

You undoubtedly have read or heard many people talk about the characteristics that are needed to be a parent of a young child. The list almost seems endless and one wonders if all of the desired qualities can be incorporated within one parent or even in one set of parents. I would like, however, to add one more characteristic. That is that the parent of the young child from toddlerhood on needs to be creative.

Think for a moment about all the many situations a young child gets into that require a different way to do something. Being creative means something quite different from being able to draw a picture or do finger-painting. A parent can come up with several alternative ways of handling that situation. Being a creative parent means that the parent can think and suggest various ways of doing something or can change the child's activity when a problem occurs.

Several examples will help. Suppose Judy, age 18 months, refused to eat. The creative parent instead of getting angry at the child will change the method of feeding or will place the food in a favorite container. Joey, age 3, is causing quite a disturbance, bothering everyone else in the family. A creative parent will involve Joey in something interesting-- will get him, for example, to place all the blocks in one corner of the box or line the blocks end to end and make a highway. Or Andy, age 5, is very tired but won't lie still to rest. The creative parent will quickly think up a sleep game or play "how long you can be quiet" or begin a favorite story or song.

In each of these cases the non-creative parent might yell or continually reprimand the child and become very frustrated. In each of these cases the non-creative parent might be tempted to give the child a spanking. But the key question to ask before yelling or getting upset with the child; Is there another way to handle this situation in a calmer manner? What could I, as a parent, suggest that Andy or Joey or Judy do instead of what the child is presently doing?

Sometimes a child will become frustrated when something he or she is doing doesn't work out. The creative parent will think of several other ways the child might try to solve the problem. A good rule of

thumb is to give the child several possible alternatives, and then encourage the the child to try the one solution that seems best. Many behavior problems can be averted or diminished if the parent thinks of an alternative or quickly diverts the child's attention. To do this takes practice, but less time than a non-creative parent who spends time yelling and then "cooling down."

Another aspect of being a creative parent involves coming up with alternatives to handling a discipline situation. Sometimes the old saying that we get into a rut is more true than we would like to admit. In some homes the only discipline or punishment that is given is a threat. Threat after threat but the situation gets worse. In other homes, physical punishment seems to be the only punishment that is even given to the child.

A parent who is trying to develop creativity will think about how he or she handles a discipline situation or a case of obvious undesirable behavior. Have you gotten into a rut? Do you rely on physical punishment? Or threats? Or yelling?

If you answered yes to any of these, then think about other ways of dealing with the child. What other, more creative punishments could you use?

Instead of hitting the child, why not have the child spend five minutes in his room or three minutes in the corner? I would suggest that if you would try these methods, several really good things might happen. First, you would not get so upset with the child. Secondly, the punishment probably would have more effect on the child than just a swat or backhand across the seat of the pants. Thirdly, the child would not get quite so upset and would be able to better understand what he or she did that brought about the punishment.

Sometimes when we threaten a child, the child learns to make a game out of our threats. One leads to another and another. Children can see through threats! When we yell, we get upset because the adrenalin or some other hormone gets very active in us and the child knows that whatever was done sure gets him attention!

If we physically hit the child we are teaching the child that the way to control undesirable behavior is

to use physical force. Young children have a difficult time understanding why Mom or Dad can hit when they're not allowed to hit. If a child experiences a parent hitting him or her, the child is learning lessons about the use of force and aggression.

The point is-- to make our job a little easier maybe we as parents need to be a little more creative. Maybe we need to try some new ideas and ways of disciplining and ways of helping the child in difficult situations. Suggest several things the child might do in place of whatever he is doing that you want him to stop doing. Be creative!

P.S. If you try a punishment such as standing in the corner, make certain the child stays in the corner. Make the time short but make him stay there. Otherwise, you'll be like the judge who sent the man to the jail that didn't have bars or guards. He knew no one was going to make him serve his punishment so he left. The next time around, the man never even bothered to go to the jail.

For a fried cheese appetizer inspired by trendy restaurants, dredge cubes of cheese in flour, then dip in beaten egg, then roll generously in dry bread crumbs. Set aside for a few minutes to firm coating. Deep fry in hot oil (350°F) about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels.

Fruit Tree Care

ITHACA, NY — Fresh, just-picked blueberries, strawberries, grapes, pears and apples can be the reward of a successful home fruit planting. How to plant and care for these fruit crops for a bountiful harvest is covered in the second edition of "The Home Fruit Planting," a Cornell Cooperative Extension publication.

Several factors must be considered when planning to grow fruit in your backyard. These include climate, site selection, soil preparation, planting plans, pollination, winter protection and pest control. All are discussed in the publication.

The authors list the very best

and newest fruit cultivars, and address low-spray, no-spray insect and disease management as well as money and time demands.

For each type of plant, the authors provide information on cultivar selection; climate; site selection and soil preparation; planting; and maintenance, including fertilization, cultivation, mulching, pruning, and control of diseases and insects. Information on harvesting to get the best fruit quality is also included.

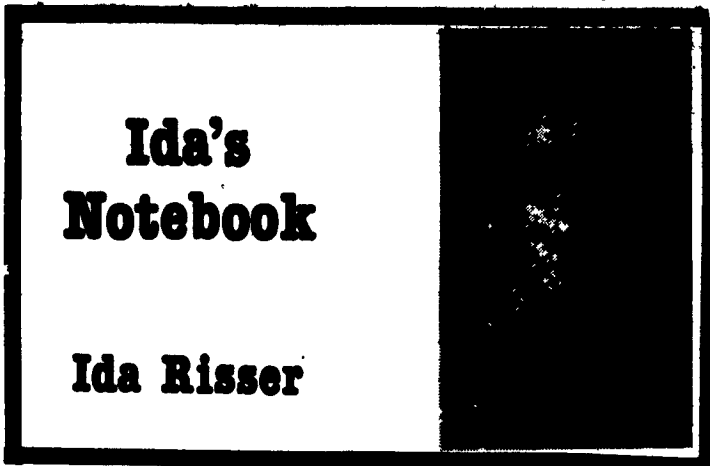
This second edition was written by Marcia Eames-Sheavly and Marvin P. Pritts, Department of Pomology, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University.

Covered in this 46-page publication are apple, cherry, peach,

square dance. As I was hostess, I made several kinds but the Graham Gems were the big hit and everyone wanted the recipe. But I must admit that I was embarrassed when I was not sure if they took one cup of sugar or one-half cup of sugar. So, I had to promise to take the recipe to the next dance. It is a good opportunity to meet new people as we had five squares there.

Allen and I went to a travelogue on Alaska last week. We enjoyed it a lot as many scenes were familiar to us. The scenery was beautiful and there were many close-ups of the wild animals. We were surprised that nothing was mentioned of the huge pipeline that winds over the countryside. I spoke to the lecturer afterwards and told him his audience might be interested in knowing that one of his featured people, a captain of a boat, had ancestors from Lancaster County.

Now I better go and dig some dandelions for our next meal and uphold a tradition.



Recently I attended an antique show where some very fine items were exhibited. The prices were extremely high, I thought. The exhibitors had traveled from New Hampshire, Maine, Indiana, Delaware and New York and therefore had some extra expenses.

It seems that some of the most interesting items are those similar to those I already own. One likes to look at the price tags and then say to oneself, "Is my brass bucket and dipper really worth that much?" I will admit that some of the primitive furniture looked ugly to me as it was unpainted or had bark on the finished product.

A few years ago I had a dry sink refinished because in its present condition I would not have wanted it in my kitchen. The top half was devoid of any finish and the bottom was a yellow grained effect. Maybe its value was affected by having it refinished but at least now it is a beautiful piece.

Saturday night I was pleasantly surprised when folks made a fuss over my cookies that I served at a

plum and pear trees, grapes, strawberries, brambles, blueberries, currants, gooseberries, elderberries and hardy kiwifruit.

"The Home Fruit Planting" is but one of many publications on gardening produced by Cornell Cooperative Extension. For a free list of all publications on gardening, write to Cornell Cooperative Extension, Distribution, 7 Research Park, Ithaca, NY 14850.

"The Home Fruit Planting" (1551B156, \$4.95) is available from Cornell Distribution at the above address. The per-copy price covers postage and handling. Copies also may be available at Cornell Cooperative Extension offices in each county in New York State, where price may vary.

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