

EXORDIUM

TAKING CARE OF SENTIMENTS.
A REFLECTION ON DISORIENTED PARENTS AND
JUVENILE DISCOMFORT

AVER CURA DEI SENTIMENTI.
UNA RIFLESSIONE SU GENITORI DISORIENTATI E
DISAGIO GIOVANILE

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The family, since the beginning of life, represents the place in which the person is born; the starting point for his own place in the world; the physical and human space in which the process of awareness of the individual takes place; the basis on which the entire social building rests (Freire, 1968/2011; Pati, 2014; Rossi, 2015). Always origin and fulcrum of life of everyone's, the family institution began, from the Sixties of the last century, a long and articulated process of *morphogenesis*, the outcome of a series of social events, historical and cultural – which have deeply affected its *being* – and, in turn, the architect of profound transformations in values and relationships.

In the *society of uncertainty* there seems to be no place for stability, for duration, for slow and dilated time (Bauman, 1999/2014; Galli, 2007); there is no time to devote to the education of children, more generally, to the care of relationships.

In this situation of *frailty of human bonds* (Bauman, 2003) we are also witnessing a profound crisis of social sentiments and, therefore, the need, inherent in every man and woman, of emotional sharing with the other person by himself.

The numerous episodes of news, frequently marked by acts of unprecedented violence and phenomena of anomy, up to the most important forms of rejection of life, represent, on the one hand,

the tormented and uneasy cry of a generation perpetually anxious, perhaps on the run from the existence of which it is the protagonist and, on the other hand, denounce the absence – increasingly evident – of a sentimental education, capable of filling the relational and sentimental gap experienced by younger people. To be called into question are, then, mainly adults (Loiodice, 2019; Lopez, 2014) and, in particular, parents who, first, in turn, find themselves living in situations of great disorientation, resulted, above all, from the absence of reference models considered valid and the desire to seek and discover new forms of being father and mothers.

The contribution, therefore, intends to reflect, on the one hand, on the need, for fathers and mothers today, to commit themselves to the focus of a component, reflective parenting, able to propose clear value coordinates for the children of which it is responsible; and on the other hand, on the urgency, for sons and daughter, to receive an education *of* and *to* sentiments to learn to recognize, name and narrate their own emotional experience and avoid annihilating drifts (of the self and the other).

La famiglia, sin dai primordi della vita, rappresenta il luogo in cui la persona nasce; il punto di partenza per la propria collocazione nel mondo; lo spazio fisico e umano in cui ha luogo il processo di coscientizzazione dell'individuo; la base su cui poggia l'intero edificio sociale (Freire, 1968/2011; Pati, 2014; Rossi, 2015). Da sempre origine e fulcro della vita di ciascuno/a, l'istituto familiare ha iniziato, a partire dagli anni Sessanta del secolo scorso, un lungo e articolato processo di *morfogenesi*, esito di una serie di eventi sociali, storici e culturali – che hanno inciso profondamente sul suo *essere* – e, a sua volta, artefice di profonde trasformazioni: valoriali e relazionali.

Nella *società dell'incertezza* sembra non esserci più posto per la stabilità, per la durata, per il tempo lento e dilatato (Bauman, 1999/2014; Galli, 2007); viene a mancare il tempo da dedicare all'educazione dei/delle figli/e e, più in generale, alla cura delle relazioni.

In questa situazione di *fragilità dei legami affettivi* (Bauman, 2003), si assiste anche a una profonda crisi dei sentimenti sociali e, dunque, al bisogno, insito in ogni uomo e in ogni donna, di compartecipazione emotiva con l'altro da sé.

I numerosi episodi di cronaca, contrassegnati frequentemente da azioni di violenza inaudita e da fenomeni di anomia, sino ad arrivare a forme più importanti di rifiuto della vita, rappresentano, da un lato, il grido, tormentato e inquieto, di una generazione perennemente in ansia, forse in fuga dall'esistenza di cui è protagonista e, dall'altro, denunciano l'assenza – sempre più evidente – di un'educazione sentimentale, capace di colmare il vuoto relazionale e sentimentale sperimentato dai più giovani.

A essere chiamati in causa sono, allora, principalmente gli adulti (Loiodice, 2019; Lopez, 2014) e, in particolare, i genitori che, per primi, a loro volta, si trovano a vivere situazioni di forte spaesamento, scaturito, soprattutto, dall'assenza di modelli di riferimento ritenuti validi e dal desiderio di cercare e scoprire nuove forme dell'essere padri e madri.

Il contributo, dunque, intende riflettere, da un lato, sulla necessità, per i padri e le madri di oggi, di impegnarsi per la messa a fuoco di una genitorialità competente, riflessiva, capace di proporre coordinate valoriali chiare per i figli di cui è responsabile; e dall'altro, sull'urgenza, per i figli e le figlie, di ricevere un'educazione *dei* e *ai* sentimenti per imparare a riconoscere, nominare e narrare il proprio vissuto emotivo ed evitare derive annientatrici (del sé e dell'altro/a).

«I had learned to read in myself
and so I was able to read also in the others».
Etty Hillesum, *Diary 1941-1943*¹

1. *The metamorphosis of an institution*

The family, which has always been the origin and fulcrum of everyone's life, has begun, since the Sixties of the last century, a long and articulated process of change, of *metamorphosis*, understood this as a *mutation*, and therefore, *transformation* of the structure and form of the family institution, through profound and radical changes. The pluralization and diversification of lifestyles, the encouragement of personal self-realization and the consequent flexibility of the division of roles between husband and wife and greater mutual autonomy among all family members, have led to a reorganisation of the whole system on several levels. The main changes concerned, in fact, not only its composition (marriages, separations and divorces, second marriages, de facto unions, etc.) and the type of relations existing in it – it was passed by the “patriarchal” family, characterized by a rigid separation of roles and an asymmetric authoritarian relationship, to the “intimate conjugal”, characterized by affectivity and relationships more symmetrical –, but also its structure: from the “simple” or “nuclear” family, formed by a single conjugal nucleus, with or without children, to the “extended”, “multiple”, “complex”, “one-person household”, up to that “without structure or atypical” (Altamura, 2021a; 2021b). The Twentieth century was undoubtedly the promoter and spectator of the Italian family revolution. Revolution passed through a multiplicity of social issues, clashes and cultural and political debates, a series of reflections on values and ethical-moral choices (Cambi, Certini & Nesti, 2010).

The long path of change experienced and traversed by the *primary cell/structure of society* has been carefully studied and

¹ All citations have been translated for this paper.

documented by the one who can be called the first scholar of family pedagogy in Italy: Norberto Galli.

Galli (2007) divides this long period of transformation into at least three phases: the *time of stability and security* (1950-1965), the *time of instability and uncertainty* (1965-1990) and the *new families and challenges to education* (1990-2006), which – according to the author of this paper –, is the phase that also characterizes the present.

The time of *stability and security* affects the time span from 1950 to 1965 and is characterized – writes Galli (2007) – by the cohesion and consistency of marriage and the family. Already the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948, in point 3 of article 16 recognized the family as the «natural and fundamental nucleus of society» entitled to be protected by the company and the State. There is talk of *golden years* in the family in which there is a high demographic index and a low rate of separations and in which the desire for stability on the part of the spouses and the desire to overcome conflicts to keep the family united. The photograph that is returned to us represents a stable family, serene (at least apparently), balanced, able to exist and resist despite crises, difficulties, adversities. These are the years, too, in which the presence of the Church and religious teaching is strongly felt. As Giacomo Cives writes (1990), there is constant attention, on the Catholic side, to the problems of the education of the family.

However, since the 1960s, and particularly the year of student protest, cultural changes, social, economic, political and legislative also affect the family and it is precisely at this juncture that the principles and values of tradition are put into crisis and new attitudes and conduct are affirmed towards marriage and the *primary cell of society*. There comes the *time of instability and uncertainty* that, according to Galli's analysis, will last until 1990, covering a period of 25 years, years in which the ancient principles will begin to be supplanted by new ideals, such as: spontaneity, for which the desire for emancipation from any form of authority and subjection (especially in the political sphere) begins to prevail; hedonism, with which the achievement and enjoyment of pleasure becomes

essential; individualism, so it becomes essential to affirm the autonomy and independence of the individual with respect to the wider community of which he is part. In these years – Galli continues (2007) – a vast movement began that penetrated the consciences of many, insinuating a deep sense of insecurity and anxiety. Young people, and more generally adults, being attracted by the new dominant models, begin to critically analyse the principles of the education received. And so, many marriages enter into crisis; there are higher and higher expectations, mutual understanding and communication relationships are broken and one begins to look at the bonds only in function of one's own well-being. These are the years in which the idyllic image of the traditional family, seen as a union based on respect, harmony, sharing among all the members of the family, is replaced by an almost demonic image of the same, perceived now as a source of possible social hardship, mental disorders, repression, until arriving in 1972, to speak of the «death of the family» (Cooper, 1972). The family image proposed by David Cooper is alienating and aimed at conformism and therefore prevents the formation and expression of free and autonomous people, making individuals anonymous.

In the context of progressive secularization of the Seventies, a real *proliferation of legislation* took place: on 1 December 1970 the Law n. 898, *Discipline of cases of dissolution of marriage*, was approved; 19 May 1975 saw the birth of Law No. 151 of 1975, *Reform of family law*, which affirmed the new conception of the family characterized by sharing and the assumption of full responsibility by spouses, as well as future parents, instead of the outdated hierarchical and authoritarian aspect; and, finally, Law No. 194 of 22 May 1978, *Norms for social protection of maternity and voluntary termination of pregnancy*, aimed at regulating the phenomenon of abortion. The promulgation of all these laws had effects of great importance, and of great resonance, such as to redesign the structure and functions of the traditional family (Altamura, 2021a).

Specifically, what emerged in a clear and distinct manner was: the rejection and opposition to a model of couple based on the principle of asymmetry, in favour of a bond based on respect and

absolute equality between men and women; the rejection of the relationship of authority in the field of education of sons and daughters, in favour of the recognition of the principle of *parental responsibility* (no longer, therefore, *parental authority*) and a real communicative horizontality (Pati, 2014).

The principles of the past years, once unassailable and indissoluble, begin to crumble. The policies of the new scenario, as well as the emergence of new lifestyles, undermine, in a certain sense, the values, until then considered fundamental and indisputable and, from the early Seventies, there is a steady decline in the rate of marriage and birth rate.

This is the Twenty years in which marriage ceases to be just a sacrament to become a real contract, legally regulated; these are the years in which getting married and having a child is no longer “the rule” and/or a priority (especially for women); the separation rate increases; new models of life of couple, of conjugal and domestic life are affirmed; the woman aspires to her independence, beginning to desire – as underlined by Lombardo Radice (1916) in his *Lessons of general pedagogy* years and years before – to a «human and not strictly feminine formation» (p. 64); the mass media propose new models and different values that gather acclaim because they are fascinating; finally, new needs arise related to being a woman/man, mother/father, parent/child. Therefore, after the boom of marriages and births of the Sixties – of 1965 in particular – there is a phase of demographic stagnation, better known as the phenomenon of the *baby bust* in contrast to that of the *baby boom* (Altamura, 2021a).

Between 1990 and 2006 – the phase of the new families and the challenges to education, the third and last presented by Galli (2007) – the trends that have emerged in previous years continue to persist but, at the same time, new models of the family are born and imposed, whose characteristics depend on the increased cultural and civil complexity. The advent of globalization, in particular, “forces” Italy to confront other models of the family, distant (often very far) from the traditional (heterosexual,

monogamous, stable couple with a fundamental prerequisite: conjugal always precedes – or, at least, in most cases – parenting).

Next to the family formed by the heterosexual couple, united by the marriage bond, with one or more children, in fact, a multiplicity of “disobedient” households appears – says Rossi (2015) – and far from the ideal family model. Pierpaolo Donati (2002) observes that the more complex society becomes, the more the possibility grows that every constitutive element of the family goes on its own. This is the season – says Galli (2007) – in which among young people spreads a kind of «allergy to marriage» as an institution, the phenomenon of cohabitation is accentuated, which from being a transitional condition becomes, more and more often, permanent; increase births outside marriage; the phenomenon of the «double presence» (concept coined by the sociologist Laura Balbo in 1978), or the double role of women: domestic and extra-domestic, is affirmed in a much more consistent way than in the past, private and public, productive and (not only) reproductive.

All these transformations have profoundly affected the way of being and having a family today, and above all, they have affected both adults (mothers and fathers) and the youngest (children). Adults - also because of the lack of reflection on the relationship with the authoritarian model, fought and repudiated in previous decades – are terrified – writes Maria Grazia Riva (2012) – by the comparison with the power and the conflict, devoid of reference models and, therefore, disoriented; while the younger ones are perpetually anxious, perhaps fleeing from the existence of which they are protagonists and often give rise to the malaise characterizing *the era of sad passions* (Benasayag & Schmit, 2005) and the *society of uncertainty* (Bauman, 1999/2014).

The non-processing of the pending debris, after the challenge, has not allowed, in many situations, the construction of new forms of education really not authoritarian, allowing instead the perpetuation of blindness to the deep needs of children [and, we add, adolescents], to which those of their parents are superimposed, in turn grown children, but with much pain, often not aware, still inside (Riva, 2012, p. 53).

For these reasons too, young people today, compared to previous generations, are living in a more precarious situation. Parents struggle to find models to inspire and struggle to achieve the difficult balance between belonging and separation, between welcoming and letting go. They fear the exercise of authority for fear of being like the parental prototype from which they intend to distance themselves and, therefore, do not provide directions, do not set limits, do not assume responsibility; and so, children first and boys then experience a huge inner and relational void in which they tend to nest lack of motivation, apathy and, at worst, rejection of life.

We are, therefore, faced with a dual pedagogical emergency: on the one hand, adults and, in this specific case, parents are called to commit themselves to the focus of a competent parenting, reflective, able to propose clear value coordinates for the children of which it is responsible; on the other hand, children need to receive an education *of* and *to* sentiments to learn to recognize, name and narrate their own emotional experience and avoid annihilating drifts (of the self and the other).

2. *Disoriented parents...*

In the *society of uncertainty* there seems to be no place for stability, for duration, for slow and dilated time (Bauman, 1999/2014; Galli, 2007). At the same time, and as a consequence of the above, the relationships within the family change, they are no longer stable, they become difficult and, in many cases, the main cause is found in the lack of time: lack of time to devote to the relationship of couple, but, above all, the time to devote to the education of sons and daughters and, more generally, to the care of relationships.

Already at the end of the Nineties, François De Singly, in his work *Le soi, le couple et la famille* (1996), stressed the uncertainty within which modern parents were called to act and the lack of reference models; uncertainty that also becomes – according to

Bauman (1999/2014) – a typical and permanent characteristic of our time. Everything is moving and moving so quickly that before you have a chance to grasp, understand and study the environment in which you live, what happens, this has already disappeared, it has already become something else. From this comes an atmosphere of indeterminacy and a sense of widespread and generalized impotence that characterizes especially adults and, therefore, also parents, especially at a time when children would most need them.

Parents increasingly absorbed by work, frequently pervaded by moods such as loneliness and confusion, struggle to propose themselves as guides – overwhelmed, as they are, by educational experimentalism –, to define and provide a clear system of rules, to promote universally shared values that allow the *human flowering*.

Now that the age of *paternal authority* has passed, today's parents seem to have rather adopted the rule of *letting go*, of not meddling in the world of sons and to pass to unconditional permissiveness, renouncing any claim to education that refers to obligations or rules of conduct (Giani Gallino, 2005). The rule, on the other hand, is what helps to discern good from evil – writes Rossi (2015) – defines the path to be followed, indicates directions to go, allows you to make the mature experience of reference, rejection, frustration, supports and governs the formation of the moral component of personality (p. 136); it is an integral part of the relationship of care and recognition, in turn the constitutive horizon of subjectivity.

Parenting cannot and must not result, therefore, in the mere perception of “having” a child. It postulates in the father and mother the responsible and common assumption of educational tasks through which to guide the son to integrate and orient himself in the surrounding world. It is necessary to be aware that the sons and daughters who have come into the world are an *existence to be cultivated*, to be cared for and not through the exercise of a proxy – to one or another spouse, to the extended family group or other institutions – but through the direct performance of the educational task by the couple (Campanini, 1992).

There is parenting, and competent parenting, where there are ties based on care and caring; care that requires responsibility towards the recipient and, in this case, the child.

Care means [...] *concern* and *solicitude*: it means in the first place knowing how to grasp the urgencies and priorities that we face, and make them the object of attention; because the *attention* [...] is the opposite [...] of carelessness and indifference, it is the indispensable presupposition that precludes at the same time to the awareness of the self and to the empathic realization of others. [...] means to be active, mobilized to give an answer, putting into play and investing energies that spring from the opening of the self, from its ability to lean out of itself, to transcend its own sterile selfishness (Pulcini, 2017, pp. 44-45).

Caring for a child, therefore, implies taking on a constant commitment and an ethic of responsibility. The responsible parent is the one who does not remain indifferent to the process of growth of his child, does not fail to guide and accompany him but, on the contrary, is the one who is committed to promoting his integral personality; which is the *guarantor of the future* of the young generations (Loiodice, 2019); which accompanies the other to become, progressively, shared subjectivity. The responsible parent, finally, is the one who does not abdicate, who does not renounce the fulfilment of the educational task.

The *flowering of the being* needs presences aware of the duty to educate. Children and adolescents, as such, have a primary and fundamental need to have solid adult reference models around them, aware of their responsibilities, *safe harbours* to get away from and always return to if necessary.

If this need is not satisfied, first the child and then the youth will experience an inner and relational void due, mainly, to not having received a look of valorising return (Lancini, 2021), an existential rooting, a recognition of one's own self and feeling. He who is deprived of recognition, of approval – wrote Ricoeur (2005) – is as if he did not exist.

And it is precisely this inability of the parent to be seen, often, as the main cause of the discomfort of younger people. The

numerous episodes of news, frequently marked by acts of unprecedented violence and phenomena of anomie, up to the most important forms of rejection of life, represent, on the one hand, the cry, tormented and restless, of a generation perpetually anxious, perhaps fleeing from the existence of which is the protagonist and, on the other hand, denounce the absence – increasingly evident – of a sentimental education, able to fill the gap relational and sentimental lived and experienced.

3. ...and juvenile discomfort

If the expectation of the other's gaze, at the basis of the principle of recognition and the construction of identity, is not welcomed – especially during the transition phases – it can only have unpredictable, sometimes negative outcomes.

John Bowlby (1972) wrote:

[...] constitutive elements of the identity of the child are the perceptions that parents have of him. When these are reorganized by him, they become his own perceptions: “That’s how I see myself”, “I see myself as you see me”. The Self is reflected in parental attitudes [...] (p. 64).

In the relationship with the parent, therefore, the child should trace the necessary confirmations for the construction of their individual identity, for their positioning in the world.

However, in today's complex, *liquid and uncertain society, fragile* – especially from an affective point of view – this confirmation becomes, more and more, difficult to implement because of the lack of recognition of *being a child* in front of discouraged parents, *lost* (Cornacchia & Madriz, 2014).

Children, at a certain point in their development, in order to assert themselves and become aware of themselves, go through a period, more or less long, of opposition and controversy against adults and, in particular, against parents. But, if parents can give them a solid education, the rebellion will soon lose its passionate

intemperance to become, in step with the process of maturation, balanced and constructive criticism. On the other hand, the crisis of opposition becomes more acute and threatens to take dramatic or even pathological forms when fathers and mothers instead of helping young people to overcome it by listening to them, understanding and guiding them, or hardening – said Ada Marchesini Gobetti (1959) in his *Il Giornale dei Genitori* – in denial, rejecting its demands; or perceiving inadequate, not up to the task, they let themselves be overcome by laziness, they resign themselves to not understand them, thus renouncing to educate them, abdicating, in fact, their mandate. When the phenomenon becomes widespread – as is happening in our time – it degenerates into a real crisis, into an existential discomfort of youth.

These *educational wounds*, caused precisely by a lack of coincidence between educational needs and recognition and by a distorted conception of education or by a substantial deficit thereof, cause *anthropological damage* of wide resonance.

It is surprising, for example, the percentage of 15-year-old boys who in the West have already attempted suicide more than once – writes Alessandro D’Avenia (2016): the rejection of life, next to disorders and behaviours of various kinds constitutes the cry of anguish of a generation in anxiety and/ or fleeing from existence that has touched: a generation that has the face of the man of Munch screaming on the bridge, above which he has forgotten where he comes from and where he goes and remains suspended in the anguish of vertigo, not knowing whether to go forward or back (p. 10), whether to transform one’s destiny into destination or annihilate it.

The awareness of being marked by the need to be welcomed and recognized is, therefore, an essential part of the *being of the child* – and, more generally, of the person –, is the root of his ability to give meaning to reality, to *read* it in order to understand and *inhabit* it; is also synonymous with research and the need for intergenerational relations – in particular – significant. Being aware of being a recipient of care promotes, in turn, the desire to take

care of oneself, in one's life, one's emotions and one's sentiments. Rossi (2015) writes about this:

[e]motions, feelings, passions, moods, moods, impulses are configured “roots” of the ego, they draw matrices of the sense of self, they represent the substratum of the intrapersonal and interpersonal life, pervasively accompany human existence, influencing its path towards more or less happy developments (p. 167).

Well, these considerations invite us to reflect – today more than yesterday – on the damage that can be caused by a lack or inadequate education of *sentiments* or *sentimentality*.

4. Taking care of sentiments

The care of sentiments originates in the family and the parent is called to be the main architect, to be promoter of authentic relationships, based on trust, respect, recognition and listening, essential to develop a *sentimental syntax* shared with their children.

Even today, however, education *to* and *of* sentiments in young people is presented as a theme in many unexpected aspects, exposed to the deformations of sentimentalism that are often translated into the inability to listen, recognize, express sentiments, conditioned also by an imaginary fed by stereotypes, *distorting mirror* of real life (Iori, 2014).

Instead, it must become a priority of our days and be configured, primarily, as a possibility to learn to cultivate listening to oneself to know and recognize one's own interiority, to confer word and, consequently, *to know how to inhabit* all the *emotional shades* (both positive and negative: joy, melancholy, anger, pain, boredom, etc.).

Sentimental education is an undertaking capable of endowing the human being with dispositions and forces, mentality and sensitivity by virtue of which to signify life enriching it with meaning, to gain a genuine and profound feeling of the self, learn to communicate according to a

conscious, measured, respectful, responsible affectivity, able to find its highest expressions and practices in the conduct of altruism and solidarity in tune with the obligations of the moral conscience (Rossi, 2015, p. 166).

The correlation between affectivity mistreated or mortified and inner emptiness, between affective illiteracy and negative self-perception is very close. Ignoring, repressing, neglecting or, again, distorting the affective states and sentiments – the singular richness of *humanism* (Rossi, 2004) – are all actions producing the loss of self and interpersonal contact, progressive alienation and de-signification of life.

To avoid these drifts and to ensure that discomfort does not evolve into deviance, the father and mother are called to commit themselves to the focus of a competent parenting, reflective, able to propose clear value coordinates and to take care of the sentiments of the children of which it is responsible.

The competent parent must become a responsible presence, a hospitable subjectivity, an individuality capable of becoming decentralized in order to make room for the child, to recognize him as something else by himself; he must also be empathetic and be able to seek biographical solutions to problems and, therefore, to trace in one's memory affective experiences analogous to those that the son is experiencing (Lopez, 2021). Writes Bruno Bettelheim (2008):

[t]he most important task of the parent is to learn to sense with the feeling the sense that they can have things for his child, and behave accordingly; in this way he will do what is most useful for both and also will make their relationship deeper and positive. The best way to do this [...] is to recall what a similar situation meant to us, as children or young people, and for what reasons, and to think about how we would have wanted our parents to handle that situation at that time (p. 28).

In a period in which the *fatigue of living* (Rossi, 2015) of the youth is also accentuated by the *fragility of emotional ties*, the competent parent must have clear the principle that having children means

taking responsibility for another creature, weaker and defenceless, accept an irrevocable and permanent commitment (Bauman, 2003), which also involves the *education of feeling* (Rossi, 2006) essential for children to learn to recognize, name and narrate their emotional experience and avoid annihilating drifts (of the self and the other).

An education that requires, among other things, listening, silence and words because – as Iori (2014) explains – listening to the other and to his word needs silence to let out the otherness that gradually reveals itself, arousing wonder and wonder of its uniqueness. The competent parent, then, will have to practice active listening and devote time to nurture, increase and enhance the *alphabet of sentiments* of their child.

Taking care of feeling and sentiments, carrying out an education *to* and *of* feelings in the younger generations, are actions that can no longer be delayed. Today more than yesterday it seems necessary – says Rossi (2006) – to help the person – and, in this specific case, the young people – to think about their own feelings, to reflect on their own affective, emotional, sentimental life, to identify, find the right words to express this inner world in all its plurality and difference. In all this, as we said, the parent and, more generally, the family will play a decisive role.

Only a family attentive to the care of sentiments will be able to lay the foundation for the formation of solid moral subjectivities and the premises for civil rebirth as well as for the affirmation of an ethic of care and solidarity (Rossi, 2015).

It is necessary, then, to restore to parents this important awareness so that younger people learn *to give voice* to the emotional life, to decipher, recognize, to name, communicate and share – but also to preserve – one's own sentiments in the perspective of an ethic of affective responsibility respectful of the self and of the other by itself.

Sentimental education is realized “by learning to inhabit every tonality of emotional life, even those that have to do with suffering”, because they represent extraordinarily fertile lands, if carefully dissolved. Alongside this habit with the difficult and tiring forms of the emotional

life, we must also cultivate the “sentiments that help us to live”: humility and gratitude as a positive acceptance of our condition, trust and hope as the ability to perceive the possible and to be born again and again, tenderness and tolerance as the disposition to make room for the new and the different smoothing every roughness, and so on (Bruzzzone, 2014, p. 99; see also Mortari, 2002).

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