

We are concerned about the modern issue of prolonged adolescence where boys in their 20-30's are still not grown up. Or children who are disconnected from their family by early teenhood demanding what they want in a more mature sort of tantrum. And even such a social movement as Occupy Wall Street where a generation or 2 of those who just think someone else needs care for them riot in the street and drain resources from already troubled local communities. The child who longed for Daddy's affection and interest or Mommy's kind words and consistent love grow up to see the family a hinderance to what they find is really important. Let's face it our children are selfish and consumed with being pampered and entertained and this produces bad fruit as they grow.

I think one of the greatest lies that we have bought, partially because of how we were raised, is that children are incapable of ^{meaningful} ~~meaningful~~ things. Historically, children have been a ^{important} ~~meaningful~~ part of the family's survival and prosperity. It seems that modern advances, instead of strengthening the effectiveness of the family, have broken it down into its individual selfish units. Daddy has his interests and Mommy has hers often, sadly, leaving the children to find their own place.

If we hope to have a better society it must begin in the home. So I thought I would share some ideas to turn back the cultural slide that is effecting your children.

First, practice making your family important. Start by showing that you value your husband or wife by sitting together talking, laughing and working together, even if it's just doing the dishes. Extend this same kind of priority to your children. Hide your television for a week or just schedule a break from entertainments during certain times. Develop some family routines such as family walks or a meal together at a table with real dishes and conversation. This ritual should be interrupted only when unavoidable and returned to as soon as possible. One family I know has made family reading time such a priority that even with children in local colleges and part time work on the side they have continued the tradition though it means dinner is much later and they are often reading together late into the evening. This didn't happen by accident they started young and have made the family consistently important.

Which brings me to my next suggestion, read good books as a family. Our family has especially enjoyed the Bible, historical fiction, and biographies. Let them see you reading and provide lots of great books that teach the morals and ethics you desire in them.

Make your children a valuable part of how your home works. Cleaning up, setting the dinner table, or helping cook a meal can build real self worth. Even a 2 year old can fold towels or a pair socks with some help.

As a family be a part of something meaningful for your community and neighbors, whether it is painting a picture for the grandma lady on the corner, helping a neighbor who can't get their yard work done anymore, or setting aside money they have earned for an orphanage in Haiti.

Bring your children along when you are involved in important things, listen to their opinions, give them a meaningful place in the family. These things let them know they have value now.

There is hope for Humboldt. This is Robert Upton for Community Comment.