

Let's Talk About It

Barrington H. Brennen, MA, NCP
Marriage & Family Therapist

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Send Angry Parents Back to School

This article is the second in the series dealing with campus rage and shame based relationships. In my previous article, I pointed out that students, children, teenagers, and adults who think of non-physical or physical violence as a normal expression of life are coming from shame-based family settings. In other words, students who are involved in campus violence are coming from families where parents are doing more shaming and blaming than praising. Children who are being shamed at home will shame others using the same tactics they observed and experienced from their parents.

VICIOUS CYCLE

How can we put an end to this vicious cycle of violence on our school campuses, communities and homes? It is my opinion that the best answer is through education. We need to start educating and re-educating our parents. Many of them do not have any idea how to parent. They are coming from dysfunctional homes where there was improper parental guidance. I believe a radical solution is needed for parents of children (up to age 18) who have a pattern of violent behavior in school or the community, and perhaps have had an encounter with the law, should be placed in a compulsory behavior modification program for parent(s) and child(ren). Secondly, there should be an intensified pre-parenting training in our primary and high schools, and communities to expose our children and young adults to proper parenting standards. I believe that training for parenthood starts from childhood. I have actually observed little six-year-old girls spanking and talking to their younger sisters and brothers in the same angry, violent, and controlling ways of their mothers or fathers.

It is a great challenge to uproot the giant tree of violence that's hovering over us because its seed was germinated in the bedrock of traditionalism, ignorance, and stubbornness, and poor Biblical teachings. Patterns of behaviors are hard to change because as the term says—it is a “pattern.” When a behavior (good or bad) is repeated at least seven times it becomes a habit. A “habit” means that the repetition of a behavior leaves imprints on the brain cells like information is recorded on cassette tapes or CDs. Then it becomes “natural” for the person to act the way they do. The greater the negative imprints on the brain cells the more negative the behavior.

BRAIN PATTERNS NEED CHANGING

The sad part about it is that the information imprinted on the brain cells will never go away. They will remain until the person dies. The only way a good behavior can override a bad behavior is by making the good behavior a stronger habit than the bad behavior. This can only come about through restructuring the thinking patterns through education and repeated practice.

How does this actually work? Let me explain in simple terms. For every bad habit, there are actual lumps created on cells in the brain we call “boutons,” or buttons. The greater the

habit, the more boutons for that habit. These boutons remain until we die. Therefore some people have more “bad” boutons than “good” ones in their brains. That’s why it comes “natural” for them to do the bad behavior. To correct this, the person must actually perform repeatedly a good behavior, thus creating more of the good boutons. If there are more good boutons than bad ones the good habit will be stronger than the bad one. Hence, we can now understand that you really cannot unlearn bad behaviors, we can only learn new ones. This process can only come about through proper education. This is the reason I suggest compulsory behavior modification program for parents and children who find it “natural” to cause emotional or physical pain to others.

THE RE-EDUCATION PROCESS

I believe that education can help reduce the violence in our country both now and in the future. Proper education will preserve our family life in a healthy state. Here are my suggestions how this can work.

1. Each child (between ages 10 to 18) with a negative pattern of behavior and who has been in trouble the law, or has high risk behavior patterns, spends two to four weeks in a controlled, compulsory live-in environment with his or her parent(s). This can be made possible through governmental legislation.
2. The program should be at no cost to the participants and possibly funded by government and private organizations. However, participants should be required to participate in daily cleaning, maintaining and clerical tasks the institution while on the program.
3. The behavior modification program will be operated by professional counselors, psychologists, social workers, teachers, pastors, and concerned citizens.
4. The structured program will consist of a daily individual counseling for both parents and children, parents and children counseling together, group counseling, parenting classes, peer counseling, games, role play, group participation, camping or hiking expeditions, etc. All of the time periods, day and night, waking and sleeping hours, should be monitored.
5. Parents who participate in this program should be allowed time off from work with pay.
6. Parents who refuse to participate in this program should be fined and the child should be placed in a juvenile center. However, there should be no criminal records if there is full cooperation and involvement in this program.
7. After the two to four weeks of intensive re-education, there should be on-going follow-up by assigned professionals, through phone calls, house and school visits, and weekly or monthly group meetings.
8. Teachers would be taught what to expect from such students and how to help support the program in the classroom.

The purpose of this program is to help restructure the thinking process and to cultivate positive behavior patterns through education and real life applications. I believe this can work. It is important to note that not all bad children come from bad parents. However, often many good parents do not know how to deal with a troublesome child. This program will help. Although imprisonment is necessary for illegal behavior, yet it is not the answer to eliminating crime and violence. Education is the answer and it must begin with parents. Let’s send them back to school.

SOWN TO THE WIND

The process of re-education is a long and painful one. But it must be done. It is true to say that we are having so much violence today because we have sown the seeds of violence in the past. Hosea 8:7 says "They have sown the wind, and they reap the whirlwind." Galatians 6:7 also amplifies it this way: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever you sow, that shall you also reap." "The seeds of brokenness sown in our homes *and the church* by selfishness, alienation, neglect, and distrust have produced a harvest in society of angry, broken lives. The seeds of broken lives have produced the harvest of deep-seated anger. The seeds of deep-seated anger have produced the harvest of unparalleled crime. The seeds of crime have produced the harvest of victims, scarred, wounded, broken and in pain."
(Author Unknown)

I like how this poem speaks to my point:

We sow the seeds of negative thoughts.
We reap the harvest of negative attitude.

We sow the seeds of bitterness.
We reap the harvest of a bitter spirit.

We sow the seeds of fear.
We reap the harvest of anxiety.

We sow the seeds of legalism.
We reap the harvest of emotional and physical violence.