

Troubled Times

A recent letter to the editor in a West Australian paper certainly caught my eye. This concerned nurse and wrote about the “worst generation ever.” She wrote *“How times have changed. This generation of children would have to be the most indulged and disrespectful generation of human beings who have ever been created....Everywhere I go I seem to hear our teenagers speaking like Americans, dressing like pop stars (who more often than not wear what used to be under wear as outer wear) swearing like factory boys, smoking, drinking, taking drugs and painting graffiti on any wall, path, or sign that they can get their hands on. But then again why wouldn't they? We teach them that looks, money, power and position matter and little else does.....”*
(The West Aust Nov 9th 2005)

It resonated with me so deeply even though I have enormous faith in so many wonderful young people who I have met and shared time with. The pressures of the consumer driven juggernaut as I call it is that the seductive conditioning of advertisers has so many of our children, young adults and parents believing that “more” is always better, that material possessions gives you the “image” of being successful or more acceptable and that simple values like honesty, compassion for others, patience, respect for self and others is old fashioned and uncool. The binge drinking and partying culture that exists in Australia is a product of that and young adults who don't drink or do drugs are considered odd. The notion of having a fantastic time at a party without some chemical or alcoholic assistance is fanciful to the majority of our young. Scary but true. Drinking until you pass out, throw up or make a complete fool of yourself is so disrespectful of yourself. Doing it once or twice can be about learning – every week there is something wrong! Yes it is considered ‘normal’ in many circles and yet a new normal needs to emerge if the next generation of parents are going to raise a more improved healthier generation of children. The nurse who wrote to the paper would be witnessing disrespectful, unsavoury behaviour in the line of her work. Emergency departments are now in need of full time security because of the repeated attacks on staff from drunken or drugged out people...not only teenagers. Frightening! The lower emotional and social competencies of our children are a clear sign of the times where many children learn about human relationships via the virtual reality world of the screen whether it be computer, DVD, video, mobile phone and cinemas. The abundance of violent, macabre films that are so freely available will continue to desensitise our world and all in the name of making a buck and entertainment. Yes let the juggernaut keep rolling and we will continue to loose our loved ones emotionally, mentally, socially and definitely spiritually. Our psych

wards are overflowing with troubled young people lost in the haze of the chaos of this world. Many more are struggling with eating disorders largely undiagnosed, thought disorders, stress related anxieties, chronic low self esteem and addictive behaviour. Then there are the patterns of violence in relationships when couples do not have the emotional competency to find solutions to problems other than with aggression and girls are now equalling boys in violent incidents. Eight years ago boys outweighed girls 4 to 1!!!! These are our future mothers.....

We are losing perfectly beautiful children on the journey into adulthood for lots of reasons that are being shaped by outside forces.....please beware of the pressure to spend, to cave into conditioned kids requests for ‘things’ and high tech things that prevent real conversation and communication and keep a firm boundary around when they can access the party scene. Show your love for your kids with time, tenderness, kindness and tell them that you want to see them happy and alive when they are over 40!!! This will mean we will look like wrinkled prunes however it will be as very happy wrinkled prunes! Re discover your sense of humour – it may be well be hiding under a pile of dirty washing!

Take care Maggie Dent Nov 2005