

Child psychologist speaks

Does dependency cause hostility?

By MIKE DOLAN
Of the Emerald

PORTLAND (Special) — Noted psychologist and author Haim Ginott spoke at the National Education Association convention Sunday at the Portland Coliseum. The New York University professor began his speech by explaining why he left teaching for the study of clinical psychology: "I couldn't detect any connection between what I was teaching and what the children were learning."

He explains that as a clinical psychologist the children he deals with have often been beyond the reach of parents, teachers and school counselors. Answering his own question of what he is supposed to know that these three other groups don't, Ginott said that adults must realize that children are dependent upon adults and that dependency breeds hostility.

His technique is to diminish dependency. He told the delegates that he has learned four methods to do this from his study of psychoanalysis.

The largest barrier to communication between adults and children is the too common practice of using threats instead of "controlled choices," the author of "Between Parent and Child" said. Ginott illustrated this concept as forcing a child to drink his milk rather than offering him the choice of a half a glass of a full glass. He also claimed that an effective method of reaching children is "granting in fantasy what you can't give in reality." Using the example of a child who once demanded his harmonica, Ginott said that often children desire friendship and recognition instead of the immediate physical objects for which they ask. He told the child, "I wish I had a harmonica to give you," and, claims Ginott, he was happy.

The third important aspect of communication between adults and children, according to Ginott, is to offer guidance instead of criticism. He urged the teachers to take the opportunity of mistakes by children to show them how to improve situations and not just assign blame.

The last of his suggestions Ginott said was particularly relevant to teachers: "Be brief." He cited the example of a child who told him, "My teacher always says something after she says something." He singled out one taped transcription of a teacher who made nine statements to a child when she only wanted to give him a pencil.

When asked later if his techniques were manipulative in the manner of behavior modification, Ginott said, "Changing just the child's behavior is not good enough," and that he wants to teach children values such as courage and creativity.

Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm of New York was a scheduled speaker at the Sunday session of the NEA Conference. However, she was tied up at the Chicago Airport and was unable to attend. An attempt was made to have Congresswoman Chisholm address the delegates by phone but that proved unsuccessful due to technical difficulties with the audio system.



Haim Ginott

Photo by Steve Twedt

James Broughton: *The Bed*

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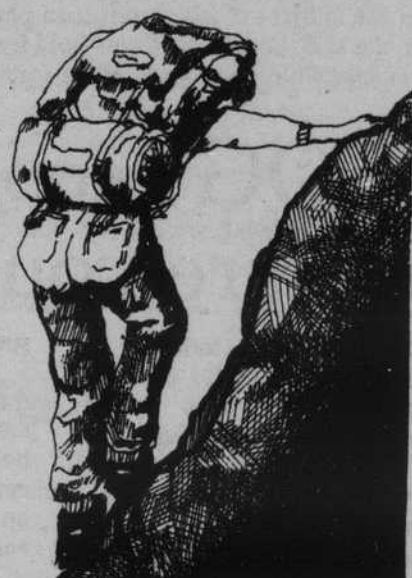
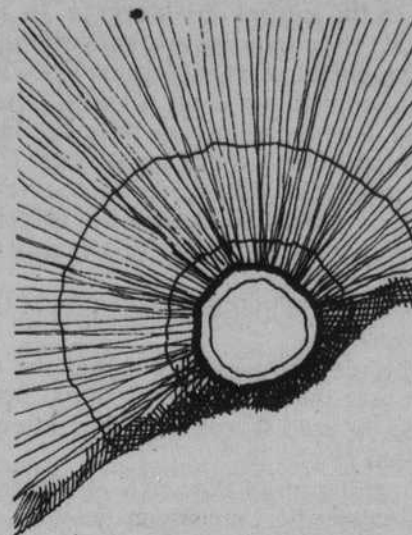
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