

IX. The Challenges and Benefits of Generativity One

William Bergquist and Gary Quehl

Typically, there are two major questions that face any person or couple when they have begun to raise children or begin a mutual project. The first of these concerns the amount of time and other resources that each person and the partners together devote to raising children or conducting their project. Chronic stress, due to shortages, rather than acute crises often influence and can even destroy the health of an individual and the health of an intimate relationship. We have to place child rearing and project management at the top of the list that demand scarce resources. The second question concerns the ways in which children will be raised and a project will be managed. This can be just as stress-ridden and conflict-filled as the problem of scarce resources. We examine both of these stormy issues, then look at the unique manner in which couples address them when they bring children from a previous relationship, or a project from a previous time in their lives, to the relationship.

As we did in Chapter Three, we rely heavily in this chapter on the interviews done with couples who have been committed to one another in an intimate relationship for many years. We conclude this chapter by drawing once more on observations that participants in our Nevada County, California, Sage Leadership Project have made about Generativity One.

Engaging in Generativity One When Raising Children

Child-raising or attending to a project is a major, energy-consuming part of an individual's or couple's life. When children are young or when a project is still in its fledgling state, most of Eric Erikson's other life stages take a backseat. Rebecca, for instance, described a typical day in the lives that she and Bill lead:

Three year-old Calvin gets up about 5:30 or 6:00 and wants to watch cartoons. Bill gets up with the kids, and I sleep until 7:30 or 8:00. We are trying to encourage four month old Natalie to take a bottle. I am usually up with her one or two times in the night. When I get up in the morning, we mutually get the kids dressed and fed and take turns getting them to the places where they will spend their day. Bill goes to work and comes home around 6:00. I have Natalie most all the time and my

days are focused on the household and the children. By 9 pm the children are in bed. We read, we talk, we have sex, Bill watches TV, and we go to sleep.

Rebecca's description of their typical day together revolved around their children, Bill's job, and the household. In assuming this traditional role in her family, Rebecca represented a minority voice among the women we interviewed. Most of the women who are less than fifty years old are working outside the home, even if they have young children. Rebecca and Bill's focus is on raising their children in as nurturing and trouble-free a manner as possible. They try to "stay afloat" while managing this very difficult process. Many of their fights are precipitated by their fatigue and the feeling that there is no way out. Fortunately, they have built a solid relationship and are flexible in assuming child-rearing responsibilities. At overwhelming moments, when they get angry at one another, they tend to use a variety of strategies for the resolution of their conflicts; they both realize that while child-raising is the source of many of their tensions, it is also the primary source of their joy. They know that they love each other and that these tensions will soon pass, especially as the children grow older.

Other couples have even less time than Rebecca and Bill for intimacy, talking, or simply enjoying each other's company. Frequently, one of the partners (often the male) feels left out and ignored by the doting parent/partner. When describing a significant change that occurred during the 23 years of their marriage, Jeannie told a story about their first son, Pete, who was born ten days before their first anniversary. Jeannie was ecstatic about the pregnancy since both she and Bob had thought that Bob was sterile. Jeannie did not even see a doctor until she was five months pregnant because she thought it was impossible. When Pete was born, Jeannie's whole world became her child. She shut Bob out. The couple had little time together and she later described herself as being an "obsessive" mother. Her child came before anything else. After fifteen months of considering only her child and lavishing him with all of her love and devotion, her relationship with Bob showed signs of disrepair. They fought more often and communicated less frequently and less clearly with one another. Bob also began drinking more heavily.

Bob reported that he felt excluded from the bonding between Jeannie and his son. Having been neglected himself as a child, Bob became jealous of the attention Jeannie was giving their son. Once again, he was being left out, now as husband and father rather than son. Bob resented their loss of time as a couple, and he did not like the child sleeping in their bed. He became

increasingly fearful about being a capable parent and felt guilty about his own feelings of rivalry with his son.

Frequently, the issue of time spent doing something other than child-rearing is heightened because both partners work full-time, and late evenings are often filled with household chores that neither partner can do during the day. Many couples we interviewed reported very little time for talking or sex. They were left with an exhausted snuggle at the end of a very long day. Many couples also do not enjoy Rebecca and Bill's capacity to look beyond their immediate child-rearing problems to the gratification that they are receiving from this complex and demanding process. In the midst of hurt feelings about attention being devoted exclusively to a child, or conflicts regarding who should change the diapers, it is often difficult for a couple to share a moment of mutual admiration for the important job they are doing in bringing a child into the world.

Child-rearing is frequently the source of contentious arguments about both financial priorities and other areas of responsibility, at least for couples who have young children living at home. Many couples we interviewed pointed to the birth of their first or second child as a joyous event, but also the source of considerable strain in their relationship. In the midst of Generativity One, they are often trying to discover new ways in which to structure their lives and the relationship with their life partner (including finances, attitudes about home and possessions, career, and values). This often happens while their children are also exploring new ways of relating to their parents, siblings, friends, and the world in general.

Even for those men and women who have grown children, the issue of child-rearing can raise its contentious head. As we have already suggested, Generativity One doesn't end after children leave home. When John and Nancy were asked to identify areas in which they had different values, Nancy immediately replied, almost dryly, "The time I spent with the children." John agreed and explained that one area where this showed-up was in long distance phone calls. John complained that Nancy would spend an hour talking to one of their distressed children about their life in general. John thought that was an expense they couldn't afford, especially since she wasn't offering counsel about a specific problem.

Nancy soon turned the conversation from finances to the issue of responsibility for continuing attention to their adult children; she often went to help her children during times of great need. To her, as well as her children, this was an expected responsibility. However, according to Nancy, "John doesn't like me to be gone for more than two days at a time." John acknowledged that this was so, but he defended himself by asserting that Nancy usually goes to such events as the births of grandchildren. Then she'd come home and have to work 52 hours a week to make it up financially.

Engaging in Generativity One When Engaging in a Project

In the case of projects, the issue of time is often compounded by a concern for the appropriate and feasible allocation of money. How much do we want to invest in this new business? How much can we afford in terms of veterinary and boarding costs for our cherished dog or horse? Where do we find the money to remodel our prized kitchen? In the case of Larry and Harold—identified in Chapter Three—the remodeling of their home required the entangling of finances for the first time in their relationship. The financing of their home was, according to Harold, "like our marriage." He went on later to point out, "our relationship has evolved into that of a married couple. We're comfortable . . . much more domesticated. The house is indicative of our lives; it's a blend of both of us. I like garage sales for clothes and furniture. Larry likes nice things."

Larry and Harold had been successful in building their joint project (home and lifestyle) largely because they had honored and made use of their individual differences. Larry is the "financial caretaker," "the designated driver," "the vacation planner." Conversely, Harold is the "navigator, cook, buys groceries, and cleans." Harold is also the "spokesman and the social planner." Larry is more "assertive," whereas Harold is "the more verbal one." They move eloquently together, allowing each other to take the lead at various points in their relationship, particularly with reference to their prized project of having a beautiful home.

The Rules Governing Generativity One

What are the rules of the game when it comes to raising kids or starting a major project? And how do we set priorities and conduct ourselves? Rule-setting is particularly difficult and critical when the decision is jointly made by both members of a couple—as it often is with Generativity One. Even when a couple has arrived at a comfortable decision about the priority they will assign in their lives to the raising of children, they still must find common ground on the rules of conduct and type and degree of discipline they will exert in raising their children or building a project together. Frequently, voices from previous points in their lives (typically, their own childhood) come to the fore. Grown men and women hear themselves mouth the words and warnings they heard from their parent when young; words and warnings they once vowed never to use themselves! Men and women who find themselves agreeing on most issues in their lives (e.g., politics, music, literature, recreation) suddenly find themselves on opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to raising children. More often, partners know that they have some differences of opinion about raising children, having come from very different families; however, they often don't realize how deeply engrained these patterns of behavior are and how frustrating it can be to raise children with another person who is absolutely "nuts" (usually either a Nazi or an anarchist!) regarding the raising of children.

Bea certainly was aware that Donald came from a tight-knit Sicilian family, and Donald knew that Bea came from a cold, authoritarian family of German descent. They knew this because they shared a common interest in escaping from these repressive backgrounds, and because Bea had already struggled with a mother-in-law who told her how to cook, do the laundry, and arrange the furniture. Bea's in-laws in fact had bought the furniture for their new home and had it delivered as a surprise. However, neither Bea nor Donald were prepared for the impact of four children who were born about a year apart. They strongly disagreed on how to raise their four girls. Donald tended to be very demonstrative and permissive, like his Sicilian parents, whereas Bea tended to be a disciplinarian. They soon learned, despite their deepest intentions, that they were repeating the same child-rearing patterns as their parents.

When their third daughter was about ten years old, a crisis occurred in their lives that brought about a partial resolution of their child-rearing conflicts. Their daughter was diagnosed as having bone cancer. An enormous conflict ensued in which Bea accepted the medical advice she had

received and believed they should leave the decision to the experts. An additional biopsy was recommended, but Donald would not allow it to occur and pulled their daughter out of all treatment programs. Within a year, the lesion had disappeared completely, without treatment. Bea, who was traditionally the practical one, believed it was a miracle and became quite religious as a result. Donald, the expressive, emotional member of the couple, was more skeptical and spoke of errors in diagnosis and the possibility of recurrence. Donald and Bea told this story with great relief as though a shadow had passed over. They also demonstrated deep respect for each other. They mentioned that the support they received from friends and family was what held the marriage and family together.

We suspect that another key ingredient was the change this crisis precipitated in both Donald and Bea. After the "miracle" Donald became more practical and realistic (in contrast to his Sicilian upbringing), having been successful in standing-up in an impassioned and unrealistic but loving way for his daughter. By contrast Bea became more idealistic and religious, as well as more open to support from other people, thereby breaking away from her traditional German upbringing. Both of these partners have changed. They now more fully appreciate and complement one another. One does wonder, however, what would have happened if their daughter had not recovered.

Many struggles in the lives of the men and women we have interviewed for all of our projects—and many disagreements among couples we interviewed for the Enduring, Intimate Relationship Project—centered on Generativity One issues: the raising of children or creating and maintaining a specific business, project or production process. These struggles and disagreements often concerned the identification of values and the differentiation between these values and those that were inherited from parents, community, church, or friends. Even after we have come to terms with the separation of our values from those of our parents, something dramatic and often disturbing occurs when we have our first children or start our first mutual project. The voices of our mother or father suddenly come back to haunt us again. We tell our son not to play with that stick or "you'll poke your eye out" and realize that we are using the same intonations of voice that our parents used and are basing our predictions and in junctures on the same faulty logic as they. We find ourselves using the same outmoded assumptions about

how to motivate workers or how to sell products as our father or mother used thirty or forty years ago. These assumptions were out-of-date even back then!

Tally and Kesha struggled individually and collectively with one of the fundamental building blocks of Generativity One: the issue of discipline in the raising of children and control in conducting a project. Kesha and Tally both came from a very traditional culture (India) and found that a focal point of their relationship and their shared values was a struggle with old parental and societal values about discipline and control. When first married, Tally and Kesha had quite different views on parenting. Tally was very reluctant to discipline their children in any way. He traced this back to his strong reactions against the domineering and abusive parenting that he experienced. Kesha claimed he was afraid to touch the children at all. He would sit and "reason" with them for hours, while she became more and more frustrated. The key for them was to find a way of blending Tally's distaste for coercive control with Kesha's concern that their children receive a clear message from their parents about boundaries and acceptable behavior. Kesha and Tally decided to have weekly family meetings with their children where they could encourage trust and honesty in each other. They negotiated disagreements with their children rather than forcing them to accept parental authority. At the end of these meetings, however, there were clear resolutions and expectations about what the children would do during the coming week. Love is mixed with clarity and communication.

It was this new focus that helped Tally and Kesha look at themselves in action. Gradually their work on parenting moved to marriage counseling and some effective new ways of living their lives together. The end result of their disagreements about child-raising was not only a rather innovative style of family decision-making, but also the creation of a new focal point for their marriage that eventually helped them through several difficult times. Since they began their new approach, Tally and Kesha have constructed a new life style which involves their children, their work with others in parenting, their work with other married couples, their church, and many other shared activities. They now teach the parenting class which had been so helpful for them, and they are team leaders in the Marriage Encounter movement.

Children (or a project) from previous relationships pose a unique challenge for many couples in 21st Century societies. As in the case of many couples who have previously been committed to other relationships, Dean and Kent faced the problem of moving into another person's life,

complete with previously incurred obligations and possessions. Dean and Kent come from quite different backgrounds. Dean was an African-American from a small town in Tennessee. He was 42 years old when the interview took place and had been in several long term relationships, dating back to his high school days; each relationship lasted about three years. Kent, who was ten years older than Dean, is a European -American from Ohio. His longest lasting relationship prior to being with Dean was thirteen years; this was with a woman, with whom he had two children. The children are now grown. Tina is 21 and David is 25. When they first met, Dean was 25 and Kent was 35.

The key issue for them had not been race but Kent's family obligations. Dean told this part of the story: "On the second day Kent and I were together, kids came running in." Kent had said nothing to Dean up to that point about an ex-wife or children. Tina was five and-a half at the time and she screamed, "Daddy, Daddy." Dean was sitting on the couch watching television at the time. Then David, who was about ten, and Kent's ex-wife Patricia came in. Dean said he panicked and thought: "Oh shit, he's married. There is going to be a huge fight." But he said he managed to keep his cool. Tina came over to the sofa and sat next to Dean, and Kent came into the room and introduced Dean to his ex-wife. Then Tina turned to Dean and said: "I don't know you very well, but if you hurt my father in any way I will get you." Five minutes later they were all having a good time—a remarkable story of one man being accepted into the life and home of another man and his children and ex-wife!

Dean and Kent talked about the challenge of raising two children during the 1980s and 1990s when there were few role models for same-sex partners. They found that with children as the focus in their relationship, they had to assume roles that were more often patterned after heterosexual roles. Kent, for instance, was very conscious of Mother's Day. He felt that he assumed that role in his children's upbringing and was adamant that this role be celebrated, despite the fact that he was the biological father.

Children and mutual projects tend to draw in all Eriksonian stages. As a result, Generativity One is often the eye of the hurricane during stormy phases in the life of a person or couple. Consequently, child-rearing or project management was often identified as the central problem for a person or couple whom we interviewed. This was certainly the case with Caroline and Sam. They both indicated that their most intensive "serious talks together" had recently centered on

family and child-rearing issues. About six weeks prior to the interview, Caroline had become very angry about Sam's new job as a church promotional director. It was taking Sam away from their family more than she felt was necessary. Carolyn confronted him with her frustrations, citing what she termed his "lack of interest" in assuming his share of responsibility around the house and with the kids. She indicated that these problems needed to be fixed immediately or she was considering leaving him. Sam agreed that things had gotten out of hand, but noted that he had recently begun to structure time with Caroline and the kids. He listed the tasks he had recently assumed to demonstrate he had equal responsibilities in their home, but he didn't seem to have a clear picture of what Caroline was left to do. She declined to comment further; they were both uncomfortable at this point. Clearly, they had work to do on this difficult issue.

Asking Caroline and Sam to describe a typical day with their parents, family, and friends did little to ease the tension at this point. Sam then took the lead by describing Thanksgiving Day: Caroline had refused to drive forty miles to spend the day with Sam's mother. There had been arguments between his mother and Caroline about Christmas presents for the kids, and Caroline refused to spend the day with her. She was perfectly content for Sam to take the kids and leave her to herself for the day. It was agreed they would tell Sam's mother that Caroline was ill. Caroline observed that this was classic cover-up and denial, but she seemed not to be concerned about how Sam's mother would react to the fib.

Sam and Caroline's church played a central role in the continuation and potential solution to their ongoing problems. On the one hand, the church provided them with support, friendships, and a sense of purpose in life. Their children had benefited greatly from the community and the education they received from the congregation. Yet, the sum total of their time outside work and family was consumed in church activities. Sam had his music programs and Caroline taught Sunday school. However, Caroline was less committed than Sam to volunteering her time to the Church, and she seemed resentful that their social life had never moved beyond the church. Clearly, the church wasn't meeting all of Caroline's needs, while Sam had everything invested in it. If Caroline wanted to remain with Sam, she had to be actively involved in the church. However, this contradiction was not discussable. Thus, a central issue in Caroline and Sam's relationship and child raising was subject to considerable distortion and resentment by both

partners. Caroline and Sam were at a crossroad in their relationship, and Caroline threatened to move out.

Many people we have interviewed, such as Bessy and Bill, discovered that their life values began to settle securely in place in the early years of child rearing or building a shared project.

Generativity One has a way of powerfully anchoring what is truly important in their lives.

Typically, responsibilities are firmly and clearly assigned, whereas before the birth of a child or the initiation of a shared project these responsibilities were more likely to be loosely framed, readily shifted, or even ignored. Like many couples, Bill and Bessy made the choice to identify an "equal and logical way" of distributing their time with their young daughter and of distributing household chores associated with child-rearing. As in many heterosexual relationships, the woman tends to assign duties and responsibilities. In the case of Bessy and Bill, each partner had particular household chores that they had done for many years. Bessy did the wash and Bill took the clothes out of the dryer and put them away. With the introduction of diapers and baby cloth into the equation, Bessy and Bill simply expanded their responsibilities in the same areas to accommodate the new demand. Bessy had more clothes to wash and Bill had more clothes to dry and fold. As their daughter, Trudy, grew older, she was also assigned chores.

Other couples are not so sanguine about the assignment of duties and responsibilities; yet, if a couple is to establish viable norms for child-rearing or project-building, the increased pressures and work demands inside the relationship typically require that they establish firmer boundaries and clearer expectations. Whether raising children or building a project, a couple is clearly in a "business" and must establish business-like rules or they risk destruction of their relationship.

Bessy and Bill kept using terms like protection, safety, security, responsibility and pride in their child-rearing when talking about their relationship. They had created a life that embodied all of these values, specifically with regard to their role as parents. Bessy's interest in child-rearing provided continuity in their relationship. The interviewer suggested that Bessy and Bill's own personal need for protection, safety, security and shared responsibility was the key to their mutual interest in these values. So In seeking security and safety for their own children, Bessy and Bill created a home that was safe and secure for themselves.

When asked what the glue was that had held their relationship together for twenty years, Bill said "valuing our differences." Bessy agreed with him. This seemed to be important to them, for if they did not value their differences their relationship might be heading for a crisis. Earlier in the interview they spoke of not having disagreements. Now they spoke of valuing their differences. Clearly, their sense of unity was built on a shared purpose, raising their daughter. They held very few differences of opinion in this realm, having affirmed the traditional values and beliefs transferred from their own parents about raising children. One wonders if, as they grow older, they will continue to learn from each other and grow closer together again under the auspices of some new shared vision.

Savoring the Fruits of Mutual Generativity One Labor

Glenda and Kurt offer a superb example of young people moving from the difficult early stages of child-rearing to balanced and gratifying roles in Generativity One. Their life story also illustrates the difficulty inherent in the initiation of the newly emerging role of child-rearing in the life of an individual or couple. Each now 33 years old, Glenda and Kurt had been a couple since they were 15; they were married 11 years prior to the birth of their daughter, Trisha, and continued to live within a few miles of their parents and the homes where they grew-up. For most of their early years together, Glenda and Kurt lived simple and carefree lives and received substantial assistance from both families. In essence, the two of them never had to grow up, but could remain as "adult children" living in the shadow of their original homes and families. Their decision to have a child came very slowly. When they finally did decide to have a child, they suddenly had to grow-up individually and as a couple.

During their two hour interview, Glenda and Kurt talked about what was most important for other people to know about them as individuals and as a couple. With Trisha taking a nap in the other room, they identified child-raising as the central theme in their current life and spoke of the contrast with their past life when they were free of most responsibilities.

Given their dual careers and family commitments, Kurt and Glenda didn't have much time being along together any more. They were fully consumed in Generativity One. While both loved their child, Kurt and Glenda also referred to former areas of mutual enjoyment, now largely forfeited, complex new responsibilities within their relationship, and even an inconvenient change to a

larger residence they thought was necessary because of their child. Now, because of the proximity of their house to a busy highway, they were concerned about Trisha's safety. They began looking for a different rental with a larger, fenced yard in which their toddler could play.

Glenda and Kurt had anticipated that Trisha's birth was going to require changes in their comfortable life style, and they prepared for them: "When Trisha was first born I took about six weeks off work and Glenda took four months off. So we were together a lot right in the beginning." Following an initial period of testing and turmoil, Kurt and Glenda began performing their Generativity One roles and newly established routines with a high degree of mutual confidence. In time, this came to include Trisha wanting Kurt to give her baths. Whereas some mothers might resent the preference of their daughter for her father's attention, Glenda viewed this preference with considerable fondness and perhaps some relief. She delighted in the affection expressed by Trisha and Kurt for one another and valued the differences between herself and Kurt.

There seemed to be three essential ingredients in Glenda and Kurt's relationship that enabled them to establish and maintain the role of Generativity One. First, they exhibited an accepting and generous attitude about competing relationships, possessiveness and competition for attention when their child preferred the other parent in certain settings. Second, there was respect and affection about differences in their individual styles of childrearing. Third, there was a willingness on their part to perform nontraditional roles. We might all learn from the example set by Glenda and Kurt.

Surrogate Parenting: Generativity One Through Impacting the Lives of Children Outside One's Family

Sometimes we try to have it all: children, a paying job, and some valued project on the side. In other cases, we try to make our project into a paying job by starting a business, turning a hobby into a business, or making our job more meaningful and enjoyable. In other instances, we make the hard decision to forego child-raising and instead invest our time, energy, and generativity in a very special project that directly benefits children who are not "our own." This apparently is the case with Oprah Winfrey, who made the difficult decision not to have children herself. Instead, as she has noted in many interviews, Oprah reframed her Generativity One pursuits by declaring

that she would seek to care for all of the children in the world rather than devote herself to raising her own biological children. Oprah Winfrey, of course, also has a huge project to run—namely her own massive media enterprise. That is enough to keep anyone fully occupied!

Then there are the less famous leaders in Nevada County, California, who participated in the Sage Leadership Project. They were all devoted to their community and many of them gained great generative satisfaction from working with children who were not their own. One of our Sage leaders offered a touching and poignant observation about the generative impact that resulted from her work with such children.

Being able to support people and letting them know they're doing a good job are qualities I admire in a leader. And also giving others confidence and making them feel good about themselves and their abilities. When I worked with kids, being with teenagers was always my favorite because I was so into building their self-esteem. And I think doing that has stayed with me, because everyone has to work on their self-esteem. I think I am good at that. I think I boost people's morale.

Another Sage leader offered a more detailed example of how he works with under-served children by offering to volunteer in his local school:

I do see a different path, mainly due to continuing budget reductions for my organization. The other day was graduation for the preschool in my building, which serves children with severe disabilities. I went in and started playing with the kids. We were playing when a very small guy, who is a fighter, backed-up and put himself in my lap. The teachers said he didn't do that with anyone. We were playing more and I had to leave for a meeting. The teachers said, "You should come back every day." When I think about my talents, I believe that my ability to connect with kids is my #1 talent, even though it got me to where I am today and I don't use it in the work I currently do.

A second form of institution-based surrogate parenting is to be found in organizations that serve children who are struggling with the demands placed on them by society. This is the opposite from education. It is the side of isolation and, hopefully, remediation that unfortunately is often given more public attention than the preventive, educational side. One of our Sage leaders found

Generative One gratification through his work as the leader of an organization focusing on troubled youth:

I'm in charge of the entire department that services children in our community who are on probation, or are potentially headed there. My span of control is six probation officers and one support staff. I also have authority over all probation officers in other departments and the staff at the juvenile hall. And I have other duties, such as training manager. In this capacity, I feel I am in charge of creating the agency's future. I'm really proud of the new programs we've created to fill needs in the department. In addition to some of the tactical programs, we're currently trying to expand the number of foster placements in the county rather than send kids off to group homes. It's been nice to be part of that success.

One of our Sage leaders works with both the scouting program and The Friendship Club in her community. She sees this type of generative work to be much more satisfying than the more complex and often convoluted work to be done through political activities (which will be more prominent in the third and fourth generativity roles to which we turn in later sections of this book):

Whatever group I'm involved with, whether the Boy Scouts or The Friendship Club, I try to bring a personal relationship that can strengthen the organization. So, finding common bonds and building relationships is very important to me. I'm not very political because most politicians are boring. They are limited and not funny. If you build relationships based on trust, you are more likely to move things forward. That is, if people really know who I am, they will tend to trust me when I try to implement something. I don't think a person would be very effective in any long-term position unless they are able to develop a high trust level.

Certainly there are people who decide to engage in a project while also raising a family. These are the men and women who do try to have it all. The Emerging Sage leaders we interviewed often talked about the conflict and tensions inherent in their effort to be civically engaged while also raising children. We conclude this chapter by turning to these challenged men and women.

Conclusions

We can learn from the couple we identified earlier in this chapter: Glenda and Kurt. They can teach us about effective ways in which to adopt flexible, non-gender defined roles in raising children. And we can learn from Oprah Winfrey about ways in which to be generative with children outside the family. We also can learn from men and women who wish to raise their children in a satisfactory manner and engage Generativity One by participating in major projects that impact the lives of children outside their own family. These people want to have it both ways, and they often find this multi-goal process to be quite difficult.

The Emerging leaders from our Sage Project (ages 25-55) often found it hard to establish the right balance between love and work in their own demanding mid-life world. One Emerging Sage leader shared the story of being a busy administrator of a community project who was also trying to find time for his family. This sage leader expressed the opinion that his family derived some benefits from his civic work, but the trade-off he described seemed less than convincing:

Last night I came home pretty worthless and exhausted. My daughter asked if we could go shoot some hoops and I said, "OK, in just a minute." Next thing I know, I've dozed off. That's an example of not having anything left on some days for my family. Also, in a leadership position in the department it's very hard to walk away and have an extended vacation. We take a number of nickel and dime vacations but haven't done a long trip in a while. So, family life suffers a bit. On the flip side, my kids have met a number of people or had experiences they wouldn't otherwise get. For example, they are very comfortable saying hello to the superintendent of schools.

A second Emerging Sage leader told a story that is all too common for men and women who chose to enter the political arena:

There is some sacrifice at times, if only because of the need to juggle everything and also be a father. Right now as I'm running a campaign in addition to all of the other things I have going on, so I sometimes I don't always get to see my kids before they go to bed. I tell myself that it is just temporary, but my wife reminds me there will be something next month, so it is never temporary. But if I am able to help grow our community it will make things better for my kids as well. So it is a win/win situation.

For some of the Emerging Sage leaders there is an option, but it is often painful. We see the struggle about work/life balance playing-out in the decision that some sage leaders make to get "out of the rat race" of civic engagement and spend more time with their children and family. For these men and women, there was often no balance to be found between work or civic engagement and love (time with family). They had to choose one over the other.

If a Sage leader decides not to opt out of her civic commitments, and if she is equally committed to quality Generative One time with her family, what can be done to reconcile those sacrifices and trade-offs? We observed that they usually can do so in one of three ways. First, they might consider their project work to be a model for their children and hope that the children will be proud of their efforts and will emulate them during their own adult years. Second, some of our Emerging Sage leaders believed that their civic work would ultimately be of benefit to their children, thus making their outside care-giving simply an extension of their care-giving inside the family. Third, some of these leaders took a more tangible step; they immediately involved their children in their civic projects.

Many years ago Sigmund Freud offered a simple but profound observation that the two ingredients of a happy and successful life are love and work. But Freud failed to mention that it isn't always easy to balance the demands inherent in both love and work—especially when love has to do with raising children and work has to do with finding time and energy to successfully engage in a project.