Love and Logic

MAKE YOUR KIDS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS

Do You Only Care About Your Kids' "Image"?

A joke hit the Internet recently. The problem is that it is not a joke. It's a serious concern to all those who work with today's youth. A high school staff met to design the perfect recording for their telephone answering machine. The staff looked at several possibilities and finally agreed on the following:

To lie about why your child is absent – Press 1
To make excuses for why your child did not do his work – Press 2
To complain about what we do – Press 3
To swear at staff members – Press 4
To ask why you didn't get information that was already enclosed in your newsletter and several flyers mailed to you – Press 5
If you want us to raise your child – Press 6
If you want to reach out and touch, slap or hit someone – Press 7
To request another teacher for the third time this year – Press 8
To complain about bus transportation – Press 9
To demand that your child get a higher grade – Press 0

If you realize this is the real world and your child must be accountable/responsible for his/her own behavior, class work, and homework, and that it's not the teacher's fault for your child's lack of effort, hang up and have a great day.

I have consulted in many schools and know how overloaded teachers are today. I have witnessed the fact that teachers don't have enough spare time during the day to eat or go to the bathroom, let alone to do all the things society asks of them. This being true, why do you suppose a staff would spend its time fantasizing about this kind of thing?

Sad to say, the teachers are recognizing a national epidemic. It's the "Jet-Powered Turbo-Attack Helicopter Parent Model" epidemic. It rears its ugly head in all communities, but is especially excessive and out of control in the more affluent communities where parents have the financial resources and power to intimidate schools and community agencies.

If this is not you, just read on for the enjoyment.

Many of today's parents are obsessed with the desire to create a perfect image for their kids. This perfect image, or perfect life, is one in which their kids never have to face struggle, inconvenience, discomfort, or disappointment. It is a life in which the child can be launched into adulthood with the best of credentials. These kids look great on paper. Their high school and college diplomas show high grades even if they were not earned. They lead a life where their mistakes are swept under the table. I have often heard these parents say,
"It's a competitive world out there and I want my kids to have every advantage. What they do when they are young should not hold them back later."

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These parents, in their zeal to protect their young, swoop down like jet-powered, attack helicopters on any person or agency who might hold their children accountable for their actions. Armed with verbal smart bombs, they are quick to blast away at anyone who sets high standards for behavior, morality, or achievement.

Declaring their child a victim is a favorite tactical maneuver designed to send school personnel diving into the trenches for protection. Teachers and school administrators become worn down by this constant barrage. As they give in to parental demands that their children not be held accountable, standards are eroded and teachers gradually think, "What's the use?"

It is horribly disappointing to watch kids learn to blame others for their lack of success instead of becoming people who reach goals through effort and determination.

All this has caused me to look back thirty years ago to the time when we first wrote about Helicopter Parents. I now realize that those parents were relatively harmless compared to the modern-day version. I daily hear about the "turbo jet-powered models" designed for deadly attack. Some of these parents are not satisfied with protection, but even prefer to destroy the infrastructure of the very agencies that are dedicated to helping their children grow into educated, moral human beings.

Now you tell me. Is it possible for children who have never had to stand on their own two feet, never had to be responsible for their own actions, or never had to face and solve the smaller problems of childhood, to have the tools to face the rigors of adult life in America? We all know the answer to that.

Can the young adult who gets that perfect job perform well enough to keep that job if his grades from school were the result of teacher intimidation instead of vigorous study? The company who hires this person won't be easily intimidated by parental pressure in the face of substandard performance.

A perfect image and perfect school transcript are poor substitutes for character and the attitude that achievement comes through struggle and perseverance.

I have worked with many parents who have fallen into this trap. They all love their children. They all want the best for them. They talk about how they don't want their kids to struggle like they did. They are prone to rush to blame others for any lack of achievement on their children's part. These parents are willing to hold others responsible for their children's actions. However, they are often willing to change their parenting style once they see the crippling effects of this parenting style. Many of these parents have said to me, "I now realize that even if I succeed in creating a perfect life for my kid, there is little chance that he/she can maintain it without my help."

YOUR CHILD CAN RISE TO THE TOP

One very astute father once said to me, "Jim, I've got it. There is a huge group of trophy kids growing up today who won't have the character and resilience to compete in the labor market. If my kid grows up knowing how to get what he wants through struggle and character, he will be the one with the true advantage. He will stand head and shoulders above the others because he has the tools to create his own perfect life. Now that I have learned that I can discipline my child without losing his love, I have the courage to abandon my old crippling parenting style. The Love and Logic approach to raising my kid will give all of us the tools it takes to make this happen."

People who are really successful implementing this skill purchased Helicopters, Drill Sergeants & Consultants

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