

# When will we grow?

By Faiez H. Seyal

In the past about ten years of my coaching, training, speaking and consulting career in Pakistan, I have met hundreds of thousands of people and this even continues, today. On average, I meet, come across and observe several hundreds of people on a monthly basis and as a habit, either talk to them personally or observe them. In addition, I have been glancing through various newspapers. From all this experience, I have seen some interesting behaviors in the society that highlight the psychology of people. Few of these most-repeated incidences and observations are:

- People killing each other for small money sometimes as small as a few hundreds of rupees
- Bosses firing or penalizing their subordinates because they told them that he/she was wrong
- People changing their loyalties with other people, organizations, political parties, over-night
- People frequently changing their preferences, likes and dislikes
- Spouses changing their loyalties with their spouses for small gains
- People becoming furious over small things
- People always wanting things that others have
- People who think they know everything. The moment you tell them something they will give you a shut-up call by telling you, "I know it"
- People not willing to invest in their personal development after their formal education
- People not learning anything from the experiences of others
- People always complaining and blaming others for their own "wrong-doings"
- People trying to solve their problems by guesses, chances, and "trial-and-error"
- People choosing to do something without looking into consequences and then regretting later on
- People choosing one of the two extremes, either this or that and not realizing that there is a lot in between
- People punishing others many folds more than the size or magnitude of their mistakes

These are some of the most-common behaviors witnessed today in our "adults". The question thus, arises, "why do we do this?" My simple answer is that these "childish" behaviors are due to the fact that most of the people are grown physically but are still a "child" in each of other three dimensions, i.e. emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Let me make it easy for you. Physical growth of all living beings is natural; meaning we grow regardless of any effort made to this end. The same way as animals, plants and other creatures would grow naturally. However, humans are also blessed with three other dimensions, i.e. mental, emotional and spiritual and we are responsible for our growth in these three dimensions, meaning the growth of our mind, heart and soul. Humans have to make a conscious effort to this end. It means that unless we made a conscious and a sincere effort to grow in these three areas, we will remain "un-developed" like a child regardless of the fact that how 'big' we have grown physically i.e., in terms of our body. This phenomenon is very common that we see someone, who is:

- Physically**, a grown up (man or woman) fully aware of all of his physical needs and ready to take the responsibility of life, whereas, he/she is, in fact,
- Mentally**, like a child, who does not even know what the "life" means? Whose mind is full of learning of others that he/she was taught in his school/college education and he/she thinks that he/she has a lot but unfortunately, does not realize that it is the "accumulation" of others and he/she has nothing of his/her own
- Emotionally**, like a child who is only concerned with his/her own emotional needs and feelings regardless of the their effects on others
- And Spiritually**, again like a child who does not even know what a soul means? What is the purpose of life? Why he/she was born? How he/she can contribute in the society? Why he/she have what he/she have and what and why is something missing?

The above-mentioned behaviors are just a few of the most-common behaviors. There are hundreds of others. A complete list of these behaviors is not possible, here. However I have a very interesting learning to this end that I would like to share with you. It also answers a question that may come in the mind of a few. A question that: "Is there any major guideline or a yardstick that determines if someone is acting like a child?" I think that you would agree with me that it is extremely difficult to generalize anything regarding "people". However, there are nine (9) general traits that I have listed down, if you see any of these in someone you can be assured that one is being a "Child" as they accommodate over ninety (90) percent of all the behaviors.

1. **One who cannot concentrate or focus on one thing.** There are many people, who cannot focus on one thing. You will find them doing one thing, one day and they will be absolutely passionate and crazy for it and would give several justifications for choosing that. The next day they will have as many excuses for it and several justifications for their “new” passion. It is a very common “childish” behavior. Children cannot focus on one thing for long enough. While playing with a toy, if they find something else that seems more interesting, they immediately turn their attention to the new toy or experience. You give them a work or watch them playing with sand trying to make a house. If they cannot make one in a few tries, they will forget about it and start doing something else. They lack patience, persistence and focus.
2. **One always wanting something others have and forgetting about one’s own belongings.** There are people who have no personal choices or may be they are not sure about them. Today they want “Corolla”, the next day they want “Civic” and the very next day they start striving for “Pajero”. You give them their “dream” 4-bed room house, and the next day after looking at a relative or friend’s 6-bedroom, two-kanal house, they want that. They always like other’s belongings. These are the people, who would even find something wrong in their “spouses” regardless of the efforts they may have made to marry him/her, the moment they find something good in other’s “spouses”. They always forget what they have and always want what other’s have. These are the people who keep on marrying many times, if they do, in “search of excellence” but every time within a few months, are striving for someone else. Just like a child, never happy with their toy for long enough. You get your child something that he/she desired for a long time, and the moment he/she sees some other toys he/she would want that.
3. **One who thinks that he/she has enough of knowledge and does not need more.** There are people, whose professional or personal life is a mess. But if you told them to go to a psychologist, a counselor, or buy a book or go to a training program, they take it as someone is telling them that they are “no” good to fix it at their own and must consult someone who knows better than them. They take it as an “abuse” and would get defensive. Then they would tell you that they know everything, it is only that something is not working right now. They do not read, and even if they do it is not more than a “fairytale” story digest. They are just like a child, who always thinks that he/she knows everything about his/her subjects and the only thing that he/she needs to read is a story-book.
4. **One whose life does not show a “balanced approach”.** There are other people who would do various things that they like in excess, and won’t even consider other things that they may not like. If they like something, no matter, if it is a food item, an activity, a game, a sport, they will go crazy in doing it in excess. On the other hand, if they do not like a few things, they will not even try doing it to see that they may like it, once they do it. You will find many people around you who will go crazy for fashion. Also many who would forget about everything if they are sitting and watching either cricket or wrestling. And then many who are totally aloof from religion, and a few others who are totally cut-off from life and just continue worshipping. There are few who are totally bent towards their wives and children and ignore their obligations towards their parents and others who are totally bent towards their parents and ignore their wives and children. Just like a child who also does not know how to balance life between pleasure, leisure, work and education, they also cannot balance their rights and obligations.
5. **One who would act without considering the consequences of his/her actions.** The society is full of people who act without considering the consequences of their actions on self as well as on others. You see people eating, drinking or smoking in excess, without even taking a minute to see what price they may pay for this. Who does not know that being over-weight brings a number of diseases, still they eat in excess. Many people have divorced their spouses and now are in pain. Few even killed a dear one while driven by emotions and are regretting since then. People abuse, lie, cheat, steal, and what not just because they do not consider the price they will pay for their actions. Many parents live with each other in severe pain because of their myth that they are sacrificing a better quality of life that they can have without each other, just for the sake of their children. They do not consider that what type of parents their children will become when they grow up. There are several families where one of the parents have been involved in illegitimate relationships for years but are now in agony when they see their children doing exactly the same. Just like a child who will jump from the roof trying to fly without knowing the consequences, this society is full of grown-up “children” who would do exactly the same. Remember the “law of nature” that suggests that there is a price for every act, good or bad and we will pay the price for our actions, now or later. Unlike the child, the “real” grown-ups would always keep the end in mind before choosing to do something.
6. **One who solves life problems with “trial-and-error” method.** We also see many people around us who are trying to solve the real-life issue with guesses, chances, and “trial-and-error”. Instead of making choices based on reasoning and arguments, they choose to do it otherwise, i.e. “let’s see how it goes”. Throughout the life, they keep on making blunders and on top of that, instead of learning from their blunders, keep on doing the same. These people are unaware of the fact of life that there are a few “laws of nature” and we cannot do against them without harming ourselves. Instead of reinventing our own laws, we need to understand and surrender to those laws. I know many people who have married four times and more hoping that the experience will be better this time. But unfortunately their analysis of what was wrong with their first marriage was wrong by

itself. They tried the second time and again concluded something else and then again the same thing happened and so on. They could have saved themselves from all this trouble if instead of “trial-and-error” they had understood and surrendered to the truths of life. How can one be a good husband or wife, if he/she is not a good human being? How many times, the life will keep on giving us opportunities and chances. Life is much more than a compromise and/or a bargain. Life is to live not a “prep” or “kindergarten” preparing us to live. God has already given us all the “do’s” and “don’ts”, so we could live in full. Then there is a second category, which instead of learning from the truths of lives and building upon those, prefer to act upon advises of others. Just like a child, who when gets tired of doing various things and develops self-doubt, they also feel safe in asking their “parents” as to what is right and then do whatever they are told to do even if parents did not know it either.

7. **One who would become “over-grievous” over small losses and “over-jubilant” over small joys.** You see people celebrating small joys for months, by blocking roads, firing, fire-works, parties, music, loud-speakers, sprinkling rose-petals on roads, dancing, etc. and the next moment if there is a loss, either a business or life, they cry, they scream, etc. and do it for months and years. Looking at these two extremes, one may wonder as to why do they do it. The answer is very simple. These “so-called” adults cannot control their emotions. They cannot even differentiate as to what is a “real” joy and a “real” grief. Ask yourself: “Is a “wedding” or a “birthday” or a “business gain” a REAL joy. These are very temporary things and also somehow natural. Everyone marries. The real happiness is living together, forever while nurturing and developing each other. Assisting each other in becoming better, everyday. It is also natural that we will grow “older” with each passing year. The question is either we are grown in the true sense of the word or not. On the other hand, death is natural. The question is how you look at it. Is it the end of life, or a beginning of a “new” life? In many cases, I have even seen member of the family showing their “grief” over the death of a member whose life was “terrible”, because of the pains and sufferings and many times even caused by the same family who is now showing “grief” over the death. Well, cutting it short, the “Quran” highlights the ways of celebrating as well as grief and in both cases, it must be in moderation. In case of marriages, a simple “nikkah” followed by a “walima” and in case of death grief for only three days without screaming. Why it is childish behavior, because one moment the child is crying over a small pain or a loss of toy, and the next moment you give him/her a “lolly-pop” or tell a “story”, he/she will be laughing, jumping and clapping.
8. **One who does not realize the ratio between crime and punishment.** You see people in the society, who go crazy for the revenge to the extent that they will use all the force and resources they have to punish the person, regardless of the size of his/her mistake and/or crime. People kill people for small money or just an abuse. Husbands kill wives because of her arguments or questioning as to what he is up to. In-laws burning daughter-in-law to death, because her parents could not buy their son a motorbike or a TV. Husband slapping and abusing his wife because the meal was not warm enough. Bosses’ making their subordinates’ lives miserable and ruining his/her career because he/she refused to help him/her in his/her wrongdoings. And the list goes on and daily newspapers are full of these news. Well it is obvious that there is no ratio between the mistake/crime and the punishment. The punishment is much more than the “so-called” mistake, even if it is. What exactly is happening is that people are punishing others, using all the resources, i.e. money, power, contacts, physical strength, etc. they have. Now the question arises, why this behavior is childish. Well simply, because the child also does not realize the ratio between crime and punishment. If he/she wants to punish someone who has harmed him/her, he/she will use all the resources, i.e. the power, a stick, a ruler, a bat, a book, a pen, or may be just ink, etc. he/she had to take the revenge.
9. **One who always complain and blame.** Then there is a majority, who falls under this category. The society is full of people, who always find someone responsible for whatever has happened to them. They are always complaining and blaming. If they fail in exam, it is because of the education system, the bad mood of the examiner, due to father who did not provide him/her with a car or an AC in the room, etc. If they are not promoted, again it is because that they did not have the “safarish” or may be because of boss’s unlikeliness for them. If they are denied of a job, it is also because of “safarish”, etc. If there is a problem in the relationship, it is always due to the other partner. If the relationship with children is tense, it is because the children are not what they used to be, etc. Just like a child they do not accept the responsibility of life, and feel good in telling others and themselves, that it is not due to their own incapability and negative attitude but because of others. You see the same in children. They are always complaining and blaming. Teacher did this to me. Daddy does not love me. Mommy did this to me. Aslam did this to me. Ayesha does not like me anymore. Aunt did not kiss me. Uncle ignored me. Knife cut my hand. Stairs made me fall. Sleepers made me slip. Electric socket gave me a shock. Cycle hit me etc.

I leave you here with a request let’s grow up and accept the responsibility of our mental, emotional and spiritual growth, before it is too late.

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