

**EFFICACY OF EFFECTIVE
PARENTING IN DAVID BALDACCI'S
*ONE SUMMER.***

Mrs. M. K. Priyanka

Assistant Professor of English (Guest Faculty)

Government Arts and Science College

Thittamalai, Nambiyur-638458.

&

Dr. M. R. Kumaraswamy

Head, Department of English

Gobi Arts and Science College

Gobichettipalayam-638453, Tamilnadu.

Email: emmarkumar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Parenting is the process of endorsing and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. The skills differ and a parent or a surrogate with good parenting skills may be called as a good parent. Children, who are not nurtured properly fall a prey to the wild attractions and lose their valuable innocence at a very young age. They lose interest in creative skills and

become depressed and stressed as they prefer to be alienated from the family members. In *One Summer*, Baldacci writes as skillfully and insightfully about the conduits of the human heart, the twists and turns that come from the toughness of one father's spirit and the revelation of the love that binds a family, in this world and even beyond.

Keywords: Parenting, nurture, emotional, responsibility, relationship, explore.

Introduction:

One Summer is a beautifully written story about family, emancipation and optimism. It has humour, poise and redemption, put forth with humanity and wisdom. Baldacci churns out a grating, contrived family drama about Jack Armstrong, a family man who is ill just praying to make it to Christmas. Sadness abounds, when Jack's wife, Lizzie, is killed in a car wreck while on a medicine run.

Plans are made by Jack's mean mother-in-law Bonnie who plans to put the three kids with the aunts and uncles across the country, and Jack be put into a hospice. Amazingly, Jack's health turns around, and he reclaims his kids and moves from Ohio to South Carolina shore where Lizzie had grown up.

There, he tries to rebuild the family and learns how to be a single parent.

In *One Summer*, Baldacci writes as skillfully and insightfully about the conduits of the human heart as he does about the corridors of power. The twists and turns in this hugely emotional and unforgettable novel come from the toughness of one father's spirit and the revelation of the love that binds a family, in this world and even beyond.

What is Parenting?

Parenting or child nurturing is the process of endorsing and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. The skills differ and a parent or a surrogate with good parenting skills may be called as a good parent. Parenting styles vary according to the time period, race or ethnicity, social class, and other social features. In addition, research supports that parental history both in terms of attachments of differing quality as well as parental psychopathology, particularly in the wake of adverse experiences, can strongly influence parental sensitivity and child outcomes. This becomes clear as in the current society where the children are becoming victims of various dangers in the name of social media, films, internet, video games, mobile phones, etc.

Children, who are not nurtured properly, without guidance, become a prey to the wild attractions and lose their valuable innocence at a very young age. They lose their bliss of childhood and become lost in a world of illusion. They lose interest in creative skills and become depressed and stressed as they prefer to be alienated from the family members.

Parenting refers to the niceties of bringing up a child and not solely for a biological relationship. The caretaker in parenting is the father or the mother, or both biological parent(s) of the child in question, whereas, in a surrogate it may be an older sibling, a step-parent, a grandparent, a legal guardian, aunt, uncle, any other family member or even a family friend. The governments and society may also have a role in child-rearing. In many cases, orphans or abandoned children receive parental care from non-parent or non-blood relations.

Background to *One Summer*:

Jack Armstrong is the protagonist who gets wounded in the army. His wife is Lizzie and they have three kids, Jackie, Cory and the rebellious Michelle. Due to a wound, he was given rest by the army. His only aim was to live till Christmas. Jack was suffering from pain and the doctor told him that he may live for another six or eight months. Jack had made up his

mind that he would not survive because of his tormenting pain. He had no will to continue his life bearing all the pain. On Christmas Eve, as Jack was about to say goodbye to his family, unthinkable tragedy strikes when Lizzie is killed in a car accident. It is now that Jack thinks that living was far harder than dying, and the children's future looked so bleak when something remarkable happened which gave Jack the valuable second chance he'd only would have dreamt of.

The family inherits Lizzie's beautiful childhood home on the ocean front in South Carolina. During an unforgettable summer Jack and the children struggle to rebuild their lives. They learn to live again and to love again. They learn the biggest lesson of all, the importance of a family.

Shattered Jack, his Confidence and Relationship with Michelle:

The death of Lizzie leaves the children stranded. Becky and Frances the older sisters of Lizzie take Jackie and Cory, and Bonny takes Michelle. Jack is not happy but as there is no other choice, he agrees. Jack Armstrong is left in a Care centre and he gets disturbed by the sounds of coughs, gagging and painful cries. Jack thinks of something which would give him peace before he dies.

Lizzie's plan was to take the children to the Palace the following summer. The children come to see Jack. Jack says "No" because he does not want to put his kids through that pain again. Now Jack thinks of death because he says that "It's time, Lizzie, "It's time". At this moment, Mikki tells Jack "I love you much, so much and she leaves saying "Good-bye, Daddy". Jack replies "Good-bye, Michelle". Jack could feel the pain in his chest, and he asks, "What the hell is going on?" Later Jack hears the voice of Lizzie which tells him, "You can do this, honey". This instigates him and he gets a motivation to live. Now he feels good and believes in a "miracle".

Two weeks later Jack celebrated his thirty-fifth birthday by gaining four pounds and in another week he gained another four pounds. Cory and Jackie were extremely happy but Michelle just says "You look stronger, Dad", she doesn't seem satisfied. Then he added another five pounds. The doctor says it is terrific and further says that "Medicine is not everything" to Jack. Finally Jack shows the photo of Lizzie and his children as his support and hope and Jack says that "When you love someone, you love them forever".

Thus his love for Lizzie and the children has made him survive through his hardships. His strong desire to nurture his children makes him fight against the wounds and his health

revives successfully for the sake of his family. Two days later, Jack eats a full meal and adds three more pounds. The doctor says he is normal. But Michelle says that it is only a trick. Now he visualizes Christmas with his family which is now solely his three children and the memory of Lizzie's smile.

Jack goes on to say that Lizzie has given him three beautiful children. Not even death can overcome his feelings for her. He says "My love for you, Lizzie, is stronger than anything". (62) Now Jack makes up his mind that he is not going to waste a second chance to live. On the way to the rehab from hospital, Jack is with Sammy. Cory and Jackie tell their dad that he seems ripped but Mikki in a low voice says "You look great Dad". Jack says that he was missing her more than anything.

After returning home, Jack is keen to have his children at home. After an initial argument with Bonnie, where Bonnie says, "You should have died not her", Jack is able to live with his children. (77) His responsibility in taking care of the kids and his loyalty to Lizzie, he is able to fulfill her wish which ennoble Jack as a good father and husband. Responsibility is a nobler task which is hated by parents of this generation as they send their kids to nursery and crèches to be taken care of. Spending money alone is not parenting, spending quality time

with them, moulding the children's characteristics are the important factors of parenting. Back in Cleveland they all go to the grave of Lizzie and express their emotions. Then they decide to go South Carolina, Channing and stay there as it was Lizzie's lighthouse.

Jack, in the course of time changes the mind of his adolescent daughter by sharing his childhood experiences, hardships and his feelings towards Lizzie. This shows his patience and care and rather than shouting at Mikki's behaviours, he slowly alters her mindset. Jack comes to realize how a little girl could become obsessed over a lighthouse. Jack tells Mikki that "I moved all of us here for to be close to your mom again. Because this place was filled with stuff and that belongs to Lizzie. Every day I'd find something else that she had touched". (265) Mikki comes to know that her father is doing everything for her sake. Jack says, "Life is crazy and maddening and often makes no sense". (266) Later Mikki tells Jack, "We're here for you, Dad. I'm here for you. I'm part of your reality". (266) Jack replies, "I missed a lot of things I shouldn't have. I know it, and so do you". (267)

The parental support leads Mikki to share everything with her father through their bond and she is guided by her father even in her adolescence firmly. This is the mental

maturity many parents are lacking which leads to chaotic relationship. The child-parent bond should not be severed by the adolescence of the kids. Jack serves as a role model in performing his responsibilities as a dutiful father and as a faithful companion to his daughter.

Parenting a young girl, more strain is needed to protect the girl's privacy and to secure the child from the harms of the society. As a father, Jack comes back from death, as a phoenix bird, in order to safeguard his children from the crisis.

Conclusion:

One Summer explores the role of parenting in carving the young children towards mental peace and to live in a moralistic manner. Effective parenting is the ability to interact and engage with children in a way that they learn and grow into remarkable adults. It requires daily attention of the parents towards their children.

Praising statements and allowing them to be independent make the children strong and capable of facing every obstacle in life with boldness. Words and actions of a parent are important because children learn everything from the parents. Children are in the process of learning from their parents. The most important duty of a parent is to give guidance to the children. Even when children commit mistakes,

parents should rectify them in an effective manner instead of punishing. Parents should motivate the children but should not reprimand or treat them in a wrong or humiliating manner.

Spending time with children is the most crucial thing for the children's mental health because nowadays parents concentrate mainly on earning money but they fail to spend time with the family. It disconnects the bond between the family members. Children begin to lose their hopes. Jack Armstrong stands as a remarkable father, who fights with death in order to nurture his children. He thinks that everything is lost, but later he begins to recover and becomes a miracle man because he is able to overcome death and bring his fractured family back together.

The coming together of the family is the result of Jack's selfless efforts, sacrifices, patience and his emotional maturity in handling his children. When he faces difference of opinion and hatred from his most lovable daughter, he never scolds her. He patiently waits for her change of mind and realization. He renders the essential emotional support to his daughter, who is subjected to emotional conflicts because of her adolescence. Parents should teach their children discipline, create an environment of happiness, filled with humour, opinions and

promote learning. Proper communication should be given priority.

Effective parents always look towards the interests and needs of their children with priority, before their own. Effective parents guide their children's mental growth and moral reasoning. Every child has its fundamental needs. Every child should feel safe, secured, loved and valued. These needs should be fulfilled by the parents. In parenting, love should be the guide. Therefore effective parents always care for their children eternally and unconditionally.

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