

NOV 2003 EMAIL TEXT

From: "GFI admin" <admin@gfi-singapore.org>
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Clear DayHi Folks

SIGN UP NOW!!! NOV 14 - 15 "How to Raise a Responsible Child". Don't miss this opportunity to mingle with like-minded parents.

For those who have yet to sign up - you can still do so. If you hope to enjoy early bird rates, get two others to sign up with you!

We hope to see you at the conference!

but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint Isaiah 40:31

Greetings from Jeremy and Suan Ai

log on www.gfi-singapore.org for parenting resource

RESPECT AND THANKFULNESS

Teacher: Kids, please take only one piece of cake. God is watching!

Kid A took cake. Turned to Kid B at the ice cream place: Quick, God's watching the cake, let's take more!

Too early to start?

Some parents having gone through classes like GKGW have said that things seem not to be working. Upon reviewing what's happening, we often notice that we parents do not follow through (giving up) or never got started. Some parents feel that children or toddlers should be left to play and restrictions would stifle their creativity (Let children be children is the belief). Perhaps it is important to highlight that restrictions are not meant to stifle but guide. For example, game-boys. Does it mean they can play 24 hours? Of course not, right? Some parents lament that they cannot do anything - or can they? Of course if training is not there from young, there will be no family rules and by teenage time, things will be a lot more chaotic (remember first-time obedience? What about starting with expecting a 'Yes, daddy or mummy' when you call your kids?)

On another note, if we can get addicted to games as adults, why should we expect differently from teens or children of primary school going age? Self-control is being instructed with the teaching of first time obedience. So, it is the mindset of the parents that need to change first, not the children's behavior. We have not bought any of these game-boys in our family (really!) but we do have computer games. So, when our children want to play (especially the boys) but permission is denied, what do they do? They end up playing other imaginary games which we believe actually enhances creativity, don't you think?

In a related but slightly distant note - a recent article in the Straits Times surveyed university students about pre-marital sex. Guess what, it is now acceptable! If the survey were to be done 20 years back, we believe the results would be very different. Why the change? Is this an indication of 'openness'? We believe not - because of the consequences. Yes, we cannot eliminate the impact of the media but we can do our part as parents to educate them and that boils down to how we teach them (do we?), what we spend time as a family doing? This starts from parents on day one! If we believe it is acceptable, it will become acceptable. If we don't believe anything, the society will help us (and the societal trend is that it is alright). It is easy to blame the media but guess who suffers the consequences! Message is this: start young, instruct our children, don't leave the instruction to chance. **Our children may be going astray not by what we are doing but by what we are NOT doing!** We may not be able to guarantee anything but society will surely teach the wrong things.

While the above signify 'loose' parenting, the other end are parents who suffocate their children by being over restrictive or over punish. Well, we think it's easier to loosen up but there is always hope at either end (just have to remember that we may have to wait 40 years for some hope to materialize!). The adjustments will be very different but we must start somewhere. To get started, gather your friends and facilitate a class! Work with those you have attended classes with, and of course your facilitators. We are not perfect but we can tell you which holes we fell in so you can avoid those as you journey in your classes! As we share in our family (during meals) those lessons we learn from classes while facilitating them, our children will remind us when we are not doing right!

Respect for others and thankfulness.

We believe if we are thankful, we will have more respect for others. In the Bible, there is a story about 10 being healed but only one, a foreigner who came back to thank the healer! If we look at our lives today, when were we last being thankful to another person? If we were thankful, we would respect that friendship or relationship (that could be spouse, children, parents, families, friends) and work towards showing appreciation. The same goes for husbands and wives, right? When we take for granted what the other half is doing, our heart grows cold. Couch time is in the refrigerator and the next thing you know, the last time you were intimate was on your honeymoon! The same goes for children. With the Singapore's educational system, when the child goes to school, instead of appreciating them (like Elliot's chubbiness - just hugged him, Josiah's smile and Samantha's talkativeness), we continue to put unreasonable academic or other expectations on them and keep saying it is reasonable. If this sounds familiar, welcome to the club! We struggle with it daily! So far, not too bad, grades are sliding a little, family still in tact. Check back with us next time, OK?