

Empowering the Children: Taking Initiative as To What We Expose Them To

The current day has many children in our society exposed to convenience, violence, and processed foods, and other less than wholesome stimuli. This month, I am asking us to take extra care in being earth angels for the children. Children thrive when their lives are filled with healthy foods, environments, activities and relationships that nourish the body, mind and spirit.

I remember an episode that occurred when I was playing the role of assistant principle in an elementary school a few years ago. A six year old child I will refer to as Adam was sent to my office just after snack time for acting aggressive and disturbing other children. Noticing that the tips of the young lad's ears were a bit pink, his cheeks blushed and his eyes tinged with redness, I knew he was having a mild reaction to something he was exposed to. "Did you just eat something, hon?"

"Fruity bites, Mrs. Stuesser," replied Adam. He pulled the wrapper from his pocket and handed it to me. It read: sugar, red #5, and a list of other ingredients that I could not identify with familiarity, let alone pronounce for that matter. Imagine the physiology of what happens within the human body after we ingest chemical dyes, preservatives, processed sugar (which happens to be full of chemicals and destroys the helpful bacteria in the bowel that is necessary for digestion and immune function) and pesticides (used to fatally shut down the systems of insects).

In order to help Adam diffuse what he was feeling physically and emotionally, I gave him a watering can and asked him to please water the plants in my office, as well as fill the table top fountain. Glancing up as I read his file, I noticed that he had a gentle hand in the fountain. Eyes closed, he became one with the water that was softly trickling over his fingers, calming his nervous system and tender spirit. The notes in Adam's file showed a peculiar but telling pattern. "Behavior issues" had been repeatedly occurring just after snack time; that it, after eating "food" that had been treated with pesticides or colored with artificial dyes (this would be similar to eating a snack sprayed with a bit of insect repellent and paint).

A gentle but informative educational session with both Adam and his parents turned into personal and family empowerment through the simple awareness that our choices (even in eating something that the family thought was appropriate because it said the word "fruit" on the wrapper, can lead to less than helpful consequences. Now Adam knows to ask what is in the food that is offered to him, and helps his parents select foods at the supermarket. He also became the self-appointed "healthy lunch hero" in the cafeteria, building understanding with his teachers and young peers while raising his self esteem in the process.

If there is at least one child in your life, I invite you to be an earth angel by being aware of the food and entertainment that children are exposed to. When we stop to educate children and assist them in identifying their own values, as well as the content of what they put in the bodies or minds, their innate wisdom shines. They know. It is the adults who must take initiative to be aware of what we expose them to -- as we all know that less than helpful patterns and habits are much more difficult to release later in life.

Theresa Ann Stuesser
Madison, Wisconsin, June 2005

For more information on learning what your child might be communicating by his or her actions, ask your inner teacher or soul to guide you. You can also contact me to make an appointment for Life Coaching with an emphasis on working with or raising children (though I must warn you that it is we that are usually the ones being "raised" up by the children) by emailing me at info@theresaann.org. To share ideas or ask questions of Theresa Ann or others in the Mosaic of Self community, visit the Communication Board at <http://www.theresaann.org/messageboard/> and scroll down to find the posting area regarding children. Other appropriate resources may be your holistic health care provider, your spiritual director or your local school's guidance counselor.