

ANIL'S CRUTCHES

Intent of these jottings.

- ✓ *Parents should not be over anxious and over protective*
- ✓ *They should not make things too easy for your children and wards to grow*
- ✓ *They must help them, not rescue them.*
- ✓ *Teach them to walk on their legs and be responsibly free*

The Story.

Once upon a time, there was a lovely little boy, Anil was his name. He was healthy and strong as any other able bodied boy could be. One day, at games Anil tripped down and broke his leg. The doctor plastered his leg and to help Anil walk, he gave him crutches.

Somehow, Anil with his plastered leg and his crutches on went to school and moved about. After a few weeks, the doctor removed the plaster and told Anil's parents: "Now slowly take away from Anil his crutches and see to it that, bit by bit, he walks again all by himself".

But, Anil's over-anxious parents reasoned out: "Oh, our poor little boy! His leg is become so weak and frail! How will he be able to walk without crutches? No! No! The doctor does not know what he talks. If we take away from him his crutches, he will fall and break his leg again! Later on, surely, when his leg becomes strong, we shall take the crutches away."

And so, our little Anil went about in crutches. In school, in the street, on the play ground, at home all over he went about leaning on his crutches. Many days later, he wasn't able to walk without crutches. His crutches had become part of him.

Months later, the doctor happened to see little Anil still with his crutches on. He called the parents and enquired: "What's this I see? Why does your little Anil still move about with his crutches?" They replied: "But, Doctor, his leg is grown so weak and frail!. If we take away his crutches, he is sure to fall and break his leg again!"

Angrily, the doctor forcibly took the crutches away. And ordered: "Anil dear, stand. Put both legs on the ground! And walk! Anil stood; then he tried to walk, but he fell flat on his face and broke his leg again!

Sadly, shaking their heads, his parents remarked: "It's clear that we were right! The doctor was wrong!"

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What did Anil's parents do to help him to recover?
2. What did the Doctor do to him?
3. Are crutches and other remedial helps to be used for ever? Why?
4. Are we actually helping our children grow intellectually by regularly giving them tuitions, coaching classes and other extra helps? Why?
5. What should be the primary purpose of any helps given our children?
6. For how long should they be given them?
7. What is the greatest need of children to grow to maturity? Why?

8. Should we, out of 'love', protect children from all hurts, hardships, failures and disappointments? Why?
9. What happens to children of over-protective Parents?
10. Should children be deprived of the right to do mistakes? Why?
11. What are the benefits accruing from failures and mistakes?
12. Was the Doctor right or wrong in doing what he did? Why?
13. Can crutches be taken away all of a sudden? Why? How to go about it?
14. What's the difference between 'helping' others and 'rescuing' others?
15. What advice would you give to Anil's Parents?

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION AND FOR TEACHING

- Growth demands pains and sufferings. It is unkindness to your children to spare them the pains of growth
- Do not give your children any sort of crutches unless absolutely necessary and then, if required give them only for the shortest possible time.
- Allow your little darlings suffer a little to grow independent and responsible men and women. It's worth the pain.
- Allow children to learn through mistakes.
- No one is a failure, we only fail some times.
- Mistakes and failures, if properly handled, are good teachers.
- A person who is not allowed to do mistakes will not learn.
- Weaning causes pain to a baby, yet it's a must.
- Likewise, weaning from parental protection is also painful but necessary.
- Teething though painful and troublesome, is part of growth.
- Figuratively, a child, has to experience teething many times over in order to reach maturity..
- Loosen the apron strings for your children as soon as possible
- Early in life, gradually, of course, but consistently, force your children to stand and walk on their legs.
- Single child families tend to pamper their darlings and keep them immature.
- It is better to lose a child, than to cripple him/her for life
- Right from its earliest days, help your child to be responsibly free.
- Help your children, with your advice and guidance, to solve their problems.
- Do not take the problems of your children upon yourselves
- Being helped and helping others is good and healthy, being rescued and rescuing others is harmful

SOME HINTS FOR PARENTS

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THEM

1. Over-anxious parents bring up shy, withdrawn, nervous and angry children.
2. The best thing to teach your children is self-confidence, self reliance, assertiveness and 'responsible freedom'
3. Do not brand assertiveness in an adolescent child, as rebelliousness, disobedience or haughtiness. He/she is just experimenting with his/her freedom, and trying to be himself/herself.
4. Patiently, encourage him/her to take his/her independent decisions.

5. Teach your children/wards to help themselves. Do not rescue them under the guise of helping them
6. Allow your children to suffer the painful consequences of their free choices .Assist them to bear their sufferings, but do not take the sufferings away from them.
7. Do not bail out your children when they are wrong.