October 31, 2002

[Chapter 7]

The “Natural Method” of Childraising as an Example of the Ways of Relating Perspective and the Relational Principle

[URL: NaturalMethod]

SECTIONS (& perhaps subsections):

I What the method is –
   A Brief description; basic perspective / philosophy
   B History / origins
   C Current usage

[From this point on, the essay shows how the natural method in an inherent part of the ways of relating perspective – what the ways of relating perspective looks like when applied to child-raising.]

II Takes the child’s interests fully (i.e., equally) into account

III After doing so, you (the parent; usually the mother) try to satisfy them as best you can.²

IV Making the final decision as an example of the 2nd-order criteria.

V Trust in the parent is the first experience of the benign universe.³

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¹SPC: The natural method of childraising has been one model that helped me clarify my thinking about the ways of relating perspective. I want to acknowledge the help of my daughter, Catherine Blood, in discovering and using the method in the first place and then explaining it to me in the course of many conversations.

²This is not a sacrifice of your interests to the child’s. It is often perceived to be, because the current practice is that the child’s interests don’t count at all, so that paying any attention to the child looks like a sacrifice of the parent’s interests. It is easy for me to slip into regarding Cathy’s 24/7 model as the only one, but it will depend on the mother’s capabilities. Infinite self-sacrifice is not a good model for a child any more than dictatorial rule is.

³This is a phrasing from Re-evaluation Counseling, but I believe many philosophies have the concept of the benign universe. Regardless, the point is that we are born into (and live within) a world for which we have already been formed – by billions of years of evolution, by tens of thousands of years of being humanoid, and by thousands of years of culture. Our cultural patterns and our very physical being down to the tiniest organelle exist to help us in the world. When we allow ourselves to look, the world is more benign than we realize. The natural method is simply one part of that – the protection of the parents is something we are born with.
VI  The fundamental importance of this raising for the child’s entire life.
VII  Objections to it:
A   “Creates dependence on the mother.”
B   “Doesn’t ready the child for the realities of life, which is harsh, cruel, and indifferent to their interests.”
C   I’m sure there are other objections unknown to me. I want to give the full range of them.