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You Are Your Parents

By Dr. Frank Carter

If you're a parent, I am sure you have had one of those moments when you say something to your child and you think to yourself, "I am turning into my mother (or father)!" Such strong recognitions might only happen every so often, so most parents don't realize just how much they actually do parent like their parents. However, in my estimation, I would say that 80% of our parenting behavior is modeled from that our parents.

Even if we have a great relationship with our parents, this probably isn't welcome news. We like to believe that we are unique in our thoughts and feelings and behaviors. We always have. Being unique and special, for example, helped attract mother's attention, which helped to create our sense of self-esteem that allows us to venture out into the world and accomplish things.

Therefore, if you were not to question your model of parenting, you would iterate the perspective that you are a unique individual with your own assessment of your child's needs, as well as your needs as the mother or father.

However, one assumption from a theory called metaphorical iconicity, to which I as a family and life coach subscribe, presumes that the brain organizes information according to symbolic icons. In other words, the brain categorizes information according to iconic symbols such as mother, father, masculine, and feminine. A second assumption is that the knowledge contained within the categories at birth starts with a basic level of knowledge imposed upon the brain genetically. From this beginning, new information derived through experience builds the repertoire of knowledge that you call your daily reality.

Effectively, this is to say there is no choice in the matter regarding how you initially want to parent. Rather than describing these values as right or wrong, like it or not, you are your mother or your father. Metaphorical iconicity advances the perspective that what you learned as a child, what you witnessed as a child, has become the norm for your brain: what you expect from yourself and what you expect from your children. Thus, there is no right or wrong. If you behave like your mother or father, it is normal.

We can take the same principles of metaphorical iconicity just applied to family and apply them to your selection of career and your sense of fulfillment with it. There are certain emotional requirements that go with feeling fulfilled in one's life. Call it a sense of contentment, achievement or an accomplishment of a goal. The definition of contentment/success has its

antecedents in your childhood. As you watched your mother enjoy/not enjoy being a mother, or your father enjoy being a provider/not much of a provider, and everything in-between, you would adopt their gender or cross gender value unconsciously. This would simply become the norm for your definition of success or goal attainment, which goes on to define your level of self-confidence and default sense of self-esteem.

The exciting news is that this does not mean that you have no control over your sense of family and career fulfillment. You do! While your biological potential is not a choice, the amount of energy you put into fulfilling the expression of your biological potential or new information through a coaching process is.

Above all, accepting that you begin with your biology and the models around you can be a very rejuvenating perspective. Only once you acknowledge where your feelings and perspectives come from, can you change your perspective and attitude. The brain lives for the truth and insists on closure, and when you tell the truth, dysfunctional emotional tension is released.

If you are interested in exploring your attitude and perspective about family and career, please don't hesitate to contact me. Visit me at <http://www.peaks-coaching.com> or give me a call at 858-454-2828.