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Three Approaches to Parenting

In his book *Revolutionary Parenting*, George Barna says there are three dominant approaches to parenting in the United States.

Parenting by default is what Barna terms the path of least resistance. This approach is influenced by cultural norms and traditions. The objective is to keep everyone as happy as possible so the parents can still enjoy the other prioritized aspects of their lives.

Trial-and-error parenting is based on the notion that every parent is an amateur at raising children. There are no absolute guidelines to follow, so the best that parents can do is experiment, observe outcomes, and improve upon their successes and failures. In this incremental approach, the goals of parenting are to continually perform better than most other parents.

Barna found that a more revolutionary approach to parenting was the least common approach. Revolutionary parenting takes God's words on life and family at face value and seeks to apply them faithfully and consistently.

Perhaps the most startling difference in these approaches to parenting has to do with the desired outcomes. "Parenting by default and trial-and-error are both approaches that enable parents to raise their children without the effort of defining their life," Barna explained. "Revolutionary parenting, which is based on one's faith in God, makes parenting a life priority. Those who engage in revolutionary parenting define success as intentionally facilitating faith-based transformation in the lives of their children, rather than simply accepting the aging and survival of the child as a satisfactory result."

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