

KIDS REFLECT ADULT WORLD

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For today's children, the most important weapons of mass destruction to be feared are the adults around them. Sounds drastic, but in many cases it's true. There is nothing more fearful and harmful to children than adults around them coming from a place of fear, anger and revenge.

Parents who come from a place of fear tend to be over controlling, anxious, overly involved and too emotional. They have a hard time staying emotionally detached when disciplining their kids, and thus get too frustrated, angry and plugged in to their children's behavior and emotions. This is a sure-fire recipe for ineffective parenting.

Worse yet are parents who are angry and vengeful. At least on third of our school-aged children have been through a divorce, and probably another one fourth or one third of them live in homes with parents who don't get along and lack a close, intimate relationship. Kids who experience cold, distant, angry or constantly at war parents carry deep hurts, fears, confusion, sadness and anger which is highly destructive to their spirits.

Kids are always a reflection of the adult world around them. Parents who see a lot of anger and chaos in their children and home should look first within themselves and then within their marriage for the root cause. When adults clean up their acts first, be they parents in the home or teacher staffs in a school, it's amazing how quickly kids settle down without even saying a word to them.

Think of all the chaos, anger and lack of integrity in important adults the past few years. Kids witnessed the President of the U.S. acting way out of integrity yet get off relatively unscathed. Kids have heard about priests and leaders in the Catholic Church covering up years of sexual molestation. Kids have seen leaders of major corporations being busted for dishonesty. And kids have watched leaders all over the globe handle conflicts with more conflict, revenge and threats and acts of war.

And with all of this mischief going on in the adult world, where has the focus been? On teenage drinking; on teenagers being angry and spoiled; on middle schoolers sexually acting out; on kids being overscheduled and out of balance; on the need for tougher laws for teenage drivers and tougher punishments for juvenile offenders. And that, my friends is a terrible mistake. And it's not fair, and we are missing the real problem...the adults!

So, let's shift the focus of our efforts this new year. When kids are afraid of monsters or nighttime storms, they seek refuge in their parent's bedrooms. As adults, we need to deal with our own monsters (anger, fears, stress, revenge) by looking inside ourselves instead of outside ourselves. The answers to any anger or chaos around us lie not with our leaders, the economy or our children. The answers lie within each of us.

Adults need to spend quieter, alone time for reflection, for questioning, for soul searching. Adults need to take time to be more spiritually grounded. Take the time first to clean out the weeds in your own yards, your own inner demons, before you blame your spouse or children or boss. Surround yourself with loving, encouraging people who will support your inner growth.

I believe that if every adult in this world committed to this inner work, the anger and conflicts in the world would cease. The world would not be rife with fear and anger as it is today. The real weapons that confront children every day are the experiences they have with adults who are angry, vengeful, out of integrity, distant, distracted and hurtful. Change needs to start close to home, in the home, and within every parent.