



"Hands are for helping, Not hurting"



The Roles We Play as Parents

COMMANDER IN CHIEF - The parent who plays this role is interested in keeping things well under control and demands that the child get rid of the negative feelings immediately and "shape up". Orders, commands and threats are the tools the Commander in Chief uses to keep the upper hand.

MORALIST - The Moralist is a "shouldist"! "You should do this" and "You shouldn't do that" is what this parent preaches. The Moralist is very concern that the child have the "proper" feelings.

The Know-It-All - Parents who play this role try to show the child that adults have been traveling life's road for a long time and have accumulated most of life's answers. These parents lecture, advise, make appeals to the child's reason and try to show how superior they themselves are.

Judge - This parent has already pronounced the child guilty without a trial. Judges are interested in proving that they are always right and that the child is always wrong.

Critic - like the Judge, the Moralist and the Know-It-All, the parent playing this role is interested in being right. But the Critic relies on ridicule, name-calling, sarcasm, or jokes to put the child down.

Psychologist - The Psychologist tries to analyze the problem. With the best intentions, this parent wants to hear all the details—so that the parent will be in a better position to set the child straight. The Psychologist diagnoses, analyzes and questions.

Counselor - Parents who play this role attempt to excuse themselves from involvement by treating the child's feelings lightly. Simple reassurance, a pat on the back, and the pretense that all is well when it isn't are this parent's answer to a child's worries and anxieties.

Adapted from role-play materials in *STEP/Teen* by Dinkmeyer and McKay. STEP stands for "Systematic Training for Effective Parenting," and materials are available from AGS Publishing, <http://www.agsnet.com/index.asp>.

