



Rafael Pich on Parenting

Rafael, father of 16, spoke twice to the parents of the PARED schools in Sydney during the 1990s. His warmth and advice were unforgettable.

On Family Life

'We need to rediscover intense family life.' Promote common family projects and interests. Share happiness and sorrows. Share the work. Do good deeds together for neighbours.

On Attitudes to Work

'The family is the first school of work.'

On giving children responsibilities when they are young

'Children have the right to be taught to solve their own problems.' Beware of raising children who do not have the resilience and responsibility to cope in the adult world. Don't raise children who are **'meringues'**. Be affectionate but demanding on your child at an early age...how ironic for a **'monopolistic mum'** to do practically everything for her child when young, and then to complain when, as a teenager, the boy or girl doesn't help around the home.

On teaching virtues

Start early, teaching virtues at the age when the child can best acquire the habits: **'Golden age of education... up to three years old; silver age...up to six; after six... stone age.'**

On dealing with things that go wrong

'Problems, studied carefully, can all be solved.'

'Look for the causes'... of unusual behaviour, problems, and weaknesses. Don't put up with problems, look for the cause, implement a strategy to overcome it.

Correct small problems early. **'Prevention is best.'**

On challenging ourselves to meet high standards

We are in an **'emergency'** in the modern world. We cannot become complacent or drop our standards. More than ever the world needs **'superfamilies...decent families are not enough.'**

On affection and sensitivity

Easy does it ... if a child for a time requires extra affection, give it; but gradually wean him off it so that he does not become too dependent on affection. **'Enter into the problem and solve it gently.'**

Do not bluster and become dictatorial: **'You can do it the authoritative way or the loving way.'**

'Do we know how to open ourselves to our children?...Speak to the heart of your children.'

On service to others

'Participation and sharing are the antidote to individualism'... that is on the increase across the world. We need to pass on to children that the goal of life is spirit of service.

On friendship

Parents should teach their children that friendship is above all service to others. Moreover that the aim of life is service to others, to give of ourselves. Get to know lots of people, to have plenty of friends. **'The more we get to know others the more we love them... the spiral of love and knowledge.'... 'Make friends with twenty by starting with one then a second, and then a third.'**

A family alone will find it almost impossible to survive; a team of families is necessary.

'There is no problem that we cannot solve if we share, if we work as a team.'

On Faith and prayer

'A profound deep supernatural life is the solution for all that life can throw at us.'