

Encouraging Your Wellness

Volume 1, Issue 2

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Positive Parenting—To Warn or Not to Warn?

When I am working with parents, I hear this question a lot:

Do I warn my child of the potential consequences for their behavior, or do I not?

If only there was a simple “one answer fits all.” There is not. Let me explain...

Those of you who have heard me speak on parenting have likely heard me discuss that part of our job as parents is to prepare our kids for the real world. When faced with a challenging behavior, it is often helpful to ask yourself, “How would the real world handle this?” Now, in the real world, sometimes we know what the potential consequences of our behavior will be, and other times we don't. For instance, if we are speeding, we know that we risk a speeding ticket. But, no one comes over the loud speaker in our car to tell us if we don't slow down, we will be involved in a car accident in the next few minutes. We must think about that potential consequence for ourselves. Therein lies the answer to what we need to prepare our kids for; sometimes the consequence is clear, but many times it is not. We do not want to raise kids to believe that they always know exactly what will happen if they make a poor choice – it is simply not how the real world works.

(Cont'd on pg 2)



Self Care, Self-Worth and Selfishness...

If you know me, you know I love my job! I get to meet the most interesting people and get to offer them support for all kinds of difficulties life can throw at us. Recently, I was having an amazing discussion with a client of mine about selfishness. I learn so much from my clients, and this was no exception. Her perspective on selfishness was very different than mine, yet very enlightening. It made me begin to wonder how others view this issue.

How you take care of yourself emotionally, physically and spiritually, all have an impact on your mental health. When we operate from the perspective that if we focus on ourselves, we are selfish, our mental health suffers. There is a direct correlation. My client viewed that if she wanted time to herself, attention, or did anything that wasn't for someone else, she was being selfish. If she wanted attention on her birthday, she condemned herself as being selfish. If she was (cont'd on page 2)

Dear Readers



I hope this issue of Encouraging Your Wellness finds you welcoming Spring with the newness and hope that the season can bring. And, of course, I hope you find this newsletter informative as well as inspirational in helping you be the person, parent, and partner you want to be.

I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for the inspiration you provide for me both in the classes I instruct and in my office. I consider myself lucky to be around others who stretch themselves to grow, and to go through such difficulty to make themselves healthier and happier. I celebrate with each of you as you achieve your goals and begin to see the progress you are seeking.

Thank you, too, for your continued confidence in me by sending your family and friends my way when they have a need. I cannot express what a compliment this is to me to be trusted to care for those people most dear to you.

Happy Reading! Encouraging your wellness is important to me!

“We want our children to grow the skills to think ahead about what could potentially happen.”

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In the real world, sometimes we can predict the consequences, and sometimes we cannot. We want our children to “grow” the skills to think ahead about what could *potentially* happen. If we always tell them what the consequences will be, we are not helping them grow the skills necessary to think for themselves about potential consequences.

Sometimes, in the real world, we get warnings. The radio announcer alerts us to the upcoming “speed trap” so we can avoid a ticket. Our boss pulls us aside and informs us that our job is on the line if we continue to come in late to work. Therefore, sometimes we should pass on a warning to our kids. (Cont'd on page 3)

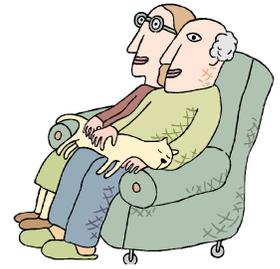
Self Care, Self Worth and Selfishness—continued from page 1

exhausted after a day of caregiving and wanted to be alone, she wondered if she “deserved” it. When we conduct our lives from this perspective, we end up feeling very empty. Guilt becomes a big factor because when we have a need, we believe this makes us selfish.

We probably all know people who put themselves ABOVE others. They consider only their needs, wants and feelings in a given situation. (My idea of selfish) This is not reasonable or healthy, nor is the opposite. Considering only the needs, wants and feelings of others does not honor that we exist, too. People who have found a balance in the middle are often the happiest individuals. If we live from a place of not letting ourselves matter, it does not take long before we feel very insignificant. It is possible to put yourself on the priority list without excluding other priorities. (Cont'd on page 3)

Couple's Corner— How good are you at forgiveness?

An interesting study came out of the Mayo Clinic on forgiveness. It looked at the benefits of forgiveness on one's physical and emotional well being. Researchers looked at the effects of being unforgiving vs. being forgiving. Turns out that those holding onto grudges and bitterness were more likely to have long-term health problems. To the contrary, those practicing forgiveness had numerous health benefits including lower blood pressure, lower heart rate, fewer depression symptoms, reduction in chronic pain, less anxiety, less hostility and better anger management skills, among others. As a couple's therapist, I often see how difficult it is to let go of the hurtful actions or words of our partners. Some view forgiveness as condoning the person's actions. It is not. Forgiveness doesn't mean that you deny the person's responsibility, and it doesn't minimize or justify the wrong. Forgiveness is not excusing the act. It is a commitment to let go of the strong hold the offending person or situation has had in our lives. By doing so, we move away from our role as victim, into a place of power to move forward. And, apparently, we get lots of health benefits from doing so.



If you have been trying to forgive a wrongdoing but are having trouble doing so, it may help to speak to a supportive friend, family member or mental health professional. The gift you give will be to yourself!

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“If your room is not cleaned up by Saturday, you will not be able to play with friends.” or “If your grades don't improve, there will be no soccer this season.” Other times, consequences should fall into place without warning. If your child hits a friend, “I'm sorry that you are not keeping your friend safe, the play date is over.” Or “I'm not willing to drive you to the mall when you have been talking so disrespectfully to me.”

If your kids are used to being warned, they will say something like, “But, I didn't know!!!” To that, you will respond, with confidence, “We don't always know what will happen, but we try to make good choices anyway.” You will thank yourself when your child is the one that thinks twice before getting in the car and driving drunk instead of saying after the fact, “I didn't know I would cause an accident!” Good Luck!

“You will thank yourself when your child is the one who thinks twice...”

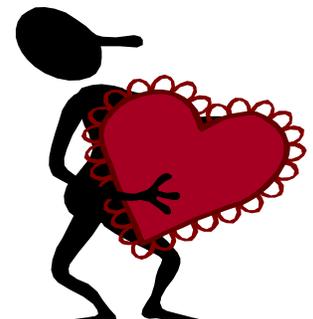
Self Care Cont'd from page 2

If you feel selfish when you have needs, wants and feelings, fight back with statements such as “I matter, too” or “It's okay for me to take care of myself.”

Move From: Others are more important than me

To: I can value my needs, wants and feelings AS WELL as those of others'.

As a parent, your kids need to see you value yourself, or they will never learn how to value themselves as an adult. Do it for yourself AND for your kids.



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If you are in need of individual, couple or family help, call me. Together with you, I will design a treatment plan that helps you achieve your goals and gets you on the road to feeling life more fulfilled. I specialize in working with teens, adults and children who are struggling with depression, anxiety, low self-worth, past experiences of abuse, and who are believing there must be more to life than what they are currently experiencing. I look forward to speaking with you.

Dear Pam,

It breaks my heart to see my child getting teased and bullied at school. What can I do?

As a parent myself, I imagine you want to march right down to the school and confront the person who is supposed to be having “no tolerance” for this kind of behavior. Unfortunately, that can make the situation worse. The truth is that most kids will face teasing or bullying at some point in their lives, and if we fight the battle for them, they will be ill-equipped when we are not around. We need to “tease-proof” our kids. When kids show their upset at being teased, they become bigger targets. The idea is to help kids remain calm under this pressure, and not let the teaser have power to upset them. Love and Logic parenting suggests trying this approach. Practice with your child putting on a “cool look” over and over. When they have their “cool look” perfected, add a one-liner, such as “Thanks for sharing” or “Thanks for noticing.” After the cool look and one liner, the child turns and walks away, smiling. The teaser will not have succeeded in making your child feel inferior and himself superior. He will move on. One I really like is to help your child practice pretending that the teaser has actually just given them a compliment. Teaser: “You’re stupid and no one likes you.” In response: “Wow! Thanks for noticing me. You are so kind!” If the child continues acting as though they are being complimented, the teaser moves on to easier targets.

As for bullying – if the situation becomes serious and/or physical, it is time to notify adults who can be aware, while ALSO empowering your child to become less of a target.

