



How To Fix Parenting Styles Which May Damage Your Kids

Posted By [Dr. Tim Elmore](#) on May 26, 2011 @ 7:34 pm

Did you know that parents have very different parenting styles?

I believe we not only have a new generation of kids on our hands today, but we also have a new generation of parents with parenting styles that may unknowingly damage their children.

I have not seen a more engaged batch of parents with so many parenting styles since I began working with students more than 30 years ago.

Today, two of three parents utilize parenting styles that define the "American Dream" as leaving their children financially better off than they were.

This evolution of events has produced a new generation of parents more focused on their children than anything else in their lives. At times, however, I wonder if this absorption with kids is entirely healthy.

During the last few years, I have spotted eight damaging parenting styles that iY (parents of children born in the 1990's who seem to have technology as an extra body appendage) can fall into without even knowing it.

Some are unique to this generation; others have existed for years. Let's explore these damaging parenting styles and see what they are doing to our culture and to the rising generation of adults.

Helicopter Parents

Problem: Hovering helicopter parenting styles don't allow their kids the privilege of learning to fail and persevere. They prefer to prepare the path for the child instead of the child for the path.

Issue: It is very possible parents can become helicopters because they possess a controlling spirit. Adults who struggle with feeling out of control or who find it difficult to trust others tend to hover and use micromanagement as parenting styles.

They feel it is up to them to insure life turns out well for the kids. These adults must learn that control is a myth, and the sooner they acknowledge this, the more effective they'll be as parents with better parenting styles.

Karaoke Parents

Problem: Those parents with Karaoke parenting styles often don't provide their kids the clear parameters that build security and self-esteem. Their parenting styles are more concerned with being liked than with being respected.

Issue: Parents often assume the karaoke style because of their own emotional insecurities. They may worry about aging or struggle with the need to be liked or feel uncomfortable with adult responsibilities.

These adults will rationalize why they do what they do, but the only remedy is for them to embrace their own age and stage in life.

They must relate to the young people in an appropriate manner and focus on the kids' needs more than their own. They need parents they can look up to and respect with appropriate parenting styles.

Dry-Cleaner Parents

Problem: Dry-cleaner parents have parenting styles don't furnish their kids with the mentoring and personal face-to-face time they need.

They prefer to pass the buck and abdicate their parenting responsibility, thus showing parenting styles that damage their children's ability to bond with them.

Issue: Some of these parents have certain types of parenting styles which don't know how to delegate their responsibility because they feel that connecting with kids is just not their specialty, or they may have inadequacy or identity issues or just don't feel up to the task.

Others have parenting styles which are just self-centered and oblivious. These parents need to run toward the very challenge in which they feel they're weak. These parents need to examine their schedules and priorities to make room for actually relating to the children they are raising.

Relationships make it all happen. Parents must build bridges of relationships with their parenting styles that can bear the weight of truth which make for great kids who themselves will have good parenting styles.

Volcano Parents

Problem: Parents with these parenting styles still have some unrealized dreams from their past—sometimes an unhealthy past—and try to fulfill them through their children.

They also have issues with self-control and fuzzy boundaries between themselves and their children.

Issue: The child represents the best way for parents with these parenting styles to accomplish the dream he or she gave up on years earlier, even if it is vicariously done.

Their parenting styles and behavior is often the result of past baggage. The best step these adults can take is self-care. They must address their own emotional health and deal with their own issues, so they don't further damage a child in their wake.

Once again, kids have a better chance at growing up if their parents do so first. The best way we can help kids become healthy leaders is to model it for them with healthy parenting styles.

Dropout Parents

Problem: These types parents have parenting styles which fail to provide a healthy role model of finishing what they start, and in some cases, they fail to provide the tools their child needs.

Issue: The parent wasn't mature enough to have children in the first place, and not ready for that kind of responsibility. Their parenting styles don't even able to lead their own lives well, much less help a child launch into the world.

The best course for this parent is to seek out counseling and discover what's happening inside, to find out why they are unable to lead their child in a healthy way. Then, they should reengage as a parent...beginning with an apology.

Bullied Parents

Problem: The parents with these types of parenting styles lack the courage and strength to lead their strong-willed children and prepare them for a potentially harsh adult world. The children are leaderless.

Issue: These bullied parenting styles may fail to lead their children and become subservient due to an intense desire to be liked and accepted by their child.

Often the child's personality is stronger than the parent's. These kinds of parenting styles must find some allies, a counselor or a parent support group in order to develop some backbone. Determine what values will govern their family and choose to fight for those values.

"Choosing your battles" is a term often used to refer to times when we choose not to fight over a trivial matter, but it also means that sometimes we *do* choose to fight worthwhile battles to uphold what is important.

Groupie Parents

Problem: These parents fail to recognize that kids need leaders, not servants. They enjoy their precious moments with their children, but they fail to equip them for the future.

Issue: This is often a reaction to a past experience. Due to the absence or neglect of their own parents, they may swing the pendulum to the other extreme, determining to never miss any milestone their child experiences. But by lavishing too much time and attention on a child and never denying the child anything, groupie parents can increase that child's self-image to an unhealthy level.

These parents must work to grasp the reality that loving their children means treating them as people, not idols. It means learning to say no when appropriate and requiring them to serve others...as well as learning to work well even when the focus is not on them.

Commando Parents

Problem: These parents are focused on attaining compliance and perfection instead of growth and improvement. Their children may live in anxiety, frustration, or exhaustion just trying to meet expectations with parenting styles which are nearly militant.

Issue: Commando parents have their own issues. They may feel their own reputations depend on their children's performance. They cannot stand a poor showing on the Little League field or in the classroom because they feel it makes them look bad.

I suggest they watch other families, consider other models, look for opportunities to practice being less rigid, and take baby steps toward flexibility.

They need to see that life is about love and empowerment, not command and control.

High standards are consistent with good parenting styles as long as they fit the young person and are balanced with equal levels of responsiveness to what the young person needs.

About the Author:



^[1] Dr. Tim Elmore is the founder and president of [Growing Leaders](#) ^[2], a non-profit organization created to mentor youth across the globe. With more than 30 years of experience and expertise in generational leadership, he and his team train middle school, high school and college students on thousands of campuses in the U.S. and internationally.

He also holds parenting events across the country sharing insight and practical steps on how to creatively parent the Millennial generation. Tim has written more than 25 books, including the best-selling book series *Habitudes*[®]—a leadership curriculum that has been translated into nine languages, and his latest, [Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future](#) ^[3] which talks about how to help children via better parenting styles.

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