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THE ROLE OF THE GUIDANCE TEACHER IN PREPARING  
YOUNG PEOPLE FOR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LIFE  
IN GAZANKULU

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By

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Dedicated to my mother, my wife,  
Sylvia and my children,  
Prudence, Expectus, Laudamus  
and Dulci

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## INTRODUCTION

In the modernising South African society, young people are faced with personal and social problems which make it very difficult for them to adjust positively to life in general. In the end they are frustrated in many situations in life because of their inability to cope with these problems. One of the major problems that the Blacks in South Africa are faced with is that of a poor self-concept. This is a major problem because any adjustment and behaviour in life is, to a large extent, influenced by the self-concept of the individual.

This thesis aims at focusing attention on those social issues which play a major role in the development of the self-concept and the lives in general, of Black people in Gazankulu. It is also concerned with the role of the guidance teacher in preparing young people for a more satisfying life.

Gazankulu, the newly created home of the Shangaan-Tsonga people, is one of the Black National States which has been founded on the philosophy of Separate Development. Gazankulu is divided into four districts, viz. Giyani, Malamulele, Mhala and Ritavi. In each district a township has been established. The residents of these townships are mostly civil servants. Besides townships there are poverty-stricken rural areas in each district where most of the inhabitants still lead a traditional way of life. These inhabitants eke out a subsistence existence, from land which is both insufficient and barren. These areas are plagued by long periods of drought. There are White farms adjacent to this national state. Gazankulu serves as a source of labour for these farms because of the inadequate job opportunities within the national state itself. The economic conditions in the rural areas force young

people to leave school as early as standard 5 in order to go and look for work on the neighbouring farms where they are often financially exploited. They commute to work by open trucks very early in the morning and return home in the evening. These young people often also have to bear dehumanizing conditions at their workplaces. The school-leaver crisis in the primary schools in Gazankulu could also be partly ascribed to the lack of appropriate guidance in that the children from illiterate family backgrounds do not fully understand the purposes of education.

Chapter One focusses attention on the self-concept of the Black person in Gazankulu. It thus concerns itself with the impact of apartheid ideology and the process of modernisation on the self-concept of the Blacks in Gazankulu. The discussion in the subsequent chapters will elaborate further the influence that social and political issues have upon a young person's self-concept. Chapter Two concerns itself with the development of the self-concept through interpersonal relationships between the self and significant others. Parents, peers, teachers, workmates and society have a strong influence on the self-concept and the individual's adjustment to life at home, at school, at the workplace and in society. Chapter Three deals with the role of the self-concept in important life decisions such as choice of a life partner, becoming a parent, and the choice of work. The choice of a life partner and choice of work are, in particular, increasingly problematic as the modernising ethos is encountered by Black young people. Chapter Four concentrates on the role of the self-concept in social life. The last chapter discusses a method of implementing these concepts and strategies in a school guidance programme.

CHAPTER 1

THE SELF-CONCEPT OF THE BLACK PERSON IN GAZANKULU

1.1. DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-ESTEEM.

There is no consensus on the meaning of the terms, 'self-concept' and 'self-esteem'. The terms are overlapping and are often used interchangeably. For instance according to Hamacheck, "the self-concept refers to that particular cluster of ideas and attitudes we have about our awareness at any given moment in time" (Hamachek, 1978, p. 3). As regards self-esteem, he says that it is "the extent to which we admire or value that picture of ourselves" (Hamachek, 1978, p. 3). Other theorists such as Siann and Ugwuegbu, argue that the self-concept "is what we think we are like", and that "self-esteem is the valuing part of ourself" (Siann and Ugwuegbu, 1980, p. 3). For instance success in an examination may enhance someone's feelings of self-esteem but for another person it may lower his self-esteem depending on the "expectations and level of aspiration for performance ..." (Hamachek, 1978, p. 5). In support of his argument, Hamachek gives the following example based on his experience:

'... I received a C in an undergraduate course which I regarded as particularly difficult. That C, however, was quite consistent with my expectations and level of aspiration for performance, and I felt it was minor, if not a major success. On the other hand, a friend of mine who also received a C in that course viewed this as a total failure, because his expectations and level of aspiration were not lower than a B.'

(Hamachek, 1978, p. 5)

According to Dovey, "the terms 'self-image' and 'self-esteem', are very closely related; in general 'self-image' refers to one's attitude to-

wards oneself, and 'self-esteem' refers to the feelings associated with that attitude" (Dovey, 1984, p. 37). To my mind the major problem which Blacks are faced with in their personal and social adjustment and behaviour is the self-concept because a person's attitude towards himself or herself is to a large degree influenced by the attitudes of other people towards him or her. In this study, the term self-concept will be used as a term which includes the phenomenon of self-esteem.

Every person, whether White or Black, wants to feel that he is a worthwhile person. As Hamachek says, "all of us have beliefs about our relative value and our ultimate worth" (Hamachek, 1978, p. 4). In South Africa, it is difficult for Blacks to have positive beliefs about their self-worth because for reasons of race, they are considered by other groups to be inferior. This creates a vicious circle in that their perception of other people perceiving them to be inferior gives rise to further feelings of worthlessness and this in turn has a very destructive effect upon their self-concept. A child's family background also forms an important basis for the development of a positive or a negative self-concept. In Gazankulu most of the children come from the rural areas. As alluded to earlier, most of the families are neither literate nor numerate and their socio-economic conditions leave much to be desired. Children grow up with internalized feelings of inferiority. Hamachek believes that the "frame of reference of selfhood develops concurrently with the development of intellectual capacities, motor skills and muscular co-ordination" and that "success and failure in the child's activities contribute to a more clear and differentiated sense of self" (Hamachek, 1979, pp. 89-90). Because of poverty and cultural deprivation, a Black child does not have the opportunity of developing the skills referred to here above by Hamachek. His inability

to do more things brings about undue feelings of inferiority when he compares himself with other children from families with better economic backgrounds. Therefore, the disadvantaged child needs emotional support and encouragement from teachers if he or she is to gain the confidence necessary to develop those physical, social and mental skills which he or she couldn't acquire at home. Due to inadequate job opportunities in the rural areas in Gazankulu, the disadvantaged economic situation in which many families find themselves compels the father in the family to leave for Pretoria or Johannesburg to look for work. He leaves his wife and children behind. Because of poverty, the wife has to commute to work daily by truck to the neighbouring White farms. She comes back home late in the evening physically and emotionally exhausted. On arrival she begins to attend to household duties because most families cannot afford to employ a servant. In such homes children grow up without experiencing that sense of love and care from parents which creates a basis for the early development of positive self-feelings.

Language plays a very important role in the development of the self-concept. Language is created by people on the basis of cultural environment. Therefore, the process of thought as well as the nature and usage of language portrays the inter-play between an individual and his or her environment. In Britain, Bernstein (1971) distinguished between two language codes. These, he claims, have developed due to different cultural environments, particularly different social relationships. Working classes in Britain use, what he calls, a 'restricted code' which relies heavily upon familiarity with social context for its meaning. The middle class uses, what he calls an 'elaborated code'. This code has a low reliance on context and instead relies on elaborate articu-

lation for its meaning. Vocabulary is thus highly developed in the elaborated code and only that which is made explicit is usually taken seriously. An elaborated code is the code of modern industrial and bureaucratic societies, and thus this is the code promoted and used in societies, and thus this is the code promoted and used in schools. In South Africa Black children are taught in a language which is not their first language. Their restricted vocabulary, alone, puts them at a serious disadvantage in school and societal context which emphasizes explicit and elaborate (and usually written) communication patterns. Their inability to comprehend the form of communication used in school, is often interpreted as low intelligence. Their failure to respond is interpreted as stupidity rather than misunderstanding due to different language use. This causes Black children to develop feelings of worthlessness which lead to the majority of them dropping-out of school at a fairly early age.

Language influences the development of the self-concept in many different ways. Initially the child refers to himself by name before he can refer to himself as 'I'. For example pre-school children like being called by their correct names. If one calls him by a wrong name, the child immediately reacts by saying, "I am not Abby, I am Mike." This applies to children of all races. As Burns says, "it is rather interesting that the reaction of a child to his name is a valid and reliable indication of his self-concept. If the child likes his name, he tends to like himself; if he dislikes his name he tends to dislike himself" (Burns, 1982, p. 40). Furthermore, he says that "loss of name makes the child a non-person, his essential self as a distinct person has been denied" (Burns, 1982, p. 82). This is the situation to which many

Blacks are subjected to in South Africa. They are often called by objectionable and derogatory names which have evil connotations to Blacks such as 'Apie', 'Jakkals', 'Bobbejaan', 'Blikskottel', 'Kaffer' to mention only a few. Such dehumanising names create indelible feelings of worthlessness.

#### 1.2. THE IMPACT OF APARTHEID ON SELF-CONCEPT.

Self-esteem is the intimate relationship which a person has with him or herself grounded in the values which give significance to his or her existence. Both Whites and Blacks have the need of being 'capable, successful and worthy'. The apartheid ideology in South Africa compels a Black person to give up one's self and renounce one's self-value. This is to become alien to one's self. To maintain this position the alien-self condemns the essential self relegating authentic values and one's own existence as being inferior and curtailing the self's existence. For a person to acquire a sense of self-esteem and adjust to a satisfying life, he needs self-sustaining encounters in the social world. However, this is not always possible in as far as Black people are concerned because of the policy of separate development. As Van der Spuy and Shamley say:

'Apartheid or separate development is depicted by its protagonists as aiming to safeguard the existence of the White race, Western civilization or Christian civilization in South Africa. Sometimes it is also described as a guarantee for the existence of the Afrikaner Nation. The need to safeguard these is felt because some threat to their survival is experienced in an integrated society with full equality for all. A basic insecurity exists.'

(Van der Spuy and Shamley, 1978, p. 8)

In "Die Katkisasieboek", official handbook of the Dutch Reformed Church for guidance of their young people before confirmation, it is blatantly stated that "Apartheid tussen die Blankes en die nie-Blankes is die enigste regverdigte en praktiese stelsel in 'n land soos Suid-Afrika" (quoted by Van der Spuy and Shamley, 1978, p. 6). In South Africa, people are classified and judged according to the colour of their skin. Blacks are by virtue of the colour of their skin considered to be inferior from the political, social, educational and economic point of view. This feeling of inferiority has been induced in them by those who have the political and economic power. The political climate of South Africa has left the Blacks with internalized feelings of inferiority and a negative self-concept. They find themselves in a situation where they are compelled to condemn their own values and substitute them for those of the 'other'. As a result they are unable to maintain their self-esteem. For example, when Blacks in Gazankulu go to a town (Tzaneen or Duiwelskloof) which is in a proclaimed White area, they are suddenly perceived as inferior people in terms of their black skin regardless of who and what they are in their own Black area. The petty apartheid they encounter in town makes it difficult for them to tolerate such dehumanization and still retain some self-respect. In some cafes and restaurants they are forced to use the "Slegs Nie-Blankes" entrances. If one accidentally uses the "Slegs Blankes" entrance, one is, if he is fortunate, ordered politely to use the other entrance reserved for Blacks. If he is unfortunate, he is sent back with a volley of dehumanizing words leaving him with the only impression that he is a worthless person. In some commercial banks, Blacks - both literate and illiterate - are expected to present their savings account books together

with completed withdrawal slips and reference books ('passbooks') to the people in attendance at the enquiries counter for clearance while their white counterparts do not have to undergo these dehumanizing formalities. Those who per chance happen to evade these tortuous procedures are those whose political, educational and economic positions are known by the bank tellers. However, there are Blacks who happen to transcend these formalities. These are Blacks who have authentic self-regard and self-confidence who are not easily compromised into sacrificing their values or self to become the embodiment of other's projections. Such are regarded as radicals and run the risk of being collected by police if they insist on not confirming. However, Van der Spuy and Shamley comment:

'"Petty apartheid" refers to matters like separate entrances for the different races at post offices, stations and other public places, separate park benches and all other aspects of racial separation encountered in everyday life, even though some of it is presently eroding.'

(Van der Spuy and Shamley, 1978, p. 4)

Elsewhere they say:

'This separation in everyday life is mainly a symbolic obsessional action by the ruling Whites to attempt to defend (unsuccessfully) against a perceived threat from the existence of an overwhelming number of Blacks in their midst. It is a symbolic barrier to the fear of being flooded ...'

(Van der Spuy and Shamley, 1978, p. 8)

This whole set-up to a large degree undermines the self-concept of Black people. Their perception of others perceiving them to be inferior and their subsequent perception of themselves as inferior, leads

to the development of negative self-feelings.

In Black schools, the political ideology of apartheid continues to have an impact upon the self-concept of Black people. That schooling provided in Black schools is intended through the influence of apartheid to make Blacks acquire low academic standards is an old historical issue. For instance, Dr H F Verwoerd, while Minister of Education, once said:

'When I have control of native education I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them ... When my Department controls Native Education it will know for what class of higher education a native is fitted and whether he will have a chance in life to use his knowledge ... What is the use of teaching a bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd.'

(Quoted by De Lange Commission, 1981, p. 5)

There are other instances which illustrate that the education that a child receives in Black schools is of an inferior nature. For example, if a child from a Black primary school wishes to further his secondary education in a private, multiracial school, he will first be expected to go through a test before he can be accepted. In most cases Black pupils fail to satisfy the criteria for admission. These preliminaries indicate clearly that educational standards in White and Black schools are not the same at primary, secondary and even at tertiary level. At tertiary level the education offered to Blacks in Black universities is also intended through the influence of apartheid to enable Black pupils to acquire the minimal educational standards. For instance some students from Black universities who proceed to a White university are not credited for some of the courses acquired at a Black institution of

higher learning because of disparity in academic standards. The academic standards of Black universities are considered to be of an inferior nature. This hits hard on the self-concept of a pupil who cannot pass a test to qualify for admission at a multiracial school and a university student whose courses, though not all, have to be discarded because they were acquired at a Black university. It is an historical issue that Blacks should receive education of an inferior nature for the entrenchment of White supremacy as evidenced in the words of the then administrator of the Transvaal, Mr F H Odendaal, in an address to a group of school principals in Johannesburg in 1961 when he emphasized that they "must strive to win the fight against the non-White in the classroom instead of losing it on the battlefield" (quoted by Scanlon, 1966, p. 281). I wholeheartedly agree with Dovey and Mason in their argument that "all that tended to be achieved by Black schools was the attainment of a basic literacy in English and Afrikaans and the internalization of a sense of inferiority, which served the interests of the White-controlled economic structures" (Dovey and Mason, 1984, p. 18). The influence of apartheid on Black education does not only have a devastating effect upon the self-concept of a pupil but also upon the self-concept of the teacher. In Black schools the teacher does not have the latitude to give his own independent interpretation of what he teaches for fear of being black listed or branded as a radical, non-conformist, non-scholar, political agitator and extremist who is totally unacceptable to the teaching profession. A teacher who is not prepared to toe the line, runs the risk of being dismissed from the profession. Little wonder that in some cases, "people who refuse to conform to the norms created by the governing group may be killed, imprisoned, banned, etc." (Dovey, 1984,

p. 30). The teacher's fear of victimisation because of classroom practice inhibits the development of a positive self-concept. His withholding of some information from his pupils for fear of being victimised puts him in a situation where he cannot be trusted by his pupils. Hence, a teacher is often regarded as a 'stooge' by the Black youth in South Africa. Of interest is that what goes on in the classroom in Black schools never goes unnoticed by those in the seats of authority because in most schools the Bureau of State Security exercises its vigilance by secretly appointing pupils to serve as informers and thus creating an unpleasant atmosphere where suspicion dominates interpersonal relationships. As Ruth Sloan Associates put it, "... the atmosphere is one of suspicion and tension not conducive to either teaching or learning" (Ruth Sloan Associates, 1962, p. 277). A situation is created where a teacher cannot trust the pupil and vice versa. Consequently absence of trust between teacher and pupil in Black schools mars the development of a positive self-concept. As a result, confronted with such massive security measures, Black people have no alternative but to internalise their anger, deflect it onto themselves and contain it ..." (Institute of Black Research, 1976, p. 14).

### 1.3. THE IMPACT OF MODERNISATION UPON SELF-CONCEPT.

Traditionally Black people have led a communal life. In such a society they know one another as either friends or relatives. As McEwan and Sutcliffe say:

'The family extends to the village so that all one's fellow villagers may be regarded as

cousins or even, quite commonly, brothers and sisters; one eats and drinks and talks and works and plays and hunts and perhaps fights, alongside the same set of people. This constant succession of face-to-face relationships covering all the activities of living gives to tribal life a special quality and makes the rules governing the formal relationship between people particularly important.'

(McEwan and Sutcliffe, 1965, p. 45)

Marriages take place within the clan for the purpose of perpetuating the kinship. Love between a young man and a woman is usually initiated by the parents. This made the task of a young man much easier when it comes to a choice of a life partner. A traditional society is characterised by a sense of co-operation among the people. Competition and individualism are unheard of in traditional communities. Dovey puts it aptly when he says that "the traditional emphasis upon group forming and stabilizing values whatever their weaknesses tended to teach group members the basics of rudimentary inter-personal relationships - co-operation, self-sacrifice, empathy, a generosity of spirit, and teamwork" (Dovey, 1984, p. 2). This sense of co-operation and togetherness is usually seen when there is a social function. The door is left ajar for all the invited and uninvited guests to attend. All were treated alike. Invitations are highly informal. When there is a funeral, people in that particular community attend in large numbers whether they are burying the rich or the poor because the families have a high sense of community spirit. Today in most of the Black traditional societies, modernisation has disrupted those social values which were cherished in a traditional society. McEwan and Sutcliffe say:

'With the arrival of external forces, however, the traditional ways of living, the old systems and values relating to the association between husband, wife, kinsmen, village and tribe no longer meaningfully or harmoniously relate. Pressures between rival demands multiply and man, with his bearings shattered or lost, finds himself in danger of becoming morally and spiritually marooned, leading a life shorn of meaning and benefit of the ancient inner tranquility that is the gift of unquestioned, un-deviating tradition.'

(McEwan and Sutcliffe, 1965, p. 45)

Dovey also says that "the emotional support structures inherent in the traditional social groups (community, extended family, etc.) ... were eroded as these groupings were fragmented by the values of modernity (Dovey, 1984, p. 1). Modernisation and technology have an impact upon the self-concept of the traditional Black people in that "every adjustment to this change, has involved the surrender of old loyalties, relationships and lifestyles and the learning of new ways" (Shipman, 1971, p. 16). In a modernising society, people have no time for one another except if they know each other or happen to be involved in the same activity. Berger et al argue that even people who are doing a similar job in the modern technological setting, are subjected to "anonymous social relations" (Berger et al, 1973, p. 35) and they further say that "social relations between workers are experienced in terms of such anonymity" (Berger et al, 1973, p. 36) for the purpose of facilitating the production process. In a modern technological setting, the individual has no chance to choose a person with whom he can work. Shipman maintains that "most daily contacts are between people who perform services for each other without knowing each other as persons" (Shipman, 1971, p. 17). In a modern society, people seldom greet one another except if they are friends or they know each other.

They may share the same seat either in the bus, train, or in an aeroplane but they seldom communicate. It's often the case that for example "the bus conductor, foreman or shop assistant who tries to become intimate is often a nuisance" (Shipman, 1971, p. 17). This way of life in a modernising society, leads to someone from a traditional environment failing to adjust himself to the new way of life. The result is that he develops negative self-feelings.

Economic factors in modernised societies have played a large part in the undermining of the self-concept of many Black people. In capitalist societies, a person's "worth" is usually judged according to financial power, and material criteria. Most Black people fail dismally on all these criteria and thus fail to qualify with respect to the social determinants of one's sense of worth. Fanon (1967, p. 13) traces the source of the Black inferiority complex to primarily economic factors. Although there are Black people with positive self-concepts, the vast majority of them are not able to transcend the barriers of poverty, disadvantage and powerlessness and the subsequent internalization of a sense of inferiority.

CHAPTER 2.THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-CONCEPT :  
INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
THE SELF AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS2.1. INTRODUCTION.

In the previous chapter the focus was on the self-concept of a Black person in Gazankulu. My intention in this chapter is to look at the general development of the self-concept with particular reference to inter-personal relationships between the individual and significant others. Generally, a person's attitudes and feelings are to a large degree influenced by others' perception of him or her. The way a person perceives, and feels about himself, has an enormous impact on both his personal and social life. Thus in order that a person may succeed in adjusting himself or herself to the demands of social life, she/he needs self-sustaining encounters in the social sphere. From these inter-personal relationships, a person ultimately gains support and confirmation of his/her self-orientation and values. As Laing says, "We learn to be whom we are told we are" (Laing, 1961, p. 95). The interpersonal relationships which to a large degree influence the development of the self-concept are usually those between the individual and his/her significant others: parents, peers, teachers, workmates and those in authority in the greater society.

2.2. SELF AND PARENTS.

The parents play a significant role in the development of the child's self-concept. "Parents' (conscious and sub-conscious) attitudes toward their children play a very powerful role in the promotion of the child's self-image and self-esteem" (Dovey, 1984, p. 39). Their attitudes

towards the child shape his ideas and feelings about the kind of person he is and would like to be. Parents are people "most meaningful to him" (Hamachek, 1978, p. 153). The key to meaningful communication between parent and child is mutual trust and respect. Parents should be willing to listen to their child, to examine his point of view and to show him that they respect his views and feelings. The child must know that although the parents may not always agree with him, they respect his right to feel and think as he does because as Grossman and Lindgren say, :

"A child who feels that his parents are making a reasonable attempt to consider his needs as well as their own, who feels that they are willing to listen to what he has to say, is likely to develop feelings of respect toward himself. On the other hand, if his feelings and attitudes are not given much consideration, he may conclude that he is not very important and a person who does not deserve respect and consideration.'

(Grossman and Lindgren, 1959, p. 15)

Communication between parents and children is another important factor in the development of the self-concept. However, in many families this is seldom experienced due to the process of modernisation whereby "many loving and devoted parents are simply too busy, too caught up in the hundred-and-one preoccupations of their daily lives, to spare time for genuine two-way conversation with their children" (Hands, 1974, p. 18). Many children grow up without hearing that they are loved and accepted. This may partly be attributed as pointed out by Hands (ibid) to the fact that both parents spend most of their time at the workplace and when they come home, they find themselves unintentionally having no time or energy to relate to their children.

In modern society there are children who are seldom loved and accepted

by their parents. This happens in both White and Black communities. According to Dovey "this may happen for different reasons: the child may not have been wanted; the anger felt by one parent toward the other may be taken out on the child; the parent may be embarrassed by the child's physical/mental make-up; the parent may perceive the child as a burden or a nuisance ..." (Dovey 1984, p. 37). Goldstein et al in support of Dovey's argument say that "when the newborn is defective, his very existence may become a reason for shame and guilt instead of pride, and for the father a discredit to his potency" (Goldstein et al, 1973, p. 15). Such attitudes are contributory to the child developing negative feelings about himself. Clegg and Megson give an example of a child who was discriminated against in a family:

'John was illegitimate, born before his mother married. Since her marriage, her husband has more or less refused to have anything to do with John. They now have three other children. The husband is not cruel to John, he just ignores him. When the others get treats, John loses out. When he does well, no praise comes his way. During the past two years he has become more and more of a behaviour problem. He steals at every opportunity and he lies and deceives.'

(Clegg and Megson, 1968, p. 25)

Today many children are reared in an atmosphere similar to the one John was exposed to in his family. This type of parental attitude has a devastating effect on the child's self-concept. The child needs parental love, warmth, understanding and acceptance. "As much as anything else, he needs to be accepted, valued and wanted as a member of the family unit consisting of adults as well as other children" (Goldstein et al, 1973, p. 14). In some Black communities some mothers leave their illegitimate children with their grandparents when they marry in order to save the children from the hardship of a single, working, parent home.

In White communities, illegitimate children are usually given up for adoption. In most cases, however, these new environments are not always conducive to the development of a positive self-concept.

Divorce and separation negatively affect the child's self-concept. As Schlesinger says:

'Children are negatively affected by the separation. Most of the separated group find great difficulty in explaining the separation to the children and in handling questions and attitudes about the absent parent. This causes the children to experience confusion about the absent parent, difficulty in school, and to experience health difficulties. Many of these children feel humiliated at being abandoned by their parent. The fact that most of them do not know the reason for the separation adds to their anxieties, and they become embarrassed when asked about the absent parent.'

(Schlesinger, 1969, p. 7)

Laing maintains that such children "feel incomplete for want of a father or mother, whose absence leaves their concept of self incomplete" (Laing, 1961, p. 86). A broken marriage can completely destroy a person's self-concept and leave him maladjusted for the rest of his life.

In many families the parent-child relationship is often complicated by the child's involvement in sexual activities. Parents have conflicting views about the issue of sex education. For example, in a strict traditional family, sex is never discussed at home. Sexual love is regarded as something spiritual and private. Parents feel embarrassed to touch on the subject of sex. Sex education is regarded as taboo in some White and Black families for cultural and religious reasons. Ginott says that one mother who was overanxious on the sex issue, once said, "my son laughed at me when I once said that two rabbits got

married. I couldn't bring myself to use the words mate or copulate in front of him" (Ginott, 1969, p. 155). Lack of appropriate sex education to a large degree contributes to poor adjustment to marital life. In some Black traditional societies, parents send boys and girls to initiation schools where they receive sex education. Such children enter into adult life with confidence in that traditional setting. In many families children find themselves in a conflict because of the clash of values regarding sex matters. More often than not what the parents do not approve of is what society sanctions through the mass media because "society today is sex-obsessed and money-motivated. For fun and profit, sex is smeared on screens, blown-up on bill-boards and used for commercial enticement" (Ginott, 1969, p. 162).

The type of discipline to which children are subjected in a home environment to a large extent influences the interpersonal relationships between the self and parents. Children irrespective of cultural differences respond positively to that form of discipline which does not aim at dehumanising them. If punishment has to be meted out, it must be preceded by explanation. This helps the child to understand the parents' values and to accept their form of discipline. When a child is constantly criticized, he learns to condemn himself and to find fault with others. He learns to undermine his worth and to belittle the value of others. Children of all races appreciate constructive criticism because destructive criticism tends to make a young person develop negative feelings about himself. It alienates the child from his parents. Negative adjectives such as 'stupid' or 'clumsy' have a harmful effect on the child's self-esteem. A child who is constantly made to feel that he is stupid and clumsy incorporates such attributes into his self-image. This may greatly

affect him in future when he has to make important life decisions. For example, he may hope to escape ridicule by not making decisions or by not risking himself in any important decisions.

In a modernising society, many parents have the tendency of making their children become what they (the parents) want them to become in order to enhance the parents' social status. If the child fails to become what his parents want him to become, they give up on him. This attitude gives the child "a permanent feeling of failure" (Ginott, 1969, p. 132). Children today strive towards physical and psychological emancipation from the parental home. During adolescence in particular, they resent parents who are overconcerned about them and view unwarranted parental help as interference. They want to be on their own and this becomes very difficult for many parents to understand. Overprotection and concern may cause young people to continue to depend on their parents even in adult life where parents continue to have a say in the affairs of their son or daughter even in marriage. Hamachek sums it up by saying that "parents who seriously restrict their children's freedom and constantly worry about their private enterprise and exploration, seriously hinder their children's need to discover their strengths and weaknesses for themselves" (Hamachek, 1978, p. 165).

Goldstein et al, in their discussion of the role of parents in the development of the child's self-concept, conclude that, "the parents by reacting to the child's behaviour with appropriate praise and encouragement or criticism and discouragement lay the foundations for the child's own control of his drives and impulses, the lessening of his selfishness and the beginning of consideration for others" (Goldstein et al, 1973, p. 14). Elsewhere they say:

'Only a child who has at least one person whom he can love, and who feels loved, valued, and wanted by that person will develop a healthy self-esteem. He can then become confident of his own chances of achievement in life and convinced of his own human value.'

(Goldstein et al, 1973, p. 20)

### 2.3. SELF AND PEERS.

In most societies, young people usually spend a great deal of time with their own age-group. Their behaviour, particularly during adolescence, is to a large degree influenced by the values and attitudes of their peers: "During adolescence, the need to belong to and identify with a group of individuals of the same age is stronger than it is at any other period" (Siann and Ugwuegbu, 1980, p. 161). These relations form the basis of future interpersonal relationships in social and workplaces. These relations also "serve as prototypes (first examples) of adult social relationships" (Siann and Ugwuegbu, 1980, p. 162). Describing the role of the peer-group in relation to the self, Siann and Ugwuegbu go on to say:

'Peers also help the adolescent in defining his sense of himself. No longer a child, not yet an adult, the adolescent must prepare to meet the demands his society makes of adult functioning in many spheres - social, sexual and vocational ... the escalation of such demands can make adolescence a very trying period, particularly if the young person is faced with a great many possible choices. The peer-group, members of which are facing similar choices, can help the adolescent in defining his sense of self and his expectations of the future.'

(Siann and Ugwuegbu, 1980, p. 162)

Thus the adolescent often looks to the peer group as a primary reference group. The peer group serves as a substitute for the parent(s) whose values and dictates are seldom understood and accepted. "It is through

their peer group that people are most likely to be introduced to new values ..." (Dovey, 1984, p. 58). The peer group is also an important source of self-esteem. As Gordon says, "it provides opportunities for the youngster to meet his needs to status and achievement" (Gordon, 1975, pp 313-314). These young people "...seek others of the same age-group to share their doubts and uncertainties about the future and their defeats and victories of the present" (Siann and Ugwuegbu, 1980, p. 162). Besides being a source of self-esteem, the peer group assists in the development of a young person's self-concept. The sharing of new experiences makes the adolescent appreciate his own problems when he realises that they are similar to those of other peer group members. Once he realises that he is accepted and recognised as an individual with problems similar to theirs, he begins to gain positive feelings of being a person of worth.

There are a number of activities which take place when the peer group members are together. Heterosexual relationships are formed. Members begin to see that the sex issue which is often frowned upon by parents forms part of the activities of the peer group. In the peer group members are accorded an opportunity to practice doing those activities which their parents regard as undesirable. "Dating, participation in extramural activities, sex, and future goals form a characteristic feature of the peer group" (Hamachek, 1979, p. 156). Furthermore, Hamachek argues that "as one practices by doing, the peer group is a source of instant feedback, it is an audience of self-proclaimed critics watching for flaws in the performance of their own kind and in themselves" (Hamachek, 1979, p. 156). The opinion of his peers means a great deal to his growing sense of self. In Black traditional communities the adolescent is also taught many things. He is taught in addition to

the activities alluded to hereabove, not to sit and eat with people older than himself and to be respectful of his elders. Schapera points out that "the educational value of these age sets is very great; not only are selfishness, bad temper and other faults more effectively checked by the group than they could ever be by the parents, but younger children are strictly controlled by the group just older than themselves" (Schapera, I., 1934, p. 96). It is also from the peer group that the individual learns many skills and attitudes which will be important attributes at the workplace in the future.

As soon as the peer group members succeed in relating to one another, some sort of solidarity is formed. Today it is no longer merely for the old to teach the youth about life but it is the youth who by their responses and actions make the old aware of what life entails. It is the youth today who teach the old that life as represented by them needs to be reformed. The inconsistencies of Black adults in South Africa have led to the youth exerting great pressure on their peers to do something to redress the huge racial injustices. There is a powerful demand among the peer group members to be heard, recognised and faced as individuals with a choice. Young people are increasingly challenging what life in present day South Africa has in store for them. Their determination to change the status quo is evidenced by strikes and boycotts in educational institutions. As a group the peer group is engaged in a battle to regain for themselves, a surrendered identity.

#### 2.4. SELF AND TEACHERS.

The teacher is the new feedback agent who is at the same time an important and influential figure in the young person's developing self. He has an

enormous influence on the student's self-feelings. The student's feelings to a large degree are mostly about his ability to cope with his scholastic work. In the life of a young person a teacher becomes the significant other "because he or she may be the only person in the whole wide world who makes that student feel like an individual of worth and value"

(Hamachek, 1978, p. 210). Elsewhere, Hamachek says:

'No matter how you look at it, the teacher is an important factor in the interpersonal field of forces which influence a student's developing self. Even if a student's self has been nurtured in a healthy home atmosphere, a teacher who is cold, rejecting and emotionally distant may interfere with the process of otherwise healthy development. With this kind of teacher students can no longer be their natural selves, free to enquire and develop. Instead they become defensive and reactive, concerned more with survival than with learning.'

(Hamachek, 1978, p. 210)

A young person seeks an acceptable identity as well as a situation of self-worth. If his relationship with his teacher makes him feel and think that he is a worthwhile person, he is on the way to developing a healthy self-concept. There are many young people whose parents fail to care about them or to give them the feeling that they are worthwhile. Such young people seldom experience any emotional warmth or a sharing and caring relationship. A teacher, as a new significant other, can become a substitute for the parents either to perpetuate the harsh atmosphere to which the young people have been subjected or to create a new climate conducive to the development of a positive self-concept. The way in which a teacher treats a child in a classroom situation either enhances or weakens the child's self-concept. Burns maintains that "the school offers new psychological experiences which ultimately will

affect the individual's self-esteem" (Burns, 1982, p. 203). In many educational institutions the most dominating demand is that of academic performance. Students are often expected to cope with these demands regardless of their intellectual endowment. The teacher's attitude and his emphasis on academic performance creates in the academically weak students a feeling of worthlessness. Hamachek elucidates:

'The kind of feedback that students get regarding how they're doing their school work can have an important impact not only on how they feel about their academic efforts but on how they feel about themselves as well. I remember to this day a comment a psychology professor wrote on one of my papers in my freshman year: "a good paper, but I have the feeling you have the ability to have explored this topic more fully". He gave me a B on the paper, but more importantly he gave me encouragement to believe more fully in myself. The grade he gave me didn't mean all that much, but the feedback mattered a great deal.'

(Hamachek, 1978, p. 224)

Humiliation, sarcasm and ridicule negatively affect the development of the self-concept. As teachers we are unable or unwilling at times to realise that some of our techniques in classroom practice have an adverse effect on the young person's self-esteem. The teacher should not only concern himself with pointing out the mistakes, but also commending the pupils for the good things they are doing. Canfield and Wells maintain that "if you can help the child see himself as capable of learning, you are dealing with a central belief. If you help a mischievous boy see himself as kind and helpful, or a doubting girl see herself as intelligent and attractive, you've made a significant difference in the life of the child" (Canfield and Wells, 1976, p. 4). From the way the teacher treats his students in class, it becomes evident what behaviour and achievements the teacher expects from each one of them and this affects

the student's self-concept, achievement, motivation and level of aspiration. A student welcomes a teacher who treats him/her justly and not the one who perpetuates an oppressive experience through his teaching methods and attitudes. Students resent a teacher who serves the interests of oppression by attempting to control the young person's thinking and action. As Freire puts it:

'The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but the one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students who in turn, while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on authority are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be on the side of freedom, not against it.'

(Freire, 1972, p. 53)

One of the tasks of the teacher must be to help each student gain a positive feeling about himself or herself because "what we all want on a world-wide scale is a chance to feel worthwhile, a chance to be a person wanted, respected, accepted as a human being worthy of dignity" (Axline, 1964, p. 195). Students resent authority which aims at oppressing them as indicated in the previous discussion of the self and peers. They rebel against harsh and unreasonable discipline in a classroom situation. They dislike a teacher who always resorts to corporal punishment as a solution to offences even of a minor nature. Harsh discipline undermines the young person's self-concept. An atmosphere imbued with challenges rather than threats should prevail in a normal classroom situation. The teacher should concern himself with how the young person feels. For the young person to develop towards self-actualisation an atmosphere of democracy should be created in a classroom situation so that the young people can learn without fear. In

Black schools, for example, as said earlier, both the teacher and the student are aware that they are not free and that they are "all too often a pawn of government and that they are moulded by mass propaganda into being creatures with certain opinions and beliefs, desired and preplanned by the powers that be" (Clarizio et al, 1981, p. 10). To maintain the interpersonal relationship of trust and confidence between the teacher and the student, the teacher should regard it as one of his tasks to clarify the situation to the pupils regarding classroom practice in Black schools in South Africa. He should make them aware that the teacher is not allowed freedom to formulate particular aims of each learning experience within the unit of content because of the strong influence of the political ideology of separate development in South Africa. They should know that classroom practice is used as a "tool of domination which aims at preparing Black pupils for political rightlessness and economic exploitation in adult life" (De Lange Commission, 1981, p. 4).

#### 2.5. SELF AND WORKMATES.

The joint processes of modernisation and technological production have brought about tremendous changes in the life-style of the individual. Industrialization has removed man from his traditional community in which he was well known and in which the values and norms were familiar to him. He now enters a new setting where new relationships have to be formed. The self has to adjust itself to the new climate of interpersonal relationships between fellow Black and White workmates. These new interpersonal relationships also play a prominent role in influencing the development of the self-concept. At the workplace, close contacts develop which may lead to the establishment of long lasting relationships. Marriages in-

creasingly occur between persons of similar occupations. (I fell in love with the woman I call my wife today at the school at which both of us were teaching). The relationships at the workplace also influence the individual's personal and social adjustment to life because it is at the workplace where more hours of the day are spent than at home or anywhere else. Thus to a large extent, as Dovey says, "a person's experiences at work will determine the degree to which his or her life will be felt to be satisfying and meaningful" (Dovey, 1983, p. 30). The workplace can be a setting in which there are communication and relationship problems, interpersonal suspicion, malicious gossip, disrespect and competitive individualism because "the social values cherished within modern technological society make it very difficult to establish warm, trusting relationships with other human beings" (Dovey, 1983, p. 2). At the workplace people compete to the extent where they find it difficult to relate to one another and to co-operate. This form of competition has adverse effects on the individual's self-esteem. The individual regards other competitors as a threat to his position of power. It becomes a situation where only 'the fittest survive'. Dovey maintains that "the formalisation of all human interaction occasioned by a bureaucratic form of organisation at the workplace creates a situation of interpersonal distrust and closure" (Dovey, 1984, p. 1). Elsewhere he states:

'Good communication is extremely difficult to achieve in modern work settings. It requires in practice, the ability to perceive others as collaborators rather than as competitors, and it requires an ability to be tolerant, candid, and understanding toward others. Most of all, it requires courage to be oneself and to refuse to allow one of the most precious aspects of humanity, namely human communication, to degenerate into a mechanical form of "sending and receiving communiques".'

(Dovey, 1983, p. 2)

Lack of tolerance and understanding towards others at the workplace is to a large degree the cause of frustration. A worker with a shaky self-concept feels suspicious and angry when he sees his fellow workmates talking to the supervisor. He is influenced by an attitude of suspicion which causes him to conclude that they are discussing him unfavourably.

Laing comments:

'The person feels that murmurings and mutterings he hears as he walks past ... are about him ... When one gets to know such a person more than superficially, one often discovers that what tortures him is not so much his delusions of reference but his harrowing suspicion that he is of no importance to anyone, that no one is referring to him at all.'

(Laing, 1961, p. 136)

The result will be a smouldering discontent directed towards the workmate. This unfounded fear may be accompanied by intense feelings of frustration. Competition without co-operation at the workplace makes workers fail to relate to one another. It destroys both the self-concept and the self-esteem of those workers who cannot cope with this competition. For example promotion of a colleague may lead to dissatisfaction and aggression. The frustrated worker first experiences a lessening of interest in his work and an increasing annoyance and irritation as he struggles to continue from day to day.

In South Africa, the creation of effective communication and good interpersonal relationships among workers of different races, is to a large extent hampered by the statutory policy of separate development. "While many Whites believe that racial discrimination at the workplace is decreasing, most Blacks do not" (Dovey et al, 1984, p. 2). Dovey further argues that "it appears that White privilege at the workplace is still

firmly entrenched, and that while many Whites seem to have internalised the political rhetoric of change, they are still far from experiencing it at work" (Dovey et al, 1984, p. 2). The Black man at the workplace finds it extremely difficult to attain self-actualisation in a situation where racial differences generate tension and where racial attitudes cause division among the workers of the different racial groups. The strained interpersonal relationships among White and Black workers with equivalent skills and qualifications, influenced by the ideology of separate development, can be seen in the workers not sharing the same facilities in many workplaces. In most of the workplaces in South Africa Black people face severe restrictions in terms of rewards, opportunities, vocational development, and basic facilities. Furthermore, no matter what happens at the workplace, they have to return to slum housing each evening. This state of affairs has an adverse effect on the self-concept of the Black worker.

#### 2.6. SELF AND SOCIETY.

Every human being, whether child or adult, White or Black, seems to require social significance, that is, a place in another person's world. The individual's personal and social adjustment to a healthy life will be greatly influenced by how he/she thinks others perceive him/her or how they regard him/her as a person. To a young person, particularly, social attitudes towards him or her strongly influence the development of his or her self-concept.

The process of modernisation has broken down the traditional way of life of the Black people. Young people are in a rapid movement from a traditional culture of low technology to one of high technology where

they have to come to grips with massive problems in the social, economic, political and sexual spheres. In the course of this mobility the Black individual has to be constantly aware of the fences of apartheid that dehumanize and separate him from the group in power. The young person must be aware of the policy of separate development which aims at ensuring that the "Whites are in a position to dominate and exploit the Blacks more effectively than ever before" (Addison, 1981, p. 5). The Black young person should know that according to the policy of apartheid "there is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour" (quoted by Dovey, 1984, p. 17). In South African society the Black individual is defined as inferior, defective or sub-standard in various ways. He is regarded as less intelligent than his White counterpart. This perception of others perceiving them to be inferior and less intelligent leads to a poor self-concept for most Black children. The socio-economic situation in which Blacks find themselves in relation to other members of the White society undermines their self-concept. In modernised societies as alluded to in the previous chapter, a person's 'worth' is based on financial power and material criteria. Most Blacks are disadvantaged as far as all of those are concerned and thus fail to satisfy the criteria on which a person's worth is determined. The disadvantaged continue to internalise a sense of inferiority to the satisfaction of the South African government of developing separately and still remaining unequal economically, socially, politically and educationally. What is most frustrating for the Black person is that when he shows "the potential for intelligence, initiative and assertiveness, there is usually no room available within the dominant framework for acknowledgement of these characteristics. Such are usually defined as at least unusual, if not definitely abnormal"

(Miller, 1976, p. 7). These attitudes of society impede the healthy development of the self-concept of Black South Africans and block their freedom of expression and action. Actions towards equality are punished. Those in positions of power "do not like to be told about or even quietly or peacefully reminded of the existence of inequality" (Miller, 1976, p. 9). Political organisations such as Bureau of State Security (BOSS) have been established in South Africa to ensure that Black "subordinates" do not make any "noise" about the inequality to which they are subjected. The power group regards any questioning of the "normal" situation as threatening and any attempt that is made by the powerless group to question, will be perceived with alarm. This attitude creates conflict in Black people in South Africa in that it encourages a view of themselves as powerless and erodes their self-respect and self-esteem.

CHAPTER 3THE ROLE OF THE SELF-CONCEPT IN IMPORTANT  
LIFE DECISIONS3.1. INTRODUCTION

The young person's perception of how others perceive him has an impact on his important life decisions. The experiences that the individual had in relation to his parents, peers, teachers, workmates and society, to a large degree determine, amongst others, his choices of a life-partner, becoming a parent and choice of work. If the significant others perceived him as a worthwhile person, he will, to a large extent, experience little difficulty in deciding what he would like to be. If his interpersonal relationships with significant others was fraught with feelings of inferiority and worthlessness, he may be inclined to be directionless in life. Therefore, choices that an individual makes, are often dependent upon his self-perception and will subsequently influence his personal and social adjustment in life.

3.2. CHOICE OF A LIFE-PARTNER AND MARRIAGE.

The choice of a life-partner constitutes one of the most important life decisions that a young person will make. In a modernizing society, the success of a marriage depends heavily on the correct choice of a life-partner. The fact that many marriages in such societies end in the divorce courts seems to imply that guidance in the choice of a life-partner is absent from our schools.

3.2.1. THE CHOICE OF A MARRIAGE PARTNER IN A BLACK TRADITIONAL SOCIETY.

In Gazankulu the majority of the people live in the rural areas. Generally these people, as indicated earlier, still lead a traditional way of life. In these traditional communities young people seldom choose life partners themselves. The choice for a life partner is usually arranged by their parents and relatives. The freedom to choose one's spouse is a new phenomenon which has been brought about by the process of modernisation. In these communities the choice of a marriage partner is to a large degree not guided by romantic love and sexual attraction. For example, Mitchell says about marriages for Blacks:

'The most striking feature is that marriage appears to be less a matter of contract between two individuals than a contract between two kin-groups. The romantic element which in Western Society appears to be considered sufficient a foundation for a lasting alliance seems to be absent from Bantu (Black) marriage.'

(Mitchell, 1961, p. 1)

The parents may desire that their son should marry a young woman from a particular family because of their admiration for her good behaviour and diligence. Another reason for their choice may be to perpetuate the social ties between the two families. However, it cannot be denied that in some instances as Mitchell puts it, "the initial attraction between the couple may be a personal affair but the larger kin-group is soon brought into it" (Mitchell, 1961, p. 2). In traditional societies, therefore, the choice of a

marriage partner is not, as such, the young person's problem. The assistance that he receives from his parents and relatives makes his task much easier. He, as an individual has a very small part to play in the choice of his prospective life partner.

Once the marriage has been decided upon the young man's parents "make use of a 'go-between' to open negotiations and they make marriage payments to the responsible kinsmen of the woman they wish to marry" (Mitchell, 1961, p. 9). These 'go-betweens' are usually selected from among the relatives. The amount of 'lobola' which is paid is not fixed. It is usually in the form of money or herds of cattle. This 'lobola' is refundable in the event of a divorce. The implicit aim of the 'lobola' is to stabilise the marriage. Marriages in traditional societies tend to be more stable than marriages contracted in a modernising society because in a traditional society, people are linked to each other either as friends or relatives. Marriage in these societies becomes a bond between two families whose main interest is in the children of the marriage. A striking feature in Black traditional marriages is that if a man is impotent, arrangements are usually made by his relatives to get, as Mitchell puts it, "a 'seed-raiser' to enter the house and so render the genetricial rights effective " (Mitchell, 1961, p. 4). Another striking feature which also contributes to stability of marriages in Black traditional societies, is that "if a woman proved to be barren or died without issue then her sister is sent to

the house of the husband without further marriage payments" (Mitchell, 1961, p. 4). If a husband dies, the widow is usually 'inherited' by one of the brothers of the deceased. This is done after she has been duly consulted by the elderly people. These practices have an important effect on the stability of marriages contracted traditionally. As Dovey says, "the extended family plays a very important role in the life of an individual" (Dovey, 1984, p. 40). The involvement of the other people, usually relatives, in the marriage of a young couple helps to cement the relationship. Hence, in these societies there is less marital breakdown than in modern societies. Another striking feature is that polygamy, which is frowned upon in modern society, is accepted as a way of life in Black traditional societies.

### 3.2.2. THE IMPACT OF MODERNISATION ON THE CHOICE OF A LIFE-PARTNER.

The process of modernisation is gradually demolishing the traditional practices in the choice of a marriage partner. In modern society, the choice of a future spouse becomes the primary concern of the two participants and seldom involves parents and kinsmen. As Dominian says, "the approval of the parents may or may not be sought, although it is frequently welcomed when received" (Dominian, 1968, p. 21).

Elsewhere he says:

'Marriage in Western societies has been considered throughout the centuries as a solemn, life-long contract between a man and a woman, conferring mutual rights and obligations in their sexual, material and social life.'

(Dominian, 1968, p. 15)

However, there are instances even in modern societies where parents still have a say in the marriage of their daughter or their son. For example as Berardo and Nye say:

'If the prestige of each family is largely affected by the marriage, then such unions are likely to be arranged primarily by the parents, rather than the young people themselves.'

(Nye and Berardo, 1973, p. 112)

Generally the onus of the choice of a partner rests on the young people themselves. A young person has to take the responsibility of deciding whether marriage is for him or not, bearing in mind that it is a life-long commitment. In modern society the impact of the self-concept on the choice of a life partner is great. Many young people today fail in the selection of the right partner because of negative self-perception. Some young people as Lantz and Snyder say, "... possess such self-doubt that they question whether anybody can love them" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 89). Others may regard themselves as inferior and unworthy of love that they decide not to marry. Such feelings might stem from failure on the part of the young person's parents to communicate to their child early in life that he/she is lovable and good. Dominian maintains that "such a deprivation leaves not only a gap in the actual needs of the person but is frequently associated with a sense of unworthiness" (Dominian, 1968, p. 62). These feelings of unworthiness which have been generated in the young person by his/her previous social environments may affect his/her decision concerning

marriage. Illustrating the impact of a negative self-concept on young people, Lantz and Snyder cite a case of a college student who harboured negative feelings about herself:

'The girl had been dating a boy for two years. Although she had never taken the relationship seriously, the boy had. He had lavished a great deal of attention on her and had spent a considerable amount of money on gifts, more than he could really afford. He proposed matrimony several times, but was rejected by the girl. Since the boyfriend was now pressing her for a definite answer to his proposal, she felt it necessary to act and sought assistance. During several weeks of counselling it was established that the girl considered herself to be physically unattractive and lacking in poise and had inferiority feelings.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 8)

The young girl developed a negative attitude towards marriage because of her unattractive physical appearance because physical attractiveness is one of the "cultural criteria for acceptability" (Dovey, 1984, p. 38 ). Young people today are frustrated by the values of modern society. Hutter comments:

'The modernisation process, which was supposed to free individuals, is seen instead as increasing feelings of helplessness, frustration and alienation that beset individuals with threats of meaninglessness.'

(Hutter, 1981, p. 64)

Young people tend to base their choices on cultural criteria. A young person may base his/her choice of a partner on physical attractiveness to enhance his/her self-esteem. He/She may wish that his/her "spouse would stay the same forever, that he/she would never change and remain exactly

as he or she did on (his) wedding day" (Cooney and Nida, 1984, p. 10). If his/her attractiveness changes later in life, a young person is inclined to lose interest in his/her partner if the physical attractiveness was the dominant factor in his/her choice of that particular partner. The marriage may even end up in a divorce court depending on the extent to which the physical changes have affected the self-esteem of the young person. Some young people tend to base their choice of a marriage partner on economic factors because as Dovey says:

'Modern technological culture encourages individuals to value material possessions above human relationships. One's social worth is more often judged by the material possessions one has acquired than by the quality of one's human relationships.'

(Dovey, 1984, p. 49)

Lantz and Snyder also say:

'The high value that culture places on competitiveness for material possessions, social prestige, and wealth often results in exploitation, since competition may become so intense that people use one another to gain advantage.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 178)

For example, it is rapidly occurring in modernizing Black settings, that young people are tending to choose partners who are in professional occupations or have wealthy family backgrounds for the sole purpose of advancing rapidly economically and thus gaining recognition in society. Many young people are so obsessed by cultural criteria for

acceptability today that they overlook other important factors in the choice of a marriage partner. Some go to the extent of hiding aspects of themselves when they are looking for a life partner. A young man may not disclose to his partner that he smokes or drinks. The picture that he presents to his future partner is different from what he is. Lantz and Snyder comment:

'Both persons invariably dress better than they usually do and, eager to please, have their 'best foot put forward'. Hence each person learns very little that may be real about each other, and to the extent that such dates occur, there is in fact little opportunity for much knowledge of one another to emerge.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 175)

Many Blacks, for instance, are economically disadvantaged. A young person from an impoverished home background where both parents are neither literate nor numerate, may have internalised a sense of inferiority to the extent that he doesn't want his partner to know his cultural background because of fear of being rejected if the other partner discovers that his home background is inferior. They do not even want their illiterate parents to be known by their prospective partners before marriage. They create a good impression in order to win their hand in marriage. However, marriages contracted in this way, often lead to difficulties later in life. Young people with similar socio-economic home backgrounds usually experience fewer difficulties in getting along with each other's families because of common experiences and values.

3.2.3. THE INFLUENCE OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS ON THE CHOICE OF A LIFE PARTNER.

The experiences from the past with members of the family and with teachers and peers form an important basis for the child's future adjustment to life.

A young person's family background to a large degree influences his/her feelings about marriage. For example young people who were reared in an atmosphere where there was no peace and harmony between their parents tend to develop negative feelings about marital life. A girl who grew up in a home where her mother was ill-treated by her father might be inclined to shun marriage to escape unhappiness.

Similarly a boy whose father was always bullied by his mother, might resent marital life. The question of sex is another problematic area which puts many young people in a very difficult position when they think of marriage. Some parents give children negative ideas about sex. A child often grows up with internalised feelings that sex is undesirable. When he/she thinks of marriage later in life, the sex issue comes into the picture as presented to him/her by his/her parents. Such feelings are frustrating and disturbing. Herbert and Jarvis comment:

'There is often a great deal of fear about the whole area of sex, especially in people by whom it is imperfectly understood, or represented as dirty and painful. There can be a feeling that one will be impotent, or frigid, or in some way unsatisfactory sexually, or that one's partner will be demanding or 'over-sexed'. These feelings will derive from the early ones of rejection or inferiority.'

(Herbert and Jarvis, 1970, p. 21)

The role of sex in marriage is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. Commenting on the significance of sex in marriage, Dovey argues:

'... The sexual act can communicate deep feelings of love between two people far better than words. It is when it is used by both partners for the expression of such feelings, rather than only as a source of physical pleasure, that the sexual act becomes central to the maintenance of a permanent and secure relationship.'

(Dovey, 1984, p. 37)

In explaining the role of sex in marriage, Scoresby's comments tend to support Dovey's argument:

'... The sexual relationship in marriage can afford the man and woman a unification and blending of two otherwise separate personalities. At its best, marital sex is a co-operative, fully and freely given expression of erotic and emotional fulfilment.'

(Scoresby, 1977, p. 9)

Some young girls may avoid marriage altogether because of "having had a traumatic sexual experience during adolescence" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 225). If a young person was neglected or rejected during his early years of childhood, he/she may decide to withdraw himself/herself completely from love affairs later in adult life. The young person may become fearful of committing himself/herself to a permanent relationship. As Lantz and Snyder say, "the early concepts about men and women that emerge in part from parent-child relationships are important in the individual's development of the capacity to love" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 127). The type of partner that one chooses is to a large degree

influenced by the type of parents one had, as parents are the first to shape the child's self-concept. For example, as Lantz and Snyder say:

'If a man, or woman, has had unfavourable experiences with dominating parents and becomes rebellious as a result, he or she may find a domineering female or male very difficult to take, and perhaps be driven to find a submissive individual.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 209)

A young woman who is reared in a home environment characterized by dependency may prefer to be married to a person who will solve her problems. She prefers a man she can lean on in the same way she leaned on her parents. Lantz and Snyder have put it aptly when they say that she is "looking for a man to assume responsibility for her life, she had outgrown her parents and needed a husband to carry on as her parents did" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 85). About dependency, Dominian has this to say in the choice of a life partner and marriage:

'Marked emotional dependency may prohibit marriage altogether but, if the handicap is sufficiently overcome to allow marriage, it is still liable to endanger marital stability in a number of ways. Such unions may break up immediately or disintegrate slowly within the first year or two. Both partners may have marked traits of emotional dependency. Indeed these very handicaps may have brought them together. Soon after the marriage, difficulties begin. If the couple live near their parents, there is likelihood of frequent visits to the respective homes.'

(Dominian, 1968, p. 43)

Marriages which are characterised by emotional dependency and parental interference have very few chances of survival because of the couple's incapacity to handle the challenges that come up in the course of marital life.

Some young people develop negative feelings about marriage because of frustration once caused by a previous relationship which ended unhappily or tragically. For example, if a young man is jilted by his prospective partner at the time when arrangements for marriage are at an advanced stage, the disappointment may be so intense that he decides to stay unmarried for the rest of his life. Similarly, a young person whose future life partner dies shortly before marriage may be so affected emotionally that he/she decides never to involve himself/herself in love affairs again. There are young people who, despite the negative feelings they have about marriage, decide to marry "because all of their friends are getting married. These people fear that being unmarried may cause them to lose status in the eyes of others" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 91). Such marriages which are founded on negative motivations lead to many problems later in life.

### 3.3. BECOMING PARENTS.

The supreme purpose for marriage throughout the centuries has been the procreation and rearing of children. The majority of married people desire to have children. However, there are marriages which are childless not by desire. Therefore, young people should be adequately prepared to adjust themselves to a possibility of a barren marriage because many marriages

have broken down on account of this problem. Parenthood is another problematic area with which married couples are faced and in which the self-concept also plays an important role.

In traditional societies the main interest in the marriage is in the children. The poor economic conditions in which most Blacks find themselves compel them to have children so that they can help them (the parents) in their old age when they are unable to work. Black children are aware of their responsibility to support and care for their aged parents and in-laws. In the traditional societies, having children is regarded as an investment. As Nye and Berardo put it:

'It is not surprising, then, that the status of the wife was dependent to a considerable extent on her ability to bear children, especially sons. Given this function, parents were not only willing to have children, but considered it almost as a matter of survival to do so.'

(Nye and Berardo, 1973,p. 349)

The importance that the traditional communities attach to children in marriage is evidenced by the unlimited sizes of the families.

One of the main problems in modern technological culture is that a married couple is faced with new challenges with respect to parenthood. In many modern marriages, couples are faced with the problem of whether to have children or not. While it cannot be denied that there is pressure on every marriage to produce children, there are marriages as Dominian says:

'In which the development of the husband or wife is not sufficiently advanced to face the problems presented by a new life, and they keep putting off pregnancy. Usually the reasons offered are the common ones such as inadequate accommodation, finance or the desire of the wife to continue her work.'

(Dominian, 1968, p. 95)

However, there are instances where both partners jointly come to a decision of not having children for a definite period of time because of other important commitments such as academic studies. Other people decide not to have children because they still want to enjoy life together without children. In the words of Dovey, "many parents are not yet ready for the total sense of responsibility and restrictions which parenthood imposes upon one's lifestyle" (Dovey, 1984, p. 95). Dominian gives an illustration of a young married woman who was not yet prepared to have a child:

'... Closer psychological examination revealed a deep-rooted antipathy to the idea of children associated with her own marked emotional unpreparedness to suffer any restriction of her freedom of activities. Her childhood had been extremely unhappy and her marriage expressed her need to feel close to someone she could turn to for help and support but she did not feel that she could cope with a child, the sight of whom in other people's homes filled her with disgust and hatred. She had not established her own separate role in life, either in terms of her identity or emotional security, and a child would have been an appalling threat to her own survival.'

(Dominian, 1968, p. 96)

Some women are not willing to have children because of fear of pregnancy and child-bearing. They fear that they might die in child-birth. To some couples "child-bearing is an intolerable conscious or unconscious anxiety which cannot be faced by the wife and an impossible challenge for the husband" (Dominian, 1968, p. 95). There are women who do not want children because they feel they cannot adjust themselves to the physical changes brought about by pregnancy and the task of bringing up children in this modern society "without the support and easy access of the extended family" (Dovey, 1984, p. 53). In some families, the reasons for having children may be the result of some problems in marital life.

For example, the man may develop feelings of jealousy and insecurity because his wife is an outgoing person and the husband is not. She enjoys going out to social functions but her husband doesn't. The husband may develop intense feelings of possessiveness and jealousy which may cause him to devise a strategy for limiting her movements. He may decide to make her pregnant as "one way of curtailing the wife's freedom and independence" (Dominian, 1968, p. 102).

To many parents, children are a source of prestige. A married couple may, for example, decide to have children so that these children may become important figures in society to enhance their self-esteem. Lantz and Snyder comment:

'... Parents coerce a child to excel at school or in artistic activity not because they are interested in the child's achievement, but because they wish to brag to others about the child's achievements.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 179)

The way children are raised today, differs from family to family. As Dovey puts it, "People generally parent the way they were parented" (Dovey, 1984, p. 53). What is lacking in many families today is effective communication between parents and children. Many parents fail to maintain effective communication between themselves and their children because of new values which dominate modern society. One of the reasons for lack of effective communication in many families is as Dovey points out:

'People in modern cultures receive far more kudos for career achievements than they do for successful parenting, and thus many adults put far more time and energy into career activities than they do into the parenting of their children.'

(Dovey, 1984, p. 54)

There are marriages which are not blessed with children. This may become a traumatic experience for a couple, their parents and their in-laws. In Black traditional settings, a childless couple does not suffer much embarrassment from not having children in that as stated earlier, if the husband is found to be impotent, a 'seed-raiser' is arranged and if it is the wife who is barren, her sister is sent to join her as second wife for the purpose of bearing children. This is one of the strategies employed to resolve childlessness in Black traditional settings. In modern society, childlessness may be a very traumatic experience for a young couple. Their incapacity to bear children generates in them feelings of worthlessness in the eyes of the public. As Lantz and Snyder say:

'For many, barrenness is extremely difficult to accept. In some instances the attitudes and behaviour of parents and in-laws become an important aspect of the problem. In one case of an involuntarily childless couple, the parents of the wife were certain that the inability to have children was due to some deficiency on the part of the husband. They reasoned that they, the wife's parents, had no problem having children; hence why should their daughter. The husband's mother, using the same reasoning, assured her son that the sterility was not his but his wife's. When this occurs and the desire for children is strong enough, the husband and wife may begin to blame each other for their childlessness. Thus the relationship may become disturbed.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 374)

A childless marriage may affect the self-concept of each partner. In some instances the husband may decide to resort to extra-marital sexual relations in order to prove whether the blame for their childless marriage is his or his wife's.

### 3.4. CHOICE OF WORK.

The choice of work is another important life decision that a young person has to make because his/her adjustment to a satisfying life will to a large degree be determined by his/her type of work. Many people today are not happy because of a wrong choice of work. Their unhappiness at work goes to the extent of affecting their inter-personal relationships outside the workplace. As Dovey says "... it is unlikely that a person who is unhappy at work, will be a happy person in general" (Dovey, 1982, p. 42).

The disadvantaged economic situation in which many Blacks find themselves, often forces young people to leave school for the purpose of going to work without any adequate preparation for a particular type of work. When a young person goes to school or university, he is mainly concerned with completing his schooling career as soon as possible so that he may start working to earn a living. He is eager to start working in order to be able to give financial assistance to his poor parents and his brothers and sisters who are still at school. He is also anxious to improve the physical conditions of his home background. To the majority of Blacks, work merely serves one purpose, and that is, survival. Due to inadequate preparation for work, many young people enter the labour market where they are exposed to dehumanizing forms of work. Therefore, young people should be assisted "to become aware of all factors which can, and do influence people's experience of work" (Dovey, 1982, p. 26). The majority of the youth in the rural areas are employed on White farms where they are engaged in strenuous and tedious work which pays so poorly that many of them leave in order to look for work in the urban areas. Most of them fail to secure employment in the urban areas because they do not have the necessary permission to live and work in the 'White'

area under the influx control laws. Their unemployment denies them "access to the usual sources of identity and meaning, and must negatively affect a person's sense of worth and their self-concept" (Dovey, 1982, p. 35). In controlling the entry of Blacks in 'White' areas, the Stallard Commission once said:

'The African should only be allowed to enter the urban areas which are essentially the White man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the White man and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister.'

(Quoted by Birley, 1971, p. 3)

The political ideology of apartheid makes it difficult for Blacks from the national states to find employment in the urban areas. It is important, therefore, that young people be made aware of the uncertainty of the future if they leave school early to become unskilled labourers. As Parsons says, "Black labour in White society was like 'donkeys', oxen and tractors which could someday be replaced by other machinery" (Parsons, 1982, p. 293). The words of the late Dr Verwoerd confirm Parsons' argument regarding Black labour in the urban areas:

'Natives from the country districts and the reserves will in future be allowed to enter the White towns and villages only as temporary workers, and on the termination of their service contracts they will regularly have to go back to their homes.'

(Verwoerd, 1966, p. 10)

Thus, the choice of work is a crucial issue in the life of a young person. His adjustment to life will, to a large degree, be influenced by the choice of work he makes. As Dovey says:

'More than one half of the time that you are awake will be spent on work or work related activities. Thus, to a large extent, your experiences at work will determine the degree to which your life will be felt to be satisfying and meaningful.'

(Dovey, 1984, p. 20)

The choice of work is to a large degree influenced by one's self-perception. A person makes a "choice that will fulfil his ambitions and self-concept" (Esland and Salaman, 1980, p. 109). Very often people are inclined to choose work which is in line with their aspirations and which offers an opportunity for self-actualization. Parents have a significant influence on the individual in the choice of work. For example, parents who hold high social status in a community, tend to influence their children to choose the type of work which enhances the prestige of the family despite the child's lack of interest and ability in that field. As Dovey illustrates:

'The family history, the values of the family, and the frustrated ambitions of parents, in particular, all play a powerful role in the 'hidden' curriculum of a family's preparation of the new generation for work.'

(Dovey, 1982, p. 36)

Elsewhere Dovey goes on to say that "where ... a family tradition pertaining to work does exist, the chances are high that pressure will be brought to bear on the children to 'keep up the family tradition'". For example, there are families today in which the majority of the members are either teachers or medical practitioners. Such a situation may either be the result of the family's direct influence on the young person's choice of work or may be the result of the child's internalised family values because "the family ... provides experiences for the child which not only shape his abilities but also his self-concept of his own abilities, which

both influence his later choice of career" (Esland and Salaman, 1980, p. 116). For example, children from families which value material possessions very highly may be influenced "to choose a type of work which has a high salary but little else to recommend" (Dovey, 1982, p. 39). Furthermore, Dovey says, "they could also react to the family situation and because of their dissatisfaction with the impoverished emotional quality of family life, choose a form of work and a life-style very different from that of their parents" (Dovey, 1982, p. 40). Among Blacks, the influence of families on the choice of work is experienced in families which are of a high social standing. Black children from the rural areas where most of the families are neither literate nor numerate, are mostly influenced by teachers and peers in the choice of work.

The process of modernisation has an impact on the young people's choice of work. In a traditional society, for example, people enjoy a co-operative and communal life. As Dovey explains:

'Traditional societies have a powerful sense of community in that relationships are extremely important to the structures of meaning of that community. A person in a traditional society will have access to a considerably extended family, and thus to a well developed support group. Traditional societies are usually co-operative communities in which the welfare of the individual is firmly tied to the welfare of the group.'

(Dovey, 1982, p. 20)

Today modernisation has demolished these traditional patterns. Social values such as materialism, competitiveness and individualism have disrupted the co-operative and communal way of life that people enjoyed traditionally. In modern society, the influence of material and social factors on the choice of work is great. Brown writes:

'Industry is the main source of status, both in the formal and the informal sense (derived and intrinsic) in Western cultures, and, when we are trying to place a stranger, our first question is "What does he do?"' (emphasis original).

(Brown, 1954, p. 189)

Dovey also comments:

'At any social gathering, the first question that two strangers are likely to ask each other is, "What work do you do?" The answer to that question will set off a host of feelings and attitudes toward that person. People have become increasingly identified with their work; we do not say, "I work as an engineer" but rather, "I am (emphasis original) an engineer"'.  
'

(Dovey, 1982, p. 36)

Today, as Brown and Dovey have clearly explained above, one's work forms the source of one's identity and personal affirmation. Work is that aspect of one's life which gives status and recognition in society. According to Hayes and Hopson, people tend to choose a particular type of work in the light of "those aspects of the job which are in harmony with their self-concept" (Hayes and Hopson, 1972, p 5). In modern society, however, Dovey says that "materialism encourages us to judge our worth as a person in terms of material criteria (e.g. size and location of our house, the kind of car we drive, etc)" (Dovey, 1984, p. 18). Therefore, in the choice of work, people tend to look for work on the basis of material factors in order to gain recognition in society, forgetting that it is not money alone that has to guide an individual in the choice of work. A person may be in a job that pays well, but still be unhappy. I agree with Dovey when he says that "... many people who have attained these goals have still experienced a sense of meaninglessness

in their lives" (Dovey, 1982, p. 49). Again, Dovey says that "a person may achieve financial success and yet fail in marriage or parenthood" (Dovey, 1982, p. 49). A wrong choice of work based on material factors alone is illustrated by an example that Dovey has given of one worker who once said, "my mind has been divorced from my job, except as a source of income, it's really absurd" (Dovey, 1983, p. 2).

In South Africa, the choice of work is to a large degree influenced by national politics. Most of the top positions are held by Whites. I wholeheartedly agree with Dovey when he says that "it appears ... that race is a powerful determinant of a person's access to, and success at work in South Africa" (Dovey et al, in print ). In the choice of work in this country, Black young people should bear in mind that not all types of work are open to them. As Dr Verwoerd once said:

'Racial relations cannot improve if the wrong type of education is given to Natives (he declared). They cannot improve if the result of Native education is the creation of frustrated people who, as a result of the education they received, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilled immediately, when it creates people who are trained for professions not open to them, when there are people who have received a form of cultural training which strengthens their desire for the White-collar occupations to such an extent that there are more such people than openings available.'

(Quoted by Carter, 1959, p. 103)

Job discrimination in South Africa does not only affect men, but also women. As Dovey et al says, "South Africa has traditionally been a male dominated society, or set of societies ..." (Dovey et al, 1984, p. 3). Little wonder that "ambitious women are not taken seriously at

work by most men" (Dovey et al. 1984, p. 3). Job discrimination frustrates many young people in South Africa because of the influence of national politics and has created in them negative feelings about themselves.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ROLE OF THE SELF-CONCEPT IN SOCIAL LIFE

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION.

Most of us find it difficult to attain a satisfying personal and social life because of the many problems that are encountered during one's life. Some of the major problems that people are faced with in modern society are, the development of a happy family; the absence of work opportunities; and other broader social problems. These problems have an impact on the individual's self-concept and, reciprocally, the self-concept influences the individual's response to these situations.

#### 4.2. DEVELOPING A HAPPY FAMILY.

In traditional societies, married couples seldom find it difficult to adjust to marital life. The wife knows and accepts her place and duties in the family. Her main functions are "... the bearing and rearing of children and the proper keeping of a home ..." (Bekker and Coertzer, 1982, p. 141). She knows that she has to respect her husband and in-laws. All this she is taught at the initiation school. This basic education which they receive at the initiation school to a large extent helps in the building of young people's self-confidence and also facilitates their adjustment to a satisfying marital life. Generally the majority of traditional women are not in paid employment. Traditionally, therefore, the "wife ... is regarded as a minor under the guardianship of her husband" (Bekker and Coertzer, 1982, p. 141). As in Japan within Black traditional societies, "... the typical pattern after marriage is for the wife to move into her husband's family household ... This

included showing deference, respect and obeying them by performing all the assigned tasks" (Hutter, 1981, p. 445). Traditionally the man remains the head of the family and plays a dominant role in the activities of the family. The fact that the couple stay with the other members of the husband's family means that in the event of marital differences, they are on the spot to mediate. The husband may be displeased with his wife, but his parents may not always agree with him. His accusations are seldom accepted unless they are supported by the evidence given by his mother who is most of the time with the daughter-in-law while he is away. The majority of married men in the rural areas, as said earlier, work in the urban areas because of absence of work opportunities in the impoverished rural areas. They usually visit home during festive seasons. While they are in the urban areas, lack of social restraint induces them to enter into intimate relationships with other women who are not their wives. In many cases such relationships become stable and may lead to another marriage. A man ends up having two families. More often than not their wives in the rural areas get to know about these relationships and marriages and they accept them. Generally disharmony in marriages contracted in the rural areas is a rare occurrence. These striking features in traditional marriages foster the development of a positive self-concept of an individual in marital life and, reciprocally, his/her positive self-concept enables him/her to adjust to a satisfying life. Even in cases where a man marries more than one wife, friction is seldom experienced. Bekker and Coertzer succinctly elucidate the interpersonal relationships between the husband and his wives:

'The kraalhead is obliged to treat his wives with consideration and kindness, and to house, feed and clothe them in a manner commensurate with his means; he is also supposed to treat them with

strict impartiality, and this is more than mere policy to avoid jealousies arising between them; should he studiously neglect to supply one wife with clothing, to plough the land of her house, and to sleep with her, while not so neglecting the others, she is entitled to regard this as a sign that he no longer wants her at the kraal.'

(Bekker and Coertzer, 1982, p. 140)

If the husband ceases to support one of the wives, desertion is one of the common practices of ending a marriage in traditional societies. Lantz and Snyder regard it as "... a poor man's divorce" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 377). Traditionally "... many marriages tend to be informally contracted (common-law) and require no formal divorce for their termination" (Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 407). The procedure that is followed in dissolving a traditional marriage does not involve much publicity. Therefore, in the eyes of the public the couple's self-esteem is not very much threatened. However, the negative effects of desertion on both traditional and modern marriages cannot be underestimated. Desertion has a devastating effect on the individual's self-concept and self-esteem. The remaining partner may experience feelings of worthlessness and humiliation. Lantz and Snyder have this to say about the effect of desertion:

'Desertion may be more traumatic than divorce itself because it is unannounced and more often than not comes as a surprise to the unprepared party remaining in the marriage.'

(Lantz and Snyder, 1962, p. 397)

However, desertion and divorce are rare in traditional marriages because of the stigma attached to divorce. In traditional societies, and to some extent in modern society, the following are inter alia the most important

grounds for divorce as summarised by Mitchell:

- '(a) Continued adultery on the part of the woman, but adultery on the part of the man affords no grounds for divorce;
- (b) continued ill-treatment by the husband of his wife;
- (c) failure on the part of the husband to feed and clothe children and the wife. In rural areas, the question as to whether or not a man does not feed and clothe his wife is a matter of common knowledge in the village...'

(Mitchell, 1961, p. 11)

Developing a happy family is, to a large extent, a very big problem in modern society. In the first place, the roles of both husband and wife in modern marriages are different from those of married couples in traditional communities. For example, a woman in modern society is not in a position "... to accept the traditional role of subservience to her husband" (Mitchell, 1961, p. 80) because she is fully aware of the fact that she is not completely dependent on him. Nye and Berardo have put it aptly:

'Wives entirely dependent on their husbands hesitate to oppose their husband's wishes or express their own displeasure. The woman who earns part of the family income is less likely to be inhibited.'

(Nye and Berardo, 1973, p. 287)

Women's economic independence in modern society makes them resist being unnecessarily subservient to their husbands. Their economic independence to a large degree enhances their positive self-concept. However, men who lack self-confidence feel greatly threatened by the women's strides in the social and economic spheres. A woman with a positive self-concept

does not hesitate to question her husband on certain matters that affect the family. Her self-confidence affords her the courage of deciding whether to desert or divorce her husband if she experiences unhappiness in marriage. In traditional societies, however, many married women are economically dependent on their husbands unlike in modern society. Hence, Hutter comments:

'We would argue, then, that part of the explanation for the lower divorce rates of several decades ago was that the majority of women were financially dependent on their husbands and thus did not have the financial independence to leave them. Their increased involvement in the labour force has led to the removal of this economic barrier to divorce.'

(Hutter, 1981, p. 454)

The economic independence of women in modern society, makes them resist society's attitude of placing them in inferior positions in marital life. It is not surprising that in many families today, women are in a dominant position and have developed positive feelings of self-acceptance. Nye and Berardo say for instance:

'Some wives are so successful in influencing their husbands that, in fact, husbands abdicate to their wives the decisions they would be expected to make. The wife, in colloquial language 'wears the pants in the family.'

(Nye and Berardo, 1973, p. 297)

However, it cannot be disputed that generally, there appears to be a balance of power and authority in 'normal' families where both spouses are in paid employment. If both partners have a certain amount of power, they tend to attain marital satisfaction because it enhances their self-esteem. In other families, harmony is achieved even if it is one partner

who is working, because the success of marriage is not necessarily based on economic factors. Money does not always develop a happy family life and can become a source of conflict and power struggle. Stephens gives the following illustration of the power struggle that is often the source of family discords:

'In the language of politics, husbands and wives may be viewed as two separate and opposing interest groups. If a husband gains in power, his wife must lose power; if he gains in privilege, his wife loses privileges, and vice versa. Marriage seen in those terms - is a power struggle. The husband may 'win' (and become a dominating patriarch) or 'lose' (and be a hen-pecked husband): or they may 'tie' (and have an equalitarian marital relationship) ...'

(Quoted by Hutter, 1981, p. 267)

More often than not what makes many people fail to experience happiness in marital life is lack of confidence. Jealousy and overpossessiveness in marriage is often the result of negative self-feelings. Negative self-feelings, to my mind, influence the partners' ability to trust each other. For example, in some families where both partners are working, problems often arise. A jealous and overpossessive husband becomes hostile when his wife comes home later than the usual time. She must explain where she has been after work. Very often the explanation she gives is seldom accepted because of his harrowing suspicion that she might have been with other men. Separate places of work of husband and wife usually give rise to conflict in families because some husbands would prefer to work with their wives to keep a close watch on her movements. This again is often the result of a negative self-concept. Some of these problems which hinder the development of a happy family are caused by the process of modernisation. I agree with Hutter when he comments on the effect of modernisation on families:

'The world of work is separated from the family household and there is an increased differentiation of roles between husband and wife. These changes have a dramatic effect on the family ...'

(Hutter, 1981, p. 280)

Elsewhere he says:

'Modernisation was supposed to free the individual but has instead, increased feelings of helplessness, frustration and alienation and has beset individuals with threats of meaninglessness.'

(Hutter, 1981, p. 290)

The process of modernisation has broken down the traditional patterns where man and wife were always together for most of the time that they were awake.

Another cause of marital conflict is the sex issue. Marriages become stable if there is harmony from the sexual point of view. Sexual compatibility in marriage contributes to a large degree to the development of positive self-feelings on the part of both spouses. As Westermarck says:

'The gratification of the sexual impulse not only gives intense momentary pleasure, but exercises also a wholesome influence on body and mind, and may lay the foundation of that exalted feeling of love which is the chief condition for a happy marriage.'

(Westermarck, 1936, p. 36)

Elsewhere he says:

'A vigorous and harmonious sex life is one of the corner-stones of the temple of love and marriage, while relative or absolute impotence of the

husband and frigidity of the wife are highly important causes of marital discord.'

(Westermarck, 1936, p. 43)

Tracing the causes of marital discord one often finds that much conflict stems from sexual factors. In many marriages sexual incompatibility is only discovered by the partners after marriage. A negative self-concept influences the individual's success in the sexual aspect of his marital life. In trying to resolve this problem, West-Mead wrote in the Eastern Province Herald an article entitled "Marriages should be made in bed":

'Britain's National Marriage Guidance has advised young couples that their final decision for or against getting married should be in bed. Sexual incompatibility is one of the main reasons for divorce and couples must be confident of passing the bed test ...'

(Quoted by Eastern Province Herald,  
1/11/1984, p. 5)

In some families problems which hinder the development of a happy family, emanate from the refusal of partners to afford each other conjugal rights. This reluctance undermines a person's self-esteem and leads to unhappiness in marriage. In those marriages where sexual fulfilment is not attained, they leave the man and the woman with intense feelings of worthlessness which often aggravate the feelings of unhappiness in marital life. Attainment of sexual gratification does not only promote marital harmony, but also limits the possibilities of one partner, if not both, seeking love outside marriage. Van Velde comments on the situation several decades ago thus:

'In a harmonious marriage, harmonious also from the sexual point of view, the woman is only rarely inclined to be unfaithful, and further fights such

an inclination with all her power and almost always successfully. The man may, perhaps run more risk of being dominated by sexual feelings for another woman, or wish to satisfy his will to power by overcoming her resistance. He will also more easily yield to such latent tendencies, but this will not cause hostility in a marriage which is otherwise harmonious.'

(Quoted by Westermarck, 1936, p. 39)

Fifty years later, these differences between men and women are no longer as likely to occur.

Another problem which creates marriage instability is alcoholism. One partner (usually the man) in the family may become a heavy drinker to an extent where he neglects his responsibilities in the family. Some people resort to drinking because of their failure to cope with the problems of marital life. Heavy drinking in many families is a symptom of absence of happiness in marital life and in turn this lack of happiness lowers the family's self-esteem.

The role of a positive self-concept in the development of a happy family life cannot thus be underestimated. Guidance classes need, thus, to address this issue and to assist students to explore the relationship between a healthy self-concept and marital harmony. As alluded to in the foregoing discussion, young people in traditional societies were equipped with invaluable knowledge at initiation schools that prepared them for adulthood. This formal education prepared young people for successful relationships with the opposite sex and marriage. This basic education which formed an integral part of traditional communities enabled young men and women to cope with their respective roles that awaited them in adult life. It is, therefore, important for guidance which has just recently been introduced in Black schools to take over

the role of teaching and making young people aware of responsibilities that go with marriage, parenting, sexuality as well as knowledge about these areas. Guidance should make an attempt to bridge the gap between modern and traditional patterns in these important areas of a young person's life.

#### 4.3. ABSENCE OF WORK OPPORTUNITIES.

Absence of work opportunities is another major problem that affects a young person's self-concept in Gazankulu. It makes it difficult for young people to adjust themselves to a satisfying life. Absence of work opportunities demolishes the young person's self-respect, self-confidence and worth. Furthermore, it destroys their sense of independence for which they have been craving during adolescence. Singer has this to say about the effect of unemployment on young people:

'They are relegated to a state of dependence again. Such a degradation no human being will tolerate, and he will react to any attempt at such degradation from an early enhanced state of importance back to undignified dependence by a violent re-assertion of his own importance ...'

(Singer, 1940, p. 137)

Unemployment is still an unresolved problem in the impoverished rural areas. In these areas, dry farming has become a thing of the past because of long spells of drought. The national state itself is unable to absorb all work seekers because of an absence of job opportunities. The majority of work seekers must look for employment elsewhere as migrants. This absence of work opportunities affects both the personal and social life of many people. Needless to mention that unemployment on the part of the

breadwinner, means poverty for the whole family, and families in these areas are big. The unemployed who cannot be maintained by the earnings of relatives are the ones who go through a period of unspeakable suffering physically and emotionally.

The South African Blacks countrywide are the ones who are to a large degree affected by absence of work opportunities. For example the recent wave of retrenchments in the private sector continues to aggravate the situation. For other population groups, there are ways and means of resolving unemployment. For example, in most of the Western countries, the Royal Institute of International Affairs says:

'The effects of unemployment on the moral and physical condition of the people are mitigated by relatively good systems of unemployment insurance and of social service; where these services do not exist, or have to be improvised, the suffering is much greater.'

(Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1935, p. 18)

The search for work has an impact on the self-concept of young people. They often have to travel long distances to the labour bureau, day in and day out in search of work without success. After a few unsuccessful attempts some give up. I agree with Pigou when he says that "the search for labour is much more fatiguing than labour itself" (Pigou, 1913, p. 33). Their futile exercise in search of work only leaves them with feelings of frustration and worthlessness. Unemployment causes people to be looked down upon by society and they are not easily accepted in society because a person's worth in modern society is judged according to the type of work he does. Therefore, in modern society, the unemployed are denied access to "'a sense of identity', a 'sense of community' and a 'sense of meaning'" (Dovey, 1983). Pigou gives an illustration of the impact of

work opportunities on a person:

'One man drove home the truth that lack of employment means far more than simply a loss in dollars and cents; it means a drain upon the vital forces, that cannot be measured in terms of money.'

(Pigou, 1913, p. 33)

In a family, unemployment demoralizes the breadwinner and to a large degree it undermines the social status of the family and often leads to marital disintegration. Quirin summarises the physical and mental effects of absence of work opportunities on young people:

'We are bound to say (he said) that when we think of the future we are afraid; the fear of life overwhelms us; it destroys the zest, the joy, the confidence - all the buoyant enthusiasm which creates the strength and the beauty of youth. No one will ever know the full measure of the pain which gnaws the hearts of the young victims of persistent unemployment.'

(Quoted by Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1935, p. 18)

In South Africa, the Blacks are vulnerable to unemployment because of the statutory policy of separate development. In the South African world of work, colour plays a dominant role in the selection of applicants for work. Many companies and educational institutions of higher learning often say cosmetically in their advertisements that posts are available for people with the necessary qualifications regardless of race. In reality when Blacks apply they are seldom taken. Job discrimination in this country is the perpetuation of the statutory policy of separate development which is evidenced by the following statement made by Dr H F Verwoerd as Minister of the then Native Affairs and head of

the government department in control of Bantu (Black) education:

'There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his community all doors are open. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community while he cannot and will not be absorbed there. Up till now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and practically misled him by showing him the green pastures of the European but still did not allow him to graze there.'

(Rose, 1970, p. 66)

White applicants stand a better chance of being selected than their Black counterparts with similar qualifications. The Black people are the hardest hit as far as unemployment is concerned. For example, the South African Labour Bulletin says:

'The industrial colour bar generates further unemployment by creating bottlenecks of skilled labour in the economy and gives it a twist so that the burden of unemployment falls mainly on Africans ...'

(South African Labour Bulletin, 1978, p. 3)

The green pastures that are referred to above, are non-existent in the homelands. The few that are there are concentrated in the public and civil service. These also, however, appear to have reached a saturation point.

Absence of work opportunities causes tremendous hardships. It results in the majority of the Blacks seeking employment as migrants in the urban areas. The migratory system has an impact on the individual and the community he has left behind. Increasing poverty is a major pressure of the movement from the rural areas to the urban areas. However, Manona

summarizes other causes of migration:

'Other factors which account for the movement of the people from the rural areas are of a social and personal nature. A large number of the people migrate because they have skills which equip them for employment outside rural areas. The social and personal factors refer to domestic relations as well. Migration may enable a young married woman to escape from the control of her husband's relations, a boy may leave home for work in the towns to avoid ill-treatment at home, etc. Apart from this, influences which ultimately lead to migration may emanate from the wider society, especially the peer group. In many instances boys say they are leaving their homes because their age mates are doing so.'

(Manona, 1981, p. 46-47)

The system of migration affects an individual's self-concept. It makes him powerless and reduces his sense of responsibility towards his family. When he does visit home, he feels out of place and especially if he was not maintaining his family while he was away. Wilson argues:

'How does a man retain his integrity and self-respect in a situation where he lives for as much as eleven-and-a-half months in every year far away from his wife, unable to watch or influence his children growing up, struggling to earn money to send home, surrounded only by men in similar positions, tempted by the beerhall which is one of the few places of recreation and finding, when he arrives home once a year to visit his family, that his children regard him as a stranger.'

(Wilson, 1972, p. 183)

Most of the migrants who cannot secure accommodation in the townships, are offered accommodation in the hostels (compounds) where they are subjected to dehumanizing physical and social conditions. For example, hostels for migrant workers are characterised by communal washing facilities which

do not allow room for privacy. There are other difficulties that migrants encounter at their new place of work. These have been summarized as follows by Dovey:

'One of the main problems may be that they have few connections in the work structures of the new country and this may limit their access to work which has any social power. Inability to speak English (or Afrikaans) may be another problem at the workplace for many migrants.'

(Dovey, 1983, p. 25)

The problems they encounter at the new place of work make the migrants develop negative feelings about themselves.

#### 4.4. SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

Social problems are an obstruction to a young person's adjustment to a satisfying life. A negative self-perception is one of the major causes of these problems which are prevalent in modern society. The dominant problems that society is faced with today are inter alia, alcoholism, child abuse, racism and sexism. The self-concept plays a major role in these problems which have become a menace in society.

##### 4.4.1. Alcoholism.

Alcoholism has become a health hazard in modern society. It has an impact on families, educational institutions, peer groups and society in general. In this discussion, emphasis will be on its effect on a young person's adjustment and behaviour in life. A young person's self-perception plays a dominant role in the use of alcohol. Roth

comments:

'In a subtle way, one of the prime accepted uses of alcohol is to drink so that we will be rather different people. We will not only feel differently ourselves after a few drinks, but will act differently and be perceived differently by others.'

(Roth, 1979, p. 75)

In Black traditional communities, the use of alcohol is not related to psychological problems because drunkenness in these settings as Field says, "... is achieved at a communal drinking bout" (Quoted by Swinson and Eaves, 1978, p. 78). Traditionally, people drink not because they have lost a sense of being worthwhile people but as part of their lifestyle. Therefore, in these settings drunkenness is not frowned upon. For example it is a common practice in traditional communities for a family to brew "mugombothi" (African beer) for a special occasion such as a wedding or when young boys and girls return from the initiation school or for some ceremonial rituals. On such occasions people are invited to join in the celebration. They all partake of the beer prepared for this occasion to their satisfaction. Little wonder that at the end of the function, they are seen staggering to their respective homes in groups. Drinking in these communities is for the love of it and not as a symptom of a deeper problem. The ingredients used in the brewing of "mugombothi" make it nutritional. It is far from being a health hazard.

The process of modernisation, which has caused people to move from the rural areas to the urban areas, has to a large degree contributed to the excessive use of new brands of alcohol. Modernisation has

broken down the traditional patterns in the use of alcohol. The inability of modern people to cope with the new values in a modernising society has led to excessive use of alcohol. For example, a person who cannot cope with the values, obligations and commitments of the workplace, may prefer to have "... his 'solutions' to life generally to be in a liquid form, pre-prepared so that he can avoid the 'excitement' which accompanies the difficult task of grappling with them" (Poley et al, 1979, p. 35). Some people resort to excessive drinking because of marital problems. For example, impotence may generate such intense feelings of worthlessness in a man that he resorts to heavy drinking to inhibit them. Jones says:

'Inability to satisfy the self-esteem need produces feelings of dependence, inferiority, weakness, helplessness and despair. Such feelings may be both the cause and outcome of drug abuse.'

(Jones et al, 1969, p. 88)

People with personality problems in social gatherings often resort to drinking in order to become different. Some people are unable to communicate effectively because of feelings of inferiority. Such people appear to be in a dull mood when they are sober. After a few drinks they begin to be lively and interesting. Poley, for example, says:

'A person derives considerable social benefit from the use of alcohol - at least in terms of his own perceptions. As he sees it, alcohol relaxes him in social situations, makes him more witty, entertaining and popular. Sometimes, if he has had enough to drink, he can

even become "the life of the party".'

(Poley et al, 1979, p. 41)

By this mystification, human beings achieve and sustain their adjustment, adaptation and socialization (Laing, 1967). Alcohol gives an individual an illusion that he is a different person.

#### 4.4.2. CHILD ABUSE.

One of the main purposes of marriage, as said earlier, is to have children. The married couples who are denied this gift develop negative feelings about themselves. On the other hand, many families which are fortunate to have children, are unable to give them love and care. Instead they develop a negative attitude towards them. Ill-treatment of children is referred to by theorists as child abuse. Cook and Bowles elaborate on this phenomenon:

'Child abuse and neglect are viewed as acts of commission and omission which interfere with the chance of children to develop their potential as human beings. An incident of child abuse or neglect is an action (commission) or a failure to act (omission) on the part of some adults who have responsibility for the provision of those things to which the child is rightfully entitled.'

(Cook and Bowles, 1980, p. 2)

Child abuse constitutes one of the problems that society is faced with today. However, Carver maintains that "child abuse is not a new social phenomenon; it has occurred throughout history for a variety of reasons. It is society's awareness and concern which is new" (Carver, 1978, p. 21). It is a common occurrence in modern society.

In traditional societies, the interest of the married couple and their

respective families, as pointed out in the preceding chapter, is in the children. Children are accorded an important place in the marriage because they are the ones who will care for their parents when they are old and they are no longer able to work. They are also regarded in traditional settings "... as another pair of hands to help earn the family's living" (Carver 1978, p. 23) because of the impoverished economic background of most of the families in the rural areas. Little wonder that the majority of the labour force on White farms is child labour drawn from the neighbouring rural areas. The interest that the extended family have in the children is evidenced by many married couples leaving their children in the care of their grandmothers when they (the parents) go to work. Therefore, the value that is attached to children in traditional environments makes child abuse or neglect a rare phenomenon. The failure of most parents in traditional societies to properly clothe and educate their children is not intentional. It is caused by their poor economic background. It is not neglect as we understand it in the modern context.

The process of modernisation has broken down some of the traditional patterns. As Carver says, "... the pattern of family life was changing, affecting the quality of relationships of its members, both with each other and with society" (Carver, 1978, p. 25). In modern society, married people tend to have little contact with the extended family and little contact with neighbours. There are various reasons behind child abuse or neglect. For example, a parent's personal problems may lead to child abuse. Halperin elucidates:

'Maltreating parents often find their lives filled

with frustration because they have difficulty finding satisfaction. Seldom are they content; rarely are they happy; infrequently do they feel pleased with themselves.'

(Halperin, 1979, p. 58)

Some parents resort to child abuse because of their internalized feelings of the way they were parented. They may have been abused physically and emotionally when they were children. It may also result from parental deprivation. Carver, for example, comments on causes of child abuse:

'Child abuse is the result of some parents having spent childhood in an institution or in a series of unsuccessful foster placements. They have completely missed the experience of being loved and cared for consistently either by parents or parent substitutes. Even if they have spent their childhood with their natural parents and have suffered no physical abuse, they may have experienced total rejection, which produces an overwhelming feeling of worthlessness.'

(Carver, 1978, p. 117)

Another reason for child abuse is that "the child may not have been wanted" (Dovey, 1984, p. 37) at the time he/she was born. For example, some marriages were contracted because of pre-marital pregnancies.

The parental anger is deflected on to the child. Carver writes:

'A mother who enters parenthood unwillingly may lack feeling and empathy with her child although most will adapt and love the child as the weeks pass. Discord with her husband whom she feels her child resembles, unreadiness yet to embark on parenting and, in some women, a masculine identification, may all be reasons for indifference in the mother's attitudes.'

(Carver, 1978, p. 38)

A parent may neglect his/her child because of the child having failed to live up to the expectations of the parent because in some families children are expected to become the source of self-esteem for the parents. For example, a parent may expect his/her child to become a medical doctor in order to make up for his/her unfulfilled ambitions. Child abuse may take the form of battering. The parent may be inclined to take out feelings of frustration on a child even for very minor offences. As Halperin says, "one often hears parents make statements like, "I was so angry I wanted to wring my kid's neck" (Halperin, 1979, p. 51). The youngster becomes "... a convenient and safe target for parental anger" (Halperin, 1979, p. 51).

#### 4.4.3. RACISM.

Racism in South Africa is a problem which has an adverse effect on interpersonal relationships. Reasons for the practice of racism in this country are as Paton says:

'The arguments put forward to support total apartheid are first that different racial groups cannot live in harmony in a common territory, second, that subordinate groups will never receive justice in a common territory.'

(Paton, 1958, pp. 53 - 54)

In South Africa "racism is the belief that some groups are inherently-biologically-inferior to other groups. True racists may literally believe that Blacks have not evolved as far as Whites" (Poplin, 1978, p. 280). How racism affects the self-concept of the Blacks in this country has been discussed in the preceding chapters.

#### 4.4.4. SEXISM.

This is another problem which makes it difficult for people to adjust to a satisfying life. Poplin defines sexism as "a set of social relations which keeps women in subservient positions" (Poplin, 1978, p. 302). In the South African context, sexism is like racism which has as its aim to keep Blacks in a subordinate position in many spheres. Poplin writes:

'Sexism is a social problem for the same reason racism is a social problem - it produces discrimination in education, employment, law and politics. Sexism locks both men and women into restricted social roles and hampers them in developing their full potentials as human beings.'

(Poplin, 1978, p. 302)

Sexism is a social problem which undermines the self-concept of both men and women in different ways. For example, for many years sexism has been practiced in professional occupations such as teaching, for a number of reasons, as Horton and Leslie point out:

'Some formerly 'male' occupations, such as teaching, became 'female' occupations when large numbers of cheap workers were required. Once an occupation became identified as a 'female' occupation, workers could be hired cheaply, since women had so few choices. Second in the 'female' occupations the higher-level administrative positions were reserved for men, blocking female avenues of promotion.'

(Horton and Leslie, 1981, p. 358)

Sexism often creates feelings of inferiority. A 'female' post, for example, which is given to a man, to a large degree lowers his self-esteem. Similarly, a woman who cannot be promoted to a higher

administrative position simply because she is a woman also makes her develop negative feelings about herself. In the teaching profession the salary scales are structured according to sex. This makes women continue to internalise feelings of inferiority.

Sexism is also practiced in schools. Its existence in schools hampers the development of healthy interpersonal relationships between teacher and pupil. In schools, for example, researchers have found that boys and girls are treated differently. Frazier and Sadker say that "... when teachers criticize boys, they are more likely to use harsh or angry tones than when talking with girls about an equivalent misdemeanour" (Frazier and Sadker, 1973, p. 89). The school curriculum also reflects a 'rigid' sex stereotyping. There are subjects which are meant for girls and are not open to boys. For example, home economics in Black schools is meant for girls and woodwork for boys. The extra-curricular activities also reflect this form of sex stereotyping. Frazier and Sadker comment:

'When school maintenance chores are assigned, boys draw those tasks requiring heavier manual labour whereas girls are asked to help in quieter, more sedentary ways. This separation of tasks is often inappropriate and forced since some girls mature faster than boys and in the early grades, are frequently as big and strong.'

(Frazier and Sadker, 1973, p. 86)

Sexism which is practiced in society is the reinforcement of the parental attitudes towards their sons and daughters. Boys are afforded preferential treatment in some areas, particularly those related to social power and girls are afforded preferential treatment in other areas, particularly emotional rewards such as affection. This, to a large degree, affects the development of the self-concept of the boy or girl.

CHAPTER 5THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT  
AS A COMPONENT OF A GUIDANCE SERVICE

In this chapter, my intention is to make an attempt at showing various ways of developing or improving a young person's self-concept. I have tried to show in the earlier chapters how the self-concept can influence people's interpersonal relationships, choices in important life decisions, and social life in general. I have also tried to show how these issues in turn can influence the development of the self-concept. For me to fulfill my intentions, I feel the positive development of this phenomenon, the self-concept, should be included as a component in a guidance service.

One of the most effective ways of developing or improving, the self-concept of Black people is by creating group discussions in class based on exercises derived from interviews with people who have transcended the limitations imposed by their situation in South Africa. The interviews in this chapter were conducted with people who, in one way or another, have been successful in coming to grips with difficult life situations. The guidance teacher could, however, adapt the exercises to suit the needs of the particular context in which he/she is working. Of significance in these exercises is that the teacher should as much as possible encourage students to examine critically the various ways in which people have succeeded in coping with their particular situations. Students should be able to identify the strengths of these people and these, in turn should enable them to scrutinize themselves. It is an opportunity for students to understand the things they feel they lacked. These case studies will also make them understand why some people often succeed in one situation

and fail in the other. They should be in a position to suggest alternative solutions to the problems which other people had different ways of resolving. The objective of these exercises and case studies is to assist students in the final analysis to develop a positive self-concept which will make it possible for them to adjust positively to life in general because, as stated at the beginning of this study, one of the major problems that the Blacks in South Africa are faced with is that of a poor self-concept. This, to a large degree, affects their adjustment and behaviour in life.

#### INTERVIEW ONE

NAME: Paddy Granville.

Paddy is a lecturer at Rhodes University. He started by being an accountant in Cape Town. Asked why he left accountancy, he says:

"I joined a firm of accountants in Cape Town and subsequently was articled to one of the partners in the firm. I worked through a very miserly group of people who grossly underpaid me even though I was articled. I got something like R60 and living was extremely difficult. I enjoyed the work and it gave me lots of responsibility. With four months of being there I made lots of friends in the companies whose books I used to do. They were very helpful in many ways. For example there was a chap who owned a clothing store in Cape Town and I used to do his books. He said to me if ever I wanted to buy clothes he would give them to me at cost price. It was at this time that problems began to emerge for me. I was relating to them as people. I liked them and I cared about them but

I found that they were actually relating to one not as a person but really as an object. First the guy whom I bought a suit from, was a very nice chap and I got on well with him. One day I was doing his books and I noticed there was a payment to a particular company for about R400 and I didn't recognize the name of the company. He was a clothing organisation and all the cheques he wrote were purchases. I looked up in a telephone book to see what that company dealt with and I saw it dealt with carpets. There were no carpets in the business and so I thought, well, they must be carpets for his house but he put them through into purchases. He would be paying less tax. So I went to him and I asked him about those carpets and he said, "They were for my house". He was very open about it. So I said to him, "you can't put them to purchases because they have to go into drawings account because it's not part of your actual business transactions. You are not buying carpets and selling carpets. You are buying clothes and selling clothes and therefore it will affect your profit and therefore the Receiver of Revenue will be affected". He said, "Ag, come on, man, what's the Receiver of Revenue to do about it?" I said to him that was wrong. Anyway, I refused to leave it in the purchases. That upset me because I felt in a sense he was calling in the favour he had done me by letting me buy clothes at cost price. Another situation involved a lawyer whose major task was debt collections, mainly amongst coloured in Cape Town. He was abusing his position as a lawyer. For example if a particular family or woman hadn't paid her weekly instalment of her debt which had gone through the courts already and he was collecting for the client or the business, he used to terrorise them because they were poor and

ignorant of the law and they thought the lawyer could take them to jail. He would get sexual favours out of the women in order not to push them in this kind of thing. I nearly beat the guy up. I actually stormed out of his office and went to see my boss and I told him what was happening and that I wanted to report this guy to the Law Society. Well, my boss bombed me out for interfering in matters that were not my concern which I appreciated as a point but I was more interested in the rights of those people who were taken advantage of. Anyway, I decided, then, that I should get out and go back to what I had originally wanted to be and that was a teacher. Subsequently I left and went to university and did a B.A. and H.D.E. and got to teaching. I was actually relating more to people at a more real kind of level. I taught in Johannesburg. I taught for three years and I began to get a little bit worried about certain things in schools which I didn't understand and I was unhappy with. We shouldn't write people off because they aren't doing well in examinations because I really believe that if you are interested in a person, you care about him and you encourage him. After three years, I felt I should go back and do some more studies to try to clarify some of my worries about schools and education. So I came back to Rhodes and did a B.Ed. after three years of teaching. It was the most fantastic year of my life".

Exercise 1.

- (a) Many people do not feel that they belong amongst the people with whom they work. How does this affect them and their work?
- (b) A person's experiences at the workplace determine the degree to which his/her life will be felt to be satisfying and meaningful. Describe what you expect from work.

- (c) Describe how the love of money and things affect interpersonal relationships at the workplace.
- (d) Describe how injustices and corruption affect a person's adjustment to work.

Exercise 2.

- (a) Describe how the attitude of those in positions of power influences a person's self-feelings.
- (b) Although the employer has more status than an employee could the work go on without employees?
- (c) Describe how status and power affect good interpersonal relationships at the workplace.
- (d) Do you find it easier to criticize than to praise people? Why?
- (e) Do you find it easier to criticize than to praise yourself? Why?

Exercise 3.

- (a) How does the abuse of power at workplaces affect interpersonal relationships?
- (b) What should a person do when power is being abused by people in authority?
- (c) How does power abuse in schools affect teacher-pupil relationships?
- (d) Describe how it influences performance in class.

Exercise 4.

- (a) What should a person do if he is not happy at work?
- (b) When should one find it necessary to change one's work?
- (c) Is a change of work always a solution to a person's problems?

Exercise 5.

- (a) What helps to establish good interpersonal relationships between teacher and pupil?
- (b) Encouragement in a classroom makes pupils feel better about themselves. Describe other ways that can make pupils more interested in their work.
- (c) Being happy in life does not necessarily mean having lots of money. Why?
- (d) How can knowledge improve a person's confidence?

INTERVIEW 2

NAME: Prudence Tsheole

Prudence is a teacher by profession. She is presently in a leadership position in one of the departments of a National State. She says about interpersonal relationships at school:

"When I was in Standard 9, I was the baby of the class. We were only five. These other four were much older than I was and they made me feel it. I happened to be the brightest

of the group and I suffered because of that. They would ostracise me. They called me a baby. I had a friend in Standard 7. The Standard 7's would sleep in their own dormitory. When we went for meals, I wouldn't sit next to her. She was in a junior class".

About interpersonal relationships at the workplace, she says;

"I love teaching and what made me love teaching was that I realised when I was a teacher that I could teach. What made me very much excited in teaching was when we started off with something that the pupils didn't understand. I managed to make them understand it and that made me develop love for teaching. The other thing I realised was that I could easily and very easily make good relationships with my class. I went to United States to do my senior degree. I came back and then went to teach at Tlhabane. Here, it's where I experienced problems. People wouldn't like to say anything. They thought I was imposing on them. We had a vice-principal who had a teacher's diploma and didn't have a degree. There was a child who had a problem and I went to him to report. I asked him if I could do something about it. He agreed. The child's problem was that of finance and this was having an impact on him. So I said to the vice-principal that if he didn't mind I could get some financial assistance for this young man and he said to me, 'you must see to it that pupils don't feel you are trying to take over the school'. The same thing happened with the female part of the staff. They felt very uncomfortable in my presence. I was beginning to be very unhappy. They would be discussing something and I would offer an opinion and it didn't just come out just as an opinion. I was saying that because they thought I was smart".

Asked whether she was ever promoted to a higher rank, she says:

"The posts that we are holding now in the psychological services section are looked upon as promotion posts. I was in the teacher training college for a year. Someone looked at my credentials and said to the selection committee, 'you said you wanted a person with qualifications like this to be in the psychological services section and everybody who is in the psychological services section right now doesn't have those qualifications'. I was advised to apply. They picked on everybody who didn't have the proper qualifications and left me out. They employed them in June. I only got a response in September to start in October".

She says about interpersonal relationships in the United States of America:

"It's tough. You meet a person, he is just like the person next door. You brave yourself to say 'dumela' (hullo) and that person just says 'hi'. You are just off completely. You become very anonymous and you can be very lonely. The other thing that really gets teething is the way they treat you. You are foreign to them in the first place because you are black and that you are not a Black American but a Black South African. You don't look like them, you don't speak like them. You are so much of a curiosity to them that you become conscious of yourself. There is no way you can hide it, they just look at your hair. If they try to find out where you are coming from and you tell them you are coming from Africa, the first thing they question is, 'Did you get all these clothes when you arrived at Tuft?' The next thing they ask is, 'Is it true you have lions at your backyard?' It can be very strenuous. There is no way you can

be accepted when you are a Black. We tend to internalise those things that we were told to leave out".

Concerning her marital life, she says:

"What I am going to say is that it is not pleasant. I had an awkward relationship because of differences in outlook and I think there is something in me that doesn't want to be inhibited. Maybe I shouldn't have married, I don't know. I think the problem started with our reading, his reading and my reading and my becoming what I am and not believing not to continue. So that's about all. Now, I am on my own with two children and I manage. We can't be quite happy, there are times we felt there was a vacuum in our lives that needs to be filled".

Exercise 6.

- (a) Describe how a person gets to understand oneself.
- (b) What causes unhappiness between people at the workplace?
- (c) How does competitiveness at the workplace hinder the development of good interpersonal relationships?
- (d) Describe how women are discriminated against at the workplace?
- (e) What makes a teacher develop confidence in his or her work?

Exercise 7.

- (a) What can a person do in situations where other people say negative things about him?

- (b) What events are changing marriage and family relations?
- (c) Prudence succeeded academically but could not use her academic skills to make her marriage successful. Why?
- (d) Do people necessarily have to feel threatened by women's academic and economic independence?
- (e) Share your feelings with the other group members on the effect of educational standards on marriage.

Exercise 8.

- (a) Describe the cause of destructive interpersonal relationships among pupils.
- (b) How does one cope with such situations?
- (c) How do pupils' achievements in school influence the way they view themselves?
- (d) Describe how marks at school influence interpersonal relationships between pupils.
- (e) Describe the effect of other forms of competitiveness on interpersonal relationships among pupils.

INTERVIEW 3

NAME: Trudy Kgotla.

Trudy is doing her final year in pharmacy at Rhodes University. She says about her career:

"I had an interest of becoming a pharmacist but I was under the impression that to do pharmacy you've got to have a B.Sc. degree. I went to Fort Hare and did my first year. I failed all the courses. I was excluded from the science faculty because the rule is that if you fail all the courses you must go to another faculty. I lost my direction completely because I didn't imagine myself doing anything other than science because I didn't do history. I went to one professor and asked for advice. He told me that I should do agriculture. I passed all my first year courses. I came back in 1980 with the hope that I would go over to science. I had credits for science. I went to the Dean of the faculty and they took me. I did my science II. In April, the Dean called me and told me, 'we have excluded you from science and I don't think as long as I am still here you will do science even after ten years although you have the credits. I have excluded you'. So I had to switch over to agriculture again. Fortunately the school riots broke out in 1980 and I had to go home and I decided I was not going back to Fort Hare because I didn't want to do agriculture. I looked for a job at my place. In the meantime I applied to Rhodes and the University of the North. In January I received a reply from the Minister to the effect that they wouldn't take me and that I should go to the University of the North because pharmacy is offered there. I just told myself that I was not going to the University of the North until I got permission to go to Rhodes. I went to the Bophuthatswana Government and pleaded with them. I said, 'please try to get me a space at Rhodes. You are an independent state, why should they restrict us from going wherever we want?' Someone referred me to the ambassador so that I could go and talk to him. So I went to him in

Pretoria. In March I got the ministerial approval and I came to Rhodes University. I studied for a year doing my second year although I didn't have all the first year courses. I failed one of my major subjects. In June, the following year, I failed it again and I was told not to come back to Rhodes. I came back and spoke to the Dean. I said to him, 'I think you are unfair, how can you exclude me from the course when I have failed just this one course and in June for that matter?' He spoke to the administration that they should take me. I went on and passed my third year".

About the choice of a life partner and how she got married, she says:

"I didn't envisage getting married and I didn't look forward to getting married to the man I am married to now. I thought I would be married to a tall, dark, moustached man. But it turned out to be the other way round. The man I am married to is short, he is not the way I was thinking. I was having a temporary job in Mafeking and a friend of mine introduced me to this guy. He was then a student at the University of the North. He was also holding a vacation job in Mafeking. I loved this man and an affair started. I liked his personality because according to me what is important in a man is his personality more than the looks, the money and possessions. There were some ups and downs. I happened to have another affair and he came to know about it. We nearly broke. We felt we should marry because we were not free to see each other because of my parents. It was in 1982. I told him that I didn't think I could get married to him then because it was my father's wish that I should finish first and then I could think about marriage. So we planned to have a baby so that it could start everything. I got pregnant in December

1982 and got a baby in August 1983. I got married to him in July 1983 before the birth of the baby. I came back to Rhodes University and got a baby in Grahamstown. In June they didn't take me back into the residence. I stayed in the township for a week. After that I got accommodation in New Street. After the baby was born, I went home and stayed with the baby for two weeks. It was difficult for me to leave the baby at home. Nevertheless, I told myself that I needed my degree to make her a happy baby so that she could get all the things she wanted in future".

Trudy wrote her examinations in pharmacy in November and hopes to be a pharmacist in 1985.

Exercise 9.

- (a) Which factors should one consider in a choice of career?
- (b) Describe how a person's poor self-concept can lead him or her into a wrong choice of work or career.
- (c) 'I think you are unfair, how can you exclude me from the course when I have failed just this one course and in June for that matter'. Which approach is being used here to solve the problem?
- (d) Describe other methods of resolving problems in various situations.
- (e) Trudy showed courage and determination when she decided to go back to university, even though she was pregnant. Was this an unwise decision? Why?

Exercise 10.

- (a) Describe what you would like in a life partner.

- (b) The choice of a marriage partner has, in the past, been influenced by traditional cultural rules. How do you feel about this?
- (c) Describe other factors that you know of, which may influence people's choice of a life-partner.
- (d) Trudy decided to fall pregnant in order to hasten marriage. Explain why it was an unwise decision.
- (e) Now share your feelings with the other group members on premarital pregnancies.

#### INTERVIEW 4

NAME: Joyce Malla

Joyce is a teacher by profession. Her parents died in a tragic car accident when the car in which they were travelling was involved in a collision with a train. She is presently doing B.Ed. at Rhodes University and hopes to go back to teaching after completing her degree. She says about interpersonal relationships during her schooling career:

"I had good friends and classmates. There was one teacher who was teaching me Afrikaans in Matric. I didn't like him nor did he like me. I hated his subject. The way he taught it wasn't interesting and motivating. So we didn't like his subject. The same thing happened at Fort Hare. There was one lecturer I didn't like and I think she didn't like me either. I have been doing well all along except when I was doing my third year. I failed one course and so I had to do that course again because of prejudices. These lecturers have their own favourites or friends. Those who are not

close to them, even if they try their best, it's useless. I was not one of their favourites. I used to see them being intimate with other students. Those who were close to them were given better marks and those who were not close to them were at a disadvantage. How they created their friendships I don't know but I learned that they were going to the same parties and socialising together".

Exercise 11.

- (a) Joyce lost her parents at an early age. This did not make her lose hope in life. Which important quality does she demonstrate to you?
- (b) Describe what you think a good teacher should be like.
- (c) Describe the things that teachers like in pupils.
- (d) How does teacher favouritism ("teachers' pets") hamper the development of good teacher-pupil relationships in schools?

INTERVIEW 5

NAME: Alex Mangarila.

Alex was born in 1957 at Rehoboth district about 60 km south of Windhoek. Alex is a B.Ed. student at Rhodes University. He says about interpersonal relationships at high school and university:

"I didn't have much problem to make friends with pupils as well as teachers because Khorixas was quite a small place and most of the pupils were from a background similar to mine. They were coming from the neighbouring farms. The secondary school itself was also

situated in a rural area. I felt quite at home except at the beginning of the year when newcomers were subjected to initiation ceremonies. It was the most crucial part in a student's life. I couldn't complete my matric within record time because in 1976 there were unrests which started in Soweto and our school was also affected. However, after completing it, I proceeded to the University of Zululand and enrolled for B.Paed. degree. The problem which I really encountered and which had an impact on me was that of the language because people here assume that if you are around Zululand, it means you can speak Zulu with them. For the first two months it was a struggle for me to get used to the people and to convince them that I couldn't speak the language. After a few months I managed to adjust myself to the language problem and to make friends with students but at the same time one ought to be selective in making friends because of different ethnic groups which give rise to ethnic conflicts. From there I decided to apply to Rhodes University because I felt I couldn't do all my degrees at the same institution. Getting all the degrees at the same university makes one suspicious of one's worth. I was motivated to go to a White varsity to find out the difference between Black and White universities. I didn't encounter many difficulties in adjusting myself to the new situation. What I have discovered is that there is some bit of tension between White and Black students. At times you are not sure whether to make friends with some of the students or not or to talk to or greet them. The only thing one does is to withdraw oneself because some reply when greeted and others, merely keep quiet".

Exercise 12.

- (a) How does racism and ethnic differences affect interpersonal relationships in schools and in other situations in life?
- (b) Describe various methods of coping with such situations.
- (c) Show how human relationships in the rural areas differ from those in the urban areas.

INTERVIEW 6.

NAME: Refilwe Nkosi.

Refilwe is doing a degree in journalism at Rhodes University. Describing her choice of a career, she says:

"After passing Standard 10 my mother asked me whether I wanted to go to a University or whether I wanted to go to a Teachers' Training College, or to train as a nurse. I said I wanted to go to Rhodes to do journalism. My uncle is a journalist. He influenced me to become a journalist but he only gave me the bright side of it. Personally, I wanted to be a nurse but my mother used to tell me that nursing was a job for slaves. She said that if I had a chance I could do something better than nursing. So I chose to do journalism. I didn't know much about journalism but my uncle said I would be able to take photographs and that I would be able to work on magazines, television and radio. But now that I am doing the course, I have discovered that when you are a journalist you often get detained or arrested because there are certain things you are not supposed to take photos of. They teach us that we have got to be neutral. In

South Africa, when you are reporting, you shouldn't show where your stand is. Another thing that I have discovered is that in the media system there is a lot of propaganda. What displeases me is that when I am working as a journalist, I will be aware that what I am giving the people is propaganda and not the whole truth because propaganda always shapes things to fit the system. I am not sure whether, when I have completed the degree, I will work as a journalist because I don't like the idea of giving people half-truths".

Exercise 13.

- (a) Describe what you would like from your work after school.
- (b) What do you think Refilwe should have done in the situation she was in at school?
- (c) How did what was happening affect her feelings about herself?
- (d) Does a person have to accept any work for the sake of money?

INTERVIEW 7

NAME: Bianca Mauwane.

Bianca describes her marital life:

"I met Jerry in Grahamstown and we fell in love. After a few months I found out that I was expectant. I had to leave school and go with him to his home town in Bedford. We got married. He built a two-roomed house. Our first child was a baby girl. Jerry used to work far away from home. At that time Jerry was drinking but not heavily. While he was away, his grandparents sold the plot on which we were

staying. When he came back, he found that we did not have proper accommodation. He started drinking heavily. I couldn't stand it and I left for my mother's place in Grahamstown. I stayed in Grahamstown with my child for five weeks and Jerry came and fetched us. We stayed in a house far away from his grandparents. A baby boy was born. Jerry was then working in Port Elizabeth. He used to come home on week-ends drunk. He was fond of using obscene language in his drunken state. Jerry started suffering from tuberculosis and was hospitalised. After recovering, he stayed for a few months without working. We were starving. Jerry's friend used to give us some money and food. The children depended on soup and bread they got at school. Jerry became physically fit again for work but the drinking problem was still there. At times I felt like divorcing him. He would come home on week-ends drunk without his wages and would demand food. Failing to get food, he would leave and go and drink. Coming back, he would break the furniture and crockery. In spite of all this, what I appreciated was that he never hit me in his drunken state. The tenth child was born. I felt I could not divorce him for the sake of the children. I felt that divorcing him would probably lead to worse problems than the ones I was faced with. Two of the children were at a local high school and four were at a primary school and the other four were still at home. I used to take part of the money that was meant for buying food in order to buy the children school books because Jerry wasn't interested in their education. My eldest daughter had to leave school after passing Standard 8 because there were the other two who had to get to high school. I couldn't afford to have them all at school at the same time. She went to train as a nurse. She is

presently a staff-nurse at the local hospital. Six of my children are now working and they are still staying with us except my eldest son who is married. My eldest daughter is also about to get married. Jerry is no longer a heavy drinker. I no longer tell him to stop drinking, but his own children who are now big, are the ones that tell him to stop drinking a lot".

Exercise 14.

- (a) Describe the various problems that people encounter in marriage.
- (b) Is divorce always a solution to marriage problems? Why?
- (c) How does alcohol affect interpersonal relationships?
- (d) Do you think that Bianca and Jerry should have had so many children when their marriage was not a good one? Explain your answer.

INTERVIEW 8

NAME: Laudy Maharini.

Laudy is a teacher by profession. He taught for two years at a junior secondary school before leaving for university for further studies.

Describing his experiences at school where he taught, he says:

"The school consisted of White and Black members of staff. We had two separate staff-rooms for the two separate groups. The principal was very strict. Every member of staff, irrespective of colour, was careful and up-to-date with his/her work. If you haven't prepared, he would visit your class now and then unexpectedly. One thing that

affected me as a teacher at that school, was that among the Black members of staff, I was the youngest and unmarried. My problem, as a young teacher, was that whenever there were sit-ins or riots, I was always under suspicion. I was suspected of instigating the students because some of the White members of staff used to watch our movements. I remember one day I was wearing clothes with certain colours, not for political reasons, but it so happened that they were the colours of a particular organisation. So that morning I got to school. On arrival, the vice-principal made me aware of these colours when he said they were colours of some organisation. I concluded from such remarks that to a certain extent I didn't have the freedom of wearing what I wanted to wear. In 1980 the students wanted to commemorate a certain day. I put on my clothes and went to school, only to find on arrival that the students had decided to boycott classes that day. I was under suspicion of having instigated the student body. I knew I was not involved and that I wouldn't influence the pupils politically. I felt uneasy. The following day, the situation grew worse. Fortunately the kids were not violent. All that they did was just to commemorate the day. On the third day of the sit-in things grew worse. The pupils came back to school. We started with the daily routine. But because of misunderstanding the police were called and some students were collected. Most of the students left the school. Among the staff, the main suspect of instigating the students was me. I was cross-questioned by the principal but I faced him and I explained to him that I had my own rights and my freedom as a teacher but not to misuse them. After a few days I was collected by the police while teaching in a classroom situation. They took me, interrogated me and left me. I felt I was a threat to the school.

Without giving three months notice, I resigned".

Exercise 15.

- (a) Describe how a person's appearance influences people's perception of him or her.
- (b) Each member of the group should write down three positive and three negative traits that he or she thinks his/her workmates see in him or her.
- (c) The teacher asks one volunteer to go outside. In his/her absence, the group is asked to write three positive and three negative traits which they as a group see in him or her. His or her list is then compared with the profile provided by classmates.
- (d) What are, in your opinion, a teacher's rights?
- (e) What must a person do if he or she is unhappy in a work situation?

INTERVIEW 9

NAME: Elizabeth Canca.

Elizabeth is a teacher by profession. Her husband, Abel, is also a school teacher. The couple cannot have children. Elizabeth has this to say about their childless marriage:

"I met Abel at Dower Training College when both of us were students. An affair started. After completing we decided to marry. We both taught at the same school. After three years of marriage we didn't have a child. This became a sensitive issue in our life. Doctors

also confirmed we would never have a child. This was shocking news. Abel resorted to drinking. What made me more unhappy was when a married woman on the staff became expectant and left for confinement. This often left me with feelings of worthlessness. I felt bad whenever my colleagues conversed about children. I used to isolate myself. The problem became worse when it started to affect our relationship. Abel was drinking heavily. He used to beat me up, accusing me of frigidity. I decided to resign from the job and left for Cape Town to join my parents. I still loved him and never felt I could marry any other man. After six months he came to Cape Town looking for me. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw him. We both sorted out our marital problem. We decided to adopt a child. This really changed our whole life".

Exercise 16.

- (a) Describe how a childless couple feels in society.
- (b) Alcohol does not solve marital problems. Why?
- (c) What have you learned from the problem of childlessness that the couple had?
- (d) What restored their happiness in marital life?
- (e) Now share some of your feelings on parenting with the other members of your group.

INTERVIEW 10

NAME: Billy Maluleke.

Billy was born at Ritavi in a family of six boys and two girls. Both Billy's parents were neither literate nor numerate. His father was a labourer and the only breadwinner in the family. The poverty-stricken family found it extremely difficult to make ends meet. Billy says about his schooling career:

"After passing Standard 5, I was persuaded to go for priesthood. I accepted because I had a vague notion of what it entailed. After completing Standard 8, I felt that becoming a priest was not my calling because I was contemplating to leave school so that I could start working for the purpose of helping the family. I finally decided to leave school after passing Standard 8. I went to a local White-owned shop during the vacation to look for work as a shop-assistant. Mr Gerbers, the owner, asked me whether I was not going to 'pinch' and I replied: 'No, honesty is the best policy'. My answer impressed him and he gave me work. He encouraged me to go back to school and promised me financial assistance. I went back to Pax College and did Standard 9 and 10 under Joint Matriculation Board. After passing Standard 10, he arranged for a bursary to enable me to do B.A. and U.E.D. with the University of the North when it was still under the academic trusteeship of the University of South Africa. After completing U.E.D. I started working as a teacher. I used part of my meagre salary to pay for the education of my brothers and sister and also to help my parents. In 1972 I got married. Both of us were teaching at the same school. Our affair started when we became interested in each other because of ball-room dance which up

till today is still our favourite form of recreation. We have four children. Our eldest daughter is at a private primary school.

Exercise 17.

- (a) People in modern society think that one must look after oneself before worrying about other people. What helped Billy not to become selfish?
- (b) Billy got a chance to continue his education, and he took it. What do we learn from him?
- (c) People's impoverished home backgrounds often influence them to lose confidence in themselves. How can we avoid this?
- (d) Billy showed loyalty at all times to all members of his family. What may make it difficult for family members to be loyal to each other?

Exercise 18.

- (a) Describe the consequences of hasty marriages.
- (b) Discuss what the word 'values' means with your teacher.
- (c) Which values play an important part in the success of marriage?
- (d) Describe the responsibilities that parenthood involves.
- (e) How is Billy's choice of a life partner and his choice of work connected?

INTERVIEW 11

NAME: Isaac Pona.

Isaac is doing B.A.(Honours) in Psychology at Rhodes University. He says of the difficult times during his school days:

"Both my parents have never been to school. I went to school for the sake of going to school. I was not motivated by my parents. When I started, I didn't know why I had to go to school. I failed Standard 5 and I had to repeat it. In Standard 8 my performance was not that good. I got a third class pass. What I had in mind was to pass Standard 8 and then do matric for one year and go to seek for employment. In our rural area people do not value education. What they believe in is getting a bit of literacy and going to work in big cities. After passing Standard 8, I left for Pietermaritzburg to do motor mechanics. Unfortunately they couldn't take me because I didn't have mathematics in Standard 8. The following year I decided to do Standard 9. I had to do Zulu instead of Xhosa. I failed Standard 9 that year. I went to a private school which could take pupils who failed to get space in other schools. While I was there, I met Mr Peters who offered me financial assistance. I did B.A. at the University of Fort Hare. After passing B.A., Mr Peters encouraged me to come to Rhodes to do Honours in Psychology".

Exercise 19.

- (a) How is Isaac's home background similar to that of Billy?
- (b) What psychological qualities are important in helping a person to cope with difficulties in life?

- (c) What should a person do if he or she is given a chance in life to advance himself or herself academically?
- (d) Now share your opinion on how to overcome the problems caused by poverty in life.

#### NOTES ON THE EXERCISES

##### Exercise 1.

This exercise attempts to assist pupils to understand absence of good interpersonal relationships at the workplace. In modern work settings people fail to relate to each other as people. Materialism is acquired at the expense of good human relationships. This exercise also highlights the type of injustices and corruption that characterise modern workplaces.

##### Exercise 2.

This exercise picks up the theme of the previous exercise. It shows how status and power cause people to overlook good interpersonal relationships. It attempts to make pupils look at themselves critically in the light of the wrongs they see in others.

##### Exercise 3.

In modern work settings, the powerless are exploited in various ways. Abuse of people lowers their morale. This exercise helps pupils understand the difficulty they may face in developing self-confidence at the workplace. For example, a person who is sexually abused, loses her/his

self-respect at the workplace. The exercise in a way makes pupils develop confidence in confronting such situations.

#### Exercise 4.

This exercise picks up the themes of the previous exercises and assists pupils to scrutinize the various methods of coming to grips with problematic situations in life. A person may find it necessary to change the social context if he cannot cope, or confront the destructive situation, or tolerate it.

#### Exercise 5.

This exercise attempts to assist both teacher and pupil to understand their interpersonal relationships better. It makes pupils aware that improvement of one's education leads to a positive development of the self-concept.

#### Exercise 6.

This exercise helps pupils to understand that many people who are not prepared to relate to others, and are not communicating well with others, are struggling with negative self-attitudes and feelings. Competitiveness which has come with modernisation, makes people withdraw themselves from potentially enriching interpersonal relationships. It also aims at showing society's attitude towards women who have attained certain heights academically. It makes pupils scrutinize the rôle of confidence in life.

#### Exercise 7.

Incompatibility of values and interests in marriage may to a large degree

affect marital relationships. The exercise tries to show how a person can succeed in one situation and fail in the other. For example, Prudence couldn't apply her academic skills to make her marriage a success.

#### Exercise 8.

This exercise sensitizes pupils that a person may be perceived negatively by other pupils because of his/her ability, e.g. scholastic performance. The important point in this exercise is that pupils should learn to cope with such attitudes. For example, Prudence was aware of the negative attitude her fellow classmates had towards her, but this did not seriously affect her.

#### Exercise 9.

The exercise assists pupils to scrutinize factors that should be taken into consideration in a choice of work. It also shows how an individual's success in one situation can create in her a false self-concept. Trudy, for example, gained so much confidence from her success in making her point felt that she thought she could succeed everywhere. Her over-confidence made her waste a lot of time in her studies because of a wrong choice of a career, although she ultimately succeeded.

#### Exercise 10.

This exercise clarifies the cultural criteria which, to a large degree, influence a person's choice of a life partner. For example, some people base their choice on physical attractiveness, money, etc. The class could examine other values that play an important rôle in the choice of a life partner.

Exercise 11.

This exercise creates a basis for scrutinizing current teacher-pupil relationships. The discussion could be extended to include sensitive areas, e.g. pupil abuse by teachers. This is increasingly becoming a social problem in schools and often destroys good teacher-pupil relationships.

Exercise 12.

Another social problem which hampers the creation of good interpersonal relationships is racism in South Africa. The statutory policy of separate development affects the positive development of a self-image. This exercise attempts to assist pupils to understand how South African legislation can negatively affect their self-feelings and help them to discover ways of transcending this debilitating experience.

Exercise 13.

This exercise attempts to clarify the values that people cherish in a choice of work. Some consider money, status or happiness as important in a choice of a career. The exercise tries also to make pupils aware of the influence of the South African ideology of apartheid on some occupations, e.g. teaching.

Exercise 14.

This exercise assists pupils to understand some of the problems that they may encounter in marriage. Alcoholism, for example, is one of the social problems which affects a person's work and the development of a successful marital relationship. Pupils should scrutinize various ways of coping with marital demands and also to see whether changing a social context which appears to be destructive to the self is the only solution or not.

Exercise 15.

In this exercise an attempt is made to clarify the effect of perception upon interpersonal relationships. The discussion could be extended to include how a person's physical appearance influences his perception of people's perception of him.

Exercise 16.

This exercise helps to clarify the importance of children in marriage. Parenthood is a problematic area which married people are faced with in modern society. It assists pupils to be prepared to adjust positively to problems that may arise in their marital life because of childlessness. It highlights some possible ways of resolving such a problem. For example, the childless couple eventually decided to adopt a child and this restored harmony in a stormy marriage. It also restored their self-esteem.

Exercise 17.

Many Black young people come from impoverished home backgrounds which, to a large extent, affect their schooling career. This exercise stresses the importance of not creating room for defeatism. The exercise helps pupils to see their own problems in a better perspective through identification with people who had similar disadvantaged economic positions. It sensitizes them with respect to various ways of transcending these situations. It also clarifies some of the dominant values of modern society, such as individualism. For example, Billy transcended it by thinking of helping his family when he started working. This exercise also stresses the importance of making use of assistance that one receives, through dedication and commitment to the task.

Exercise 18.

This exercise helps pupils to understand the importance of values compatibility in marriage. People with compatible education and interests in marriage tend to get on harmoniously. The exercise also helps students to understand the importance of avoiding hasty marriages. It also assists them to understand some of the responsibilities of becoming a parent. It also clarifies that people in modern society tend to choose partners from amongst the people they meet at the workplace. There appears to be a close connection between the choice of work and the choice of a life partner.

Exercise 19.

Same as exercise 17.

CHAPTER 6CONCLUSION

Guidance as a subject, was introduced in Black schools in 1981. Both the teachers and pupils are still in the process of understanding the significance of this subject in Black schools. Some teachers and headmasters have gone to the extent of developing a negative attitude towards this subject. However, guidance as a means of preparing young people for personal and social life is not a new phenomenon in Black communities. For example, in traditional societies young people were taught informally by their grandparents about life in general. To a certain extent, the peer group also offered its individual group members some form of informal education on good behaviour. Formal education was received at the initiation schools. It, as indicated in the previous discussion, addressed itself to the development of young people's positive attitude towards their individual roles in marital life, sexuality and parenting. The way young people were prepared for adjustment to personal and social life assisted in developing their self-confidence en route to adulthood. They were given emotional support which enabled them to adjust positively to marriage and parenthood.

I have tried to show in the earlier chapters how the process of modernisation has caused the movement of Black people from the rural to urban areas and how this movement has brought about a change of values. Modernisation has demolished most of the social and cultural values that were cherished in traditional societies. The new values that have come with modernisation have an impact on the self-concept of Blacks. Most of the traditional marriage and work patterns and the ways of parenting have been abandoned. The new values that people have to cope

with in modern society have an impact on their self-concept. Similarly, the change from the extended to the nuclear family has given rise to problems which, to a large degree, affect an individual's adjustment to a happy life.

As noted earlier, the political ideology of apartheid has an adverse effect on the development of a positive self-concept. Blacks are regarded as inferior because of the colour of their skin. They experience this discrimination from the social, economic, educational and political point of view. Apartheid affects a Black person's attitudes and feelings about himself or herself. The majority of Blacks have internalised these feelings of inferiority. The development of their self-concept is also influenced by their interpersonal relationships with significant others and, reciprocally, the self-concept influences the creation of good interpersonal relationships. It also influences, in various ways, the individual's choice of a life partner and the development of a happy family and parenting. As pointed out earlier, many people find it very difficult to adjust positively to these important areas in life because of a negative self-concept. The type of choice that a young person makes in the above important life decisions determines to a large degree his adjustment to life. Therefore, if, in the modern schools, guidance is to be meaningful to Blacks, and to achieve credibility in Black schools, it must focus attention on those issues around which young people experience difficulties in adjusting themselves. To my mind the role and status of a guidance teacher in preparing young people for personal and social life cannot be underestimated. Guidance should also take as its point of departure, the consolidation of the type of guidance that Black communities had traditionally.

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