

GO ASTRAY

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First, in your dedication to the teaching of young people, in your dedication to the development of better human beings, as you encourage sincerity, honesty, and responsibility in your students, are you being sincere, honest, and responsible with them? Secondly, do you have faith in your pupils? Thirdly, are you encouraging them to take the first steps toward shared responsibility? Lastly, when pupils do a good job do you give them due recognition?

These challenges have been given to clarify the fact that we must have a happy medium of creativeness and cooperativeness on the part of our teachers in order that our goals of desirable citizenship, character, personality, and thinking ability will develop among our children—and that grim spectre—Juvenile Delinquency, will turn clanking bitter disappointment away from its schools and in this way, away from every home in the Philippines.

In order that these goals can be achieved, a formula can be suggested:

The formula is *harmonious behavior* plus *useful participation* with two abilities—the ability to get along with other people and the ability to adjust to changing situations—to be developed through two practices—carrying on active participation and sharing responsibility.

In this development of desirable behavior patterns, as the forces for juvenile delinquency, the school environment too, looms as an important factor. Environment is more than the sum of physical surroundings and personalities. It includes the things that children do; the acts of citizenship that they practice; the opportunities that they practice; the opportunities that they have to think to make decisions, to take responsibilities.

If then, we are set on stamping out those factors that breed juvenile delinquency and are bent on setting up those conditions conducive to the development of desirable behavior patterns, let us consider what the school and its environment itself can contribute to mental and physical health; let us search for realistic means of developing a school community code; let us examine carefully our own attitudes; let us provide the opportunity for children to make real decisions and to take carefully graduated responsibilities; let us give children an abundance of practice in the skills of citizenship; and let us be elastic enough in our thinking and working to try a new way of doing things when we are convinced of its value and to part with a practice—new or old—when we know it is useless.

And one thing we are convinced now as to its value is an all out coordination of all efforts to develop citizenship, personality, character, and thinking ability in every classroom, home, nook, and cranny of every community—for then and there only would the problem of juvenile delinquency disappear from our midst!