

Life in the Middle Years

Summary Points - Visit 1 - Chapters 1 & 2

1. The middle years represents an in between time of life, when a child is too old to be called a child, too young to be labeled an adolescent.
2. From a growth and developmental standpoint, the middle years is a period in which children begin the long process of metamorphosis—moving away from childhood dependencies, associations, and interests, and moving toward a self-reliance directed more and more by the beliefs and values of their home life.
3. The middle years consist of a variety of growth transitions that begin around age eight and merge as one major transition by age twelve.
 - a. Transitioning away from Childhood and Childhood association
 - b. Transitioning to “Getting all the Facts Right”
 - c. Transitioning from an Assumed Trust to Reasoned Trust
 - d. Transitioning to the Growing Influence of Peers
 - e. Transitioning to Hormone-Activated Bodies
 - f. Authority to Influence Transition
4. The authority to influence transition is the only parent-initiated transition.
5. Parental authority is a necessary substitute for three things young children lack:
 - a. knowledge,
 - b. understanding, and
 - c. self-regulating caution and initiative.
6. Parents use their authority to:
 - a. protect their children’s welfare,
 - b. educate their children in beneficial life skills, and
 - c. instruct in matters relating to values of the heart.
7. The younger the child the more you will guide and direct by your authority. As you begin to journey through the middle years, you begin to transition from relying on the power of your authority to bring conformity in behavior, to tapping into the power of your relational influence.
8. To appeal to someone in authority, whether it be a parent, teacher or employer is to acknowledge another person’s rule in our lives. To be in a position of authority, and to hear an appeal is to accept that sometimes we give instructions without being fully aware of the context in which our instructions are given.

9. Teaching your children how to make an appeal removes the temptation to disobey even simple instructions. The child's job is to bring "New Information" back to you—information that Mom did not have when she originally gave her instructions.
10. Benefits of teaching the appeal process:
 - a. It makes obedience attractive to children, since they know their parents are approachable and willing to revisit previously instructions.
 - b. It protects children from becoming needlessly frustrated.
 - c. It prepares children to interact correctly with present and future authorities.
 - d. It prevents parental authority from being arbitrary, legalistic or authoritarian.
 - e. It allows parents the right to change their minds without the fear of compromising their authority.