

The EDITOR'S desk

While having a conversation with a group of colleagues, the topic of child rearing came up. One woman's comment was "I'll never raise my kids like my parents did!". This made me wonder about how many of us have said the same thing as we were growing up.



Good Behaviour Has Its Price!

It is said that toddlers learn by example, youngsters between the ages of 5 through 12 learn by experimenting, and that teenagers learn through peer pressure / rebellion...well not total rebellion (LOL). Some scientists believe that the fetus learns from her or his mother before they are born ...while still in the womb.

If these theories are true, I ask you, if you could, how would you totally change how you were raised to adulthood?

I remember making a commitment to never do a few things my mother did while I was raising my own children. For example, my mother would say, "If you don't eat your dinner you'll get it for breakfast". Thinking back I knew I wasn't going to starve if I didn't eat for 12 hours and even though she pressured me to eat, I never got dinner served for breakfast. Now I remind myself that the life patterns that today's young parents learned came from their parents, and their parent's parents...some of them possibly starving from wars, poverty or famine.

Intimidating or threatening statements leave a long-lasting impression on a child's mind and subconsciously they may create confusion and resentment towards parents. There are many books on "how to" raise children. Some are written by psychologists who research child behaviour and other authors are well-meaning parents who have been seeking a solution for an unpleasant experience they are facing with their children. They often passionately describe, in great detail, a solution that worked for themselves and hoped they could help the parenting world by writing a book. Don't get me wrong... I've read a lot of self-help books and yes I used some of their creative ideas from Dr. Spock.

However, in the long run, while raising three sons I honestly found that the more they personally experienced in life the more quickly they learned for themselves what's right and what's wrong.

I've come to understand that when an adult exhibits a pattern of bad behaviour by repeating it over and over, the child thinks that this is the norm. And then, if a parent/caregiver scolds/punishes the child for repeating this exact same adult pattern, this is totally confusing to the child. If a parent's negative pattern does not change then the child thinks it is the right thing to do and will copy the parent's harmful behaviour, i.e. swearing, bullying, verbal abuse etc. In contrast, when children are praised for replicating an adult's good behaviour, they can make a choice that this particular action feels good and hopefully they will adapt the pattern.

As the new school year starts it is the perfect time to establish new life patterns for both child and parent. A clean mind opens both the child and parent's way of thinking to move forward in creating a positive and healthy environment. If you are a parent or a caregiver of a school-aged child, why don't you consider chatting with your child and asking what she or he thinks is the right pattern to follow in different situations? You may be surprised at the responses. Children truly do want to follow by good example. You could even make a game out of it – a family fundraiser for a worthy cause.

RULES OF THE GAME: For each bad example you make in front of a child, the child gets to call you on it, and you as a parent/caregiver have to drop a Looney (or Tooney, or \$5 would be good and really make the parent think about the pattern change) into a money jar. If you do this for one month it is a healthy start for YOU to start changing a negative pattern; do this for one full year and watch the total change in your child's life. After the agreed upon time is over (you have to stick to it!) the child can make a donation to the charity of his or her own choice. The parent has stopped repeating unconstructive behaviour and the child has learned by example. The real plus to this game is that the child then has the pride of helping others through the donation.

I like to call it the "Good Behaviour Has Its Price!" game. I also like to see the smiles on children's faces when they have done a good deed. How about you? It makes for lifetime changes in both child and parent. If you and your child internalize new and positive patterns of behaviour they will not grow up saying "I'll never raise my kids like my parents did!"... Rather, they'll say "I want to raise my kids just like my parents did!"

A blue ink handwritten signature that reads "Lorraine Leslie". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lorraine Leslie
Founder/Publisher

Nominated for RBC
Canadian Woman
ENTREPRENEUR
Awards  **2005, 2006,
2009 & 2010**

The feature women about whom I write, have traveled a long, winding road to success – each woman on her own journey; a journey that sometimes hasn't been smooth. These women open their hearts to inspire and motivate other women, of all ages, to follow their dreams and passions...