

How much is it possible to learn how to be a parent?

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This study is concerned with the extent in which individuals' commitment to parenting, is related to their exposure, when adolescents to their parents' commitment to the role of father/mother. It was developed departing from the assumption that the first experiences that might be meaningful for the construction of what it is to be a parent may be searched in the individuals' family of origin. The study compares the level of commitment to parenting (high commitment or low commitment) both reported by parents and their respective adult children. It also explores the relationship between children's actual parental commitment and their retrospective accounts of parents' commitment to parenting and parent-child relationship (focusing in the period from 12 years old to the time they left parents' home). Data were collected from self-report questionnaires in sample of family dyads and tryads (approximately, 350 families). Findings are discussed considering the relevance that the parent-child relationship might have for the explanation of similarities and dissimilarities detected in the way each generation is committed to parenting. Some comments are made about the kind of messages related to parenting that individuals may learn directly from their parents options regarding the place, relevance and function of parenting in their lives and the relationship between these parental choices and children's memories of the care and protection received.

Does closeness in family relations relate to family resemblance?

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A large group of young people wants to live their life approximately like their parents. The willingness to follow the paths of older family members might influence and be influenced by the quality of their relationship. Furthermore, similarity in personality variables might moderate this relation, facilitating orientation towards a person when perceived as similar. We argue that the quality of a relationship may be a crucial factor in the dynamic of family resemblance. However, their intertwining has seldom been examined. We address four questions: (1) Do young people who report a close relationship to their parents pursue the same goals as their parents? (2) Is similarity in terms of personality traits related to relationship quality? (3) Do personality relationship dynamics interact in their contribution to adolescents' well-being? (4) Do we find the same relations in adolescents and their parents as in young adults and their parents? Data were collected in Switzerland and in Russia. Young people (aged 16 to 25) and one of their parents participated in the study, resulting in 137 Swiss and 93 Russian family dyads. Results showed that relationship variables and family similarity are related. The findings are discussed in the context of life span development psychology.