



Planting and harvesting

Today we will focus on how the past affects the present, and the importance of investing in the present to impact the future.

We want to share with you some examples to help you relate it to the lives of the children who came to your family after already having started their story.

When you plant a plant, you usually make sure the soil is good, that you have the right temperature. You may even do some research to know if the plant needs more light or more shade and sometimes you add fertilizer to make sure it grows in the best possible way.

But what happens when they give you a plant already planted in a small pot where you had nothing to do with the soil, the type of water or if it had the necessary nutrients?



Sometimes we realize when the days go by that something is not right, and we decide to investigate. We try to change the pot, put new soil and look for the best place in the house for the plant.

But if we change the whole soil at once, it could also affect the plant, sometimes we have to make the transition little by little so that the plant gets used to the new soil. And we start testing out in different corners of the house until we find the best place where it receives enough sun, shade and we make sure to pour water as often as needed.

If we pay attention to this example, and see the patience or dedication that some people put in their plants, we can use this analogy for the care of the children that God has brought into our families, either by adoption or as a foster family.

These children grew up in an environment where 100% of them did not receive what they needed. Sometimes they received things they did not need.

- The first thing they **did not receive, was a pleasant welcome** by their biological parents, some from the womb, others from birth, and others, some time later for many different reasons.
- The second thing they might have received was **abuse, mistreatment or neglect**. Some may have lacked adequate nutrition, stimulation and a safe and protective environment.
- Then they met some strangers in a different place than they were born, either hospitals: cold and isolated, connected to tubes, exposed to surgeries, treatments and exams **without a warm figure, attentive to their needs**, or were taken to homes or shelters full of other children. Sometimes the caregivers did not know what to do with them, or they could not provide everything they needed because of lack of

time or resources.

- Some hoped to return to their parents, or dreamed of an adoptive family, and found themselves with people that were little capable or inattentive, who instead of providing the best environment for them, **hurt their hearts** and had to be taken out for return to the previous place.

**How do you think the hope they had looked like after all this?
Hurt or even broken completely.**

- And finally, in one way or another, they make it to your family, and we realize that the soil was not clean, plowed, prepared, or cultivated. The necessary conditions and elements were contaminated or not present. But sometimes we expect them to grow and respond as if it was. **We are reaping what someone else sowed, watered, fed, or ... didn't.**

In spite of all of the above, we have the opportunity to take advantage of this new chapter to clean the soil, prune the dry twigs, give it the air, light and the necessary conditions for the plant to heal. For our children heal.

Every day, as the sun rises, we have a new opportunity to continue sowing and working so that the result is better.

From abandonment, to an institution, to a forever family.



Regardless of their origin or previous story, the children who were institutionalized had an invisible connection with their biological family. From the womb of their mothers, they were being influenced by the events, emotions and decisions of the couple. There was already a connection, some sounds that he liked or scared him, some flavors that satiated his little body or the lack of them.

But there was also an invisible thread that had already begun to form since the couple decided to adopt the child who was in a shelter waiting to have parents.

And although he is now in a new family, yours, ours,

his story began to be written in his heart before he knew you and even though they may have wanted to erase it, they cannot, and sometimes they do not want to because they are afraid to get lost.

Sometimes it's scary to not know what's going to happen, other times it's the fear for what has already happened, that's why they seek (and we seek) to protect us the way we learned, sometimes it's through withdrawal, to look for someone to blame, to fight or defend ourselves.

But there is a better option, which although it is more difficult and sometimes painful, is what will produce healing and true change: Look inward. Recognize that it is difficult, that we were not prepared, that there are things that hurt us, that we do not understand, that sometimes we doubt, that we feel attacked, rejected, impotent and even tired of repeating things over and over again.

But why do we feel this way? What were we expecting?

We need to acknowledge the importance of taking the role we have decided to enter into, that of adoptive or foster parents, and we are those adults. And if we do not have the capacity or the tools, we can learn. And be aware, that the most important thing is the relationship that we are going to build, or that we are building.

- Treat them with kindness and don't be aggressive, even when they act this way.
- Be available when they need you, remember that most likely they did not have a person attentive and connected to them the first months or years of their life.
- Tune in to their needs, emotions and fears.
- Help them recognize what is happening and what they are feeling and teach them what to do with it.
- Show them what is not right and how to do it right.
- Be present unconditionally, even if they hurt us with their hands or feet, say hurtful words or make mistakes a thousand times.
- Recognize that they are defending themselves from the image they have of what parents can be, those they knew were not reliable, how are they supposed to know that you will be? By persevere in the day to day.

Adopting or fostering a child who went through trauma during the first months or years of his life is not to satisfy a personal need or fill a void, it is really to give your life for that creature that feels helpless, rejected and underappreciated, who does not know who he is, nor his purpose in life yet.

Sometimes children are afraid if this time they will be accepted by someone, or that you will really love them.

The qualities for the relationship mentioned above that you will be working in, will help shape your child's brain in a new and healthier way. The brain was designed in a creative and powerful way by our Creator and has the possibility to be renewed and heal.

While the mind and behavior are changing, the brain is also healing, therefore, their development will improve and they will have greater chances of success in life.

But what about us? We will die in the attempt?

No, there is Someone who takes care of us, who was willing to come out of love, aware of our weaknesses, mistakes and failures, Someone that is willing to give us His strength, Someone who can be our refuge, someone who forgives us and lifts us up every time, if we allow Him to.

Reflecting about our own story

In addition to the story of our children and teenagers, our past is also often present in our lives. And so our story adds to theirs. Our fear of the unknown makes us cling to the past, or our fear of the past, makes us fear the future. Our learned habits usually guide our behaviors because we do not know that something new or different exists. Sometimes we are afraid too because we think that they will reject us again.



How many times do we distance our children from us so they can "learn"? How often do we build walls because they have disobeyed us too much?

Give yourself an opportunity, every time the sun rises, remember that it is a new day to try again, to continue preparing the necessary conditions and elements for our plant to grow and heal.

What does the Word say?

The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the wear and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:28-31

Where are you looking for refuge? for strength?

Let us lift up our eyes, and let the one who created us, who chose us and lifted us up, help us to follow the path that lies ahead of us, help us to forgive and forgive ourselves, to heal and be healed.

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¡Mantente informado!

