

is said to be. And all unconsciously he will conform readily to his asserted character.

The same writer points out that there are certain rules governing suggestion. First, its effectiveness depends on the confidence inspired by the suggester in those whom he desires to influence. Hence the importance of the probation officer's winning the confidence and respect of his charge.

Second, the assumption towards the person sought to be influenced of an antagonistic or coercive attitude will defeat the purpose aimed at. You will never make a child good by scolding and commanding. At times it is necessary to command, but commands have in them no suggestive value. They do not secure the involuntary automatic assent which is the prime aim of suggestion. Instead of exhorting a child to be good, he should be led indirectly by conversation and little stories into a goodness-desiring attitude. This should be done repeatedly, but always through new settings or with new stories, for a third rule of suggestion is that while repetition increases its force, the repetition should not be so continuous and unvaried as to become monotonous. For

monotony breeds indifference and even antagonism, and these in turn inhibit the influence of suggestion. The probation officer will do well to study suggestion carefully, for he will find no greater help.

I have said that his work is constructive. Unless the probation officer can feel that he has by his influence made a lasting change for the better in the character of the child and left the home and the environment in general better than he found them, he cannot claim to have succeeded even though the probationer does not return to the court under charge of a further offence. The probation officer should be sympathetic, tactful and resourceful, and should possess a large fund of optimism, balanced by good judgment accompanied by firmness. The work is by no means easy. Many cases bristle with difficulties. But a good probation officer will not be deterred. He will look on such a case as a test of his own ability and of his fitness for the position. He will recognize that failure is his own failure, just as success is a personal triumph for himself. For, after all, the test of a good probation officer is the number of his successes.