

Parents should teach values

When I was in college, I had this great professor whom I really admired. He had a saying that went, "Values are caught, not taught."

With apologies to my former teacher, I think the mantra only partially applies to our children and the use of alcohol. Alcohol use among Oregon's youth is on the rise, according to a state survey of more than 18,000 students.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Teaching our youth about the dangers of alcohol use does include some

talking. It's not always an easy conversation to begin, but the payoffs of early parental intervention are enormous.

As your children progress through the school years, dealing with peer pressure, academic stress and social challenges, you will have already established a sense of values to help them when faced with the tough decisions and temptations.

Even years down the road when your children are not under your roof 24 hours, the messages you instill in them early on will influence their choices later.

As a parent, I feel fortunate that my children had a good set of values before

they left for college. I know that there are some individuals who will never touch alcohol. Others, however, may find themselves going down a path they know is not right for them. Again, it is early, consistent and frequent modeling and messaging that will get them back on course.

You don't need a formal forum to get the discussion going. Find something that you and your child enjoy doing together - jogging, rollerblading, cycling. Talking with them during these relaxed times will not only help to keep the lines of communication open, but studies also show that children who have close bonds to their families are less likely to use alcohol.

Don't wait until your children are in junior high school to talk to them about the dangers of alcohol. Set the rules early.

- Be an example: If you have a rule about drunk driving, and you should, make sure not to drive when you've been drinking or get in a car with someone who has. Children notice when their parents say one thing and do another.

- Recognize good behavior: Emphasize the things your children do right instead of focusing on what's wrong. When parents are quicker to praise than to criticize, children learn to feel good about

themselves, and they develop the self-confidence to trust their own judgment.

- Be specific: Tell your children the rule and what behavior you expect. For example, you could say, "The law says that you have to be 21 to drink. Our family follows the law."

- Develop consequences: If your children are old enough, they can help suggest appropriate and reasonable consequences. It may help to write up a list of rules and consequences for breaking each rule.

- Be consistent: Be sure your children understand that the rules are maintained at all times, and that the rules hold true even at other people's houses. If they are at a party where alcohol or illegal drugs are being used, they can call you for a ride home.

That college professor who talked about values being "caught, not taught" was right about a lot of things. But the harmful lifetime consequences of alcohol are so great, we parents have to ensure our kids are "taught."

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to teach the person a lesson. Actually, I think I'll leave that up to the creators of reality television. I also don't remember signing a waiver saying I would participate in an experiment on the psychology of unethical class assignments.

I'd love to believe Mr. Wieden's intention was to teach us to stand up to authority, but I honestly don't. And if it is, well, his strategy is very dangerous, because if I had gone ahead and objected to a marriage, I would have not only failed at the "hypothetical" lesson of the workshop, but also ruined someone's wedding in the process. I'm sure that wouldn't sit on my conscience for long. I mean, it was just a joke.

The problem is that this is a classroom environment, with Dan Wieden serving as a mentor. George Cox, a professor of public affairs at Georgia Southern University, addresses the issue students face interacting in an "artisan/apprentice" relationship. He states, "Those of us who are far enough along in life to discern the moral competence of others will avoid collaboration with questionable colleagues. Nevertheless, we cannot expect student apprentices to be experienced and discerning in such matters." While Mr. Wieden might not be aware of the principles surrounding teaching ethics, the journalism school should have realized the situation students faced. Instead, the school said it does not condone illegal or unethical behavior, yet neither did it provide students with a manner by which to make ethical judgments. The school's reply to concerns about the class was that it was not about the task, but the chance to show how creative you are to Dan Wieden.

The workshop, which was advertised as "an extraordinary opportunity for any advertising student," required an application and selection process. The students enter the workshop feeling privileged just to be there. So when one of the biggest names in advertising tells them to do something moronic and record it on video, they don't question it,

but say, "Should I bring popcorn?" Sometimes when we idolize people we laugh at everything that comes out their mouth and do anything they ask us to do, whether it's get them coffee or, as was assigned to one student in this class, convince your parents that you're gay.

Someone suggested this issue was ultimately one I needed to work out with Mr. Wieden myself, but I'm not sure the student's role is to regulate the behavior of her teachers. That's where I expect the school to step in and stand up not only for me, but for all my peers. I do not know if Mr. Wieden's intentions were different from the ones he stated at the workshop, but in-stations aside, the effects of these assignments could have been very emotionally damaging or even punishable by law.

We were told to continue to face our fears on the second day of the workshop by singing and dancing in front of the agency's employees. I guess I'm the fool for paying \$400 for a workshop that treats me like a puppet, but I trusted that the journalism school wouldn't offer a class in which the instructors took advantage of their authority in such a way.

Well, I've faced my fear of speaking up against Dan Wieden, talking to faculty and making my concerns known to the dean. Maybe I didn't need a workshop on fear after all.

I know I should never have been asked to do something ethically wrong for a class assignment. I should never have been exposed to a learning environment where the instructor seemingly took advantage of his authority for his own amusement at the expense of the students. I may only be 22 years old with a monthly income that barely covers my rent and the utopian vision that I can make the world a better place, but don't sell my intelligence and integrity short.

"Jump," you say? Mr. Wieden, I'll pass.

Contact the columnist at marissajones@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Death penalty remains wrong, primitive way to punish crimes

If I were to ask you your opinion on killing, what would you say? Would you look at me in disbelief, stating matter-of-factly that "It's wrong?" Or would you say it's a just practice and you support it? I'm not talking about just any type of killing here, in case you haven't guessed yet; I'm commenting on the routine execution of criminals in our justice system — the death penalty.

Most people don't start talking about things as dark as the death penalty unless it affects them personally.

It's just one of the things in this world that is unpleasant to think about. By some odd coincidence, two of my favorite television shows last week both dealt heavily with the death penalty and the possibility of killing innocent people. Unlike most opponents of the penalty, I don't want to argue about that possibility. Instead, I want to target the root of the problem, the justness of the penalty.

I feel that a penalty such as this is

merely a primitive version of revenge, only it's been legalized. Killing someone who committed murder is like me stealing something from the person who stole my bike tire last month. Be honest with yourselves, would my doing that make any sense or help make the world a happier, safer place? So how, then, do we justify to ourselves the killing of those who kill others?

Let me make another example. We attacked the nation of Iraq, completely unprovoked. Our attacks killed innocent civilians and soldiers who were likewise innocent because they had done nothing to us. Does this give the nation of Iraq the right to turn around and attack our country? No. And by my analogy, it doesn't either. However, working within this analogy, Iraq would have the power to watch as the United Nations executed such an attack.

But when you think about this, none of it makes sense, does it? But apply that same logic to the death penalty. Neither makes logical sense, but for some odd reason we continue to practice the former in many states. Remember the immortal words of Gandhi, "An eye for an

eye makes the whole world blind."

You can also look at the argument of rehabilitation. After a person has been rehabilitated, if they ever are, they are not the same person who committed the crime. Even if you are able to justify the death penalty, how could you justify killing someone who has seen and corrected the error in his life? I can't.

I realize that many people will just read this in passing and many won't actually care about what I've written here. I hope, though, that at least one person takes my words to heart and thinks hard about the point I am trying to get across. I don't intend to start a national campaign to end the death penalty, I just want to get more people thinking on the same wavelength so that, one day, such a campaign might be possible.

Eric Mann is a junior studying physics.

GUEST COMMENTARY

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