad in media, government, and business, and to use the one while avoiding the other.

5. Make communication the constant goal. Implement it, improve it, and insist on it – between spouses and between parent and child.

6. Create identity, security, and motivation for children through family narratives and ancestor stories, through family meetings, family traditions, family rules, and a family economy that shares household responsibilities.

Use „values therapy”, where the focus shifts away from what is wrong and toward the rewards and fulfillment of what is right. ... Build a family culture that is value-centered”⁷.

⁷ R. and L. Eyre, *The Turning...*, pp. 181-182.

ABSTRACT/ABSTRAKT

The article is a proposal of social and pedagogical reflection on the relations within the family. The text presents the key relationship between the time parents spend with their children and the occurrence of educational problems. The author - referring to his own experiences and insights - describes the contemporary style of family life and postulates its changes.

The article presents dependencies between the time spent with children by parents and the occurrence of parenting issues. The author presents the contemporary family lifestyle and postulates its changes.

Artykuł stanowi propozycję refleksji socjopedagogicznej dotyczącej relacji wewnątrzrodzinnych. W tekście przedstawiona została kluczowa zależność pomiędzy czasem spędzonym z dziećmi przez rodziców, a występowaniem problemów wychowawczych. Autor – odnosząc się do własnych doświadczeń oraz spostrzeżeń - opisuje współczesny styl życia rodzinnego. Na bazie powyższego pojawiają się w tekście postulaty jego zmiany, mające na celu wsparcie trwałości relacji rodzinnych.

KEY WORDS/SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

family, parenting time, children, parenting issues

rodzina, rodzicielstwo, dzieci, problemy wychowawcze