

THE TALIBAN ARE COMING TO YOUR LOCAL SUPERMARKET

By Foster W. Cline, M.D.



CLINE'S
CORNER

BY FOSTER W.
CLINE, M.D.

I was walking through the supermarket the other day, wanting to check out the magazines articles near the cash registers, but I couldn't see the covers and the articles within, because the covers had just been obscured with thin pieces of laminated wood. I asked the lady at the checkout stand, "What is going on here?" I had always liked to peruse the contents of the magazines while standing in line. No more. Why?

It turns out that a father with a couple of little kids had waltzed through the other day and complained that there was too much cleavage showing on a lady gracing the cover of *Cosmopolitan*. So now hundreds of people cannot easily see the contents of several basically news magazines because the father thinks his little kids would get overly interested in cleavage!

Isn't it always the vocal, controlling, slightly off-base minority that tramples the rights of the quiet, healthy majority? The psychiatrist in me can't help but wonder if this is a dad that is trying to control his own impulses by controlling his kids, in the same way fat parents worry about their kids' eating habits or abusive people attack others and their property, ostensibly to protect animals. In my mind's eye, I imagine this father at home watching *Desperate Housewives* while he figures out which supermarket he's going to hit tomorrow to control magazine covers.

Except for a few super-disturbed kids, I have found few four to seven year olds all that interested in cleavage. Perhaps you have seen groups of ogling children gathered around the magazine racks looking at pictures of buxom ladies and overly muscular men, but I sure haven't.

By the time the kids are eight, nine, or ten, they can certainly:

- ✓ Pull out and buy the magazine themselves.
- ✓ Peruse the Internet for tacky sites.
- ✓ Find novels and other books in the library with graphic explanations.
- ✓ Get a hold of R-rated video disks.
- ✓ Play video games that put the raciness of *Cosmopolitan* to shame.

Well, the list could go on, but the point is, this dad in the supermarket is heading down the path to a battle he will inevitably lose as he tries to control his kids from the outside in. Actually, by defining early what his kids can't have, can't see, and can't think about, he'll drive 'em right to the only tree in the entire garden that has the forbidden fruit. The tighter such parents control the kids, the sneakier they become. Of course they try to cover it up, but the parents always eventually find out and a schism develops between parent and child. And the kids still

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continue to misbehave, to boot! It's a pretty old story!

Love and Logic teaches that the only real control anyone ultimately has is self-control. Children have to learn to make the right choices from the inside out. Naturally, we all want children who make healthy choices. We don't want kids into early sexuality. And if it were as simple as putting a V-Chip into the TV, hiding the magazine covers, and forbidding the Internet, I'd be all for doing those things. But the fact is, none of those things develop self-discipline or the ability to make wise choices. In fact, they do the opposite. They say to the kid, "You can't be trusted to make wise choices and you won't be allowed to make the choices that you wish you could!"

So how does Love and Logic advise raising a responsible child who makes wise choices if the parents don't make the choices for them?

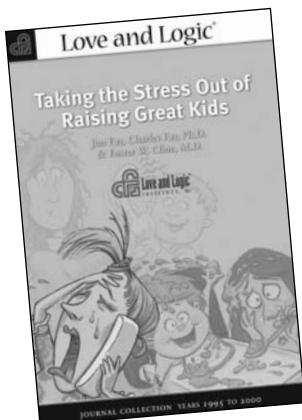
- 1) Children learn by modeling after parents who love and listen to them before giving their own thoughts and ideas: "Son, what works for me is..... and

the reason I personally don't..... is because....."

- 2) Most poor choices generally result in their own natural consequences. Parents always worry that the consequences may not occur until later down the road. But the fact is that if parents give thoughtful ideas when their children are young and inevitably let the consequences, good or bad, occur, then when they say to their children, "This may not work out well for you in the long run because.....," their children will listen with the same attentiveness that we would listen to our investment counselor if he said the same sentence. We'd think, "Wow! This guy has been right in the past, and if he thinks this is a poor choice, then....."

In summary, what ultimately didn't work for the Taliban won't work for parents.

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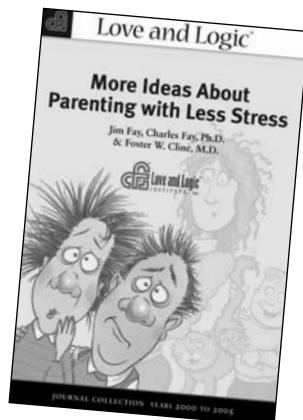
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