

Parenting Styles and Parenting Training

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Eva Dreikurs Ferguson

Do parents raise their children in Autocratic, Democratic, or
Laissez Faire styles ?

Dreikurs understood that Kurt Lewin's styles of leadership describe Family Dynamics

- Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., & White, R. K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created 'social climates.' *Journal of Social Psychology, 10*, 271–299.
- Autocratic – order without freedom
- Democratic – order with freedom
- Laissez Faire – freedom without order

Relation of Authoritarian mind-set to contemporary politics

- **The rise of American authoritarianism: A niche group of political scientists may have uncovered what's driving Donald Trump's ascent.** What they found has implications that go well beyond 2016. by Amanda Taub on March 1, 2016 -- www.vox.com
- Authoritarians prioritize social order and hierarchies, which bring a sense of control to a chaotic world.
- In the early 1990s, a political scientist named Stanley Feldman, a professor at SUNY Stonybrook, believed authoritarianism could be an important factor in American politics in ways that had nothing to do with fascism, but that it could only reliably be measured by unlinking it from specific political preferences.

Feldman's questions used by political scientists to assess authoritarian mindset:

- Feldman “settled on something so banal it seems almost laughable: parenting goals. “
- “four simple questions that appear to ask about parenting but are in fact designed to reveal how highly the respondent values hierarchy, order, and conformity over other values.”
- 1. “Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: independence or respect for elders?”
- 2. “Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: obedience or self-reliance?”
- 3. “Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: to be considerate or to be well-behaved? “
- 4. “Please tell me which one you think is more important for a child to have: curiosity or good manners?”

Ferguson Parental Values Inventory

- The Ferguson Pvi (Parental Values Inventory) contains items for **autocratic parenting style** like:

obedience to authority

conformity to rules

follow orders

for **democratic parenting style** like:

fair play

mutual respect between people (peers and adults)

empathy towards others

Laissez Faire items are different than Democratic items in the PVI

- Laissez Faire items in the PVI are like these:

pursuit of personal wishes

don't worry about the rules

“do your own thing”

Findings in Ferguson's research show a rise in adoption of Democratic values over time, a drop in Autocratic values over time, and as reported in a Chicago Tribune article, a rise in Laissez Faire values.

- <http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/parenting/sc-collapse-of-parenting-family-0202-20160127-story.html>

Leanne Italie Associated Press

- Dr. Leonard Sax has been a family physician and psychologist for 27 years, conducting workshops around the world for parents, teachers, social workers, counselors, school psychologists and juvenile justice professionals.
- He's also a dad, and it's from all those perspectives that he took on his fourth book, an alarm bell of sorts titled "The Collapse of Parenting" (Basic Books).
- Sax, who lives in Exton, Pa., argues that American families are facing a crisis of authority, where the kids are in charge, out of shape emotionally and physically, and suffering because of it. He calls for a reordering of family life in response.

Findings in Research Reports

- **Ferguson, E. D., Hagaman, J., Grice, J. W., & Peng, K. (2006).** From Leadership to Parenthood: The Applicability of Leadership Styles to Parenting Styles. ***Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*** Vol. 10, pp. 43–56.
 - Students' reports of how parents raised them before age 9 shows confusion between Democratic and Laissez Faire styles, but clear grasp of how these differ from Autocratic style.
- **Ferguson, E. D., Hagaman, J. A., Maurer, S. B., Mathews, P., & Peng, K. (2013).** Asian culture in transition: is it related to reported parenting styles and transitivity of simple choices? ***Journal of Applied Social Psychology***, Vol. 43, pp. 730–740.
 - Students in India report more Laissez Faire, Individualistic, and Competitive style of how parents raised them up to age 9 compared to Caucasian American students.

Parents think of themselves as more Democratic in raising their children than the Students report, the majority of students and parents report that parents use the Democratic style, and Democratic vs. Laissez Faire style differ in how they relate to the Triandis cultural values test items.

- Analysis of the frequencies of reported parenting styles on the PVg (a global measure rather than the Pvi that measures individual items) showed in 2009 that 93 participants reported democratic, 60 reported autocratic, and 11 reported laissez-faire styles. Data collected in 2016 show less Autocratic and more Democratic and Laissez Faire styles reported than in 2009.
- The Laissez Faire style did not relate to vertical collectivism on the Triandis cultural values scale whereas the Democratic parenting style did; whereas the the laissez-faire style related very strongly with horizontal individualism the Democratic style related much weaker to the horizontal individualism items. Laissez Faire relates more to Individualism, Democratic more to Collectivism.
- **Yemm, K. A., vanBuren, J., England, A. N., Ralph, J., Addis, B., & Ferguson, E. D.** Clearing the confusion: Distinguishing between democratic and laissez faire parenting styles. Poster presented at MPA, April 11, 2011.

Students' current values, and parents' current values differ from the styles reported for when parents raised the child up to age 9

Several findings have become clear:

- 1. Students rate parents as less democratic than do parents report themselves in raising the child up to age 9, and as young adults the students see themselves as more democratic than they report their parents' styles when raising the student up to age 9.
- 2. Students rate their mothers as more Democratic and Laissez Faire than their Fathers, and Students rate their fathers as more Autocratic than their Mothers.
- 3. Students rate their fathers as more Competitive (a style added to the 3 Lewin styles) than their mothers.
- 4. Parents, like the students, report their current styles (as measured by the Ferguson Pva – parenting style values held currently) as more democratic than when they raised their student up to age 9. There is a distinct shift in values for the past 10 years in both the students' and the parents' reports of leadership styles.
- 5. All reports show clear distinction between Autocratic, with high negative affective rating, and the two other styles of Democratic (high positive affective rating) and Laissez Faire (low negative affective rating).

Autocratic is distinct from both Democratic and Laissez Faire, but there is confusion between Democratic and Laissez Faire in both the parents' reports and the students' reports of parental values.

Adlerian Principles for Family Dynamics and raising children in the Democratic Style

- 1. Share in decision making and respect for all members of the family, believing each person has equal value as a vital member of the family.
- 2. Mutual respect is the only way to have healthy people and healthy relationships.
- 3. Neither give in nor fight, neither submit nor dominate. Come to an agreement that serves in a good way all members of the family community.
- 4. Collaboration and cooperation serves everyone best.
- 5. Share meals, recreation, working together. Feel respected and loved, and show respect and love to all in your family.
- 6. Respect good ideas, and respect good understanding. Parents are leaders, but children also can be leaders when they have good common sense, knowledge, and understanding.