

Raising children: an evolutionary perspective



Dr. med. Herbert Renz-Polster

Understanding Children

[Kinder verstehen]

Born to be wild – Child development and parenting from an evolutionary perspective

foreword by Prof. Remo H. Largo

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Herbert Renz-Polster (MD, PhD) is a paediatrician and scientist at the Mannheim Institute for Public Health at the University of Heidelberg and has trained in both Europe and the USA. He is an editor of a well-known clinical textbook for medical students in Germany and is considered one of the most renowned voices in the questions of child development. His works *Human Children* and *Understanding Children* have permanently influenced the parenting discussions in Germany. He is the father of four children.

Children's development follows programming that originated in humankind's earliest days. For thousands of years this has ensured that our little ones developed in the right ways and reached maturity equipped with the tools to cope with life. Nowadays, parents are often concerned by their children's behaviour and feel guilty about not doing a good enough job.

However, the latest evolutionary research presents the theory that children develop the way they do because it was once necessary for their survival. Their behaviour was strength, not weakness. If children from centuries ago had indiscriminately eaten any green leaves they happened to come across, they wouldn't have survived for very long. It is hardly surprising, then, that even today children view vegetables with scepticism. Once you understand the "meaning" behind children's behaviour you will be able to support their development in a more relaxed manner.

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