

Elizabeth Stranahan

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How to bring out the BEST in YOUR CHILD


PART 7



## TEN-PART COURSE TITLES



- PART 1 OBEDIENCE, Up to Six Years**  
How to Win Prompt, Cheerful Obedience
- PART 2 OBEDIENCE, After Six Years**  
How to Get Whole-hearted Cooperation
- PART 3 THE GREATEST SECRET**  
A Tested Formula that Works Wonders
- PART 4 SELF-CONTROL VS. TEMPER**  
Make Home and Family Life Pleasant
- PART 5 MANNERS AND POISE**  
How Your Child Can Be Admired By All
- PART 6 COURAGE**  
Help Your Child to be Strong and Fearless
- PART 7 HONESTY AND TRUTHFULNESS**  
Teach Your Child to Be Trustworthy
- PART 8 HEALTH, BODY AND MIND**  
How Your Child Can Be Outstanding
- PART 9 AMBITION, SUCCESS**  
Make Your Child's Future Bright
- PART 10 HIGHER VALUES**  
Inspire Your Child With The Great Truths

 **INDEX For Entire Course**  
At End of **PART TEN**



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# How to Bring Out The Best In Your Child



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THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION

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PART SEVEN

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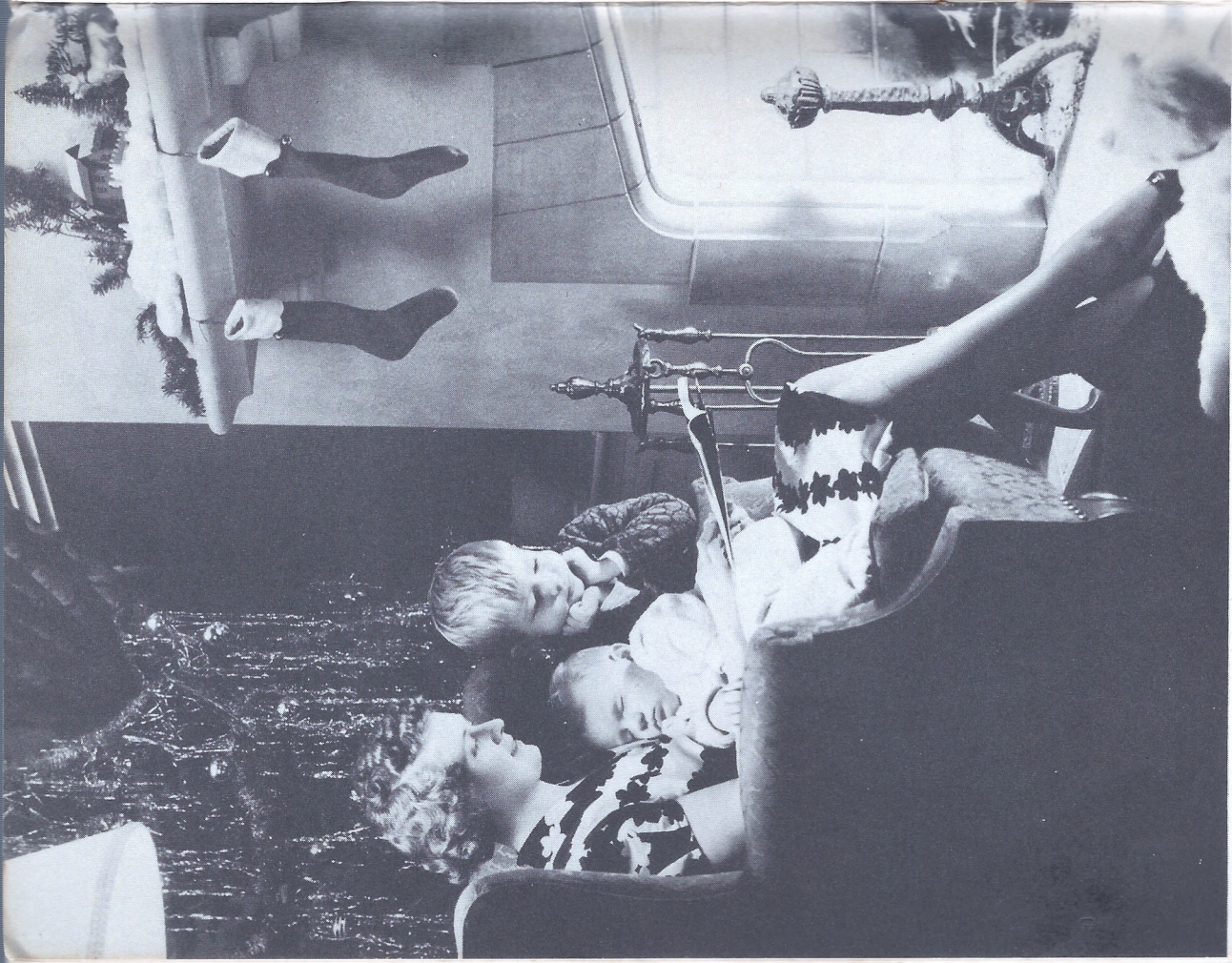


ILLUSTRATION 136

*This mother is reading the story of Christmas to her little son. When he begins to ask serious questions about the mythical character, Santa Claus, she will then give him frank and truthful answers.*

## HONESTY—A CORNER-STONE OF CHARACTER

### Why Your Child Should be Taught Absolute Honesty

So far as adult behavior is concerned, there seems to be a widespread notion that if one is but truthful in the big, important matters of life, then the minor dishonesties do not count.

And yet it is precisely in this realm of the seemingly insignificant that the parent's honesty or dishonesty is most often evident to the child.

Take the matter of threats, the accepted disciplinary technique of the unscrupulous. A mother in taking her little daughter on the train to visit her grandmother says, "Now Mary Jane, if you don't stop pulling down that window shade, I'll not take you to Grandma's. Do you hear?"

Of course Mary Jane hears. But she goes right on pulling down the shade. Why? Because she is keen enough to know that her mother, having made all arrangements for the trip, would not think of stopping the train or turning back. Besides, the child realizes from past experience that her mother habitually says things like that without any intention of carrying them out.

Such threats are worse than futile. They indicate not only the parent's inability to discipline the child; they also indicate to the child that the parent is being untruthful.

The same could be said for evasions, white lies, prevarications, flattery.

### Where Is the Dividing Line Between Truth and Untruth?

If these seemingly trivial dishonesties are to be condoned, at just what point is one to draw the line and start being honest?



Unless a child is given definite instruction in honesty, he will be influenced by this hazy conception of ethics, and will tell the truth only when it suits his convenience. Our juvenile courts and detention homes are filled with just such youngsters.

Happily, it is possible for you to teach your child to be absolutely honest. How? Certainly not by saying, "Junior, always be honest." Nothing so simple as that. The teaching of honesty will require thoughtful preparation and effort on your part.

For one thing, the teaching of honesty will require that you yourself be absolutely sincere, lest your child respond with an attitude that says, "What you do speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you say." Children are adept at sensing whether or not a parent is honest.

I think of the young mother who, upon being coaxed by her youngster for another piece of candy, puts the box behind her and says, "It's all gone. There isn't any more." Her deceit is further evident to the child when, in response to his insistence, she forthwith produces the box and gives him another piece. Thus does she instill in him the spirit of dishonesty, feeding it to him along with the very food that he eats.

In the following pages you will be shown how to instill honesty in your child. You will be shown how to teach him to keep his promises, to distinguish between fact and fancy, to be honest in money matters, and in his dealing with others.

#### Teach Your Child to Keep His Promises

Five-year-old Jamie enjoyed having the funny papers read to him. One day he took a comic sheet to his father's desk and said, "Daddy, please read me the funnies." The father glanced at his young son and said, "Daddy's busy now. I'll read you the funnies tomorrow." But the morrow came and the father was still busy. In the rush of affairs he forgot all about his promise. His failure to keep faith with his son not only caused the little fellow to feel neglected, but it also gave the child the impression that promises need not be taken seriously.

Another father promised his family that he would take them on an extended trip into the western states the follow-

ing summer. Every member of the family made eager plans for the journey. The eldest son bought a camera for the trip, and the girls bought appropriate sport-togs. The youngest son even gave up his two weeks' camping trip with the Boy Scouts in order to be included in this wonderful tour of the West.

In the father's own mind this promise of the western pleasure trip was contingent upon a certain new business deal which he thought surely would be made before summer. As the days went by, he began to fear that the transaction after all might not be made in time for the journey. But, seeing the enthusiastic preparations being made by his family, he could not bear to dampen their spirits by mentioning the fact that without closing the new deal they could not make the trip. He kept hoping against hope that everything would work out all right.

#### How a Broken Promise Dashed the Hopes of an Entire Family

Unhappily, however, the deal did not go through. The western trip had to be called off. Not only were the various members of the family disappointed; they were deeply hurt that the father had not told them in the first place that they would be unable to make the trip unless a particular bargain was closed. In any case, he had made them a promise, and that promise had not been kept.

The foregoing cases show how parents unwittingly convey to their children the idea that promises may be kept or broken, according to the convenience of the person who makes them.

Fortunately, a parent may just as readily convey to his child the importance of scrupulous exactness in keeping promises.

By your own example, show how important it is to keep a promise, even to the minutest detail. Emphasize to your child that you make a big distinction between what you hope to do and what you actually promise to do. Say to him, for example, "Now I don't want you to take this as a promise from me, but I hope to be back home in time to play with you before dinner. I expect to be back, and I shall try to arrange my plans accordingly, but I cannot promise you definitely, because I am not absolutely sure."



If You SAY You Will Do Something  
At Seven, Be Sure You DO So!

Then, upon occasion when you can make him a promise, fulfil it with meticulous care. This is exceedingly important. If, at six o'clock, you promise to play with him at seven, don't wait for him to remind you of your agreement. At the first stroke of seven, make a noise with the paper you are reading, arise from your chair abruptly and say, "Let's go! My promise to you was for seven o'clock. What shall we play?"

In case you promise your young children anytime during the day to read them a story at bedtime, be sure not to forget it or to allow any small excuse to keep you from reading to them. Call attention yourself to your previously-made promise just before you carry it out. This example makes a deep impression upon the children. (See Illustration 137.)

Provide Chances for Your Child  
To Keep His Promises

After you have demonstrated to him that you carry out your promises to the letter, then let him have the fun of undergoing a similar discipline himself. He might, for example, like to promise you that he will bring you a drink of water at seven-thirty o'clock. As the hour approaches, see to it that he does not become too engrossed in other activities. If he should show any disposition to forget his promise, a subtle reminder on your part, such as a casual glance at the clock, will be sufficient to recall to him his obligation. When he brings you the drink say, "Oh, thank you! That's splendid. You kept your promise right on the dot!"

As the days go by, allow him to make promises which involve a greater and greater length of time between the moment the promise is made and the hour set for its fulfillment. Always praise him for his punctuality, for his having kept his promise at the exact time.

Besides praising your child directly, it is helpful to tell others in his hearing occasionally that he takes pride in carrying out his promises to the letter. For example, say, "John is careful not to make promises he can't carry out, but once he makes a promise he respects his word and carries out his promise."



ILLUSTRATION 137

*When this mother promises her two boys that she will read to them at bedtime, she later calls attention to her promise just before she carries it out. This positive example impresses the children.*



### Teach Your Child to Tell the Truth

How to help him differentiate between fact and fancy.

One of the most useful faculties of the mind is imagination. It enables the architect to visualize the finished building before even the first drawing is made. It enables the sculptor to see a masterpiece of art before ever he applies a chisel to the stone.

Normal children are endowed with vivid imagination. So keenly do they visualize make-believe characters and situations that, sooner or later, every parent is faced with the problem of teaching a child to differentiate between what is real and what is imaginary.

This problem is heightened when the parent realizes that imagination, as such, should be encouraged in the child, but that the habit of truth-telling must also be inculcated. Suggest the child has the habit of substituting imagination for truth. How can this problem be met?

Give the youngster plenty of legitimate opportunity to tell stories that are recognized unmistakably as pure fiction. Enter into the mood of the moment with him. Encourage his ability to think imaginatively. Who knows? He may some day become a great writer of fiction.

Always distinguish, however, between fiction and fact. At first you may need to label as true or fictitious the various stories that you tell each other. If you have just finished telling him the story of Jack the Giant Killer, you might say, "That, of course, is just a fairy story. It never really happened. But now I'm going to tell you a story that is really true. This actually happened to Daddy when you were just a baby." Then relate the account vividly, accurately.

This procedure will not only help him to make a distinction between the real and the imaginary; it will lead him to observe that truth is quite as fascinating as fiction. Indeed, he may soon express a real preference for the truth by insisting, "Tell me another story, Mother, a really-true story!"

Once you have made him aware of this distinction between imagination and actuality, your problem is largely solved. Simply suggest to him that, in daily conversation with you or others, he let it be known by his accurate statements and sincere manner that he is telling the truth exactly as it is.

### One Family Coined the Word "Plike," Standing For "Let's Play Like."

To distinguish further between fact and fancy, one family hit upon this happy solution. The children loved to dress up in adults' clothes and impersonate first one fictitious character and then another. "Let's play like we're going to a party," they would say, or, "Let's play like we're riding on a train." So frequently did they use the words, play like, that the expression quite naturally contracted into one word, p'like. Thus, in playing house, they would say, "P'like you're the father; plike I'm the mother." Or, in playing school, "P'like you're the pupil; plike I'm the teacher."

P'like, therefore, came to be accepted by the household as a legitimate king's-ex from reality. P'like became the magic symbol for the realm of make-believe where the children could revel in whole-hearted enjoyment of imaginative situations.

This very word helped the children to distinguish between imagination and reality. At the close of a game of plike, it was not uncommon to hear a child say, "Now, this is for real," a signal that, from that moment on, every child would be held strictly accountable for thinking and speaking in terms of the factual.

It is all to the good, then, for you to allow your child, in playing with other children, to give vent to his imagination. You will do well to encourage him to take advantage of this harmless outlet for creative expression.

### Enter With Your Child Into The Spirit of Make-Believe

Furthermore, if you yourself will occasionally enter with him into the spirit of make-believe, you will establish a rapport that will be of inestimable value in all your future dealings with him. He will love you for dwelling with him, even for a few moments, in his own world.

Happily, you can bring about this intimate, harmonious relationship without undue inconvenience. It is surprising what a little wisp of attention a child will accept and be grateful for.

One busy mother at her ironing board, missed scarcely a stroke as she kept her little four-year-old son enthralled



for literally hours on end, merely by entering with him into the spirit of imaginative play.

The little fellow loved to pretend that he was the milk man. Week after week, his zest for this particular characterization lifted him to the very heights of childhood enjoyment. An old wire basket was his only equipment. The milk bottles, the receipt book, the money--all were imaginary. He would take his wire basket, stand out on the porch for a few moments, then knock on the door.

"Come in," the mother would call cheerfully. And in he would come, fairly beaming.

Sometimes his mother would order only two quarts of milk from him, sometimes four, depending upon how many visitors she might be expecting. Again, she might order six or even eight quarts explaining to him any of a dozen different reasons for her decision. After all, she had the whole morning for this sort of thing.

#### With a Penny That Wasn't There, She Bought Milk That Didn't Exist

Regardless of the amount of milk purchased, the youngster was always thrilled with the transaction. Payment was made by the mother reaching into her imaginary pocket and placing in his hand an imaginary bill.

The diminutive milk man, after going through the motions of making change, would pocket the imaginary bill, and then sit down for a friendly visit with his customer. But not for long. Business was too pressing. Again he would hurry eagerly to the porch where he would wait for a few moments in absolute silence. Again he would knock, enter, beam, make change, visit. And so on until the ironing was finished, or until it was time to stop for lunch.

This mother, by thus entering into her child's play, was in a strategic position to sharpen the distinction in his mind between the imaginative and the real. All that was necessary was for her to say, "All right, dear, now let's wash our hands and get something to eat; we'll play milk man again some other day."

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of establishing in your child's mind this clean-cut distinction between the fanciful and the factual.

#### How to Deal with the Problem of Santa Claus.

Many otherwise truthful parents feel that unless they can make their child actually believe in a flesh-and-blood Santa Claus, they are somehow depriving their offspring of one of the keenest delights of childhood. And so they go to great lengths in playing up the myth as though it were a veritable fact.

One little six-year-old girl asked in all sincerity, "Mother, is there really a Santa Claus?" The mother hesitated and then said, "Why, of course there is a Santa Claus! Didn't he put candy in your stocking last week?"

Thus do parents deliberately deceive their children, forgetting that the inevitable day of disillusionment is sure to come.

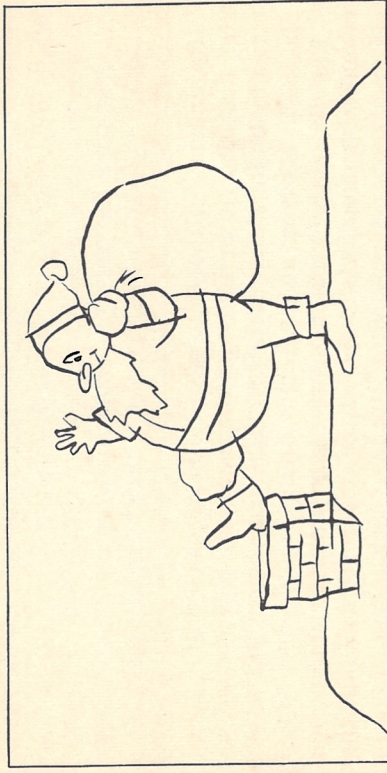


ILLUSTRATION 138

**One parent made a rough sketch like this. The child could see that even if Santa Claus were real, he could not get down a little, narrow chimney with a pack on his back bigger than the chimney.**

"I shall never forget the blow I received when I was quite a big girl," said a young woman in reminiscing over her school days. "We eighth-graders were decorating the Christmas tree when one of the girls told me that there was no really-and-truly Santa Claus. It made me so mad that I slapped her face. Then I ran home and told Mother. Poor Mother turned red and looked embarrassed, as if she didn't



know what to say. But she evidently figured that, after all, I had been deceived long enough; that, besides, if the matter had already come to blows, it was about time for me to know the facts. So she told me that what this girl had said about Santa Claus was true. I shall never forget my bitter disappointment."

Happily, you need not resort to any deception regarding Santa Claus. Simply keep the jolly, mythical fellow in the realm of fancy where he appropriately belongs.

#### Your Child Can Enjoy Playing Santa Claus Without Being Deceived

There is certainly no harm in allowing children to enjoy a delightful bit of fancy, as such. The harm comes when parents deceive their children into believing that the fanciful is, in very truth, the factual.

I wonder who has not observed among crowds of Christmas shoppers the nervous, apprehensive mother who takes her child by the hand and jerks him hurriedly along like a little dog on a leash, lest he tarry in contemplation of the many different Santa Clauses on the street. She is afraid that if the youngster starts asking her questions, he will see through her deception regarding the whole Santa Claus myth.

The only proper way to avoid the fear referred to above is to give the child truthful answers as soon as he starts to ask serious questions about Santa Claus. (See Illustration 136 on page 2 of this book.)

Do not think for a moment that you will deprive your child of the joys of Christmas by being truthful from the start. Let him know that at this happy season everybody likes to pretend that there is a real Santa Claus. Remember that children love to p'like. They love to dwell in the atmosphere of the imagination. Once they realize that Santa Claus is make-believe, they are in their element. They can then give themselves to uninhibited flights of the imagination, as such, enjoying to the full every phase of the traditional set-up from reindeer to stockings filled with toys.

This simple, honest presentation of Santa Claus will give you children a joyous exaltation without the harmful after-effects of disillusionment, "a lift without a letdown," as the tomato juice ads say.

Furthermore, the sooner your child knows the truth about Santa Claus, the sooner can he enter with the other members of the family into the outgoing spirit of giving. We are told on good authority that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Certainly this dictum is verified in the life of any normal child. His joy at finding in his Christmas stocking a toy for himself is surpassed only by his joy in surreptitiously maneuvering a loving gift into the Christmas stocking of somebody else.

#### What Should You Do If Your Child Already Has a Wrong Impression?

But suppose that, without intending to deceive your child, you have nevertheless allowed him to believe in a literal, flesh-and-blood Santa Claus. What then? If I were you, I would square that account before the sun goes down. Don't wait until next Christmas. Don't wait until your child, upon being told by a playmate that there is no really-and-truly Santa Claus, comes to you heart-broken and confronts you with the matter. That is forever too late. Do something about it now. Anticipate a discussion of the matter and thus forestall any such disastrous reactions.

Think carefully through the conversation ahead of time, for what you say on this occasion will be of tremendous consequence. It will mark the turning point in your whole relationship to the child. It will let him know that, from this hour on, he can rely upon you to be honest with him; that, no matter how other parents may deceive their children, he can trust you implicitly for the absolute truth.

Once you have thought through the conversation, let your quiet manner inspire your child with a feeling of confidence in you. In a natural, easy-going way, bring up the subject of Christmas. Will it be long now until December the 25th? Will there be snow for sledding?

Almost any phase of his former holiday experience will serve as a legitimate approach. Would he like a Christmas tree with colored lights and strings of pop corn? Where would be the best place to put the tree? To hang the stockings?

Whatever you do, don't enter into this conversation with a tense manner that says, "Oh, dear! I'm about to tell you something dreadful." Rather, radiate a joyful spirit that



says, "I'm about to let you in on a wonderful secret!" You might use those very words. What child does not thrill at the prospect of sharing a wonderful secret with his father or his mother?

When you have aroused in him a feeling of glad expectancy, you might continue in the following vein. "You know how much fun we have on ironing day when you take that old wire basket and we play milk man?" Of course he does. That analogy strikes a responsive chord. "Well, on Christmas Eve, Daddy likes to dress up and play Santa Claus. We take the toys that we have made for you, slip them into your stockings which hang from the mantel, and play like Santa Claus has brought them to you."

It is as simple as that. Add whatever embellishments you care to about the reindeer, sleigh bells, or Santa Claus coming down the chimney with a pack of toys on his back. If your manner is cordial and sincere, the child's response will likewise be cordial and understanding. Should he ask if all the family can play Santa Claus next Christmas, say, "Yes, indeed! We can play Santa Claus every Christmas. I just wanted you to know the truth, that it's make-believe instead of for-real." (See Illustration 139.)

#### What About the Easter Bunny --And the Stork?

The Easter bunny and the stork may each be dealt with in a similar manner, at least insofar as differentiating between make-believe and actuality is concerned. Here again, in dealing with either of these myths, you will do well to enter into the conversation in a spirit of letting the child in on a wonderful secret.

Just this word of caution. A child, who is fortunate enough to be entrusted by his parents with the truth in these matters, may be so overjoyed that his first impulse is to enlighten all the other children in the neighborhood. "The Easter bunny doesn't really lay eggs," he may inform them, or, "It isn't true that the stork brings babies."

To preclude any possible misunderstanding with the neighbor children or their parents, simply explain to your child the situation as it really is, that many parents, for one reason or another, do not want their children to know the truth. Conclude by saying, "So, you must be very careful

not to give away our little secret in the presence of other children."

He will love you for this intimate trust. He will realize that, after all, he himself has something quite special in the way of a parent. If he does not thank you in so many words, he will thank you by his increased confidence in you. As he grows older, he will bless the day when he learned that he could trust you in every particular.

Now that you have been absolutely honest with your child, you are qualified to teach him to be absolutely honest with you.

If he has already formed the habit of misrepresenting the truth, deal understandingly with each instance of dishonesty as it arises.



ILLUSTRATION 139

**All these are to be considered in the same boat after a child starts to ask serious questions about them.**

Exaggeration ("I saw millions of kids there")

Overstatement lies very close to the substitution of imagination for truth. Exaggeration, however, usually indicates a desire on the part of the child to make an arresting story in order to capture the undivided attention of his hearers.



It may seem funny at first to hear a child report a lecture at the local school by saying that there were "millions of people" present, or that the angular speaker had "bones a mile long." But such exaggeration can readily become more than a laughing matter. This tendency to step up the facts in order to command attention can become a habit that is difficult to break. After all, exaggeration is a form of dishonesty. If not checked before it becomes too deeply ingrained, the child's inherent truthfulness will be open to question. When he speaks, his acquaintances will be obliged to make allowances for what he says, or, at best, to "consider the source."

By way of a cure for this habit of exaggeration, set the stage, so to speak, and quietly talk the matter over with your child. Remind him that it is more valuable in life to be known as an honest person than as a person whose statements, though interesting, nobody can trust. (See Illustration 140.)

Help him to overcome this tendency by giving him specific tests in which his statements can be verified. For example, he might like to count, actually count, the number of seats in the school auditorium, and then check that number by the alleged seating capacity. Praise him for his accuracy.

Above all, listen carefully whenever he relates any incident to you, so that he will never feel it necessary to exaggerate in order to gain your attention.

#### Roasting ("I can beat ANYBODY at that game!")

A child's egotistical outlook on life, his bragging of what he is, what he has, or what he can do, may arise from either of two widely different causes.

On the one hand, he may simply be spoiled from too much flattery and attention. A six-year-old child is not altogether to blame for his overbearing conceit if, time after time, well-meaning adults say in his presence, "Isn't he handsome! What a precocious child he is!" If your youngster is a victim of this kind of palaver, do something at once to offset its harmful effect.

When you and he are sitting quietly alone, remind him that natural endowments are a gift of God; that instead of making

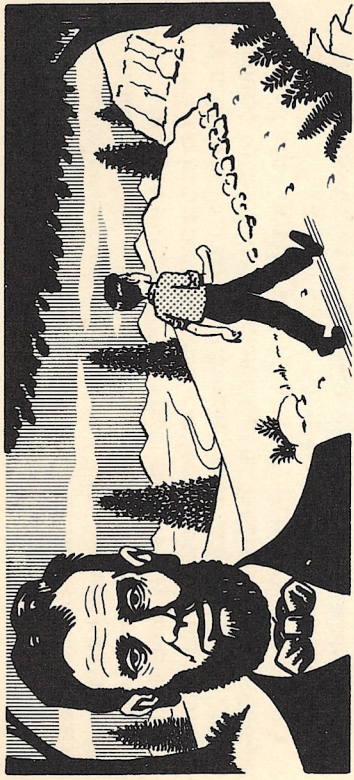


ILLUSTRATION 140

*When A. Lincoln kept store, a woman overpaid him six cents. After store closed, he walked six miles to pay it back. It earned for him the title, "Honest Abe." It is valuable in life to be known as an honest person whether it results from accuracy in money matters or in verbal statements.*

us boastful, they should rather make us humble. Relate this thought to his own experience. Suppose that in a foot race with other children, he should be the winner. What would be the gracious attitude for him to take? Let him try to figure this out for himself. Should he strut, pound his chest, and say "I beat! I beat!?" Or, upon being congratulated, should he simply acknowledge that, after all, perhaps his legs were a little longer than those of the other children? You will be surprised at how responsive he will be to this quiet, conversational approach.

On the other hand, boasting may arise from a deep-seated feeling of incompetence. To deal understandingly with this type of boasting, one needs to take into account an important psychological principle. This principle has come to be known as the law of inverses. It may be stated in the following terms, "By our actions we are not to be known; by our words we are declared."

According to this law, an adolescent girl, deeply smitten with affection for a certain youth, may declare that she simply despises him. So a young boy, painfully conscious of his own deficiency in athletic ability may, upon hearing of a record jump made by a classmate, declare that he himself jumped even farther--an obvious untruth.



If you have reason to believe that your child boasts in order to compensate for his feeling of inferiority, then by all means do something that will bolster up within him a wholesome confidence. Assure him by your words, as well as by your manner, that you love him dearly, and that you appreciate his good qualities. Cite an outstanding example of a noble character from among your acquaintances. Call attention to the fact that honesty and meekness of spirit are a part of true greatness.

#### What to Do When He Falsifies to Avoid the Unpleasant

Many a child, faced with the prospect of a difficult examination at school, has been known suddenly to develop a digestive upset whose symptoms deceive the very wisest. One needs to know the child intimately in order to discover whether the illness is genuine or whether it is merely his reaction to an unpleasant prospect which he cannot "stomach."

If the child is allowed to stay at home during the morning, his behavior will throw considerable light on his condition. If he is listless and feverish, the chances are that his stomach ache has a physical basis and he is really ill. Better put him to bed and consult the doctor.

On the other hand, if the child is full of life and insists upon going out into the yard to make a snow-man, then perhaps his stomach ache is psychological, merely an alibi. In this case, what he needs is the talking cure, the "cathartic method," in which his mind is purged. Perhaps there has been some misunderstanding between himself and the teacher, or between himself and the other children.

Encourage him, by your sympathetic manner, to tell you all about the situation. Is he afraid that the examination at school will be too difficult? If so, start helping him at home with his studies, so that he will look forward to examinations with confidence. You may find it advisable to have a confidential chat with his teacher to arrive at a better understanding of the situation. In any case, get at the real cause of the trouble, so that he can adjust happily to his environment without resorting to deception of any kind.

Likewise, if the child tries to evade other unpleasant tasks, do all you can to transform those irksome chores into pleasant ones. If he hates the humdrum duty of washing

his hands, let him use gaily-colored soap in the form of a fish or a swan. He might even like to select his own soap, based upon his preference for a certain fragrance. Does he scheme to avoid drinking his milk? Provide him with something special in the way of a cup or a glass to be used exclusively for that nourishing beverage.

Two very worthy organizations that place stress upon truth telling, as well as other desirable traits and activities, are the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts. As soon as your boy or girl is old enough to become a Scout, it would be well to encourage membership. (See Illustration 141.)

#### When He Falsifies to Avoid Punishment

One mother writes: "My seven-year-old son cannot be depended upon to tell the truth. I have whipped him time after time for telling falsehoods, but now he is more deceitful than ever. What can I do?"

Obviously, the first thing to do is to stop inflicting physical punishment. Whippings, slappings, spankings, are relics of bygone days when parents knew no better method of dealing with their offspring.

Corporal punishment is demoralizing. It is degrading. It is such a thoroughly disagreeable experience for the child that he instinctively tries to avoid it. By the very nature of circumstances, he is punished only for those instances in which he is actually caught in untruthfulness. Naturally, he feels that he was simply not shrewd enough to negotiate the deception successfully. He soon realizes that, if he is sufficiently astute to deceive even his parents, he can thus avoid the humiliating ordeal of physical punishment. That is the reason that whipping makes him "more deceitful than ever."

Besides its demoralizing effect, physical punishment does something else to the child. In his own mind, it renders him unprotected and insecure. His parents, who should be his refuge, have taken sides against him. They have displayed an unfriendly, antagonistic spirit and have actually laid hands upon him in violence. Imagine. A full-grown adult, armed with a switch, a brush, or a whip, pitting brute strength against a tender, unprotected child! Nor is the harmful emotional effect upon the youngster offset by the pious parental words, "This hurts me worse than it does you."



### Punishment is Negative and Seems Unfriendly to the Child

Corporal punishment for past misdeeds is negative. It emphasizes the wrongdoing and smacks of revenge.

The alleged corrective purpose of punishment is often lost sight of by the child because of his intense fright. A sensitive child may even gain the impression that the underlying purpose of parental punishment is to apply the torture until it brings the tears. One little girl, upon seeing her mother approaching with switch in hand, stamped her feet, jerked her little hands protectively behind her and screamed in a frenzy of fear, "Oh, Mamma, Mamma! Don't spank me! I can cry by myself!"

I cannot emphasize too strongly that the inflicting of physical pain for misbehavior is a barbarous hang-over from the day of the woodshed and has no place in this enlightened era.

How then? Shall we just let our children go on being untruthful and do nothing about it? Not at all. There is a positive, helpful approach.

Take the mother, mentioned above, whose repeated whippings of her seven-year-old son made him "more deceitful than ever." Suppose she hears the little fellow tell another falsehood, and he knows that she has heard. What can she do? She can exercise a bit of self-control. Without saying anything at all about the untruth at the time, she can calmly and serenely think through the situation until in the evening at bedtime. After he is already in bed and just before she tells him good night, she can look him tenderly in the eye and say in all sincerity, "Mother wants you always to say what is true; only what is true." She may then kiss him on the forehead and leave without saying another word.

The very contrast of this method with the former will give him something to think about.

If the mother herself is habitually honest, this simple technique will be sufficient to cause the little fellow to say "I'm sorry, Mother."

### It May Help the Child for Mother to Square Herself

If the mother is not habitually honest, then another step is required. She may need to say in all humility, "Junior, I feel so ashamed of myself." He will naturally want to know



ILLUSTRATION 141

*A competent scoutmaster can do much to help instill the habit of honesty as well as other fine traits of character. When your boy is of proper age, encourage him to join the Boy Scouts.*



why. Then she can explain. 'I used to spank you for telling things that weren't true, but I'm beginning to see that I haven't been quite honest, myself. Remember when the salesman came up on the porch yesterday and I didn't want to be bothered? Well, instead of answering the door bell, I pretended that nobody was home. That simply wasn't honest, was it? I'm afraid you'll have to help me by checking up on me whenever I say or do something that isn't absolutely honest.'

The little fellow will love his mother for her candor. He will respond with eagerness to her suggestion that, from now on, they help each other to be truthful in all things.

In contrast to the old method of punishment, this new approach is altogether wholesome, and curative.

Many parents have made the mistake of scolding a child for a deception honestly confessed. Suppose a penitent child says, 'Mother, I'm sorry, but this morning when you were out of the kitchen, I slipped a cookie out of the jar and ate it.' A scolding at this point would have the same effect in the child's mind as being rebuked for telling the truth.

No child should ever fear to tell his mother anything. No matter how much in the wrong he may have been, he should always feel that Mother will somehow know and understand.

Just as the parental attitude of reproof repels the child and causes him to be deceitful, so a trusting, understanding attitude inspires in him confidence and self-respect. Once he has confessed a deception, give him credit for telling the truth. If the deception confessed is nothing that requires further restitution, simply say in a confidential manner, 'That's all right; I know you will not do it again. Thank you for telling me.' Thus will he come to associate pleasure, instead of pain, with honest confession. (See Illustration 142.)

#### Give Your Child Practice in Truth-telling

Honesty will more quickly become a part of your child's character if you will give him frequent occasion to exercise this virtue.

Here is a simple test which he will enjoy if it is proposed to him in the spirit of a game. Have him go into the dining room, count all the chairs, then come back to you and report on the exact number. When he returns and tells you the number of chairs, commend him heartily, not for his ability



ILLUSTRATION 142

*This mother has just said, "You did exactly right today in telling mother what you did. I know you always want to do and say what is right. Isn't it wonderful to trust each other?"*



to count, but for his ability to give an accurate report. Say, "Oh, that's fine! Five chairs. That is exactly right. You could have made up any figure without even bothering to count the chairs, but that wouldn't have been honest, would it?" (See Illustration 143.)



ILLUSTRATION 143

**"Five chairs . . . exactly right." Assure your child that by reporting things as they are, people everywhere will trust him.**

He will probably enjoy this experience so thoroughly that he will want to be given another assignment immediately. Say, "All right, suppose you run out to the kitchen and count the drinking glasses on the lowest shelf in the cupboard. When he returns and reports eight glasses, say, "Why, bless your heart! You tell the truth every time. That means that people can trust you. They will like you because they will know that what you say is true."

From time to time as he grows older, increase these tests. Enlarge them to include accurate reports of conversation, particularly those conversations which so easily lend themselves to misrepresentation. Suppose, for example, that your child wants very much to go over to the playground immediately. His father has said to him privately, "You may go over to the playground, providing that you first help Mother with the dishes." Then suppose that a few minutes later, when you are alone with the child, you ask, "What did Daddy say?"

This is a real test. What happens? If the youngster has not been drilled in absolute honesty, he will doubtless yield to the temptation inherent in the situation and say, "Daddy

says I may go!" This, of course, is true, but only partly true. It is a case of inaccurate reporting with the express purpose of misrepresenting the truth.

On the other hand, if your youngster, from his earliest remembrance, has been drilled in absolute honesty, drilled in the lesser tests of accurate reporting, he will say without a moment's hesitation, "Daddy says I may go to the playground, providing I first help you with the dishes."

Be quick to appreciate this evidence of absolute honesty. Say cheerfully, "Then I shall work fast, because I know how eager you must be to get over there with the other children!"

### Teach Your Child to be Honest in Money Matters.

One has but to consider the tremendous cost to business firms in handling bad accounts or in apprehending embezzlers to realize how common is the habit of dishonesty in matters pertaining to money. Recently, in one year, the Fidelity and Casualty Company, one of more than fifty big companies writing bonds for employees in positions of trust, had to make good the embezzlements of more than two thousand otherwise respectable men and women.

Just as a person who takes his first drink of intoxicating liquor never intends to become a confirmed alcoholic, so the person who simply "borrows" a few dollars of his company's money, intending soon to return it, never purposely sets out to become an embezzler. The National Security Company declares that 69 out of every 70 embezzlers never intend at first to do anything other than "borrow" and quickly repay.

The following instance indicates how this most insidious of crimes can undermine the reputation of the very elect. A highly respectable woman worked for an electric company. She lived in a small town with her father and sister. When her sister was unemployed and her father ill, the bills started to accumulate. Finally, when her savings were exhausted and she needed to buy medicine for her father, she used a few dollars of the company's money, intending of course to pay it back as soon as she received her next pay check. In the meantime the auditors appeared. To hide the small shortage, she borrowed from friends. After the auditors had gone, she repaid her friends by "borrowing" again from the company. She resorted to this seemingly innocent expedient for several years, taking slightly increased amounts



as the occasion required. Finally, there came the inevitable day when she could not borrow enough to balance the books, and she was sent to jail.

Quite aside from the social stigma involved in a case of this sort, there is this further tragedy. Serving a term in prison does not settle the account. The money taken dishonestly continues to be a debt over one's head, a debt that can be discharged only by repayment.

There is only one way to make sure that your child will escape such pitfalls. Teach him early in life to be absolutely honest in all matters pertaining to money.

If a youngster reports gleefully his personal good fortune in losing his nickel on the way to Sunday School and finding it on his way home, it is high time he were given specific instruction in business transactions.

Conduct a campaign for inculcating the strictest kind of accuracy in all matters that involve money. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, call his attention to the scrupulous honesty of certain business men. Perhaps you buy your food from a certain grocer because he always deals fairly with his customers. Mention that fact to your child.

#### Running Back a Half-Mile With a Nickel Made an Everlasting Impression On Me

To make a lasting impression upon his mind, give special attention to some minor detail. To this day I recall the time when I was eight years old and my father sent me to the grocery store half a mile from home to buy some fruit. As it happened, this fruit cost five cents more than I had in my pocket. The clerk, knowing my father, said, "That's all right. You may take the fruit and pay for it later." When I reached home and told Father that we still owed a nickel, he sent me back with the money at once, before he would allow me to eat my dinner. Such discipline seemed a bit severe to me at the time. But my running back that half-mile with a nickel made an indelible impression on my mind. As long as I live, I shall be influenced by Father's unswerving honesty and promptness in matters pertaining to money. (See Illustration 144.)

As a definite assignment to your child in teaching him honesty in business transactions, send him to the store to buy a twenty-cent item. Give him a quarter and explain to

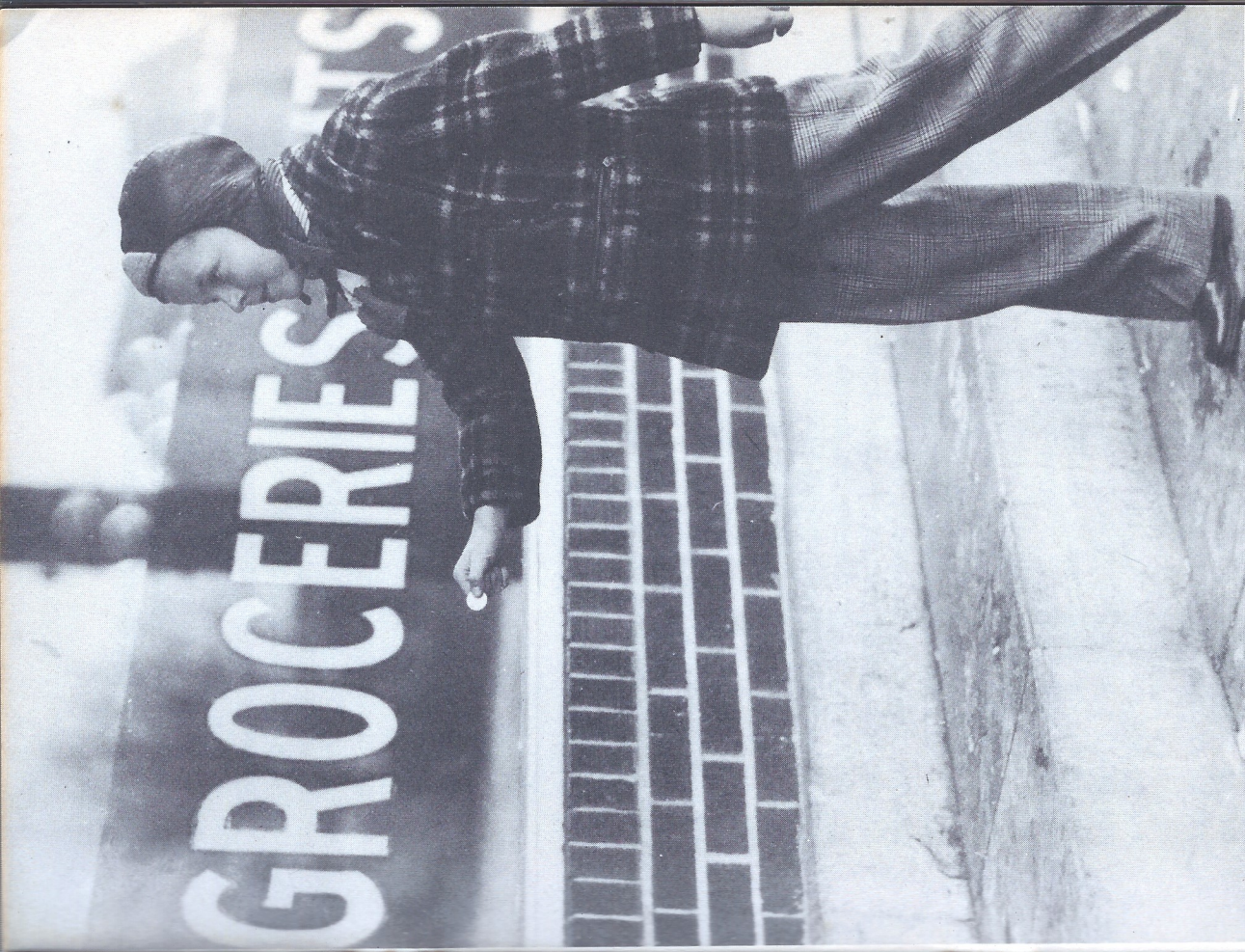


ILLUSTRATION 144

*You make a deep impression by giving special attention to some detail. My father once sent me back to a grocery a half mile away with just a nickel to square a transaction. That case will never be forgotten.*



him that he will have five cents in change to bring back to you. Then, when he returns and hands you the correct amount, say enthusiastically, "That's fine. Exactly right. Thank you!"

Shortly afterward, and within range of his hearing, tell somebody how your youngster can make a regular business transaction and bring home the correct change--to the penny!

With variations which will occur to you, repeat this sort of thing until the child becomes aware of his reputation for honesty and dependability.

Whether or not he has ever been known to be dishonest with money, the following technique will prove to be helpful.

#### Study This Technique Carefully. It Has Been Used With Splendid Results

When you and he are alone, say, "James, do you remember last week when you brought me the correct change from a quarter? And the time you brought me the exact change from that dollar bill?" Of course he remembers. "Well, now that you know how to handle money, you might like to have a little allowance all your own!" He will love this. Discuss at length what might be a suitable amount per week. Then say, "I have a feeling that I can trust you with money."

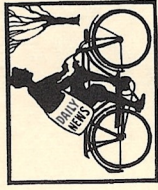
At this point, produce your pocketbook from some nearby spot. Empty its contents onto a table or into your lap and say, "Let's see if I'm not right. Will you help me count this?" Count the money together, "One dollar, two dollars, fifty cents, a dime, and a penny. Two dollars and sixty-one cents! All right. Now I'll tell you what let's do. Let's put this \$2.61 back into the pocketbook ... that's right, thanks ... and then we'll put it back of this red book. See? Now! We both know where it is. In the morning when I count the money in it, I'll find exactly \$2.61. Do you know how I know that I will?"

Pause at this point and give him time to smile from ear to ear, for he will surely have guessed that it's because you trust him!

Next morning, let him go with you to the pocketbook. Empty its contents and together count out the \$2.61. Say joyfully, "What did I tell you? I knew it would all be here!"

Pat him on the back, shake hands with him, give him a hug, anything to assure him that he has scored a real triumph. Say, "Now I'm going to put in ten cents more, and tomorrow morning at this time I'll find ... that's exactly right ... \$2.71."

From time to time, by way of variation and follow-up, add still other coins to the amount, or even dollar bills. According to mutual agreement, change the pocketbook to different places over the house or, as a final test, let it remain for several hours wide open and in plain sight.



*Earning money teaches the value of a dollar.  
The more industrious a child is, the more apt  
he is to be honest.*

#### ILLUSTRATION 145

One practical way to remove the temptation in a child to take money and then falsify about it is to encourage him to earn his own money. Take an enthusiastic interest in wholesome projects which he can undertake that will bring him financial reward. It may be a paper route or any one of a score of activities, involving work and responsibility on his part. (See Illustration 145.)

#### Teach Your Child to be Honest in Games

If you want to find out about the honesty of a child or of an adult, play a game with him--tennis, golf, checkers, croquet, any kind of competitive sport. His true character will invariably come to light.

The player who cheats in a game will cheat in life; and vice versa. (See Illustration 146.)

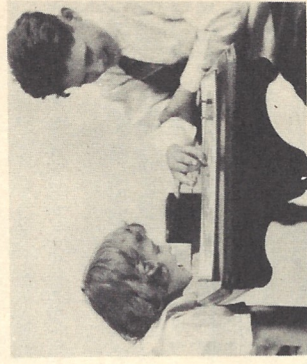


ILLUSTRATION 146

*This girl and boy get even greater  
joy from games since learning to  
show a fair spirit.*



I once witnessed a roque tournament among professional business men. For the most part, the sportsmanship among them was of a high order. But there occurred one little slip which marred the spirit of an otherwise enjoyable game. One player, whose opponent had skilfully succeeded in wiring him against both wicket and balls, picked up his ball, ostensibly to flick off a piece of dirt. But somehow, by the time he replaced the ball on the court, it was no longer wired. The pity of it was, this poor fellow was scarcely aware of the fact that, by this seemingly unnoticed act, he was proclaiming to all and sundry that he was dishonest.

A mother writes: "My eight-year-old boy does not always play fair in games but wants to have his own way, which often irritates other boys. What can I do about this?"

It has been my observation that merely telling a child to play fair is far less effective than the sight of an actual example. Children greatly admire honesty in sports and it makes a deep impression to see a real demonstration.

#### One Player Greatly Needed a Good Example

Several young boys were playing a game of ball in a school yard through which I was passing. The boys wanted me to join them, and so I did for a few minutes. The first boy up to bat knocked an easy grounder and was crossed out. But the ball came so near going directly over first base that an argument followed. Finally, after loud protests from the fielders, he was allowed to keep on as a runner. Then in going from first base to second he was crossed out again. This time he turned his back to the ball and, in spite of still more arguments, he obstinately insisted again that he was safe.

Finally, it came my turn to bat. At this point we made new rules, mostly against the batter. Over the fence was "out"; the batter couldn't turn his back to the ball; the runner had to touch each base. After I had struck the ball and landed safely on first, I played off the base a little, while the pitcher was about to throw the ball to the next batter. However, the pitcher suddenly aimed the ball between the second base and me, the ball crossing the line just after I had stepped hastily back onto the base. "Out!" yelled one little fellow near me.

While I did not think that I was out, I grasped that situation as an opportunity to teach the needed lesson. "O.K." I said cheerfully, and started immediately to leave my base for a fielder's position. Two or three other boys objected, declaring that I was "safe a mile." But I said, good-naturedly, "No, that's all right. Glenn was standing near, where he could see, and I'll take his word for it." Attention was then quickly directed to the next batter up.

The next few times I went up to bat, I cheerfully considered myself "out" at the least suggestion made by anyone. Frankly, it was nothing short of amazing to see how quickly the previous manner of yelling and arguing changed to a spirit of good will.

In like manner, some one person may need to set for your child a definite example of fairness. You yourself can do him an everlasting favor by taking time each day to play games with him in which you actually demonstrate the cordial spirit of good will and fair play. (See Illustration 147.)

#### Teach Your Child to be Honest in the Classroom.

Just as a business magnate may have as his goal the accumulation of wealth, no matter by what methods he may acquire it, so a school child may have as his goal the acquisition of high grades, regardless of what methods he may be obliged to use in order to gain them.

One extreme case that was brought to my attention was of an attractive sixteen-year-old girl. She was the adopted daughter of childless parents who took great pride in her scholastic attainments. Each afternoon she would come home from High School, one of the largest in the city, carrying an armload of study books. Her report cards carried a flawless record of straight A's. She was to graduate in June, after having completed her course in three years instead of the usual four.

Her formal and other graduating clothes were in readiness. Her Commencement announcements had been mailed. Gifts from out-of-town friends had already started pouring in when suddenly, out of the blue, the bombshell burst.

An irate Principal telephoned the mother and rebuked her severely for not having kept any of her repeated appointments for an interview with him.



The mother was bewildered, for she had made no appointments. She went to his office immediately and there, for the first time, learned that this beautiful adopted daughter had been carrying out an elaborate system of deception for three years. Instead of being a Senior about to graduate, she was not even a full-fledged Sophomore. The report cards had been stolen and the A's filled in by herself.

#### This Girl Used a Very Odd Plan To Get Herself Congratulated

The occasional telephone calls which the mother had received, congratulating her upon her daughter's splendid scholarship, were from the daughter herself who simulated the voice and manner of an elated teacher.

The genuine telephone messages from the Principal to the mother had been intercepted by the daughter who, in turn, simulated the mother's voice and gave convincing excuses for not seeing him, or agreed to see him in the near future, whichever course seemed best at the moment.

It was not until after the Baccalaureate Services that a thorough search for a certain Senior diploma led to the discovery that this girl had stolen it, erased the owner's name, and written her own name on it instead. Thus it was that her intricate network of deception finally came to light. Instead of graduating with honors, she was expelled from the school in disgrace.

This was a most extreme case, and yet it shows to what lengths a pupil will go whose parents are more concerned with a goal of scholastic attainments than with an avowed goal of honesty and integrity of character.

In the matter of cheating, a certain college professor declares that, long before the close of a school year, he can tell which students he must watch during the final examination. They are the ones who are habitually disrespectful and inattentive.

Also teachers in elementary and secondary schools soon learn from the general behavior of pupils which ones are most likely to deceive in their school assignments. During examinations, many of these teachers wisely attempt to remove all needless temptation. That is to say, they collect and place on the teacher's desk all the textbooks, and seat

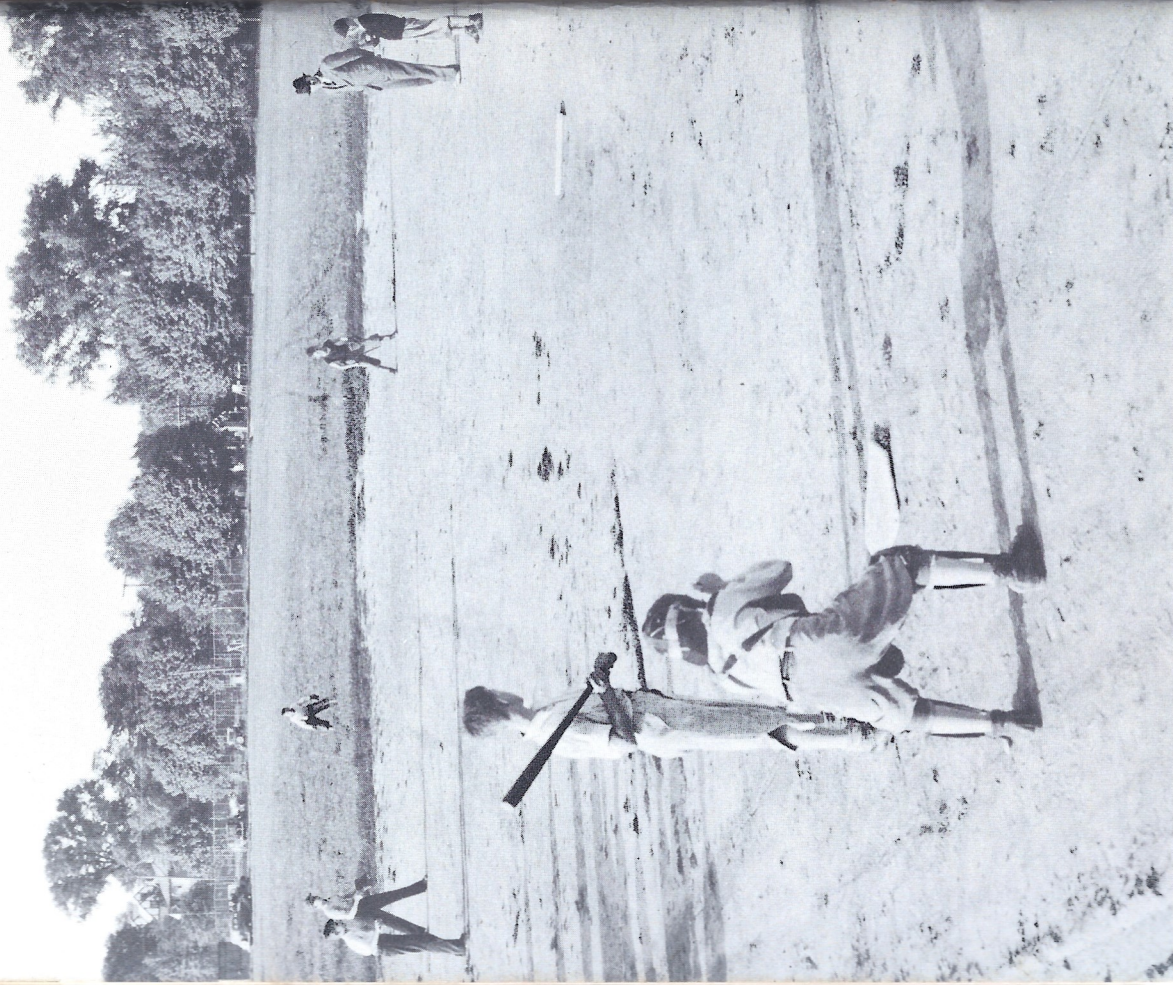


ILLUSTRATION 147

*It is good for children often to play under the watchful eyes of an adult who can set the right pattern of fairness for them. He also may enthusiastically praise examples of good sportsmanship which he sees.*



each child so that no other pupil is immediately in front of him, behind him, or at either side of him.

Even so, this policy at best is only an expedient. While it can prevent actual cheating for the moment, it cannot get at the root cause of cheating.

It is Better to Remove

#### The Cause of Dishonesty

The underlying cause of dishonesty can be probed and dealt with only in such thoroughgoing ways as have been already outlined. Know your child intimately. Enter into the spirit of his recreational activities. Through his teacher, or through your local Parent-Teacher Association, keep in close touch with his school life. Avoid scolding him for incompetence or lack of capacity. Guide him in his home work. Reserve for him each day a period of quiet which will be conducive to uninterrupted study. Inspire him with a zest for learning. Help him to prepare his lessons thoroughly, so that he will actually look forward to examinations as eagerly as to a favorite athletic contest. Above all, assure him of your love and affection, regardless of what grades he makes. If you do this, there will be no need to remove his books at examination time, for he will have no inclination to cheat.

Of course, besides cheating, there are other ways of being dishonest in the classroom, such as being mischievous when the teacher turns her back or steps out of the room.

Whatever you do, avoid giving your child the notion that you simply cannot understand him. Don't say as did one mother, "Edgar, why do you want to misbehave like that when your teacher leaves the room? Don't you know you shouldn't do that? Why do you continually do things like that?"

Why You Should Never Say,  
"I Can't Understand You."

You weaken your position with a child and tremendously lessen your influence over him when you reveal that you are at a loss to understand him. The proper thing to do, therefore, is to let him know that you do understand him. There is always a way to do this honestly.

As an intelligent adult, you are in a much better position to analyze the reasons for his misconduct in the absence of his teacher than is the child himself. The child, you may be sure, merely acted in response to the impulse of the moment, without ever giving a thought to why he acted as he did. You can easily reason it out that, if there had been no other pupils in the room besides himself, Edgar probably would not have stood up on top of his desk and thrown an eraser across the room. You therefore would be fairly safe in assuming that at least one reason why he misbehaved was his unconscious desire for social approval, for securing the attention and admiration of the other pupils.

There would be no harm in your relating a case similar to the one in hand about a boy you remember when you were attending school. You could analyze that other boy's action for the benefit of Edgar. He would realize from your conversation that you appreciate and understand his point of view. This understanding of his own viewpoint would put you in a much better position for influencing him than if you were to place yourself in the weak position of imploring him to explain the situation to you.

In any case, the important thing is Edgar's behavior in the future, not in the past. So the best thing you can do, once you have convinced him that you understand the situation, is to suggest that after this he will doubtless get his full share of attention at recesses and then act with the honor of a gentleman during study periods, even if the teacher should be out of the room.

#### Teach Your Child to Respect Property Rights

By way of impressing upon your child's mind a sense of the property rights of himself and others, you will find the following procedure both pleasurable and profitable. This is something the whole family can enjoy. The more who take part, the more fun it will be.

On a table in the center of the room, place a dozen or more attractive articles belonging to various members of the household. Included in the assortment may be a pocket-book, a toy telephone, a tennis ball, a fountain pen, a story book, building blocks, a field glass, a box of chocolates, and any other attractive and desirable articles. (See Illustration 148.)



Call upon each child, in turn, to see which one can properly allocate the various articles to their respective owners: the billfold of money to Daddy, the rattle to the baby, the box of chocolates to Aunt Mamie, and so on.

‘You’ll Have to See George About the Roller Skates -- They Belong to Him.’

Impress upon the minds of the children that these articles are not just anybody’s property; each item belongs to one certain individual. Say, for example, ‘Now George, these roller skates are yours. If any one comes to me and asks to borrow them, I’ll say, ‘You’ll have to ask George; they belong to him.’’

Pause a moment until you catch the understanding twinkle in his eye. Then continue, ‘Now it’s the same with these other things. If you want a piece of chocolate, whom would you ask? Would you ask baby Joe?’

George will probably grin and say, ‘No, I’d ask Aunt Mamie.’

Say enthusiastically, ‘That is exactly right! Those chocolates are Aunt Mamie’s, because Uncle Ed sent them to her. He wanted her to have them.’

From time to time, as the children become adept at identifying the rightful owner of each article, suggest a complete change of items. For this new assortment, allow each child to select from his own possessions the one article which he would like to have all members of the household recognize unmistakably as his; the one article which may not be used by others, except by special permission from him.

You will be surprised at how this mutually beneficial drill will cause each child to delight in respecting the property rights of others.

When you need to use something belonging to your child in his absence, it is well to say, ‘Tommy, I used your crayons when you were at school, but I put them back where you had them. Was that all right with you?’ (Wait for answer.) ‘Thanks a lot for the use of the crayons.’ This adds to his feeling that he is an important member of his family.

In cases where lines of ownership have not been thus definitely drawn, a child may acquire the unfortunate habit of appropriating for himself any object that may appeal to his fancy.

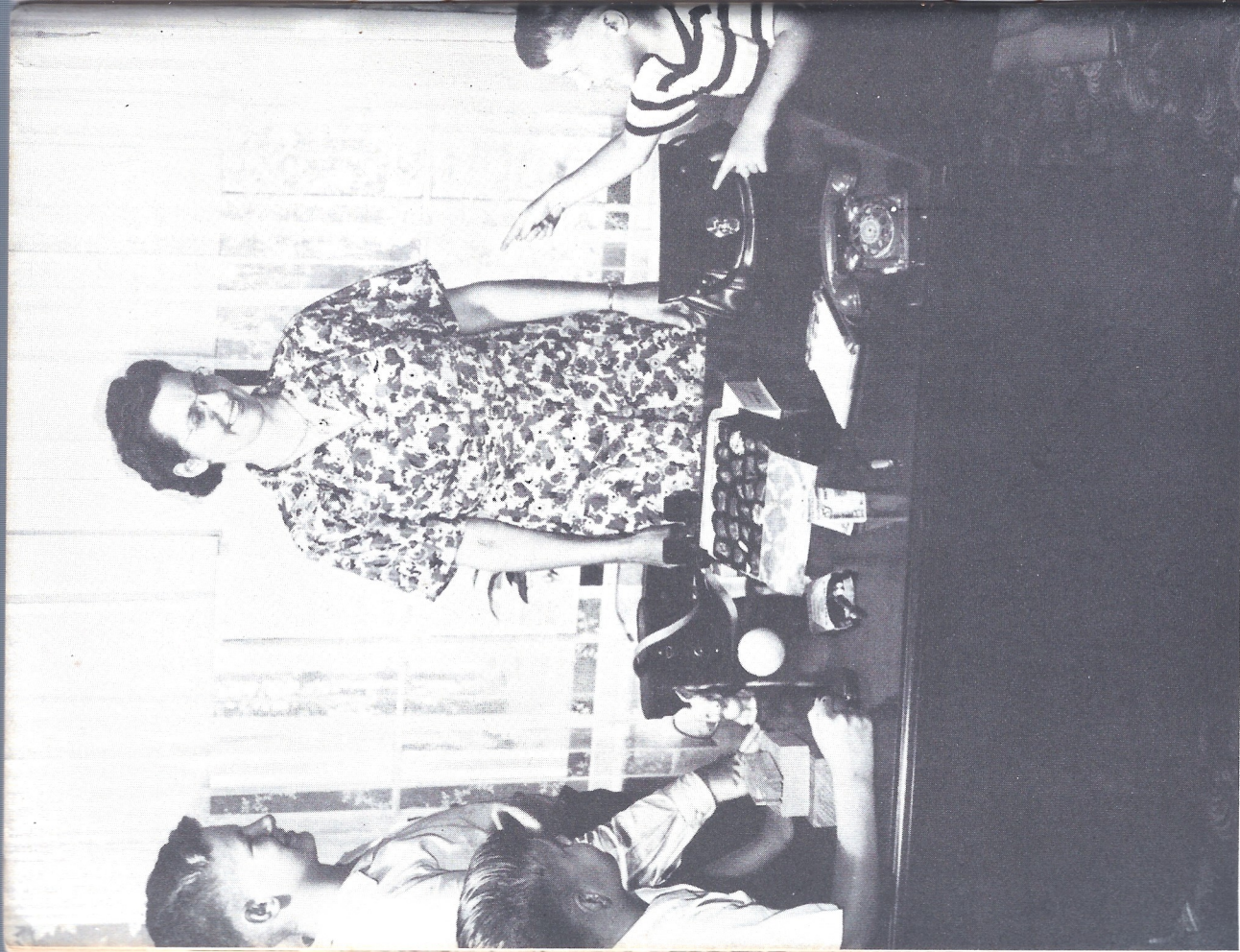


ILLUSTRATION 148

*You may impress upon children a sense of property rights through simple games in which they can take active part. The more objects you place on the table, the more interesting it may be.*



One mother writes:

"My six-year-old boy, James, is inclined to take things which do not belong to him. When asked if he has taken a certain object, he always declares he is innocent. I have spanked him again and again, but he seems to be getting worse instead of better.

What can I do? I don't like to put things under lock and key, or to hide things from him. A neighbor tells her youngster that big policemen carry off little children who steal. But James would never believe anything like that. What would you suggest?"

No matter whether a child would believe the policeman story or not, it is absurd for mothers to tell their children such things. Imagine telling a deliberate lie in order to induce a child not to lie! The objection to such a procedure is too obvious to require any explanation.

Investigation revealed that this six-year-old boy had never had any definite instruction in the matter of property rights. At home, he was simply given the run of the place. Everything he touched was his, to do with as he pleased.

#### When Asked a Simple Question About Sex, This Mother Gave an Evasive Answer.

Furthermore, it was found that this youngster had not been dealt with honestly in regard to sex. In response to his natural question, "Where do babies come from?" his mother had given him an evasive answer. Not that she resorted to the stork myth; she considered herself above such flagrant dishonesty. But, for all practical purposes, the answer that she did give had precisely the same effect. With a tone of pious finality she had said, "Babies are sent from God." Then immediately she changed the subject.

Little did she dream of the disastrous emotional tensions which were to result from such a well-meant, high-flown answer. It never occurred to her that if she did not enlighten her child about sexual matters, some one else would. No wonder little James sought the companionship of a foul-mouthed playmate who "really knew things."

In recent years, much has been learned about the cause of stealing among children. It has been found that the act of stealing is frequently associated with sex curiosity. Vol-umes have been written on this subject of dual association.

In the book, Mental Conflicts and Misconduct, by William Healy, the author cites case after case wherein a child, upon contemplating some lascivious thought, steals almost without being aware of what he is doing. He certainly does not understand what causes him to take things, although at the moment, he may experience an unholy thrill at seizing an object surreptitiously.

Once a child has developed the habit of stealing, it goes without saying that the cause must be removed before a permanent cure can be effected. It may require skilful, if not professional, questioning in order to bring out into the open the significant factors associated in his mind with the act of stealing, namely, where he was, what was said to him, what thought was uppermost in his mind when he first saw stealing done.

Mental rest, such as comes from a wholesome knowledge of sexual truth, is quite as necessary to the child as to the adult. This question of the sexual enlightenment of children goes much deeper than the mere dispensing of biological facts. It has an important bearing upon all parent-child relationships.

#### When a Child Has Taken An Object--What Then?

Naturally, if your child has taken an object that does not belong to him, see to it that he returns the article at once to its rightful owner, whether a member of the family, a neighbor, or a playmate. Help your child sympathetically at this point, for restitution on his part will be an ordeal, at best. Without being told, he can scarcely be expected to know what to do or to say. Either suggest to him what to say, or go with him in person to make sure that the matter is adequately dealt with.

Suppose he has taken a small vase belonging to Mrs. Smith who lives nearby. With vase in hand, he might appropriately knock on her door and say, "Mrs. Smith, I took this vase when I was playing with Doris. I am so sorry!"

The chances are that he will burst into tears, but that will be all right. Tears of confession have a curative effect. He will be less likely in the future to take something that does not belong to him.



Under no circumstances should he accept the vase as a gift, even though Mrs. Smith might say in a moment of sympathy, "That's all right, you may just have it to keep."

In case the article he took from Mrs. Smith's house was food which in the meantime he has eaten, talk the matter over with him. Perhaps he himself will be led to propose that he reimburse Mrs. Smith with money from his own bank.

In any case, after he has made restitution, reinstate him as quickly as you can into your full confidence. Let him know that, no matter what may have happened in the past, you trust him now.

#### "It is Wonderful to Trust a Boy the Way I Can Trust You"

Whether for the first time, or by way of repetition, make use of the pocketbook drill described above. At the end of the day when he has refrained from taking money from the pocketbook, put your arm around him and say cheerfully, "You know, James, it is just wonderful to be able to trust a boy the way I can trust you."

Let him smile and enjoy this well-deserved compliment. Then continue, "Some parents might be afraid to let a boy know where they put their pocketbook. But here's the way I feel about the matter. I believe that if parents are honest with a boy and trust him, why, he will be honest with them. In other words, I believe that if you treat a boy right, he will treat you right. Do you agree with me on that?"

He will be sure to answer, "Yes." His whole-hearted agreement with you will clinch the suggestion of mutual confidence, the suggestion that, from now on, you and he can trust each other.

#### Teach Your Child to Avoid Gambling

One eleven-year-old boy was brought to me by his father for help. This lad, as a result of playing marbles "for keeps," had developed a mania for gambling, for taking a chance on getting something for nothing. He actually thought that if he became sufficiently adept, he could eventually make a lot of easy money by playing the gambling machines.

If your child has acquired a similar notion, acquaint him



ILLUSTRATION 149

*Small children may enjoy making their wishes. But as they grow older, they should be taught that to make their best wishes come true, they should depend only upon their honest efforts and never upon gambling.*



with the facts: that mechanical gambling devices, such as slot machines, are so constructed that in the long run a player is bound to lose; that dishonesty is built into the very mechanism of these tempting contrivances.

Some children boast of their so-called "ability" to hit the "jack-pot." This may create a temptation on the part of other children to keep putting in more coins until they, too, succeed. Often this strong desire for good luck tempts a child to take money not belonging to him in order to keep playing the machine.

Since two powerful instincts--(1) acquisitiveness and (2) pride--work together to foster the habit of gambling once it gets a start, it is highly important to discourage the habit before it has any chance to grow. (See Illustration 149.)

A positive way to overcome a child's tendency to gamble is to provide him with more wholesome activity, such as outdoor sports which require the pitting of real skill against skill.

#### Broken Windows--What to Do About Them

No active child ever grows up who does not at some time have an accident that involves damage to the property of others and consequent expense.

One evening when I was working in my garden, a group of young boys rode by on bicycles. As each one passed, he called out, "Andy's got something to tell you!" I waited. Finally at the end of the line, slowly and unhappily, rode Andy. He stopped. "Mr. Beery, I - I guess I was careless. I - broke one of the basement windows at your office."

"Well, now Andy," I said pleasantly, "let's see that window." Andy, his friends, and I inspected the damage. "I'm mighty glad you told me, Andy, because if I hadn't noticed it, the material in the basement would have been soaked during the next rain. You know, a less manly fellow wouldn't have told me. It takes real courage to admit you did something wrong, especially when I might never have known who did it. But let's see, boys, what do you think I ought to do? It will cost something to have it fixed."

"I think I should pay for it," said Andy. The other fellows waited anxiously for my verdict.

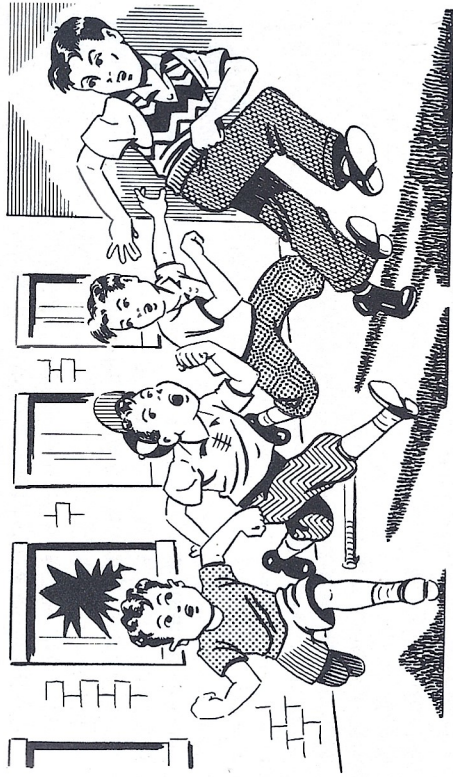


ILLUSTRATION 150

**The way in which you handle any accident, such as a broken window, may influence a child's attitude toward real honesty the rest of his life.**

"Well, boys," I smiled, "I like to see you fellows have a good time. I want you to play. Suppose I pay - half of the damage and Andy pays half. Would that seem fair to you?"

"That's fine!"

"It sure does!" There were various expressions of agreement.

#### Make Sure the Child Feels Happy For Having Done the Right Thing

Andy looked relieved, in fact, happy that he had done the right thing. So the arrangement was made. Andy was to pay half out of his allowance. The other boys, all sharing Andy's good feeling, wanted to talk. So I seized the opportunity to say a word about how fine it is to treat others as we like to be treated, and that when they are grown and some boys damage their property, how much they will appreciate the boys who are manly enough to admit the act.

There, I knew, was an OPPORTUNITY for impressing a never-to-be-forgotten lesson. By using the Principles of Approval and Friendship, I made Andy and all the boys feel



glad to do the right thing. If I had paid the entire bill, Andy would not have learned the lesson that sacrificing a part of his cherished allowance taught him. On the other hand, had I been gruff and scolded the boys for having played ball so near the glass windows, the chances are that those boys would never again tell me, or perhaps any one else, about their damage to any property.

Breaking a window is just one type of property damage. The spoiling of anything that belongs to another, the loss of a borrowed book, even, in later years, the denting of another's car fender, or any damage which the immature person might not admit having done, all fall into the same category. (See Illustration 150.)

The formula for handling any kind of accidental property damage to others should include at least some sacrifice on the part of the one directly responsible. He should not be allowed to go free as a reward for reporting, but discretion, good judgment and consideration of the financial circumstances of all parties involved, should be used as to the amount he should pay. Above all, reward him in spirit. Aim to make the transaction result in even a closer friendship. Apply the power of Suggestion by repeating not only once but a number of times the idea that it was very MANLY and very HONEST and very FAIR of the boy to come straight to the owner without hesitation. Make the boy feel glad and actually thrilled with the idea that he did right.

When you take enough thoughtful interest in the little problems faced by children to help them find the right answers and make the right decisions, you are doing a really wonderful work. Now, more than ever before, this whole world is in great need of adults who can really act like mature grown-ups. By teaching honesty to your own children and to their companions, you will be doing your part as a parent in the most practical way possible.

#### CONCLUSION

It will be seen from the foregoing examples that honesty is of one piece, a standard of conduct for all areas of life, whether in the home, in the classroom, at play, or in transactions that involve money.

Also it must be remembered that a lack of affection can lead a child to any sort of behavior--boasting, lying, even stealing--to attract the attention he desires so much and needs.

One young boy, who had told an untruth, was obliged to make a difficult restitution. The experience impressed him deeply. He came home and tacked up on his door a sign which read: "Nobody must tell a lie in this house."

He had learned his lesson, although the hard way. Happily, once your child has grasped this concept of absolute honesty in one realm of behavior, the chances are that he will apply this same high standard to every other phase of his life. Thus will he develop into an altogether noble citizen, honored, loved and trusted by all who have the good fortune to know him.