

Are we Enabling our Children to be Irresponsible, Self-centered and Lazy?

When we give our kids everything they want and do everything for them are we enabling them to be irresponsible, materialistic, self-centered, lazy and immature? As a parent we should provide our children with the necessities such as food, clothing, a place to sleep, and a roof over their heads.

Throw in unconditional love and moral guidance from infancy through to adulthood and they should have everything they need to succeed in life.

Most parents that grew up with parents raised during the depression feel the need to give their children the things they wanted but never had as a child. That feeling is understandable; there is no doubt that we all want the best for our children. The problem is, these “things” are just that; toys, phones and other electronic devices, designer clothes, even their own cars, showered on our children do not teach them the valuable lessons and work ethic we learned growing up. These materialistic things are now expected by our children, but often not appreciated.

Most parents currently raising teenagers could not wait to finish school, get a job, move out on their own and become independent from their parents. If we went to post secondary school, we paid for all or most of it ourselves. We worked at jobs to pay for our social activities, the latest styles in clothing, and our first cars. Very few of us received an allowance from our parents to help defray these extra costs.

If we did not pay for it ourselves, we did not get it. We appreciated the things we bought because we worked hard for them. We also respected the things others purchased because we knew they worked hard for them. We made mistakes along the

way, but almost always learned from these mistakes and tried to rectify them without the help of our parents. Our parents taught us that respect is earned by choosing the ethical and moral path to success and working hard to get there. They did not love us any less than we love our children, they just taught us better life lessons.

Many teenagers today do not take responsibility for their actions. They blame their teachers, coaches or others when achieving less than perfect results. They get their parents to fix their problems, and the sad thing is we do it! They often do not look after their own (or our) possessions and have no or very little respect for the possessions of others.

For example, before our sons drove cars, every autumn when we cleaned out our garage to prepare for winter, we would find several bicycles that did not belong to us. We would ask where they came from, but no one knew or cared enough to retrieve them.

We should stop enabling our children unless we want them to become unsuccessful, immature, irresponsible and lazy adults, dependent on us for way too long. Provide them with the love, respect and guidance they deserve, but encourage them to spread their wings and earn their own way in the world. They will be better off in the long run.