

APRIL 2011 NEWSLETTER

Update

Some very exciting developments are taking place at the moment which if they come to fruition will give **Parenting 911** the exposure it needs and deserves and which will allow it to reach parents in many other centres. Watch this space! Also, I will be coming down to Cape Town from the 2nd to the 6th May and if any of you Capetonians are interested in attending a workshop while I'm down there please let me know. I've had great interest and feedback from fellow Capetonians who have attended previous workshops.

Comment

I'm sure that you're all aware of the teenage problems that are being experienced throughout South Africa. More and more young people as young as 11 or 12 are having sex and in many instances on school property during school hours. Drugs are rife and teachers are finding more and more difficulty in teaching these learners, many of whom are disinterested in school and highly aggressive. A number of teachers are lashing out and pupils are fighting back. The situation in many schools is untenable. The question is: why is this happening on such a large scale and what's the reason?

Millions of rands are being spent on educational material every year warning and educating learners as to the dangers of drugs, alcohol and unprotected sex. Why is it that these programmes are largely ineffectual? From my experience in working at the coalface with hundreds of adolescence the problem centres on one word – **self-esteem**. A learner who feels confident, independent and takes challenges has developed their own standards and values and knows how to say **no** and is able to deal with peer pressure. So, what's the problem? The problem is rooted in their early upbringing and if parents are not doing their job effectively early warning signs can be detected from the time their child can talk. Children who tend to opt out of challenges and refuse to persevere or are always dependent on help often perform poorly at school. These dependent children have low self-esteem and the problem is exacerbated when the parents of these children become more and more anxious or more and more disinterested in their child. Overcrowding, poverty and all the accompanying socio-economic problems associated with these circumstances means that the prognosis for millions of children reaching their potential is very poor indeed. By the time they reach adolescence many have lost faith in themselves and adults, especially authority figures like parents and teachers. Most parents do not know how to parent teenagers effectively, especially if the teenager is displaying unacceptable behaviour and disinterest in school. Teenagers don't want to be unhappy and neither do the parents and teachers. When I work with families with teenagers, all I ask of

them is to cooperate in order to help me mediate a structure of rules, responsibilities and consequences that they agree to with their parents. I tell them that the spin-off for them is that I'll get their parents off their case provided they also play the game and cooperate. It must also be remembered that dependent children lack self-discipline as they get older and this becomes a real problem for them when they reach high school. This means that even though they may have the intention to 'work harder' they find it extremely difficult to sit down and stay focussed on their work for 40 minutes.

If any of you would like any help regarding your problematic teenager please feel free to contact me.

The following article printed in The Star newspaper earlier this month, and taken from a report in the Daily Mail of London seems to confirm my observations mentioned above.

If you love your children, DON'T overprotect them

Children are growing up miserable and fretful about the future because parents dominate their lives.

A study reveals that youngsters resent being wrapped in cotton wool and being left with little choice over what happens to them.

Being overprotected can make them increasingly unhappy, leaving them ill-equipped to deal with the challenges of living independently as adults.

Research in Britain by the Children's Society found that "choice" and family affected happiness the most. Their health was third-most important to the well-being of those eight- to 15-year-olds questioned.

One in eight was unhappy about lack of autonomy, such as not being allowed to do things on their own or make decisions. About 9 percent of youngsters aged eight to 11 were upset about how much choice they had in their lives, compared to 16 percent of 12- to 15-year olds.

Psychologist Kairen Cullen says parents may be passing on their anxieties to children. "We are flooded with information about the right way to parent and the right way children should grow up. So it's not surprising that parents, whose job is the most challenging of all, feel anxious and overcompensate by being too protective."

Penny Nicholls, director of children and young people at the Children's Society, says an important part of development is becoming independent of parents. Youngsters must be helped to take "responsible risks" to develop into well-rounded adults.

The survey also revealed that 10 percent were worried about what may happen to them in later life. Children became increasingly unhappy about this as they grew up.

Cullen says: "The answer is that parents must get the support they need so that they don't risk passing their worries on. Children should also be given the opportunity to express their concerns and be provided with perspective from caring adults."

Dirk Flower, of Flower Associates International, which provides psychological treatment, says overprotected children tend to rebel as soon as they taste any independence.

Parenting 911 gives parents the tools to help them manage their children effectively. All the issues mentioned in the article are addressed by the programme and as a result parents calm down and manage their children in a very effective manner.

Parenting 911 Workshops

Workshops are held on an ongoing basis with various options available to parents. Feel free to contact me with any queries that you may have. Also drop me a line as to any issues that you'd like me to feature in my newsletters.

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'Til next time, enjoy your parenting!

Ken