The Father-Child Relationship Essay, Research Paper

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The father-child connection proves to be a very important component to a child?s psyche growing up. A child nurtured in a caring, loving and affectionate environment will most likely be provided with the physiological and emotional support needed to become a well-rounded individual. A child nurtured in an abusive and negative environment will most likely carry the emotional scars for the rest of their lives, resulting in having a toilsome time of dealing with life?s ups and downs.

The physiological and emotional effects on a child living with an uncaring father are expressed in Franz Kafka?a ?Letter to His Father.? In this letter, Kafka speaks of an event where in the middle of the night he starts whimpering for water. After several threats, his father takes him out of his bed and places him outside on the pavement and shuts the door. Kafka writes, ?Even years afterwards I suffered from the tormenting fancy that the huge man, my father, the ultimate authority, would come almost for no reason at all and take me out of bed in the night and carry me out onto the pavlatche, and that therefore I was such a mere nothing for him? (91). Till this day, Kafka still carries with him that humiliation and hurt that brought on by his father.

In the poem ?My Papa?s Waltz? by Theodore Roethke, alcoholism is the cause of the abuse that Roethke must endure. When I first read this poem, I did not feel that Roethke was talking about being abused. I thought Roethke was talking about the way he and his father used to dance. But after reading everyone?s comments, I began to see how the poem could be interpreted as experiences of being abused. Roethke writes ?You beat time on my head? and ?Then waltzed me off to bed Still clinging to your shirt? (202). In these two quotes, Roethke speaks of the beatings he received and how he was taken to bed. The memories Roethke portrays in this poem are ones of abuse, but yet they also have some loving undertones to them.

Susan Cheever?s, ?Portrait of My Father? speaks of a father who loved his daughter. It can be seen in how her and her father interact with each other and also to in a telephone conversation that they had. Cheever?s father was a man who loved his, wife and children and would do anything for them. He hid his suffering so they would not have to suffer too.

After reading all of these beautiful works of art, it is very clear to me how important the father-child connection can be. A father who has been abusive, whether it was physical or mental, burdens their children with low self-esteem and physiological problems. In Roethke?s case, his father was not a complete and total bastard, but still the physical abuse stayed him his whole life. In Cheever?s case, she seems to be well-rounded individual and probably has her wonderful father to thank for that.