

## MAY 2003 EMAIL TEXT

From: <admin@gfi-singapore.org>  
To: <Undisclosed-Recipient:>  
Subject: Mailer - May 2003  
Date: Friday, May 02, 2003 11:43 PM

Folks

It is time again. Sorry for the slight delay. You should also see your email coming from admin@gfi-singapore.org <mailto:admin@gfi-singapore.org> .It is still us, just using a different email. You might have also noticed the new voting portion on the website and a discussion forum. Please make use of these at your leisure. Most of the previous month's mailer have also been uploaded onto the web.

Thanks again for helping us circulate, there are new emails joining the list and again we received feedback to help us understand what your needs are and what areas we can discuss to bring more value to you. Keep them coming!

In this month's mailer, we touched on the survey done last time and also on some education related items. We thought of explaining a little on the streaming in Primary 4 and the secondary school system next month to clarify and ease the concerns of some parents. If there are items you have in mind, please do not hesitate to reply to this email and let us know.

Meanwhile, enjoy your family as always!

God bless.

Jeremy and Suan Ai

## BEHAVIOUR AND FEELINGS/EDUCATION

**Q: Our baby was born last week. When will we begin to feel and act normal again?**

**A: When the kids complete their education.**

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***“Should good feeling precede good behaviour or good behaviour precede good feeling?”***

The survey showed most selected right behaviour first. 30% went for feelings first. ***Behaviour should precede feelings*** – it may feel good lashing out at another but the right behaviour is self-control. It may seem better to get a divorce though there is no physical abuse in the marriage but the more painful right behaviour, would be to work things out. It may feel good wearing revealing cloths (cooler?) but the right behaviour is to dress modestly (1 Tim 2:9). Many times, it boils down to “I am NOT willing.”

Advertisements flood us with ‘just do it’ because we ‘deserve it!’ That’s where most of our erroneous ‘teachings’ come from (and where most troubles start). “Other centred-ness” simply will not go well with a ‘do it for myself first’ mentality.

If we cannot humble ourselves to be obedient to God’s teachings and to change our behaviours accordingly, what examples are we as parents setting for our children?

### **Singapore’s education**

We promised to touch on Singapore’s education. Many Singaporean parents are concerned about the emphasis on academic results and many are concerned about the Chinese language. Yes, the system is fairly demanding. Yet, parents have the abilities to cope if we set our expectations according to the kids’ abilities. Perhaps let’s address 2 areas this round: enrichment classes and the Chinese language.

**Enrichment classes.** For younger children, where parents can afford, the question of enrichment classes will arise. (Cannot afford, less headache!) For the first born, parents do have more time and we tend to consider such classes to broaden social skills. Subsequently, the other children get less because parents are busier and siblings provide the social interactions. Each family’s preferences will vary. When choosing the type of classes, may we suggest non-academic programmes? Classes on art, swimming and gym are good to start with rather than abacus for instance. The theory is that since Singapore already has a good academic structure, we can let the system take care of that while we have some fun first. One more thing, accompany your kids yourself when possible, not an auntie nor the helper, to build bonds! The fear of many parents is whether our children can catch up academically. Let us put it across a little differently, if we pump too much too soon, will our children burn out at an early stage? We also need to set different expectations for different children – not every child can be or needs to be a university graduate.

Next is to set a minimal period to stay (like a year or 2 years) on the programme even if the kids dislike it. Many parents think that just because the kid dislikes, they have to stop the classes immediately, missing a teaching moment. Ask ourselves - do we enjoy everything we do? You get the point. May we also remind all that giving the children too many decisions too early is detrimental – they do become very self-centred – just explain and leave our decision final. You don’t need to have a smiling kid every second of the day – that is not reality.

**Chinese.** We will procrastinate when we have difficulties with this one. Yet children complain because they see us complain. That subject will remain for 10 to 12 years of education, why make life difficult for them? They are actually quite adaptable if we encourage them. If parents do not speak the language, tuition or external classes can help. The Chinese culture actually has a lot of Biblical values – respect for parents or elders (it is even a commandment) and respect for authority to name a couple, so let’s not brush it aside so quickly. If the parents give up first, half the battle is lost. Learn with them and stay in touch with those who manages this alright – you will need them!

Jeremy and Suan Ai  
May 2003