

Don't skip teaching an essential life skill

OTHER VIEWS

Scott Smith



We all have busy lives filled with activities from the moment we wake up until our head hits the bed. Yet quite often, at some point in the day, you might hear, "I'm bored" or, "I don't have anything to do" from one of your kids. Some child-development specialists say we often fail to teach our children one important life skill, dealing with boredom. In addition, children's days are filled with activities planned by others and can find it difficult to direct themselves to an activity of their own interests.

University of Central Lancashire looked at what we often associate with boredom — lack of something to do. When we view boredom from this lens, it allows children to depend on others for their activities and restricts their creativity. This is not just at home but in our educational system, as well. Our schools have cut recess times for students greatly over the past 20 years. This has impacted children's abilities to develop friendships, work with others, and create activities with others independently.

Who would have ever thought making sure that our kids always had activities and events to attend or do might be harming them? Developing and learning how to create their own interests and fill their downtime is a life skill we expect our children to execute. Yet, as adults, we often experience frustration when our children face downtime. The child hasn't learned or developed the skills to fill this unknown time. Instead, they become dependent on others to fill their day with

activities, and when faced with unplanned or free time, we hear, "I have nothing to do, I'm bored."

Providing a "downtime" where a child has to spend time on their own is not free time for the parents at first. Learning not to be bored is a process and takes time. You cannot start with 60 minutes of "downtime." You have to build up to 60 minutes. Start with 10 minutes and provide a couple of choices, such as reading a book or drawing a picture. When you hear those beautiful words, "I'M DONE!" All you have to say is, "You still have more time to choose something else." This is where the learning takes place, so be ready for the push-back. Stick to the 10 minutes. After a bit, you'll be able to increase by five-minute intervals. Just as you cannot run a marathon the first time out and must build your endurance, the same is true in learning how to deal with boredom. By providing your child with downtime, you can teach them how to engage in activities independently

and not depend on others to create activities for them.

Some schools have cut their recess times during the school day because of the demands on instructional time and to avoid dealing with student misbehavior. They found that cutting recess time cuts down students' misbehaviors, yet is that best for them? Instead of using this time as a teaching/developmental time, schools shorten the time to run and play, shortening the time to practice these developmental skills.

We so often assume children can use free time for productive things when it is a skill that parents and teachers need to foster. Take the time to guide children out of boredom and model and share what you are doing during your downtime.

Scott Smith is a 40-plus year Umatilla County educator and serves on the Decoding Dyslexia Oregon board as its parent/teacher liaison.

Indifferent government leaders say 'Let them eat Kix'

OTHER VIEWS

Tom Purcell



I never parted with a \$20 bill faster. It happened at one of my favorite diners. The Western omelet and Diet Coke I often get wasn't the \$11 it had been for as long as I remember. It was \$16.

That expense, with my tip for the excellent waiter, consumed my entire \$20 bill.

I feel bad for the diner's owner. He told me that soaring food costs have been killing his profits for months. He's been forced to raise his prices, yet he's making half of what he used to.

Why? First, his labor costs are up because there is a shortage of workers and he has to pay

them a higher hourly wage or they won't take the job. And second, because he has to charge higher prices, his customer base is dwindling.

As wonderful as a diner breakfast is, more people, getting hit by inflation across the board, are choosing to stay home and eat a bowl of Wheaties or Kix instead.

I'm certainly no economist. But I know this: Inflation stinks.

According to one financial adviser quoted in Forbes, there are a few driving factors behind our current spike in prices — high demand and low supply.

COVID-19 lockdowns caused Americans to sit on their money for months but lately they've been injecting those dollars back into the economy with abandon.

The nearly 0% mortgage interest rates we've been enjoying since March 2020 are driving up the demand for houses — and therefore their sales prices. And global supply chains for many products are all goofed up because of the pandemic's disruptions.

For instance, due to a shortage of vehicles for sale — new vehicles are being held back by car makers because of a shortage of computer chips — new- and used-car prices are ridiculously high.

I bought a new Toyota Tacoma off road truck in December of 2019 and it's done something no other vehicle I've bought has ever done in my life: gone up in value.

Kelly Blue Book tells me that my truck with 11,100 miles on it is worth \$3,000 more than I paid for it brand new.

That is one of the few upsides to inflation. Owning property is another. If you have a fixed-rate mortgage, but the dollar "value" of your home keeps rising, you at least keep pace with inflation.

But if you are retired, as my parents are, and living on a fixed income, inflation is an invisible tax that nibbles at the buying power of your money. Your limited dollars buy fewer groceries and other increasingly expensive basic items you need to sustain yourself.

I trust in the efficiency of the many very talented business people in our mostly free

economy to adjust to inflation and get our markets running smoothly again.

But I don't trust our government leaders who have been spending recklessly for years and are currently attempting to ram a massive, ridiculous spending bill down our throats that could make high inflation a lasting problem.

I fondly remember the Clinton presidency when our government actually took in more money than it spent. But since 2001, Presidents Bush (\$6 trillion), Obama (\$9 trillion) and Trump (\$6 trillion) have reversed that trend and added trillions to our total debt.

Way too few people in Washington seem to care about our \$28 trillion national debt or the inflation they've caused.

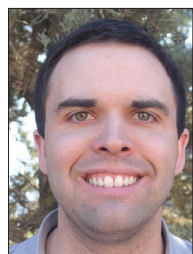
They don't care a whit about struggling diner owners or cash-strapped patrons who now eat cereal for breakfast.

Tom Purcell is an author and humor columnist for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. Email him at Tom@TomPurcell.com.

I want to hear what you have to say, whatever your viewpoint may be

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Ronald Bond



I've been pleased to see the letters to the editor flowing to my inbox the way they have been the last month.

Once in a while, I hear that the Chieftain isn't representing the views of the county's citizens. Yet letters to the editor are one of the best ways for people to be heard. At times, they rush in much like the Wallowa River does at the beginning of spring. Too often, though, they trickle at the rate the river did in late summer this year.

Letters to the editor carry an importance, one many readers miss out on. This is the easiest for a resident to get their opinion out there, to offer their take on any topic.

We run letters to the editor on any topic you can imagine, from any viewpoint imaginable — conservative, liberal, independent or any other ideology you may or may not subscribe to.

Opinion, as best as we can, is kept out of the news portion of our publication. The Opinion Page is set apart for exactly what it's name says — the opinion of the person submitting a piece, whether it be a from syndicated columnist, from our newsroom

or from the readership.

It's important for this to be in the paper given we make the attempt to run strictly news articles that are based on facts and that keep opinions out of them in the rest of the pages. We don't do this perfectly, but we do so, in part, with the hope that we can present the middle line — not too far to one side or the other — as the middle is where the truth often is found.

Frankly, I want your letters to the editor. I want to be able to see what your views on topics are, and get them out there for the public. I originally wrote this column about three weeks ago to encourage letters to the editor as we were in a massive dry spell of them. Space limited running it at the time, and with my inbox inundated in recent weeks, I actually had to alter this piece.

But what follows, the second reason I wrote this column, I still want to pitch, and see if there is interest in the community

In addition to your letters, I also want your feedback on the paper in general, which is why I am putting out the call for a "Coffee with the editor" meeting which, if successful, I would hold periodically.

The purpose of this will be twofold. One, it will give those who attend an opportunity to voice their takes to me directly. And two, it will allow them the opportunity to ask me questions — questions that I will do my best to answer.

This is not something I have done before, but, if well-attended and successful, it is something I would like to do maybe once a month to hear from the public.

Readers, if you are interested in meeting with me with a group of other subscribers to ask questions and give feedback, email editor@wallowa.com with the subject "Coffee with the editor." You also can call me at 541-398-5502. If we get 10 individuals on board, I will follow up with each of you to set up a meeting time.

For those who haven't submitted a letter to the editor but want your opinion heard,

email them to editor@wallowa.com, and include "Letter to the editor" in the subject line. They can also be mailed to 209 NW 1st Street, Enterprise, OR 97828. Please limit submissions to once every two weeks.

I look forward to hearing from you and, perhaps, meeting with you.

Ronald Bond is the editor of the Wallowa County Chieftain.

Congratulations on your retirement
Theresa Russell!

After over 30 years of providing care to her patients, Theresa is retiring. Due to strict COVID precautions, we cannot host a proper party, but please join us in a resounding CONGRATULATIONS!

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