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Coping Series - Coping With Your Convictions, 1978.

Coping With Convictions
Daniel Jeremy Silver
December 4, 1978

When I was first assigned the topic "Coping With Convictions" I began to wonder if I was a prison warden, but we are free, and what I would like to do tonight is to talk to you about how convictions are formed, the relationship of convictions and our adult personalities, and then to make a few comments on some of the problems that convictions pose for adults, why, really, the fact that we have convictions is a problem. Perhaps the best way to begin is to refer briefly to the book, The Seasons of a Man's Life, which Dr. Daniel Levison published this year. It is the basic research on which Gail Sheehy batted herself down to produce her book Passages. Dr. Levison is Professor of Psychiatry at Yale Medical School and he has done some research on men which leads him to believe that in all of our lives there are what he calls age-linked phases through which we must all pass. These phases, he believes, have basic consequences for our behavior and for our emotions. Now, he did this study on only forty men in his research team. These forty men are all about my age. They were chosen, for reasons which I do not quite comprehend, from four basic occupational categories: workers, business executives, biology professors and novelists, and I think you will agree with me that those four professions do not exhaust the realm of human activity. The work is a beginning, an initial stage by those who study human nature, the attempt to understand Adulthood, why we are, what we are, why we tend to react the way we do react.

Now, Dr. Levison is very conscious of the fact that he has chosen arbitrarily a certain age group, a certain sex, that there are possibilities that women will show quite different age-linked phases than men, that it is possible that these age-linked phases are peculiar to our American middle-class environment. They will not show up in other cultures, primitive cultures, other cultures in other parts of the world. But whatever else this research will prove to be or not to be, it has been seminal, and it has made all of us conscious of the fact that adulthood is a very special stage of life with special

characteristics, a stage of life which can be studied developmentally the same way we study childhood or adolescence or aging. Now, I have always been intrigued by the fact that so much of what we do is in a sense conditioned for us, predetermined for us, by the language which we master and I suspect that it is not out of the ordinary, that since English is the only western language, at least, which has a word, adulthood, which defines this very special stage in human life, that perhaps these researchers are first coming out from American universities. Most languages are like the French, *maturete*; or German, *bundikeit*, languages in which the word for adulthood is really the word for ripeness, fullness, which applies to any living being, animal, perhaps even vegetable.

We have a word adulthood, or adulthood, and we are conscious that sometime after adolescence, after the teens or early twenties, we emerge into a certain kind of behavior as well as a certain physical size and emotional construct, and that we retain, or seem to retain, much of this construct, much of this size, until we pass into aging. One of the questions that Dr. Levison only alludes to is the question which I have suggested, whether or not these age-linked phases are apparent in other cultures, whether they are universal. Obviously, there is no research. He tends to think that they are and he brought together in the concluding chapter of his book, and it's with this that I really want to begin, three pericopes, three paragraphs, from ancient authors in which each of them defines from a different cultural point of view the stages in the life of men, and I hope you ladies will forgive me, I am not a male chauvinist, but almost all ancient literature relates to men and the stages of life in a man, and this is all, really, we have to go on.

The first of these was written or ascribed to Solon. Solon was the legendary lawgiver of Athens in the seventh century B. C. E. and Solon divided the ages of man into seven-year cycles. Seven was a sacred number and the whole paragraph reads this way:

From zero,, that is, from birth to seven: a boy at first is a man, unripe, then he casts his teeth, which he sheds in his seventh year.

From seven to fourteen: Then to his seven years God adding another seven, signs of approaching manhood show in the bud

From fourteen to twenty-one: Still, in the third of the sevens his limbs are growing; his chin touched with a fleecy down, the bloom of the cheek gone.

From 21-28: Now, in the fourth of the sevens ripen to gret completeness the powers of the man, and his worth becomes plain to see.

From 28-35: In the fifth he bethinks him that this is the season for courting, bethinks him that sons will preserve and continue his line.

Then he brings together two sevens, fourteen years, from 35 to 42, the center of adulthood.

Now in the sixth his mind, ever open to virtue, broadens, and never inspires him to profitless deeds.

From 42-56: Seven times seven, and eight; the tongue and the mind for fourteen years together are now at their best.

From 56-63: Still in the ninth he is able, but never so nimble in speech and in wit as he was in the days of his prime.

From 63-70: Who to the tenth has attained, and has lived to complete it, has come to the time to depart on the ebb-tide of Death.

A few thousand miles to the east, two hundred years later, around the year 500 B. C. E. Confucious has this pericope about age described to him:

The Master said, At 15 I set my heart upon learning.

At 30, I had planted my feet firm upon the ground.

At 40, I no longer suffered from perplexities.

At 50, I knew what was the mandate of Heaven.

At 60, I heard them with docile ear.

At 70, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.
(I love that one.)

And, finally, he quotes from the Sayings of the Fathers, that chapter of proverbial wisdom which was appended, oh, probably in the third century of our era, to the Mishnah; and there the rabbis are quoted as saying:

5 is the year in which the child is set to reading Torah;
At 10 he is set to reading the law without commentary, the Mishnah;
13 he becomes obliged to obey the commandments of Bar Mitzvah;
15 is for Gemara study, the law and its commentaries;
18 for the marriage canopy, wedding;
20 for seeking a livelihood;
30 for attaining full strength;
40 for understanding;
50 for counsel;
60 for becoming an elder;
70 for white hair;
80 for the special strength of age;
90 for being bent under the weight of the years;
100 for being as if already dead and passed away from the world.

Now, I am struck by several things, the first, that our people, as always, lives in faith. All the other traditions end at 70, but we go on to describe life to 100. But more importantly, and specific to our topic of this evening, I was struck as I saw these three paragraphs together that each of these cultures relates adulthood, maturity, to settled convictions, to the time when our mind is made up, we are certain of what we feel, confident of our philosophy, confident of our faith, able to marshal our energies in a single direction. Let us look again at these three texts.

Solon, seventh century, Greek - Now in his sixth, that is from 35 to 42, his mind ever open to virtue broadens and never inspires him to profitless deeds. Now, this is a world that believed in the search for wisdom, the love of philosophos, the love of knowledge, who believed that if you trained the body and trained the mind you ultimately activated the mind so that the mind knew, saw beyond the world of appearances to the world of reality and to believe that the mind which had broken the shell of appearances,

he could see to the very heart of things, that mind could direct the steps aright, could lead us to live a virtuous life and that there were no psychological impediments, a modern term, there was nothing to prevent the man who knew from living the completely virtuous life. It is this idea that lies behind Plato's philosopher-king, for the philosopher-king will not be corrupted by power. The philosopher-king will not lead his people astray for he knows what is needed, he knows^{of} what the truth, the right, consists and he will discipline himself according to that knowledge, settled convictions, certainty, confidence, clearness of thought.

Now, let us look at Confucius. At 40 I no longer suffered from perplexities. At 50 I knew the mandates of heaven. The Confucian Book of Rights tells us that when a young person who turned 20^{they} passed through a ceremony which was called capping, a ceremony which declared that they were now adult, but the next 20 years were to be spent in study, in earning a living, in courting, in establishing one's family. It was only when one became forty that one was properly prepared to accept the responsibilities of a scholar-official, the responsibilities of power. Why? At forty I no longer suffered from the perplexities. My mind was clear. I knew what was right. I knew what should be done. I could be trusted to impose the law, justice, the right, on others. And at fifty that clarity takes on a slightly different perspective. At fifty I know what are the mandates of heaven. Now, this suggests that there are transcendental commandments, that there are laws, rules of behavior, which are in tune with, in conformance with the universe, and at fifty I sense what this relationship is and I guide my life accordingly.

And I suspect that there is another idea implicit in this concept of the mandate of heaven. At fifty I learned that I will not complete the task; that the world will still be imperfect when I have given it my best efforts, when I tried to do all that I can do. Confucius, between forty and fifty, lived a very difficult life. Some of his closest young

disciples died. He was threatened by one of the generals of Sung and his life was in danger. The Chinese emperor turned his back on his advice. His life seemed to be going nowhere but he knew, regardless of the external circumstances, regardless of the fact that none of us achieve fully our goals, we must continue to do what we, by then, feel we know is right to do. It's like the old rabbinic proverb - yours is not to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it.

And the same theme is picked up again in the rabbinic text: forty for understanding; fifty for giving counsel. At forty we have not only absorbed the Talmud, the law, the specifics of the law, but its spirit, understanding. And at fifty we are wise enough to be trusted with authority, to give leadership and advice and to have some control over the lives of others.

These three traditions suggest that when the change between youth and adulthood is a change which involves increasingly an awareness by us of what our convictions, what our principles, what our faith, really is; and that, somehow, out of the strain, out of the struggles of adolescence, of young adulthood, when we somehow seem to be like the butterfly, trying to shake itself away from the cocoon, moving seemingly in every direction at once, we suddenly emerge and we know who we are in the sense that we know what it is that we really believe. We've tried a lot of things, we've had a lot of experience, and somehow out of these experiences and reflecting upon them we have to come more or less settled convictions.

Now, anyone who is a clergyman, anyone who deals with convictions, with faith, principles, day in and day out knows that there is a certain truth to this because religion is very different for the adolescent, for the young adult, than for the settled adult. When we organize activities for our young adults, there is a certain intensity to them. We know that they want to debate the cosmic issues. We know that they want it to be if they are in shul

an intense experience, a shul-in all night long to explore their spirits, to explore themselves.

But when we get into our thirties and forties and fifties we come occasionally; we come to be reminded; we come to share a moment of fellowship with friends who share values with us, share a destiny with us. We come because it is good to leave behind the cacaphony of the world and find the silence and the simple voice of faith. There is a difference of temperature in the religious activity of the adult and of the young person. William James, one of the first of the philosopher-psychologists who studied religious behavior at the early part of this century began to write in the field of religious experience. He studied primarily the experience of the Pilgrims and the Puritans and the early Protestants of New England. Our Pilgrim Fathers were people who believed that one could hear the call of God. There was what they called the conversion experience when suddenly one sensed the presence of God and one felt called. One had received the Lord and then one could be received into the fullness of the Church. And one of the things that William James noted in these studies of the conversion experience is they almost always happened to young people. It is no happenstance that Jesus was a young man when he felt his missionary call; that Mohammed was a young man when he felt the voice of God was speaking to him, the Koran, the word of God; it is no happenstance that most of the calls which are felt by people to join a political crusade, an economic ideology, a religious faith, most of the conversion experiences occur to us some time between seventeen and thirty. And one of the interesting observations of Dr. Levison in his book, one which was particularly interesting to me, is that unlike William James who tended to say that these calls, these moments of conversion, when Joan of Arc sees the spirit of God, when Benedet sees the Madonna, that these moments come not only in the late teens, but they tend to come over a period of time, ^{between} say seventeen and thirty, thirty-one and thirty two. And that after that age we are settled into those

things which will be our convictions, our principles, our faith, our first principles, the things by which we guide our lives for most of our adult lives. Very few adults change their fundamental principles. It is an interesting fact. Conversion takes place almost entirely among the very young, that is those below thirty, and among those who are moving from adulthood into age when there is another moment of terrible emotional stress and strain, but primarily among the young.

If we reflect back on our own development I think most of us will recognize that somehow during those years we emerged into our philosophy, we emerged into our faith, we emerged into our convictions. Now one thing that I found fascinating is the correlation between the observations of Levison upon these first years, the years in which we move into the adult, where he calls them the transition years into adulthood and one of the Biblical novelettes, the story in which the Bible describes the young Joseph and young Jacob. Joseph, you will recall, was a twin. He was the younger twin. He was a lithe young boy, he was a very pretty young boy, very dependent on his mother. His brother was the more athletic type, more outdoorsy, the favorite of the father. The father was determined as he drew towards the end of his life to give the blessing which was the statement of primigenitor, the right of inheritance, the family name and family authority, to the older of the two twins. The mother was determined to gain that right for her favorite and she created an elaborate ruse in which the young Jacob participates willingly, it would seem, and the ruse is successful. Jacob receives the blessing and then he flees. He flees from the anger of his older brother and we get the first of the moments of trauma of conversion, of recognition of self, of recognition that we are responsible for our lives, for that is the first recognition which antedates or is the basis of the development of principle. He flees and the first night he is out in the wilderness. He has no cover. He has no tent. He takes a stone as his pillow and he lies down

band against him, and as he approaches the boundaries of Esau's land he sends ahead

and he falls into a fretful sleep and he sleeps and he dreams. And he dreams that he sees a ladder. Its base is on the ground. Its top is in the heavens. There are angels ascending and descending the ladder and the voice of God speaks to him. And the voice of God speaks of the covenant, of obligations and the promise. It reminds him of the larger responsibilities, responsibilities^{of} which we are not consciously aware when we are young people, and somehow this covenant, this responsibility, this obligation, these duties apply to him. And when he awakens from his dream he says to himself: "Truly, the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

Somewhere in those early years, in those late teens or early twenties, we suddenly become aware of the fact that we are alive in the sense that we are responsible for our lives. No one else. We are alive and we are mortal, truly God is in this place, and until now we knew it not. But that is only the beginning of the movement, the trauma, the emotional energy which must be expended before we arrive at our principles. Jacob goes to live with one of his distant relatives and he works for many years for him and he falls in love with one of his daughters, if you will recall, and he is promised the daughter in marriage for work for seven years. And then Laban tricks Jacob because he wants to marry off his older daughter, Leah, first which was only appropriate and he marries Leah and then he must work another seven years for his bride, the woman whom he really marries, Rachel, whom he really loves, Rachel. And having completed this period of about fourteen years, eighteen to thirty or thirty-two, having matured, having come into himself, he now realizes that there must be a moment of transition into adulthood when he finally proves out his convictions. And the proof that he devises is that he can go back and face his brother and that the family can be reunited.

And so he goes back to Canaan, but he has not heard from his brother for the full fourteen years, and he worries, will he be accepted. will his brother sent out an armed band against him, and as he approaches the boundaries of Esau's land he sends ahead

a group of men with wealth, gifts, to try and placate the brother and there is no response. Several days later he sends more gifts and more men and more flock ahead as another gift and again there is no response. And now he has come the boundary of the land of Canaan, the river Yabok, and the question is, shall he cross and put his life in jeopardy, that is, shall he cross from immaturity into maturity, from irresponsibility to responsibility, from the lack of convictions to the life of convictions, has he the guts to do it. And, again, he sleeps and again he dreams, and this time in his dream he wrestles with an angel of God, and he wrestles the long night, call it wrestling with your conscience, wrestling with yourself, wrestling with your own lack of convictions becoming convictions. Neither the angel nor Jacob could pin the other. It comes morning and the angel turns to Jacob and said: "You have wrestled with God and with man and you have prevailed. What shall I do for you?" And Jacob says, "Give me a blessing." And instead of giving his blessing he gives him a new name. He said: "No longer shall you be called Jacob, you shall be called Israel because you have wrestled with God and you have prevailed."

And that is the beginning, that is the full entrance into adulthood. The conversion experience is rarely that thing which we see in a Cecil B. DeMille movie, you know, suddenly giant illumination behind a young person, they have seen the light and everything becomes clear. Sometimes it is that, but for most of us who are not religiously sensitive, who have not been raised in a particular mystic tradition, for most of us there is a long period between that first moment when we recognize that we are mortal and responsible for our lives and that final moment when we take responsibility for our lives and cross the fjord and live in a way that is pleasing now to us. We have wrestled with ourselves, with our fears, with our dependencies, and we have not been overcome.

And I have been struck by something else, a correlation between this longish period in which convictions emerge and some material was presented from this platform about a year ago by Dr. James Wilson of Harvard University. He is a man whose field is contemporary government. He has particularly been interested in criminology, crime in the United States and the patterns of crime, and we know very little about what makes for crime, but one thing is emerging, one truth is emerging from all the statistical studies and that is that crime relates to age. Something on the order of half of all the crime in the United States, of violent crimes, is committed by those who are under twenty years of age. And the most interesting thing is that very little of this kind of erratic, impulsive crime is committed after people pass thirty, thirty-two or thirty-four. By that time, except for the professional criminal or the paranoid, the erratic knowledge, most of the juvenile delinquents have become part of the straight society. They have had that moment when they have wrestled with themselves, for better or for worse, they have accepted family, accepted responsibility, accepted certain kinds of duties. Principle has somehow entered their lives.

Once we pass that age of thirty or thirty-two we settle down. We become people of certain principles. Not all of us always live up to those principles, but we have principles, we have convictions, we have a faith. And the test, of course, becomes whether we live that faith which is ultimately the test of adulthood. What do we do with that faith? What do we do with these convictions? What do we do with these principles? But now there is a sense of release and of relief. The period of strain, of fighting with ourselves, is over. We now can allow our energies simply to flow out, and now, between thirty and and forth and fifty it is not simply that we are at the top of our form, that we have mastered a particular field. It is also that we are no longer at war with ourselves. The energies flow directly and they flow freely in whatever direction we decide that they ought to flow. There is a sense of clarity, a sense of certainty, to our lives that has

not been there before. And adulthood is that period of settled conviction, when we find ways to reinforce our convictions ritually, ceremonially, however, but the convictions are now ours.

I don't know how many of you happened to read or hear today one of the leaders of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations speaking on the fact that he believed that now is the time for liberal American Judaism to go out and to become a missionary movement. We were talking about this at dinner. If we become a missionary movement, any missionary movement, any movement which has tried to win the hearts of people, to make converts, to gain people who will be convinced theirs is the right way, must work with those who are thirty and below. That is where the converts are. It is no matter of chance that those who join the political cells, those who join a particular ideology, those who join a particular religion, are almost always young people. They are the people who can be convinced because there is the need to know and to learn and to become involved with. And if a group wants to gain converts, if a group wants to draw people to itself, even if it wants only to bring the next generation up into its own ranks, it is on these years that they must concentrate and it must provide the activities which are appropriate to those years. Young people in these years do not want to sit in pews. Pews are straight and they are confining. This is the time of action and of wrestling. You are not ready to sit quietly and to listen to somebody else. You want intensity and not the calm of an organ playing over you. You want commitment, activity, proof of conviction. You want participation in an electric group, a group which can magnetize and catalyze you, allow your energies to spill out, and it is that kind of activity that all groups who have conviction must engage in if they want to retain the loyalty of their own or attract others to their group.

Now, what are some of the problems attendant to adulthood as far as convictions are concerned? We have spoken of the great prophet, of having settled convictions,

now our energies are free; now we can concentrate ourselves, our emotions, our feelings, our competence on accomplishing what we set out to do. Now what are the problems? The first problem is this, that no one is an island to himself. Contrary to popular opinion we do not arrive at faith, at our political ideologies and convictions in solitude. We arrive to them in a community, with groups, with friends, with those who share concerns with us. You don't suddenly find a bhuddist in the middle of a group of Jews. You don't suddenly find somebody involved in Indian politics in the middle of the United States. You pick up from the environment, from the electricity, from the concerns of those who are part of your environment, those activities, those vibrations, those interests which, somehow or other, you will accept or reject or weave into your final web of faith, web of convictions. And so we almost always arrive at our convictions at the same time that we evolve ourselves, we become members of a cell, a congregation, a party, some group of people who share our principles, our loyalties and our concerns. And that creates for us a problem because institutions, parties, groups, congregations, have lives of their own. The young people, the older people, who joined the People's Church in Indianapolis twenty years ago when Rev. Jim Jones was speaking of brotherhood and adopting children of many races, when the church spoke of a kind of visionary socialism or communism, these people joined the church which expressed many of the finest aspirations of man, but if they stayed with that church during the long period in which the corruption of the leader ultimately corrupted the teachings of the community, they found themselves engaged in activities in which they would not have been part of at the beginning. And, unfortunately, we are all creatures of habit. We are all lazy in a sense. We tend to stay with those loyalties and with those groups with which we originally affiliate without thinking of how the group itself has changed, how the anti-war movement becomes the Weathermen, how some reaction to

liberalism becomes fascism, how the disciples of an economic theory become disciples of Russian internationalism. Every group to which we become loyal has a life of its own and one of the critical problems for all of us as adults is to check up from time to time on the institutions with which we are affiliated to make sure that despite the friendships we have, made in those institutions, despite the sense of fraternity, of solidarity which is so important to the sense of community, the institution still reflects the values which are ours, the values which made us join that institution in the first place.

And a second problem with convictions has to do with the fact that - we are talking about serious convictions, about faith, about those things which go to the heart of life itself - we are talking about truth, and we are talking always about sharing that truth with others. There are certain kinds of convictions that are essentially trivial, you know, a stitch in time saves nine; don't waste your time; keep your nose to the grindstone; all those proverbial bits of wisdom - that is not what I am talking about. I am talking about faith, a political faith, an economic faith, a religious faith, the things which propel us, our vision, our dream of the social order. And we all have these dreams, every one of us, and everyone of us would like others to share that dream. Every conviction in this sense is by definition missionary. Now we have all seen the dangers of missionary activity. We all know that Christian ministers went into Asia and went into Latin America and went into Africa and they were in a sense agents of the mother country, of a colonial government, and they imposed upon the natives attitudes and values which were totally irrelevant and often dysfunctional ^{for} the tribal life, for the level of cultural development, for the particular nature of these communities, but the missionaries who went out did so in love. They went out because they were people of settled convictions, because they wanted to offer salvation to these people.

Now, we in America have been fat and prosperous and powerful, and we have

tended to assume that prosperity and power and technology would ultimately make the rest of the world become open and free and democratic, so we have not thought very much about selling our ideas, about being missionaries, but the rest of the world has. There is no governmental activity more intensely prosecuted in our world than the missionary activity and that activity can be simply the domestic control of the educational system and of the media, propaganda. It can be the kind of guland, the kind of re-education camp which Cambodia, Russia, China, other governments in the world have operated to re-educate the people, to modify behavior, to make certain that everyone will march in step towards the Promised Land.

People are competing for minds and it is almost inevitable that if we are people with conviction, we want to convince others that they should share our vision and our hope; and we are frustrated when others walk in a different direction because if there is going to be peace on earth and fraternity everybody has to link arms and walk together. So, settled convictions are almost inevitably missionary concern and once they become missionary they become intolerant because you stand not in my way, you stand in the way of peace, you stand in the way of economic justice, you stand in the way of workers' freedom, whatever it may be. People of conviction are both the most blessed and the most dangerous of all human beings, and it is inevitable that we are people of conviction. And how do we resolve this dilemma?

Well, I suspect it can be resolved only by the assiduous cultivation of humility. Everybody is talking now about the importance of a healthy ego. It is also very important that we have a humble ego, that we recognize not that everybody has the right to his own opinion, that goes almost without saying except when that opinion stands in the way of what I know to be right.

Now, what happens when what you believe stands in the way of what I know to be

right? It depends on how big an ego I have. If my ego is large enough I try to steam-roller you, I try to convince you and if I cannot convince you then you are a fanatic, an obscurantist, an enemy; and once you become the obscurantist, the enemy, I can devise all kinds of rationalizations which will allow me to do almost anything with you. The Nazis did it to the Jews. The Russians have done it to dissidents. This kind of contempt for all those who oppose what we know to be our convictions, our truth, is endemic in our world. That is why there have been religious wars. Imagine this. In the twentieth century millions of people have died because somebody wrote a book on economic philosophy and because that book became a faith. It became an imperial faith. It became the center of the religious war in the west of the twentieth century.

Now, how do we resolve this tension between being people of settled conviction and yet, of necessity, having to live with others whose settled convictions are opposed to our own? And here, dear friends, I suspect we have to have another conviction, the conviction that ours will never be a perfect world. If you can accept that then you can live with other people's truth because then you can live with disorder; but if you are still enough of the visionary, the messianist, the child, to require the vision that everything is solved, everything is resolved, there is peace everlasting, the only way you are going to achieve that is if you can brainwash everybody to be exactly like you.

Religions have found it very hard to say that anybody else has the right to go into heaven but their own communicants. And political ideologies find it very difficult to say that there is any other political system which has a right to survive but one which agrees with their political ideology. And what is true of politics and true of religion is true of economics, is true of social organization and everything else.

Now, all of us have to cultivate, one way or another, both the ego strength and

the humility, both the vision and the cynicism, that which allows us to know the vision will never be completed, for us to accept what is in fact the truth, that we will never have a world of complete peace; we will never have a world in which everyone agrees; we will never have a world in which there will not be bitter quarrels between people; that our truth will never be anything more than a very tiny sliver of the whole truth.

That is a very hard point to accept because faith is a redeeming set of ideas and what redeems my life certainly ought to redeem yours.

And this brings me to the final issue of conviction that I want to deal with in this prepared part of our evening, and that is the challenge that your children raise to your settled convictions. Once you are an adult you have children, and the older we get into adulthood the more settled our convictions become. After all, we've had more experience, we know more

tape was being turned over

Why doesn't he listen to me? My experience could help him. And here we have the generational gap. I know. I have settled convictions. I have the experience to back up my convictions. They worked for me. I am successful. That's the proof of my convictions. And my adolescent has to reject my convictions in order to gain convictions of his own. This challenge to my convictions is inevitable. And woe betide the parent who thinks that they can missionarize, sermonize, impose upon their children, what they know to be the truth. It can't be done. It will destroy your child if you succeed in brainwashing your child. And in point of fact, if we would only recognize that we have had the child during the most formative of years when all those basic things that need to be done for his character are done. We have loved the infant and so freed the infant to love. We've nurtured the infant and taught him the importance of sharing, of being supportive. We've brought the infant into a whole variety of experiences and allowed him to sense or her to sense some of the possibilities of the world.

The order of nature makes sense, in the sense that character, those things which deal with quality and with the basic emotional construct of a person are effected, molded or are shaped largely during the youngest of years, when the child is not in rebellion. The child is going to live a different life than ours. The faith the child needs needs to be different from ours, particularly in a world of future shock, particularly when our experience may not at all be relevant in many ways to the reality that the child will have to face ten years out, thirty years out, and long after we're dead. And unless we recognize this fact during the late teens and early twenties, or have the good sense to send our child off to college and to welcome him home for only a week or so at a time and then to keep the conversation on his level without imposing the papal bull on him - only then will we really be able to welcome the child at twenty-eight or thirty or thirty-two into the adult world. And it is surprising, you know, over the years how many parents come to me and said, they're grown-up young people, hey, I finally like him, he's a nice human being. They were terrible years, those years of stress, because we tried to missionarize, we tried to brainwash, we tried to sermonize. It can't be done. And, yet, it's inevitable, I suspect, that we try. I certainly tried. What else can you do with those things that you fundamentally believe which are part of the core of your being? Who's more precious to you than your own children? For them not to be able to share your faith, your hopes, your vision, is a terrible, terrible trauma, and yet, it is one that as adults we have to face.

There's a final problem. It's the problem of judging which of our convictions are worth having and which are worthless. It's not enough to say I'm a person of conviction. Jim Jones had convictions. Hitler had convictions. Stalin had convictions. You have to have the right kind of convictions, and that is one of the things that a great, spiritual, humanistic faith like Judaism can help you to achieve because it gives you certain bench marks. If your faith involves contempt for other people you find no

confirmation of that faith in this ancestral tradition. It's good to wonder why do I have these principles. If your principle is simply to make out, get ahead, you find no confirmation of that kind of ultimate selfishness in this tradition. If your faith involves a respect for the dignity of others and a respect for yourself and for your own mind, for the spirit of others and for your own spirit, for justice, love, that you find confirmation of in a great religious tradition such as this one, and you can find reconfirmation, a reason to believe that your principles, your convictions, may be valuable and valid, but that's the hardest task of all.

How do we get perspective on our own traditions? We have seen people who have determined to deprogram youngsters caught up in one or another of the cults and how difficult it is to make people see the folly of what is to us patently foolish. What would a Martian feel if they put us under the microscope about our faiths and our convictions? Would we seem, in a sense, as foolish as some of the Moonies? How much of our conviction, how many of our basic principles, really could stand up under that kind of dispassionate scrutiny? We've got to get sometimes a little bit of distance from ourselves, from our own principles, and one of the ways that a great tradition helps you in this is that it gives you great texts. It gives you a rich tradition against which you can measure what it is you believe. I think you can date the moment at which The People's Temple became an abomination. A young assistant minister of Jim Jones, when he was in Indianapolis, reported in 1961 one day, he took a Bible and he threw it on the floor in the middle of a service, complaining 'they're more interested in this than in me.' Now, the fact that there is a this, a Bible, a Talmud, a tradition, is one advantage of an ancient and noble faith because it says however corrupted the preacher may be, however misbegotten I may be at the moment, I'm always brought up short by three thousand years of a religious and ethical spiritual tradition which has refined itself over that

period of time and can be a grid for me against which I can measure myself. But, that is very difficult to do for we often have eyes but we see not and ears that we hear not, and when we are most convinced we're most liable to be blind to our own failings.

So, settling down into adult age frees our energies, allows us to do more, to achieve more, but, at the same time, puts us in danger of using these energies for misbegotten ends and that's why some lives, adult lives, are noble and some are ignoble. Most of us fall some place in between.

Well, let's have some questions.

Question: Do I think that adjustment or compromise with younger ideas or mores is a surrender?

Answer: Yes. Why must I compromise my principles simply because someone younger than I has other principles? That is not to say that I must not be open to the fact that even young people could speak the truth and from all my pupils I've learned something. One of the least becoming things of this generation is that we tend to reverse what our fathers did. Our fathers gave exorbitant deference to age, forgetting that age is often senility, and we give exorbitant deference to youth, forgetting that youth may often be folly, and both those extremes are wrong. I think we have to listen to anybody talking good sense and make up our own minds.

Question: Long question.

Answer: Historically, most people who have ever lived have not been able to live up to their convictions, to which I add, thank God, because I tried to define the other day, yesterday, to this congregation what a cult was. A cult separates itself out from a religious structure simply by intensity, by being literal about one's conviction. And there are two ways, obviously, in responding to what you say. First of all, I'd be out of

business if everybody lived up to their convictions, that is to say, Yom Kippur wouldn't exist any more. We are human. No man is a saint. There's no one on earth so righteous that he has sinned not, that they don't fail, and whether we're twenty or forty or sixty we fail to live up to the best that's within us, clearly, and there are some who fail more and there are some who fail less. That's to be human. But, at the same time, as you live through life you realize that you can't live simply by convictions, that is to say, if I were to live only by ultimate convictions, convictions that I ought to devote my energies and my life to the service of mankind and have no chance to be with my family and do what I need to do with my family. If I live only by a concern for others what are the concerns that are legitimate to myself? Yes, as earthlings, we are weak, fallible and ought to do far more than we do, but I don't think that's a factor simply of age. I really don't. I think it's a factor of personality, that is to say, I think it depends on the individual and I think that in our society where we have, to a large degree, lost a sense of a compelling vision we have been tempted to be far more self-involved, materialist if you will, indulgent, than perhaps in other societies. At the same time we have been able to be far more tolerant of others than if we were people of burning conviction and others disagreed with us. It goes back to what I said about utopian thinking. I have only one ideology and that is that no ideology is correct. I have only one messianic principle and that is that the messianic age will never arrive. We're on a messianic journey. We do all that we can and it's never enough. I don't know what to answer you beyond that except to say that I hope that when you get to be thirty and forty and fifty you will feel that you have done all that you needed to do, given the buffets, the challenges, the confusions and the convulsions of life. Ultimately, that's the judgment each of us must make on themselves.

Question: Could not hear question

Answer: Well, Dr. Cox has made a good living out of the cults and suggesting that there is a good deal in their success which throws a dark light on religious life. Let me suggest this to you, that it's not a question of the traditional religions modernizing themselves. We're a modern tradition. It's a question of young people not wanting, many of them, what is modern, what is reasonable, what is calm, what is liberal. One of the interesting things about faith, about this search that goes through the teens and the twenties, is this factor of intensity. The traditions which are too cool, which are precisely the modernized traditions, are repellant precisely because of that. We tell a youngster, make up your own mind. The cults tell the child, this is what is right, we'll make up your mind for you, I am the leader, I know the right, here is the light and here is the truth. Unless you are one who believes that in the name of fighting the cults we ought to go back to this kind of authoritarian direction, we can't take this road. We know now, that observing modern life among young people, the most attractive of the religious traditions are the most orthodox, the most evangelical, the most intense, those who have answers. And I've often said that I wish I had the mental attitude of Billy Graham. I am a good preacher and if I could, in all good conscience, raise my hands and say, come unto me, here is the light, here are the answers, bring me your troubles and I will lift up the burdens from upon them and I will give the grace of God to you - and I could fill these pews because that's what, not young people, that's what you want to hear when all is said and done, but I can't do it in good conscience. And the modern liberal religious structures cannot do it in good conscience because we have emerged from the medieval world. We know what authoritarianism is, we know the dangers of following the leader - Jonestown. That's why we have modern religions, and those who tell us, see what the young people are attracted to and make yourselves over in that image, are telling us to abandon one of the things we believe will make

progress, development, growth, possible. Now, we may be on the wrong track in terms of numbers, but I don't know that we can be on any other track. That is not to say that we program all that we should do, all of this, but as a basic philosophic stance I really don't think that we can take any other. How do we go one step further? How do we develop a world in which young people, those under thirty, it's not a pejorative, I've tried to say to you simply the fact of age, how that they will be attracted to this kind of cool, reasonable, liberal tradition. I don't know. We've opted for a world of change, a cold technological world. It's a world which requires a great deal of time, effort, competition, drive, success. We've put them into the pressure cooker. Most importantly, we've created a society which requires that they remain children until they are in their twenties, long periods of education, long periods where we keep them away from us, with their peers, developing their imaginations, developing distance from the adult world. If the world would ever slow down I could guarantee you that the liberal traditions would be more attractive, the mainline traditions. Until it does I think all we can do is hope that there is enough stability in the homes, that the children were loved enough when they were young, and to recognize, I guess, that the problem of the appeal of the cults is the problem of the coldness, the distance, of the home and of the school and of all those kinds of institutions. If a child feels secure, it is statistically true that he is less likely or she is less likely to be attracted to one of the cults than if they are intense and insecure and come from a turbulent home environment or neighborhood environment. So, a whole lot of things have to be done. I don't think it's necessarily a question of making ourselves over into the image of the Maharashi or of the Divine Light or of any of these other groups, I really don't.

Question: could not hear

Answer: It's not that so much. It's simply a, like most things, it's a little more practical. It's really a school curriculum. It's a, oh, I suspect there's a bit of

attempted rabbinic humor in here. It's much more brief and much less descriptive of the stages, but it's still revealing in that respect. This doesn't begin to exhaust what the rabbis said about adulthood, believe me. It's simply one that Dr. Levison picked out and put side by side and, therefore, I used it. What did Judaism say about adulthood, traditional Judaism? It said, first of all, adulthood must be marked by learning. It was a long lifetime argument against ignorance, against assuming that you knew the right simply because you knew it. You had to think problems through and study. It said something about family responsibility. Interestingly, it's the only one of these traditions in which marriage is an obligation early on in life as opposed to in your thirties when it's an obligation because you want an immortality as opposed to sense of family. The rabbinic tradition on adulthood is one of growing responsibility, emphasis on experience. It's one in which there was very great concern about uncertainty and doubt. You were not supposed to study philosophy until you reached thirty-nine and you were wise enough not to be disturbed by the questions it might raise. It's primitive in the sense that it's early. All of these traditions are early. After all, we started by saying this whole series that the study of adulthood is the study of the last ten years. It's really only in that period of time that people have begun to study this whole phenomenon. We've lived it. We've assumed it. We've assumed that it's right. We've assumed that adults were the acme of it all. Now we are beginning to study who we are and what we are.

Question: could not hear.

Answer: I do. It would be pointless to tell them anything else anyway. That's the whole point. You are casting them adrift. That's the beginning of maturity. Yes, you have to cast your child adrift, and the sooner the better once they've reached the late adolescence or early twenties. I would suspect that of the parenting problems that come into my office, the largest part of them are problems which involve smothering

love, that is, love which was good and valid at six which is still being practiced the same way at sixteen or at twenty-six. I'm not arguing that you ought to do what some swimming teachers do, that they take the child and just throw the child into the water and say, now swim. Obviously, there have to be ties and it's important to help a child understand how you can be part of the family and, yet, yourself, but there has to be a long period of walking away. That's why we take it for granted. One of the strengths of our conventional wisdom is that the child should go away to school, and probably the child should stay away, vocationally, however much we may want him to come back into the family business or something of that kind for a few more years because that period of apartness is the formative period of a child's adult personality, their faith, their philosophy, their convictions. Each of us lives with a partner in marriage whose convictions are not identical with ours. Our love isn't less because we vote different political tickets, or even because we have very sharp differences of economic philosophy or anything else. We can love and respect and admire that person despite those differences. And the same thing is true between parents and children. We don't have to have that absolute identity of principle, but what we can't have is that kind of intense dependence which the child always resents and the parent cannot always manage which always leads to a disastrous explosion. It really does. A child has to be weaned twice: once from the breast, and once from the nest.

Before we close and before Bob comes up here I want to say just one thing. I want to thank the Mr. and Mrs. Club of The Temple, Bob and Beverly Kendis, their President, for organizing this third annual Coping Series for us. We have had remarkable response from you. I hope you found these programs as interesting as I have and if all goes well and The Temple can afford it we'll have another Coping Series next year.

old age as a period of decline: at 70, man "has come to the time to depart on the ebb-tide of Death." The Talmud and Confucius offer a more developmental view of this era. According to the Talmud, the full wisdom and dignity of being an elder start at 60. At this age, says Confucius, I enter into a new relation to heaven—that is, to life and death, to the ultimate source of personal values, to the self—and through it gain a new kind of spiritual freedom transcending the old antitheses between desire and morality, between society and self.

e. The Talmud adds a final phase, which corresponds to our late late adulthood. At 80, a man attains a new strength (*Gevurah*) of advanced age. After 90, he lives on the far edge of the boundary between life and death.

One may also note, in addition to the ancient concepts of the "ages of man," the curious but suggestive outline presented in 1851 by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer in *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays* (published in English translation by the Clarendon Press in 1974). He agrees with the Upanishad of the Veda that "the natural duration of human life" (barring accidents or illness) is 100 years, and then (slightly tongue-in-cheek) identifies a sequence of decades with appropriate planetary influences. At 30, for example, "Mars reigns, and a man is now impetuous, strong, bold and warlike." At 50 "Jupiter holds sway." Finally, "Uranus comes and then, as they say, we go to heaven. . . ."

THREE VERSIONS OF "THE AGES OF MAN"

"The Sayings of the Fathers" (from the Talmud)

- 5 years is the age for reading (Scripture);
- 10 for Misnah (the laws);
- 13 for the Commandments (Bar Mitzvah, moral responsibility);
- 15 for Gemara (Talmudic discussions; abstract reasoning);
- 18 for Hupa (wedding canopy);
- 20 for seeking a livelihood (pursuing an occupation);
- 30 for attaining full strength ("Koah");
- 40 for understanding;
- 50 for giving counsel;
- 60 for becoming an elder (wisdom, old age);
- 70 for white hair;
- 80 for *Gevurah* (new, special strength of age);
- 90 for being bent under the weight of the years;
- 100 for being as if already dead and passed away from the world.

Confucius

The Master said, At 15 I set my heart upon learning.

At 30, I had planted my feet firm upon the ground.

At 40, I no longer suffered from perplexities.

At 50, I knew what were the biddings of heaven.

At 60, I heard them with docile ear.

At 70, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what
I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.

Solon

0-7 A boy at first is the man; unripe; then he casts his teeth;
milk-teeth befitting the child he sheds in his seventh year.

7-14 Then to his seven years God adding another seven,
signs of approaching manhood show in the bud.

14-21 Still, in the third of the sevens his limbs are growing; his chin
touched with a fleecy down, the bloom of the cheek gone.

21-28 Now, in the fourth of the sevens ripen to greatest completeness
the powers of the man, and his worth becomes plain to see.

28-35 In the fifth he bethinks him that this is the season for courting,
bethinks him that sons will preserve and continue his line.

35-42 Now in the sixth his mind, ever open to virtue,
broadens, and never inspires him to profitless deeds;

42-56 Seven times seven, and eight; the tongue and the mind
for fourteen years together are now at their best.

56-63 Still in the ninth is he able, but never so nimble
in speech and in wit as he was in the days of his prime.

63-70 Who to the tenth has attained, and has lived to complete it,
has come to the time to depart on the ebb-tide of Death.

An Evolutionary Perspective

In a more speculative vein, I want to place this view of the life cycle in the perspective of human evolution. In 1932, the biologist G. P. Bidder published an evocative article in which he attempted to explain biological senescence—that is, the normal process of bodily decline. Senescence is not built into the life cycle of some organisms as an inexorable sequence leading to death. However, senescence occurs in all the land vertebrates, including man. Why, asks Bidder, is this?

David Lewin's work regarding the role of
 of molecules & the environment in the development of the
 stages of adult development but Shelly presented another
 version of the Paradox. The original research has been
 been presented as a new study The Journal of Neuroscience
 and I believe indicates that the Paradox is
 that there are a number of AGE-RELATED phenotypes and
 synaptic loss - however these include both normal
 emotional states and neural groups and behavior



The work is significant and the primary results of several
 in some new studies neural groups and behavior
 being indicated are - cellular loss, neural
 loss to neural groups - of neural groups for
 4) detail neural groups : neural groups
neural groups / neural groups / neural groups -
 D.1. neural groups of neural groups /
neural groups of neural groups / neural groups in
AGE-RELATED phenotypes neural groups / neural groups
neural groups neural groups neural groups -

Will understand similar plan every other year
where on students? - -

2 line always been enjoyed by the men -
made every balance in nature thought - These
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where large man be a social movement before
a DISTRICT STATE in the life of the individual - -

The French were NATIVITE
American " NIVHOS KET
NIVHOS IN 2nd LAST

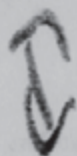
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to my country There - not speaking in human being.

D.L. much more to believe that the eye - English
plans are removed - - but proof is in my hand
to children - no record - - I want to be
down to quote 3 exact names of Shakespeare

James STAGOT OF NEW
↓

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can even of men ↑

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(SOURCE)



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P.A. - ~~one~~ policy to be held to be 2nd ~~category~~ on

one



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me as 2 ~~year~~ ~~and~~ 3 ~~month~~ ~~period~~ ~~into~~ 5 ~~and~~
~~then~~ ~~that~~ ~~period~~ - ~~copy~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~document~~ - ~~document~~
ADULTHOOD and CONVICTION // the adult known to
read and is copied of his opinion -

Let us focus on the adult years -

Salem : 35-42 (7 year cycle) Now his mind
EVER open to virtue ~~brandon~~ AND
NEVER inspires him to profitless deed

The result is ~~perfectly~~ - He ~~knows~~ his mind and
is ~~confident~~ of his principles - Salem's ~~noted~~ ~~noted~~
of the principles - ~~the~~ ~~adult~~ ~~known~~ ~~at~~ ~~his~~ ~~level~~
and ~~training~~ - ~~refers~~ ~~to~~ ~~body~~ ~~and~~ ~~mind~~ - TO ~~mind~~

appeals - to use even more active and in
control of life -- to make a genuine balance and
a truly enlightened mind would only and virtuously not
but even so -- hangings indeed would present
be with now for other writings.

2000 miles to be that in 30 years later
Confusion caused in each year?

AT 20 I NO LONGER SUFFERED FROM
PERPLEXITIES

AT 50 I KNEW WHAT WERE THE
MANDATES OF HEAVEN

WRHS AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
6 years to explain in introduction, examples
Confusion now known, one's mind -- to know
Book of Rites - 1000 - in a way as current at
20 - (40 years) Chuang-tzu Kuan-tzu - to not to
you spent money - money - but at 40 came into
Authority of Scholar-official - Now virtues
for the society - at one would be have examples
The Secrets of the - - at 50 would be

MANDATES OF HEAVEN - 2 more

13 3113N Translated section
philosophy
25 examples of mortality - a section

Accepting God (Christ) / - last interest concerning
man's life to be ~~glorified~~ way to liberation
~~these~~ religious concepts lead to a perception
of the term and revelation - there are no
years for such ins / notion / faith tenets /
interest objects / the need to live with faith -
these are the years when the religious liberation
and the will - & the political movement and
to make concepts - beyond 30 or 20 years /
return / all / any day lead to a question
ethics - an uninterrupted
renewal of energy
means of expression

ALMOST ALL THE work committed - committed to
free / political action / groups / an idea in the
early years -

NOT all - of course - some 7 years
the last trial year
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side was caught in the 30's to commence - but

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Just like this - 100 - 1000

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The number of letters - 1000

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WRHS

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Thursday - June 1944 - 2011 5PM 450 671
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not"

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much more - of love - Range of words
let say right - Be on me

Now Camp. - 1944

You have answered with God man have provided

Found answer

WRHS



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service to each of us - under in a

some of the best left -

ANOTHER

ACTING OUT for an appeal

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there ~~was~~ ~~also~~ ~~no~~ ~~value~~ to be - The
you of nothing ~~has~~ ~~no~~ ~~value~~ ~~and~~

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processes which I can use as a staff here.

[illegible]

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May 1st 1904

11. Peapack, N.J.

21 5-1-1941

3) read and understand

2) Protein
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 make given to have ~~same~~ ~~percentage~~ ~~applied~~

you have no more

Printing was of published language

SPS To ~~W. J. J. J. J.~~

C.P. to ~~Reverend~~ Nathaniel ~~Reverend~~

$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{1}{r^2} \right) = -\frac{2}{r^3} \frac{dr}{dt}$

in success been perceived not in the mind of the public at large

unity -

2. many people are not aware of the fact that the public is not united

under the same name - there are many different groups and organizations

which are not always in agreement with each other

Throughout our lives it is important to check
that no institutions (parties) which helped shape
our conceptions are still reflecting them

7. The Success of moving - - 21 2 lines

A dream - 2 lines are needed to make it real - 21
2 lines - people are not aware of the fact that the public is not united

alone it will not succeed - - Rel. movement has been the main factor

suspect - because the public is not united and is not aware of the fact that the public is not united
is not aware of the fact that the public is not united - - but

and the public is not aware of the fact that the public is not united - - the public is not aware of the fact that the public is not united

is not aware of the fact that the public is not united - - the public is not aware of the fact that the public is not united

is not aware of the fact that the public is not united - - the public is not aware of the fact that the public is not united

is not aware of the fact that the public is not united - - the public is not aware of the fact that the public is not united

is not aware of the fact that the public is not united - - the public is not aware of the fact that the public is not united

Need to give patient / will to know - and understand
the value of control of the body - because

recovered

Dr. [unclear]

Dr. [unclear] left hand control movement control

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can not be taught directly - control control -

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control control control

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