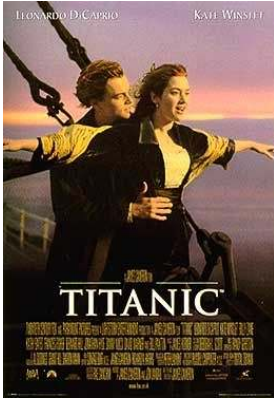


Helping Boys & Girls Learn

Vol 10 - Issue 4HS

Parenting for Success in High School



Watching for Adolescent Icebergs

Shortly before midnight on April 14, the Titanic collided with an iceberg causing the ship to sink at 2:20 AM on April 15, 1912.

This historic event makes a great foundation for a family movie night and some interesting conversation about the roles of men and women in the world nearly 100 years ago.

Some topics for discussion:

How does the movie depict the social classes that were quite obvious among the passengers?

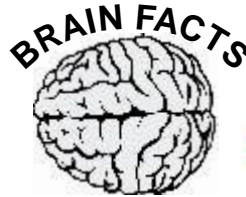
How did men in the upper class relate to the women in their world?

How many women does the movie point out as having had any role in the building or the functioning of the ship?

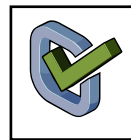
How was the life of the heroine changed because of her meeting Jack?

Movies make wonderful conversation starters for questions that adolescents have and often are reluctant to bring up. Talking about the movie characters makes it less threatening.

As you have the discussions, listen for the differences in how the males and females in your family interpret people and situations – there will be interesting observations to make!



The cerebellum is believed to not only be involved in coordination of our muscles – making us graceful dancers and good athletes – but also in coordination of our “thinking” or mental muscles! For adolescents, the cerebellum can help smooth out our complicated social life and navigate the world more smoothly. Activity is important for the healthy development of the cerebellum – too much sitting in front of the TV or computer screen isn’t the way to be active! Encourage both your adolescent boys and girls to get up and move! The male brain especially needs this movement during early adolescence to control impulsive behavior that can lead to trouble at home and in the classroom!



Check This Out

Resources for Parents

160 Ways To Help The World: Community Service Projects for Young People

by Linda Leeb Duper

Our world would be a better place if we were taught from an early age how important it is to serve and be active members of our communities. This book offers ways to do this.

Parenting Adolescents

Excerpt from “Confession of A Helicopter Parent...”

“Caring for our children’s welfare and helping them along the way is a fundamental part of a parent’s role, of course. But we baby boomers have made this nurturing an extreme sport. In my case, I was there in the school principal’s office putting my requests in for specific teachers to ensure that my children would get the best education possible. I monitored deadlines for them, whether it’s for completing a homework assignment, filing a college application, or lining up a summer job. While my husband and I have worked hard to ensure that our children are independent thinkers, we still inject ourselves into their decision-making process far more than our parents did in ours.

‘Never leave anything to chance.’ has become our mantra in parenting. This involvement with our children seemed so right to us. Isn’t that what good parenting is supposed to be, we ask? But is it healthy?

Shouldn’t our children be taking more responsibility for their own lives? Shouldn’t we recognize that encountering obstacles and overcoming them is often a valuable learning experience? And shouldn’t we back off and find something else to fill our days (and our need to be needed)? After all, most of us can expect to live at least 20 years past the time our youngest child has left the nest.

As baby boomers, we don’t want to accept that we are aging, much less acknowledge our own mortality. The reality is that we will not always be there to help our children along. Will they be ready, when the day comes, to cope with whatever life brings them?”

--Sarah Briggs, associate vice president of communications, Albion College (used with permission)



Ways To Identify A Helicopter That Needs To Be Gounded...

If you:

- Find yourself running out to WalMart at 8pm on Sunday night, gritting your teeth, because you need to get the supplies your son or daughter needs for a science report due Monday
- Consistently unpacking your child’s back pack to find homework assignments that were never done, or, worse yet, done and never turned in
- Running by school on the way to work (so that you will be late) to drop off the homework or lunch money or trumpet your child left at home

If you see yourself in any of these scenarios, you run the risk of also someday becoming the parent who contact their child’s college professor to argue about a low grade, or the registrar to choose your college sophomore’s classes.

Helping children learn the important lessons in life often means letting them suffer the consequences of the choices they make.

Wouldn’t it be better to have your child deal with a failure as a young adolescent, learn from it and move forward, than still be expecting life to cover for him or her in the mid-twenties?

Raising independent, self-sufficient children is a challenge – but meeting the challenge early on is a lot easier than seeing them crash and burn as older adolescents or young adults.

Rites of Passage

As the brain grows, it needs to mark its progress. A rite of passage, for both boys and girls, provides this marking, even if in somewhat differing ways for each gender.

– Michael Gurian
Boys & Girls Learn Differently!

Researchers know that rites of passage are a key part of every traditional culture. Why are rites of passage so universal? What fundamental human needs do they speak to? Our modern culture lacks meaningful rites of passage—are we missing something? How might we reclaim rites of passage in culturally relevant ways?

The purpose of traditional cultures' rites of passage was to allow the youth to become adults. Through rites of passage, the youth discovered their gifts, their vision for their role in the community, and their own personal "medicine" or wisdom for dealing with the challenges that lay in front of them. Their elders facilitated these discoveries, and supported the young adults to integrate their visions, roles, and paths into the fabric of the community. The rites of passage supported the transformation of the child mentality ("What's in it for me") into the adult mentality ("How can I best serve the needs of my community?"). It was obvious to every member of these cultures that one could not possibly function as an adult without the rites of passage experience.

Many of the problems that face our youth today may well be linked to the absence of rites of passage. A fire burns in the blood of youth—this is universal. This fire longs for intensity that will give life new meaning and initiate the young person into a new phase of their life. If the youth are not provided this initiation experience by elders of their community, they will unconsciously try to create it for themselves. We know our youth are capable of creating experiences that are dangerous, intense, and edgy: they do this through violence, risk-taking behaviors, drug abuse, careless sexuality, bodily mutilation, etc. There is an African proverb, "If you don't initiate the youth, they will burn down the village." Is this what we are seeing in our own culture?

What are some opportunities for parents to provide their sons and daughters with rites of passage?

Some families are members of religious groups that offer such rites. Confirmation in Christian religions, Bar and Baht Mitzvahs in the Jewish faith – these are formal, traditional rite of passage experiences.

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have ceremonies marking the passage from one program level to another, with more independence and responsibility at each step.

Education provides some incremental rite of passage, such as graduation ceremonies and recognitions.

Obtaining a driver's license is seen by most adolescents as a serious rite of passage. How will you handle this one in your household. Will you make it a serious "coming of age" rite of passage. Think about all the ways you could develop an entire series of events related to the privilege of driving a car.

Helping our young people learn to think about the steps they climb as they become less and less children and more and more adults will provide them with good skills for handling serious rites of passage they choose for themselves throughout their lives.

The decision to marry. The decision to become a parent. A path of worth – work that is important and satisfying.

Our boys and girls will travel different paths as they grow, and will need different rites of passage to mark their progress, but they will all need those rites. As parents, think about how you can help build a culture for your child that includes rites of passage.

Family Fun This Month

Celebrate “Keep American Beautiful” Month

Keep America Beautiful Month follows a practical approach that unites citizens, businesses and government to find solutions that advance our core issues of preventing litter, reducing waste, and beautifying communities.

It’s never too early to start our boys and girls on the path to civic pride and good citizenship. Plan a day or a weekend to work on your own space - if you have a yard, do a family clean-up and maybe plants some flowers or seeds. If you live in a neighborhood with community space, help your teen organize a community clean-up day. End it with a cook out with each neighbor bringing a snack to share.



Community service is more and more becoming a part of what college’s look for in student applications, and starting to build awareness of volunteer work in elementary school can be good way to help your child be ready when the time comes. It can also be a good, healthy way to spend some quality family time outdoors!

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WHALE TALK

by Chris Crutcher

T.J. lives in Spokane with his adopted parents, John Paul Jones and Abby Jones. He attends Cutter High School, which prides itself heavily on the physical achievements of its students, and thrives on the winnings of the football and basketball teams. Many teachers there display favoritism toward the star athletes, such as Mike Barbour, and turn a blind eye to the bullying that occurs, such as Barbour tormenting Chris Coughlin.

Mr. Simet, a teacher, wants to start a swim team to avoid having to be an assistant coach for Wrestling. He encourages T.J., who formerly swam and was very talented, to join and recruit others. Eventually, T.J. recruits six others to form a seven-man team, composed of him; the mentally challenged Chris Coughlin; the obnoxious and extremely intelligent Dan Hole; the kind and talented bodybuilder/musician Tay-Roy Kibble; the rude and antagonistic Andy Mott; the quiet and generic Jackie Craig; and the obese Simon DeLong. All of them have troubles, which they slowly reveal to each other as they grow to become friends.



The Disreputable History of Frankie Landeau-Banks

by E. Lockhart

The main character Frankie begins attending a New York prep school and quickly realizes that the only way to get ahead in the school is to be a guy. Only guys can be members of the only secret society on campus, the Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds. Not to be outdone because of her gender, Frankie works to become a part of the “inner sanctum.” However, every action has a consequence and Frankie must decide if what she wants is worth the price. A fantastic read!

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