

Too Much of a Good Thing

Raising children of character in an age
of materialism

WEEK 2

A.L.I 259: Online Parenting
Series

Winter 2014

Review from Week 1

- Material wellbeing and crisis of conscience
 - The state of our youth and families
 - Parenting challenges
 - What went wrong
- The role of
 - Peers
 - Media

Agenda for Week 2

- Examining the parental role in the Crisis of Conscience

What is causing this “Crisis of Conscience”?

1. Peers – ours and our children’s
2. Media
3. Parenting Practices

1. How important are peers?

The extent of peer influence...

MYTH: Peers influence kids' morals more than parents do.

- Peers influence...
 - Dress choices
 - Entertainment
 - Language
- Parents influence...
 - Religion
 - Education
 - Core values

(From 7 deadly myths about raising moral kids:

<http://www.behavioralinstitute.org/FreeDownloads/START/7%20Deadly%20Myths%20About%20Raising%20Moral%20Kids.pdf>)

Peer Influence

- Teens rarely strong arm other teens into trying risky behaviour
- Friends influence is subtle
- Children are likely to pick friends similar to them

Minimizing peer influence

- Be the 'Bad' Guy
- Build your relationship/Talk to us/be an “askable” parent
- Give them the facts
- Follow through with consequences.
- Wait up for them
- Encourage speaking up
- Do preventative teaching and role plays

3. How are our parenting practices contributing to the crisis of conscience?

- Parenting practices of modern parents and their impact on children
- What makes our children successful and happy?
- An examination of our own level of materialism

Parenting practices of modern parents and their impact on children

Neglectful Parenting

- The parent is neither **demanding** nor **responsive**.
- Low involvement in children's lives
- Few limits
- **Impact on children:**
- Emotionally withdrawn
- May show patterns of truancy and delinquency
- Tend to lack self-control, have low self-esteem and are less competent than their peers

Authoritarian Parenting

- High demand, low responsiveness
- Parents tend to rely heavily on the use of coercion to force the child's compliance
- **Outcome:**
- Obedient and proficient but anxious, withdrawn, and unhappy
- May display aggression and hostility with peers
- May develop second identities

Permissive Parenting

- High responsiveness, low demand
- Friends rather than parents
- Few or no limits
- Outcome:
- Immature
- Self-centered, impulsive, disobedient, and rebellious
- Rank low in self esteem, self regulation and happiness
- Problems with authority

Imam Muhammad al Baqir (as) has said:

The worst of parents are those who transgress the limits in their love and goodness to their children.

Helicopter Parenting

- Over-involved in their children's lives
- They make sure that their children's needs are honoured wherever they go: they must have their foods, their routines must remain unchanged
- **Outcome:**
- Children grow up with a sense of entitlement but lack confidence and are unable to make decisions for themselves

“Think of your child standing to your right and the problem that she needs to solve is on your left. If you step between her and the problem, *you become the problem*. See cannot see around you and she cannot see the solution. Get out of the way”

Jeanne Norris

Authoritative Parenting

- Parents are in charge
- Listen to their children
- Encourage independence
- Encourage personal responsibility
- Place limits, consequences and expectations on their children's behavior
- Express warmth and nurturance
- Allow children to express opinions
- Encourage children to discuss options
- Administer fair and consistent discipline

Outcome of Authoritative Parenting

- Children tend to be more well adjusted in life and more successful in school.
- Children are more likely to be happy, capable and successful
- Research shows that children tend to do best in homes where there is love and warmth but also clear rules and limits and the parents are in charge

*Parenting styles tend to be stable
across generations.*

*What kind of parenting style do
you think most of us have?*

3. How are our parenting practices contributing to the crisis of conscience?

- The PPM study

Our parenting practices

The PPM Study shows that:

- Our generation of parents are giving too much (money and privileges, leniency) and expecting too little (contribution, responsibility)

Money and happiness

- America's newly identified at-risk group for high levels of emotional disorders – especially anxiety and depression – are preteens and teens from affluent families (those earning \$120,000 per year and more).
- Current studies suggest that 30 to 40 percent of 12-to-18 year-olds from affluent families are experiencing disturbing psychological symptoms.

Our parenting practices

The PPM Study shows that:

- We blur the line between friend and parent

Our parenting practices

The PPM Study shows that:

- We have and give too much of everything except time

The Myth of “Quality Time”

“There is a lot of anger in my generation. You can hear it in the music. Kids are angry for a lot of reasons, but mostly they’re angry because parents aren’t around.”

- 17 year old in a Newsweek article

Our parenting practices

The PPM Study shows that:

- We claim that we are very concerned with our children's happiness and emotional wellbeing

What will make our kids successful and happy?

1. Their connection and personal
relationship to Allah swt!

Connection between faith and social adjustment

Teens who practice their religious faith show:

- Higher levels of altruism
- Lower levels of theft, vandalism, violence, and drug and alcohol use.
- Less likelihood of sexual activity.

2002 Child Trends Research Brief, *Religious Involvement and Children's Well-Being*
www.childtrends.org

What will make our kids successful and happy?

2. The social and emotional skills

- Being absorbed in a challenging activity
- Self-efficacy
- Frustration tolerance and the ability to cope with stress
- Compassion
- Emotional maturity – self control
- A sense of self-worth tempered by humility
- Ability to self regulate emotions

Our parenting practices

- Our level of materialism

Our parenting practices

- Our level of materialism
- Where do we hold things? In our hand or in our hearts?
- Do we own things or do they own us?

Our relationship to material things

- - do we see them as identity enhancers?
- - Is our sense of self worth bound up with the things that we possess?
- - do certain possessions induce a subtle feeling of importance or superiority? (eg of "I wear ring when I feel most insecure")
- - Does the lack of them make you feel inferior to those who have them?

Our relationship to material things

- - Do you casually mention things you own or show them off to increase your sense of worth in someone else's eyes and through them in your own?
- - Do you feel resentful or angry and somehow diminished in your sense of self when someone has more than you?
- - do we have an endless striving for more? Paul Getty when asked what it felt like to be the richest man in the world, said, not rich enough

What is our relationship to our material wellbeing?

- What are the priorities in our life?
- Where do we spend our time/focus our attention
- What message is that sending to our children?



Words of Wisdom

“Don’t worry that children do not hear what you are saying. Worry that they are seeing everything that you are doing”

Curbing our own materialistic tendencies

- Be honest that it is you and not the kids. Be a model.
- Limit TV
- Use your time wisely
- Give up magazines for books
- Do not use shopping as a recreational activity
- Monitor your urges - Use a 30 Day shopping list
- De clutter
- Become environmentally conscious (recognize link between earth disease and materialism)

The value of struggle

The little boy and the butterfly



Questions and comments?

