

Parenting an “Entitled Child”

by Michael Rebel, LMHC #MH3532

reprinted from the Kids Enquirer, Family Resource Guide

Mary, a vibrant, thirteen year old girl, has just been arrested for smoking pot at school. When the police arrive they find a short little blonde girl spraying profanity like a hissing cat. She had already spent time refusing to speak to the school officials and now she is enraged. She shouts, “You have no right to do this to me. Wait until my parents get here!” Every adult facing this barrage is stunned. She’s usually a friendly, playful girl.

What has happened to get her here?

The professionals working with children and adolescents have coined the label “Entitled Child.” This label is an abbreviated way of describing a child with a belief that they are more important than any one else. They believe that the social world revolves around them. They are above reproach and external controls. The sad part is that the child truly believes this illusion.

Where did this come from?

I believe we, as misinformed parents, actually taught them to believe this. What I am about to say is not intended to cause guilt, but of increased understanding in how to remedy the situation: our society, as a direct expansion of a wonderful idea, has gone from treating children very well, to making children believe that they are more important than their parents and that they are above any authority figures. Not all children are affected the same, but the ones who misinterpret the message about their importance, can be in serious trouble.

It truly is a tragic situation!

The child has no one to look up to and feel protected by. The parents do not feel respected. Everyone is unhappy. The child is often frightened and defiant; they live in a world without boundaries and without direction. The parents often get desperate to regain control and use abusive measures. It all began with parents who were only doing what society said they should.

How can one prevent or correct this problem?

1. Parents must return to the reality that parents are more important than their children. Without parents or adults, children cannot survive prosperously.
2. One must realize that unhappy parents raise unhappy children, no matter how much they give them or do for them. Remember the cliché, “If Mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.”
3. Make sure your children are following you and that you are not following them. This could be as simple as when they are little, you go through the door first and then the children.
4. Remember, your children want **you** to be in charge. They do not want you as a sibling or friend. Know that if you want them to be your friend, you may have issues about your own worthiness. An adult usually prefers adult friends.

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5. Never underestimate your child. When they were born, they instinctively began learning to manipulate you to insure their survival. By the time they can talk they are experts at manipulating you.

6. Unless it is an emergency, don't tend to your children before you tend to adults. Children will want to grow up and get their turn to go first.

7. Remember, kids watch and internalize everything they experience. The younger they are the more intently they watch. This list could go on and on. Just use your head when you are parenting. It is the most important job you will have. Parents and the results of their efforts are what insure our future. Parenting can be a wonderful adventure and a lot of fun when one knows the rules and follows them. Raising a well-adjusted child is very rewarding.