

**You are encouraged to read the whole book, and please make a proper citation if needed.**

Satir, V. (1988). *The new peoplemaking*. Science and Behavior Books.

1. The family is the context in which a person develops. And the adults in charge are the peoplemakers. (3)
2. In my years as a family therapist, I have found that four aspects of family life keep popping up:
  - The feelings and ideas one has about oneself, which I call self-worth
  - The ways people use to work out meaning with one another, which I call communication
  - The rules people use for how they should feel and act, which eventually develop into what I call the family system
  - The way people relate to other people and institutions outside the family, which I call the link to society
  - Self-worth was low VS self-worth was high
  - Communication was indirect, vague, and not really honest VS communication is direct, clear, specific, and honest
  - Rules were rigid, inhuman, nonnegotiable, and everlasting VS rules are flexible, human, appropriate, and subject to change
  - The family's link to society was fearful, placating, and blaming VS the link to society is open and hopeful, and is based on choice
3. Nurturing family
  - Does it feel good to you to live in your family right now?
  - Do you feel you are living with friends, people you like and trust, and who like and trust you?
  - Is it fun and exciting to be a member of your family?
4. Parents in nurturing families know that their children are not intentionally bad. If someone behaves destructively, parents realize some misunderstanding has arisen or someone's self-esteem is dangerously low. They know people learn only when valuing themselves and feeling valued, so they don't respond to behavior in a way that will make people feel devalued. Even when it is possible to change behavior by shaming or punishing, the resulting scar is not easily or quickly healed. (16)
5. I am convinced that any troubled family can become a nurturing one. First, you need to recognize that your family sometimes is a troubled family. Second, you need to forgive yourself for past mistakes and give yourself permission to change, knowing that things can be different. Third, make a decision to change things.

Fourth, take some action to start the process of change. (18)

6. After years of working with families, I find that I can no longer blame parents, no matter how foolish or destructive their actions may be. I do hold parents responsible for accepting the consequences of their acts and learning to do differently. This is a good first step to improving the whole family situation. (27)
7. Good human relations and appropriate and loving behavior stem from persons who have strong feelings of self-worth. Simply stated, persons who love and value themselves are able to love and value others and treat reality appropriately. Having a strong sense of self-worth is the way to become more fully human, to having health and happiness, gaining and maintaining satisfying relationships, and being appropriate, effective, and responsible. (33)
8. The stronger one's self-worth, the easier it is to have and maintain the courage to change one's behavior. The more one values oneself, the less one demands from others. The less one demands from others, the more one can feel trust. The more one trusts oneself and others, the more one can love. The more one loves others, the less one fears them. The more one knows another, the greater is one's bond and bridge with them. Self-worth behavior will thus help end the isolation and alienation between persons, groups, and nations.
9. I invite you to look at two human facts.
  - Fact 1. I really am the only one exactly like me in this whole world. Therefore, I am guaranteed to be different from everyone in some ways.
  - Fact 2. All human beings have the same basic physical ingredients – feet, arms, heads, etc. – and they are the same relative to each other. Therefore, I am like everyone else in some basic physical ways.
  - Since I am unique, I am different from and the same as everyone else in many ways. (33-4)
10. Your self mandala:
  - Your body – your physical part
  - Youth thoughts – your intellectual part
  - Your feelings – your emotional part
  - Your senses – your sensual parts: eyes, ears, skin, tongue, and nose
  - Your relationship – your interactional part
  - Your context – your space, time, air, color, sound, and temperature
  - Your nutrition – the liquids and solids that you ingest
  - Your soul – your spiritual part
11. Each of these eight parts performs a different task and can be understood separately. However, within a person, no part can function by itself. All parts are interacting with all other parts all the time. This is another way of saying that

whatever happens to one part affects all others. (46)

12. Communication is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships she or he makes with others and what happens to each in the world. (51)

- We bring our bodies – which move and have form and shape
- We bring our values – those concepts that represent each person's way of trying to survive and live a "good" life
- We bring our expectations of the moment, gleaned from past experience
- We bring our sense organs – eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin, which enable us to see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and be touched.
- We bring our ability to talk – words and voice
- We bring our brains – the storehouses of our knowledge

13. My hope is that you can learn to engage yourself fully while listening.

- The listener is giving full attention to the speaker and is fully present
- The listener puts aside any preconceived ideas of what the speaker is going to say
- The listener interprets what is going on descriptively and not judgmentally
- The listener is alert for any confusion and ask questions to get clarity
- The listener lets the speaker know that the speaker has been heard and also the content of what was communicated

14. Placater: Placate so the other person doesn't get mad

- Words: agree – "Whatever you want is okay. I am just here to make you happy."
- Body: appeases – "I am helpless" (shown in victim's posture)
- Insides: "I feel like a nothing; without you I am dead. I am worthless."

15. Blamer: Blame so the other person will regard one as strong (if the person goes away, it will be her or his fault – not one's own)

- Words: disagree – "You never do anything right. What is the matter with you?"
- Body: accuses – "I am the boss around here."
- Insides: "I am lonely and unsuccessful."

16. Computer: Compute so that one deals with the threat as though it were harmless, and one's self-worth hides behind big words and intellectual concepts

- Words: ultrareasonable – "If one were to observe carefully, one might notice the very workworn hands of someone present here."
- Body: computes – "I am calm, cool and collected."
- Insides: "I feel vulnerable."

17. Distracter: Distract so one ignores the threat, behaving as though it were not there (maybe if one does this long enough, it really will go away)

- Words: Irrelevant – The words make no sense or are about an unrelated subject
  - Body: angular – “I’m off somewhere else.”
  - Insides: “Nobody cares. There is no place for me here.”
18. In the placating response, you hide your own needs; in the blaming response, you hide your need for the other person; computing hides your emotional needs and your needs for others. These same needs are ignored in the distractor, who also ignores any relationship to time, space, or purpose. (112)
  19. To apologize without placating, to disagree without blaming, to be reasonable without being inhuman and boring, and to change the subject without distracting give me greater personal satisfaction, less internal pain, and more opportunities for growth and satisfactory relationships with others, to say nothing about increased competence. (108)
  20. Rules have to do with the concept of should and should not. They form a kind of shorthand, which becomes important as soon as two or more people live together. The questions of who makes the rules, from what material are they made, what they do, and what happens when they are broken will be our concerns. (116)
  21. I’m talking about the unwritten rules that govern the freedom to comment of various family members. What can you say in your family about what you feel, think, see, hear, smell, touch, and taste? Can you comment only on what should be rather than what is?
  22. Four major areas are involved with this freedom to comment:
    - What can you say about what you’re seeing and hearing?
    - To whom can you say it?
    - How do you go about it if you disagree or disapprove of someone or something?
    - How do you question when you don’t understand (or do you question)?
  23. The simple fact is that whatever a person sees or hears has an impact on that person. He or she automatically tries to make an internal explanation about it. As we’ve seen, if there is no opportunity to check out the explanation, then that explanation becomes the “fact”. The “fact” may be accurate or inaccurate, but the individual will base her or his actions and opinions on it. (120)
  24. If your rules say that whatever feeling you have is human and therefore acceptable, your self can grow. This is not saying that all actions are acceptable. If the feeling is welcome, you have a good chance to develop different courses of action – and more appropriate action at that. (120)
  25. Now let’s take a look at what you might have discovered about your rules for commenting in three areas

- The human-inhuman sequence means that you ask yourself to live by a rule that is nearly impossible to keep: “No matters what happens, look happy.”
  - In the overt-covert sequence, some rules are out in the open, and some are hidden yet obeyed: “Don’t talk about it. Treat it as though it didn’t exist.”
  - Then there is the constructive-destructive sequence. An example of a constructive way of handling a situation is, “We’ve got a problem about a money shortage this month. Let’s talk about it.” An obstructing or destructive way of handling the same situation is, “Don’t talk to me about your money troubles – that’s your problem.” (128)
26. The family whose rules allow for freedom to comment on everything, whether it be painful, joyous, or sinful, has the best chance of being a nurturing family. I believe that anything that is can be talked about and understood in human terms
- What are your rules?
  - What are they accomplishing for you now?
  - What changes do you now see you need to make?
  - Which of your current rules fit?
  - Which do you want to discard?
  - What new ones do you want to make?
  - What do you think about your rules? Are they overt, human, up to date? Or are they covert, inhuman, and out of date?
27. An operating system consists of the following:
- A purpose or goal. Why does this system exist in the first place? In families, the purpose is to grow new people and to further the growth of those already here.
  - Essential parts. In families, this means adults and children, males and females.
  - An order to the parts’ working. In families, this refers to the various family members’ self-esteem, rules and communication.
  - Power to maintain energy in the system so the parts can work. In families, this power is derived from food, shelter, air, water, activity, and beliefs about the emotional, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual lives of the family members and how they work together.
  - Ways of interacting with the outside. In families, this means relating to changing contents, the new and different.
28. There are two types of systems: closed and open. The main difference between them is the nature of their reactions to change, both from the inside and from the outside. In a closed system, the parts are rigidly connected or disconnected altogether. In either case, information does not flow between parts or from outside

in and inside out. When parts are disconnected, they often appear as if they are operating: information leaks in and out but without any direction. There are no boundaries. (132)

29. An open system is one in which the parts interconnect, are responsive and sensitive to one another, and allow information to flow between the internal and external environments. (132)

30. Closed system

- Self-esteem: low
- Communication: indirect, unclear, unspecific, incongruent, growth-impeding
- Styles: blaming, placating, computing, distracting
- Rules: covert, out-of-date, inhuman rules remain fixed; people change their needs to conform to established rules; restrictions on commenting
- Outcome: accidental, chaotic, destructive, inappropriate

31. Open system

- Self-esteem: high
- Communication: direct, clear, specific, congruent, growth-producing
- Style: leveling
- Rules: overt, up-to-date, human rules; rules change when need arises, full freedom to comment on anything
- Outcome: related to reality; appropriate, constructive

32. Another important part of any system is that it tends to perpetuate itself. Once established, a system will stay the same until it dies or something changes it. Each member in a system is a most significant factor in keeping the system going as it is or changing it. Discovering your part in the system and seeing others' parts is an exciting, although sometimes painful, experience. And you can certainly see the importance of systems when you consider the very life of the family depends on its system to a very large degree. (136-7)

### **The couple: Architects of the family**

1. Our feelings of self-worth have much to do with how we label what a love experience is and what we expect of it. The higher our self-esteem, the less we depend on continual concrete evidence from our spouse that we count. Conversely, the lower our sense of self, the more we tend to depend on continual assurances, which lead to mistaken notions about what love can do. (142)
2. I have come to learn, sadly enough, that most failures are due largely to ignorance – ignorance that is due to naïve and unrealistic expectations about what love can do, and the inability to communicate clearly. (144)

3. Without necessarily knowing it, parents are the architects of their children's romantic and sexual selves. Familiarity exerts a powerful pull. What we have observed and experienced day after day exerts a powerful influence. (144)
4. Every couple has three parts: you, me, and us; two people, three parts, each significant, each having a life of its own. Each makes the other more possible. Thus, I make you more possible, you make me more possible, I make us more possible, you make us more possible, and we together make each other more possible. (145)
5. How these three parts work is a part of what I call the process, which is crucially important in marriage. For example, couples need to reach decisions about things the two of them now do together that they once handled alone – such as money, food, fun, work, and religion. Love is the feeling that begins a marriage, but it is the day-to-day living – their process – that will determine how the marriage works. (145)
6. I find that love can truly flourish only where there is room for all three parts, and no one part dominates. The single most crucial factor in love relationships is the feeling of worth each person has for self. In turn, this affects how each person expresses self-worth, what demands are made of each other, and how each acts toward the other as a result. (145)
7. During courtship, two prospective mates see each other by plan. They arrange their lives to make time for one another. Each knows the other has made being together a priority. This naturally gives each the feeling that the other sees him or her as a Very Important Person. After marriage, this feeling is subject to drastic changes. In courtship it is easy to forget that the loved one has family, friends, work responsibilities, special interests, and other obligations. Courtship is a rather artificial situation as far as life is concerned. After marriage, these other life connections reappear and compete for attention. When one partner has felt he or she was everything to the other person and must now share with a lot of outside persons and responsibilities, trouble can begin. (149)
8. Again, mutual attraction is not enough. How you get along with someone, what you expect from marriage, and how you communicate with each other are strong factors in what kind of marriage you create together. (151)
9. One basic problem is that our society builds the marital relationship almost completely on love and then imposes demands on it that love alone can never fulfill:
  - If you love me, you won't do anything without me.
  - If you love me, you'll do what I say.
  - If you love me, you'll give me what I want.

- If you love me, you'll know what I want before I ask.
10. Another myth that corrupts and destroys love is the expectation that love means sameness. "You should think, feel, and act as I do all the time. If you don't, you don't love me." From this perspective, any difference can feel threatening. I believed that two people are first interested in each other because of their sameness, but they remain interested over the years because of their ability to enjoy differences. To put it another way, if human never find their sameness, they will never meet; if they never meet their differences, they cannot be real or develop a truly human and zestful relationship with one another. (154)
  11. Positive pairing allows room for each of these parts. Each part is of equal value. Positive pairers know that if any one of the parts is denied, suppressed, or pushed into the background, the positive nature of the relationship disappears. For each person to flourish, each needs psychological permission to be him- or herself, to develop these interests and parts that especially fit. Furthermore, each partner willingly and knowledgeably supports the other in this regard and, in turn, is supported. Each is respected by the other, each is autonomous, and each is unique. (326)
  12. The "us" part is where the partners deal with each other. Here they experience the joy, the pleasure – and sometimes the struggle – of being with each other, making decisions and operating as teammates. This relationship has a life of its own. The nature of the relationship will be greatly influenced by the way each partner feels about her- or himself (self-worth) and the way they communicate. (326)
  13. Let your attention be focused for that time on that partner. Once you have established your communication context, focus on being clear and congruent. This means being honest and direct. (330)
  14. In any stage of any relationship, each interaction includes an opportunity for clarifying, strengthening, broadening, and reshaping the pairing. This in turn nourishes the participants. As you contact your pair member, see that person as a unique being. Do the same for yourself. Recognize further that the uniqueness of each partner can continue to emerge: change is frequent, and new possibilities constantly open up. The factors in a positive pairing relationship are:
    - Each person stands firmly on his or her own feet and is autonomous.
    - Each person can be counted on to say real "yes's" and "no's" – in other words, to be emotionally honest.
    - Each person can ask for what she or he wants.
    - Each acknowledges and takes responsibility for her or his actions.
    - Each can keep promises.
    - Each can be counted on to be kind, fun to be around, courteous, considerate,

and real.

- Each takes full freedom to choose to comment on what it is going on.
- Each supports the other's dreams in whatever way possible. Together, they cooperate instead of competing. (332)

### **Family map**

1. Every family member has to have a place, simply because each one is a human being and is present. For every family and for every family member, it is crucial that each person's place is fully recognized, accepted, and understood.
2. Every family member is related to every other family member. The importance here is that these relationships be clearly understood.
3. Every family member affects and is affected by every other family member. Therefore, everyone matters and everyone contributes to what is going on with any one person and has a part in helping that person change.
4. Every family member is potentially the focus of many pulls simply because each has so many relationships. What is crucial is not to avoid the pulls but to deal with them comfortably.
5. Since the family develops over time, it is always building on what it has already developed. Therefore, to understand what is going on in the present, one needs a perspective of the past.
6. Every family member wears at least three role-hats in family living. What is important is that you are wearing the role-hat that matches what you are saying and doing.

### **Family blueprint**

1. Two big questions present themselves to every parent in one form or another: "What kind of a human being do I want my child to become?" and "How can I go about making that happen?" From the answers to these questions, the family blueprint develops.
2. I think most parents would describe the kind of person they want their child to become in pretty much the same way: honest, self-respecting, competent, ambitious, clean, strong, healthy, bright, kind, good-looking, loving, humorous, and able to get along well with others. Do these qualities fit into your picture of a desirable person? What would you add or delete?
3. The best preparation for parenthood that I know is for the parents to develop an openness to new things, a sense of humor, an awareness of themselves, and a freedom to be honest. When adults enter into making a family before they have achieved their own maturity, the process is infinitely more complicated and

hazardous – not impossible, just rough. Fortunately, changes can be made at any point in any person’s life, if one is willing to risk doing it. Please remember to start your change from a perspective of knowing you are always doing the best you can. Through hindsight, we always see how we could have done better. That is the nature of learning. Knowing you’re doing your best will help you create the confidence to go beyond where you are now.

4. The coming of the child, even though wanted, requires major adjustments in the couple’s life. Shifts and changes in regard to time and presence with each other are essential to accommodate the immediacy of the infant’s needs. People who have already worked out a healthy balance in their relationship can handle this adjustment more easily. For parents who are not at that place, these changes may appear as maladjustments and take the form of physical or emotional stress, or both.
5. All too often parenting becomes weighty and demanding, and life as a couple fades into the background. If this happens and goes unattended, the child will pay a heavy price. The child may be used as a reason for the couple to stay together; or the couple may project their difficulties on the child, overtly or covertly: “If it had not been for you, things would be better.”
6. What lingers from the parent’s individual past, unresolved or incomplete, often becomes part of her or his irrational parenting. I refer to this as the contaminating shadows of the past, of which many parents are totally ignorant. Another trap is when parents start out with a dream about what they want their child to be. This dream often involves wanting the child to do what they personally could not do. Many children have pinioned themselves on an altar of sacrifice so their parents would not be disappointed.
7. I want to talk now about something I call the parental cloak (parental role). As I use the term, it refers to that part of the adult that lives out the role of a parent. To my mind, the parental cloak has a use only as long as the children are unable to do for themselves and need parental guidance. One of the problems is that the cloak may get stuck on the person, never changing, and stay forever. Once a mother, always a mother, even if the kids are already adults.
8. My recommendation is that parents strive to be empowering leaders. This means being kind, firm, inspiring, understanding people who direct from a position of reality and love rather than negative use of power. If parents understood this, they would better appreciate the link between what they do and the tremendous job their child has to do. We have focused too much attention on disciplinary methods and not enough on understanding, loving, and humor, and developing the beautiful manifestation of life that resides in every child.

9. Three other areas complicate carrying out the blueprint. They are in the iceberg, below the perceivable functioning of the family. The first is ignorance. The second is that your communication may be ineffective. The third are in the iceberg has to do with your values.
10. I have described important factors that can affect how the family blueprint will be carried out. Briefly summarized, these atmospheric influences are: the actual experience of conception, pregnancy, and birth; individual circumstances in the family; the condition of the infant; and the relationship of the marital pair. Additional factors include the family's relationship to the grandparents, and the adults' level of knowledge, their ways of communicating, and their philosophy.
11. Within any atmosphere and blueprint, certain learnings are essential for every human being between birth and adulthood. They fall into four main categories which, when translated into family life, come out in the following questions:
  - What do I teach my child about herself or himself?
  - What do I teach about others?
  - What do I teach about the world?
  - And what do I teach about life and its source, about God?
12. The teaching process includes the following: a clear idea of what is to be taught, each parent's awareness of what she or he is modeling, a knowledge of how to interest the other parent in agreeing on a model, and the communication to make it work.
13. In the ideal family, adults show their own uniqueness; demonstrate their power; show their sexuality; demonstrate their ability to share through understanding, kindness, and affection; use their common sense; show their spiritual nature; and are realistic and responsible. If you remain honest about where you are, your children's trust in you will increase. They care about truth, not perfection, and it is an impossible job for a human to play God.
14. Once someone achieves the essential learnings, a whole set of other things will follow: honesty, sincerity, creativity, love, interest, zest, competence, and constructive problem-solving. As human beings, we prize all of these. With them, we can also more easily teach the necessary information that all children need.
15. Helping a child to appreciate the differences between the two parents becomes an important part of learning. If parents try to present a façade of sameness, they bypass this very important opportunity. Mama likes to sleep late in the morning, and Papa likes to get up early, and that's okay. People don't have to be alike. Some differences make life a little more complicated, but most differences can be used constructively.
16. The first place is the self-worth level of each person (how I am feeling about

myself at this moment in time). The second place is each individual's response to the other person (how I am looking and sounding, and what I am saying), and the third is each person's knowledge of the resources available at a given time (where I am, what time and what place this is, what situation I am in, who is here, what I want to happen, and what possibilities exist in this reality).

17. I would like to tell you where I am in my practice of being responsible. First, I clearly own what comes out of me: my words, thoughts, body movement, and my deeds. I might have been influenced by you, but I accept that I made the decisions to act on that influence, so that part is my show completely.
18. Loving is a very important part of life. Did you ever stop to realize what a feeling of loving is like? When I feel loving, my body feels light, my energy flow seems freer, I feel exhilarated, open, unafraid, trusting, and safe. I feel an increased sense of my own worth and desirability. I have a heightened awareness of the needs and wishes of the person toward whom I direct these feelings. My desire goes toward a joining with her or him, to share ideas, to touch and be touched, to look and be looked at, and to enjoy and be enjoyed. I like the feeling of loving. I consider it the highest form of expressing my humanness.
19. In families, it is unfortunately true that control and authority are often assumed to be the primary province of the parent: "I (the parent) control you (my child)." In this way the child doesn't develop an appreciation for positive uses of power and could run into some sticky problems in adult life. There are two ways to use authority that seem to make a difference here. Does the parent speak as an empowering leader or as an autocratic one? If he or she speaks as an empowering leader, chances are that control can be used as a learning as well as an implementing tool. This can also serve as a model for learning about power.
20. Family time needs to be divided into three parts: time for each person to be alone (self time); time for each person to be with each other person (pair time); time when everyone is together (group time). It would be great if every family member could have each of these kinds of time every day.