

Are Parents Responsible for the Troubled State of American Children?

We read about teenage killers, we acquiesce to college students by establishing free speech “Safe zones” lest feelings are bruised by politically-incorrect opinions elsewhere, we hear about high-school teachers imposing personal and political agendas in classrooms, we accept “Gun-free zones” in schools that invite invasive violence, we watch our youth – taught to abandon the tool of survival (reason) now demanding a ban on the tool of defense (guns) – march to the drumbeat of well-funded political manipulators, and we shake in our souls to recognize that kindergarten children are being drugged into docility and confused about their sexuality. We blame police, politicians, the education system, the internet, and mass media for the violent, fragile, and/or twisted condition of too many children today. And all of these surely do contribute to the disorder we witness across the land.

But we seem never to consider the role of parents. What is their culpability in the distressed state of so many American youths? What happened to tried-and-true concepts of successful parent-led family life that consists of encouraging curiosity, instilling rational values, and teaching socialization skills to children in a secure setting called “home”? Where is parental responsibility in establishing an environment that celebrates self-discipline and creative activities resulting in earned pride and emotional rewards that serve to ease and direct a child’s development from a dependent early life to a confident, independent, mature, and moral adult?

Especially in today’s turbulent world, children can be deleteriously influenced by teachers, social media, the

internet, severe peer pressure, socially engineered TV programming, violent movies, and political correctness. It is crucial, therefore, for parents to provide not only a steady, loving, and nurturing family life but also help their kids grow as individuals able to think independently and critically, thus acquiring the genuine self-esteem necessary to judge external input and resist group-think.

Yet we must remember that children have free will too. Parents must take the lead as adults, yes, but children have the ability to accept or reject that leadership and, if rejected, parents face different challenges. Even so, the primary function of parents is to protect and nourish their children whether cooperative or difficult. The process must start early so youngsters can look up to their parents as positive role models. Also, if misbehavior arises, children are then small enough to pick up physically and remove from public places, or, when old enough, isolated to think over mistakes that have been explained to them.

Employment excuses are not enough to disregard parental responsibilities. Finance excuses are not enough. Time excuses are not enough. No excuse is enough. Parents who do not teach their children to reason for themselves turn malleable minds over to schools to mold them as they wish. Parents who do not monitor social media, TV, texting, computer gaming, and real-life friends are shirking their supervision responsibilities and obligation to promote positive, life-serving ideals and rational behavior for their children. Parents who do not attend PTA meetings leave educational curricula to be decided solely by bureaucrats who dedicate much attention toward their own persuasions rather than toward the welfare of students. Parents who dress and talk like adolescents or try to become "buddies" with their kids offer nothing of adulthood for children to emulate. Parents who allow cell phones (including their own) during meals are delinquent in teaching table manners and social skills via family conversations. Parents

who do not discipline misbehaving children via a penalty system exacerbate problems. Parents who do not initiate family gatherings (without *any* electronic devices) for sportive-fun, artistic creations, and group celebration and learning projects must realize that families that play together stay together.

Parenting is serious business, and if a couple decides to bear children, they must take the resulting guardianship seriously. Approaches to this task can vary. Book clubs exist to discuss ideas. What about Parent Clubs to discuss successful ways to raise children able to think for themselves, able to evaluate the merit of ideas presented to them in school or social discourse, and able to gain the courage to hold opinions based on facts rather than on the opinions of others? It is clear that much of America's youth is growing more ignorant, impressionable, and immature rather than growing up to become informed and responsible adults.

Children are the future, and it does not look promising for America if our children today become the weak and warped robots of tomorrow, looking to the government to solve every problem, relying on devices for shallow-minded texting and chit-chat that distracts them from hands-on, real-life experiences, and crying over insults to their fragile or missing self-esteem. It is demonstrably true that our "progressive" public education system, universities, biased media, violent Hollywood-TV movies, and addictive devices are sources for distorting the minds of our youth, so the job of parenting is more difficult but more essential than ever before. Concerned parents must rise to the challenge because children of all ages from pre-school through college are susceptible to indoctrination – their minds are in formative stages and easily manipulated – so it is imperative to look honestly at how kids are thinking and behaving. It is also necessary for parents to look hard at themselves in the mirror to see if they are contributing to the disarray because it is

also true that many “adults” today are immature themselves, a fact that directly hinders the development of offspring.

In our present cultural slide into collective thinking and control, parents must double their efforts to strengthen the sovereignty of every child, help them defy pressures that would turn them into compliant clones, and guide them into an adulthood of reasoned responsibility, self-reliance, self-respect, and genuine self-esteem born of self-achieved individual worth.

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