The Power of Women Invitational Leaderships in Leading a Single Parent Woman to Independently Foster Young Children’s Intelligence

M.E. Julita
Universitas Pelita Harapan

Abstract
One of the most common problems for single parents after the loss of their beloved spouses mostly deals with managing their families, especially on how to lead their children’s attitudes after the demise of their beloved parents that can socially and intelligently affect their daily lives and activities at their schools. Applying the power of women invitational leaderships and providing certain teaching tools and strategies, namely mind mapping and boost reading, single parents will be able to socially and intelligently lead them to attain their positive attitudes. The author whose husband unfortunately passed away two years ago attempts to reveal the pinnacle of her experiences in building her close, positive, and worthwhile relationships with her beloved only son and meaningfully developing his cognitive and social intelligences used independently while studying and mingling with others.

Key words: women invitational leaderships, mind map, social intelligence, cognitive intelligence

I. Introduction
As a rule, becoming a single mother after spousal death is something that we do not really want to expect in our lives, however, if it happens to us, there will be two possibilities we will gain, namely either it drives us nuts or blesses us in disguise. If we think that it drives us nuts, it is considerably bothering us to dead. It means
that it is quite difficult for us to accept the reality of becoming a single parent and further more we frequently end up desperately in frustrations and complaints at all times. Conversely, if we think that it blesses us in disguise, we will positively consider our new single parent status as a challenge and fervor that allow us to be sincerely strong and challenged.

The author in this case totally follows the second option, namely becoming a single parent after her spousal death allows herself to gain blessings in disguise. Some obstacles hit like a tidal wave, sweeping us in a storm of feelings, emotions and physical demands. It is difficult to find out our feet as we struggle to get through each day. Summoning the courage to look for opportunities may begin only after she decides to move forward, step by painful step. After a few days of tears, the author took the lead. She committed to the good “recovery.” Then she rolled up her sleeves and began an intense journey to pull her beloved son into her challenging world.

Finding out the realities, the author then attempts to contribute and share her strategies when leading her only bereaved child, an eleven-year-old son now, to become an independent learner who is able to socially and intelligently manage himself with his social environment and academic achievement especially after the loss of his beloved father. Hopefully, the leadership strategies can be applied by other single parents when arriving at mostly handling their young kids with their managing studies independently, and other social development that surely lead them to be an independent, creative, and analytical learner without leaving any burdens on their parents’ shoulders.

Statement of The Problem

Statement of the problem is concerning with how the author as a single parent woman after her spousal death appropriately leads her son to be an intelligently creative, practical and socially competent child after his parental death.

II. Method

Subject

The subject of the study was totally concerning with the author’s son who was bereft of his beloved father two years ago. Absolutely, he did not understand the real situation which happened exactly in the middle of his adoring his father. Nevertheless, the author believed that it did hurt her little son to death for he could not express properly his bereavement at that time.

Data Collection

The study was totally based on the qualitative type of research which was reflectively derived from the author’s close observations on her son’s mingling around
and coping with his peers at school and others as well when dealing with his academic achievements he attained especially after the demise of his father.

III. Theoretical Background

Death is a difficult fact of life for us to come to terms with, however, it is even awfully hard for kids who have not yet comprehended the full meaning of death itself. According to Eppier, a professional School Counseling, in Exploring Themes of Resiliency in Children After the Death of a Parent, research has been revealed that aspects such as individual attributes (intelligence, communication skills, positive self-concept), and emotional ties within the family foster the ability to cope and thrive in kids’ difficult circumstances. (2001)

Obviously, the emotional ties refer to how close and tight relationship is built between parent and kid themselves. Thus, the more communicative and collaborative their relationship is, the stronger their emotional ties fostered within them. To positively overcome the situation, some certain styles of leadership are surely required, namely women and invitational leaderships.

“Women leadership in early childhood appears to define power differently from men and do not appear to be interested in displays of power. This style of leadership is exercised in a climate of reciprocal relationships were the leader seeks to act with others rather than assert power over others” (Porter, 1997). In Leadership Theory and Practice, Northouse stated that there were some significant aspects of leadership, such as how a leader influences followers because without influence, leadership is not effective (1997). This means that leadership has to direct followers or individuals to achieve certain goals. The following aspect is the followers are involved together in the leadership process. A leader needs followers and a follower needs a leader. However, Northouse also mentioned that although leaders and followers were strongly related, it was the leader who frequently initiated the relationship, created the communication, and was responsible for maintaining the relationship (1997), According to Rodd, “this female approach is based on collaboration and tends to see themselves as member of the team. Such leaders are committed to young children and their well being as well as to caring for the staff and others associated with the organisation.” (1998)

Rodd then listed the commonly accepted leadership behavior, as follows:

1. Vision behavior - creating a vision and taking appropriate risks to bring about change. Similarly, Laura stated that many of us concerned with a vision of what family life was really like and lacking a shared vision in a family. (2002) Thus, bringing up a vision in our lives, we obviously come up against our hardships and ignite a powerful energy to foster growth with our families.
2. People confirms - providing caring and respect for individual differences. Laura also confirms, "Every individual has a unique potential. We really can not bend our kids in the direction we think would be best for them." (2002)

3. Influence behavior - acting collaboratively

4. Values behavior - trust and openness.

Those aforementioned characteristics reflect in invitational leadership likewise.

Rodd states, "Invitational leadership is an attempt focus on an educator’s desires, understandings and actions in order to create a total environment that appreciates individuals’ uniqueness and calls forth their potential."(1998) This means that we should carefully realize and understand that everyone is a unique creature that possesses his or her own ability. It surely becomes our responsibilities as leaders to be able to foster and help our kids develop their skills to later achieve their aspirations.

According to Rodd, listed down the five basic a leader should possess when leading and dealing with others (1998):

- Respect : people are valuable, able and responsible, and should be treated in ways that acknowledge and extend their worth, talents and abilities to take ownership for their actions.
- Trust : education is a co-operative, collaborative activity in which mutuality can be enhanced.
- Care : the process as the product in the making because how you go about doing something affects what you end up with.
- Optimism : people possess untapped and unknown potential in all areas of human endeavour.
- Intentionality : human potential can be realized best by processes and programmes specifically designed to invite development by people who are personally and professionally inviting with themselves and others.

On the whole, should we appropriately apply those aforementioned leadership strategies to our children, we will as well gain the similar traits conducted previously by our children. In other words, if you plan corn, you will reap the corn. Additionally, Omrod (2006) states, “Parenting styles appear to play a role in children’s personal, social, and moral development”.

Next, as quoted by Futris in The Impact of Parental Death on Children, “Children who have experienced the loss of a parent typically experience intense grief and sadness, social withdrawal, and declines in academic performance”(2001).

To help her son independently foster both his cognitive and social thinking skills, she encourages him to be keen on reading and applying mind maps to gain meaningful
learning while studying.

When students engage in activities that help them organize what they are studying, they learn more effectively. "One useful way of organizing information is to make mind map. Mind mapping is a technique to increase meaningful learning in sciences and other subjects which is used to stimulate the generation of ideas, and is believed to aid creativity" (Omrod, 2001). At any rate, "Students facilitate sense-making and meaningful learning on the part of actively making connections among ideas. By focusing on how key concepts relate to one another, students organize material better." (Omrod, 2006)

Another way to increase more meaningful learning is by encouraging kid to love reading. Omrod stated that meaningful learning refer to the cognitive process in which learners related knew information to things they already knew or prior knowledge. What is more, according to Omrod, "Prior knowledge can be derived mostly from books. Thus, if students have abundantly previous knowledge to which they can relate new information, they can engage in meaningful learning that help them enhance their academic and social intelligences. "Similarly, as quoted by Omrod", Piaget suggests that words help children mentally represent and think about external objects and events and that language in general is critical for the social interactions that enable children to think less egocentrically and more logically." From an information processing point of view, much of the knowledge that children acquire about their world comes to them through books (Omrod 2001).

What is more, according to Widarmono (2006) in Membaca dan Agresivitas, two researches Miles and Stipek from USA, did a survey on the child development. They came across that there were some relationships between student's reading ability and aggressiveness. The lower the students' reading ability was especially in grade 3, the more aggressive attitudes the students would possess, such as bullying, impatient, mischievous, and fighting. Eventually, they became worse in grade 5 for they conducted much more responsibilities, frustrations especially dealing with reading and more complicated subjects they had to face up.

On the contrary, the higher students' reading ability was, the easier they were being controlled. These students possessed rich and positive attitudes for they were as a rule able to see themselves and understand others. Certainly, integrating their previous knowledge, information and experiences they had had beforehand from reading books, they are capable of comprehending and tolerating with others, such as easily getting along with others, helping and respecting others (Omrod, 2006).
IV. Discussions and Results

Vision Behavior and results

In this first aspect the author creates her vision for her son and then summons up all her courage to take appropriate risks to bring him about to change.

The author’s vision for his son is to appropriately lead him to be an intelligently creative, analytical and practical child who is able to develop his cognitive, creative, and social skills in solving any problems he encounters every day, and maintain his relationships with others around him. In order to enhance those positive attitudes, the author always includes her positive attitudes, such as respect, trust, care, and collaborative manners when interacting with him. She then receives the similar positive attitudes likewise from her son who eventually conducts the same things to others.

In result, her son knows a lot about fulfilling this vision, such as appropriately behaves, treats, and gently gets along with his friends, teachers and his mother especially. Apart from being a good academic student with mostly excellent scores at his school, he is such an awfully benign companion who like offering helps and cooperation to others. According to his teacher, once he helped his new friend whose attitudes were not welcomed and reckoned by his other friends in his class was then taught and helped on the certain difficult left-behind subjects. What is more, he was successfully leading some troublesome peers who were totally excluded by his other friends, to become the ones who were accepted by other students in his class. In fact, he constantly got Bs for his good attitudes.

Next, to develop his cognitive intelligence, the author then keeps encouraging him to apply concept maps while studying and reminding him to always be keen on reading which can mostly develop also his intelligent and social skills while mingling around with his peers.

People Behavior and results

In this second aspect, a leader should care, tolerate and respect for individual differences. As a single parent, the author in this case has to realize all the time that everyone is unique, and nobody is perfect, so everyone should be highly valued and appreciated on his or her uniqueness. It becomes our responsibilities as leaders to lead him or her to fervently develop their potentials. Similarly, laura writes “We do not have ownership of our kids for they have already had their own path which we can not comprehend” (2002).

Since the author’s son is still in his middle childhood that is according to Piaget’s third stage of cognitive development called concrete operational stage so it is about time for her to start looking up on all of her son’s unique differences. In this stage, a child starts reasoning logically but his or her cognitive development is not yet complete (Mooney, 2000) However, it can develop appropriately if one leads him or her
appropriately likewise. Hence, the author always makes sure that she has fully given her son opportunities to express all his ideas in order to respect his differences and leads him as well to be creative and critical. For instance, rarely, does she force him to follow her option on how to solve problems when studying mathematics or other subjects. However, she always gives him freedom and opportunities to work out by himself providing that he arrives at the right path and solution. Thus, she does believe that the more she understands his differences, the more her son respects her. As a result, she inevitably enhances his cognitive intelligence to accomplish his learning goals.

Next, in regard to providing care, the author really tolerates with his existence. She always cares for what he has done with all of his efforts, and then supports all of his notions and always pumps up his fervor in attaining better outcomes in his study. As a result, he mutually respects likewise his parent’s decisions and viewpoints because his mom conducts the same thing to him. Never, does he looks down on his diverse friends, but he always sees their positive sides only.

**Influence Behavior and Results**

As a single parent, the author totally agrees with building up team works in her family, especially with her beloved son. She believes that the dominant parents tend to frequently ruin their own family, so she thinks that she can not successfully lead her son without collaborating with him. To her, collaboration is very crucial in her family because by imparting it to her son, she in return can gain “healthy” atmosphere, namely building trust and respect each other. For instance, she supports her son to make up his own daily schedule that mostly involves studying and doing small chores at home, such as doing the dishes after meals and properly tidying up his properties and other things around the house. What is more, she always puts trust on him concerning with his studies and he never misuses her trust. Certainly, this can enhance their mutual trust and care, and also can empower him to develop his potentials and to conduct self-disciplines. Take for example, once her son asked her to buy for another English dictionary though actually he has already had one, but it was unfortunately torn off. Yet, he could understand her mom’s limited time and getting tight up with her office responsibilities. Surprisingly, he then fixed the broken dictionary and confirmed the following day that her mom did not need to purchase the new one because he still could use the old one. This occurrence fortunately also taught him to eventually be self-disciplined and frugal.

**Value Behavior and Results**

This last aspect of leadership really values trust and openness as positive attitudes to be developed when leading followers. Of course, by trusting and being open with one another, the author’s relationships with her son become stronger and stronger every day. For instance, his mother totally puts all her trusts on him when dealing with his school matters. She can easily conduct her daily activities without babysitting him
all the time when dealing with his school subjects. Never, does he hide his problems at school regarding with the academic fulfilment and relationships with his friends. He can freely keep consulting and communicating with his mother on school problems every day. This really consoles and helps us create relaxed and happy atmosphere at home after coming from tight and busy day at her office. These positive attitudes also bring up good effects and constant improvements on his school achievement.

Mind Map and Results

To develop and strengthen her son’s cognitive skills, the author then follows the advantages of using mind maps or concept maps. Adjusting to mind-mapping, he can then easily make sense of any subjects. Instead, using mind maps regularly can also strengthen his memory by retrieving, tracing, and integrating all the information he had had previously, with his current information In this case, the more frequent he assimilates the coming information or knowledge, the more he uses long-term memory to deal with. As a result, the more he retrieves information from long-term memory, the more meaningful learning he will experience. In the long run, the more he applies mind maps or concept maps, the more meaningful learning he will attain. Obviously, as he is considered a typically creative child, this strategy really supports him to be so occupied and dominant with his own ideas that he can freely manage, develop his own ways, and maximize his capabilities while learning. So far, he proudly has been survived to be one of the outstanding learners who mostly achieved the best scores in his classes.

Boost Reading ! and Results

Another strategy to enhance her son’s cognitive skills and social intelligent attitudes is boost reading. Craving for books is an excellent way for him to gain any sources of information and widen his horizon to which then be applied in helping him respect and understand others, and improving his studies likewise. As a result, she finds out that her son loves reading. Rarely, does he miss any single day without reading. He really is a bookworm.

What is more, fostering his reading abilities, he can constantly gain better academic achievements and build conducive relationships with his peers and mother especially. Those are all because he is able to integrate all his knowledge and information he customarily derives from reading with his real life and then apply them to cope with any hardships he encounters every day.
V. CONCLUSION

Indeed, being a single parent is not an easy task, however, if we totally commit ourselves to open our hearts in following appropriate strategies of directing our lives, we will then certainly produce more meaningful, and challenging moments, such as she can lead her son to be cognitively intelligent that really makes him become independent, creative and practical learner. Instead, he also becomes socially intelligent who is capable of building strong relationships with his peers around and maintaining positive attitudes with his mother especially. To attain those attitudes, such as respectful, trustful, caring, and collaborative, the author in this case simply applies the women invitational leaderships whose aspects have greatly ignited and brought about positive impacts on her son's social development and cognitive intelligence.

Strengthening his cognitive skills, the author strongly keep asking her son to benefit from concept/mind mapping that can help him become an independent learner without interfering his mom's daily activities while studying, encouraging him at all times to be a bookworm constitutes another strategy likewise to develop his social awareness. What's more, he would be able to diversely see, understand, and respect others because of his experiences and infinite information he had experienced from books.
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