

Better Parenting: Where Did You Learn to Act Like That?

By Sonia Spackman

A study from the University of Michigan states that most kids spend more time in front of the TV than doing anything else except sleeping - 28 hours per week!

This gives an enormous exposure to some really bad behavior. Dr. Cynthia Scheibe analyzed how much of children's TV contained insults. You will be surprised to read that close to two-thirds of "pro-social" TV shows to educate young children have characters that insult each other. Regular TV programs have insulting behavior 96% of the time.

So what do these insulting nasty behaviors have to do with your kids?

- A lot! Schools deal with the fallout every day. Researchers have studied acts of violence and the effect it has on kids. Much of their behavior is intended to hurt other kids by telling lies or secrets, or gossiping about friends to other kids. Hurtful behavior is done purposefully like leaving some kids out, ignoring or picking on kids. These are behaviors that some kids use to make themselves more popular.

- The more kids watch, the worse they think. "The more kids watched, the crueler they would be to their classmates," reported Jamie Ostrove, one of the study's authors. Kids were 2.5 times more likely to be bossy, controlling, and manipulative than violent in their aggression.

- Kids are learning tactics and becoming expert bullies. One study revealed boys tend to be physically aggressive and girls to be relationally aggressive. They report that kids' friendships are worse the more TV they watch.

- Kids love the shows that are spicy and full of unchecked meanness. In one episode of a popular show a girl made fun

of her friend who likes things she considers "nerdy." She called her brother a "loser" because of the way he speaks. And in a subplot on the same show one of the characters portrayed an elderly grandfather as an idiot. So what is the lesson for the kids that are watching, except to be cool like these characters and learn their language?

- Over time relational aggression is very damaging. A study in the Journal of Communication reported that victims of bullying suffer from lower self-esteem, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and in extreme cases are more likely to think suicidal thoughts or consider homicidal actions.

- There are no adult corrections or reprimands, or any apologies given. There is no consequence shown for any of these behaviors. Some of these comedies make it normal for kids to interrupt, insult and dismiss each other and not feel bad about it or experience any consequences.

Things parents can try to turn their kids in the right direction:

1. Identify family issues that contribute to bullying or disrespectful behavior. Read books or play games that help children become more sensitive about the causes and effects of bullying and disrespectful behavior.

2. Teach your child LIMITS at home on wrong behaviors. Let them know that it is not ok to insult adults or call their brother a loser, or to ridicule or mistreat friends or to do any of the unpleasant things popular characters on TV do to each other.

3. Teach your child COURAGE. Teach them that doing what is right is not always popular. When they see a wrong, to tell an adult is not easy. Ask your child to "practice" courage by doing something he or she knows is right. Ask your child to share the experience with you.

5. Teach your child about SAFETY, explaining how to act like a safe person. Explain how they can keep themselves safe and to care about how others feel. Ask them to "practice" by asking one person each day how they feel, especially someone who is being picked on. Tell them you would be interested in hearing about it.

6. Teach your child KINDNESS and how everyone has a battle they go through, and how we treat people can make things better or worse. Ask your child to have compassion and understanding for those who seem to need it and tell them you would love to have them share their experiences with you.

7. Teach your child about BREAKING

HABITS. In fact, tell yourself that it takes courage to change, that breaking a habit starts by practicing doing what you want to do and practice not doing what you want to stop doing.

As a parent I hope we all promote kindness, courage, respect and positive habits in our own life, in our families and with our children where adults will ask our kids: "Where did you learn to act like that?"

If you have any comments or questions feel free to e-mail soniaspackman@msn.com.

Resources: Martha Brockenbrough, MSN TV, Dr. Cynthia Scheibe

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by law from public inspection. Council took no further action upon returning to open session.

Topics From the Floor – Jason and Andrea Grant asked for clarification on the city ordinance concerning obstruction of a public right-of-way. The Grants told the Council they have been warned in the past about having their travel trailer in the alley next to their house and have complied. They recently received a \$500 citation when they left the trailer in the

alley overnight following the return from a camping trip. Council referred the issue to staff, who said they would speak with the Grants about the issue the next day.

Sharon Bernal asked Council to please meet with her to discuss the development issues at Nickerson Ridge Estates before they make any final decision. The City is in negotiations with the owners of the property and have declined to issue any further building permits at the development until the dispute has been settled.

Vernonia Students of the Month

March 2016



Megan Zavales Grade 5

Megan's teacher says she is "an amazing young lady" who works hard, tries her best and excels in her studies. She is always willing to help others and does so with patience and kindness. Megan has an infectious personality. She always wears a smile on her face. She is definitely setting herself up for success.

Michael Holmes Grade 8



Michael is known as a kind, polite, hardworking and creative student, who shows thoughtful consideration and effort. "He is not afraid to think outside the box and his creativity is evident in everything he does," says one of his teachers. "He has a lot of talent and the perseverance to get his work done and do it well." Michael says his favorite subject is art. Outside of school, he is involved in 4-H and shows dairy cows.

Jared Medearis Grade 12



Jared is running track this spring, played football, was part of the State Championship basketball team, and plays trombone in the band. He says his favorite subject is math and he also enjoys choir. He just received his Eagle Scout Award for his project to clean up Spencer Park. He is planning to go on a church mission after graduation and then attend BYU to play football and study software engineering.

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