

# **Inherent Affection**

American studies have disclosed the fact that 80 percent of mothers cradle their infants in their left arms, holding them against the left side of their bodies. If asked to explain the significance of this preference most people reply that it is obviously the result of predominance of right-handedness in the population. By holding the babies on their left arms, the mothers keep their dominant arm free for manipulation. But a detailed analysis shows that this is not the case. True, there is a slight difference between right handed and left handed females, but not enough to provide an adequate explanation. It emerges that 83% of the right handed mothers hold the baby on the left side but then so do 78% of the left handed mothers. In other words, only 22% of the left-handed mothers have their dominant hands free of action. Clearly, there must be some other, less obvious explanation.

The only indication comes from the fact that the heart is on the left side of the mother's body. Could it be that the sound of her heartbeat is the vital force? Thinking along these lines it was argued that perhaps during its existence inside the body of the mother, the growing embryo becomes fixated on the sound of the heartbeat. If this is so then the rediscovery of the familiar sound after the birth might have a calming effect on the infant, especially as it has just been thrust into a strange and frightening new world outside. If this is so, then the mother either will instinctively or by an unconscious series of trials and errors soon arrive at the discovery that her baby is more at peace if held on the left side against her heart.

This may sound implausible, but tests have now been carried out which reveal that it is nevertheless the true explanation. Groups of newborn babies in a hospital nursery were exposed to the sound of the heartbeat, for a considerable time, to the recorded sound of a heart beat at a standard rate of 72 beats per minute. There were nine babies in each group and it was found that one or more of them was crying for 60% of the time when the sound was not switched on, but that is figure fell to only 38% when the heart beat recording was thumping away. The heart beat groups also showed a greater weight gain than the others, although the amount of food taken was the same in both cases. Clearly, the groups without the sounds of the heartbeat were burning up a lot more energy because of the vigorous actions of their crying. It can be said, mothers are inclined to act according to their inherent traits, rather than behaving in a unique or individual manner. It is almost as though they are not supposed to think about certain things, such as holding a baby predominantly on the left side rather than on the right, it is clearly something mothers never think about, but, rather do what 'feels' right according to their instincts.

Therefore, it seems fairly certain that this is the explanation of the mother's left side approach to baby holding. It is interesting that when 466 Madonna and child paintings (dating back over several hundred years) were analysed for these features, 373 of them showed the baby being held on the left side. Here, again the figure was at 80%. This contrasts with observations of females carrying parcels, which recorded that 50% of women carried them on the left and 50% on the right side.

**Q. Write and learn the spellings of the underlined words from the text.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

**Q. Write the meanings of the following words in the spaces provided.**

a. manipulation \_\_\_\_\_

b. predominance \_\_\_\_\_

c. adequate \_\_\_\_\_

d. instinctively \_\_\_\_\_

e. implausible \_\_\_\_\_

f. inherent \_\_\_\_\_

**Q. Answer the following questions based on the text 'Inherent Affection'.**

a. What were the explanations that the mothers gave when asked why they hold their babies to their left side?

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b. What were the findings for the relationship between right-handedness and baby-holding?

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c. What is the most plausible explanation for the findings?

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d. What can be said about the instincts of mothers?

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e. Describe the research that was conducted and how it justifies the theory?

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f. Do you think affection towards one's child is innate? Explain your answer.

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g. How does the painting support the writer's theory?

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