

The Danger of “Exposive” Learning



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There is this common thinking that the way to train a child in their moral capability is to expose them to the world with both the good and the bad – and the goodness that is within them should be able to distinguish the right from the wrong. Sounds reasonable?

The state of our youth today testifies otherwise.

State 1 : The Value-Gap is Widening

We are witnessing a generation of young people that no longer “look” like their parents. They even appear to be living on a totally different planet ... maybe even universe! While it is understandable that there exist a “technology gap” between our children and us but when if that gap extends to values and worthwhile traditions, then we have a **legacy issue**. In the absence of a *vertical transfer* of values in the process of parenting, what happens is that teenagers end up parenting each other and we have a case of **peer parenting**. Young people end up giving advice to each other and they miss out the wisdom of the “school of hard-knocks” from oldies like ourselves!

State 2 : The Pervasiveness of Aimlessness

The word teenager was first used in 1941 – started by a Readers’ Digest article. How did the world ever survive without teenagers in the thousands of years prior to 1941? Children graduate to become responsible youth – young man and ladies who have proper apprenticed skills and guided into embracing a skill and purpose in life. Look at what a distorted world it is today – right now children grow into a era of maximum freedom with minimal responsibility! We have vastly under-rated the capability of our young people and blame it on their raging hormones. The so-called teen years can be the most formative years in their lives if we give them a strong life purpose. **Moral training must be done first** before they are exposed to society in general. Without prior training, the default mode is peer pressure.

State 3 : The Dilution of Morality

If education by exposure is the answer, then sex education would have solved the societal ills of pre-marital sex and venereal diseases. On the contrary, the more “liberal” we are in terms of moral standards, the more we are witnessing a breakdown in virtuous behavior. The solution is not in education alone. We as parents need to take ownership of teaching and guiding our children when they are young and not leave the area of morality to their own devices. The right grounding in morality is the starting point of a high view of marriage. This is such a critical area of right living that we as responsible parents dare not throw caution to the wind. Morality is built not by exposure but by **intentional teaching and accountability** – the issue is this : who is teaching our young people and who are they accountable too? Can we protect our children forever? Of course not. **We protect in order to prepare**. Without right guidance and intentional parenting, the “moral capacity” of our children does not remain as a vacuum – it *will* be filled up. The question is : be filled up with what and by whom?

Fill it up right and then they will be able to make right choices.

Think about it.

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