

THE SECOND RULE FOR LIFE

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Rule 2 from Bill Gates to teenagers:

'The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself!'

Following the Vietnam War the hippy movement was at its zenith. Free love, peace and 'yo bro' were shouted out and put into practice. Dr. Spock had previously introduced very liberal parenting and schools adopted airy-fairy subjects and feel-good philosophies.

We are reaping the negative results of all this today. Self-esteem became everything and people became so 'precious' making our country the most highly-offendable nation on earth. Suing became rampant and being 'politically correct', so as not to make anybody feel uncomfortable, has made us afraid to speak out what we believe is the truth. After all, we might be called 'hateful' if we don't agree with the crowd or a particular faction in our society.

It is important for our kids to feel good about themselves, but not for mediocre effort, and we do this. Sally belongs to a national organization that has a major competition every year. Hundreds of people pit their talent against one another. Instead of a first, second and third placement in each category they find a way of giving a trophy to just about everyone who participates. The awards ceremony takes around six hours! It is ridiculous and, despite Sally's protests at this indulgent behavior, they continue to do it.

Why is this so silly? You may not feel it is silly, but that's because you were raised in this indulgent culture. It makes everybody feel as if they have done a good enough job. Believe me. I have sat through several of these competitions and there is no way many of these people should be rewarded for their performance. I believe it is often the same with sports' team prize giving events.

In our schools it is the same. A's and B's are handed out liberally like Prozac. Kids get to believe that their performance is good enough, when it's not. At home we often praise kids for performance of chores or behavior when it is based on low expectations. Parents and teachers are not doing our kids a favor by letting them feel good about their accomplishments if the standard is below par. The real world expects far more.

Employers are finding that young employees are ill equipped for the working world in that they expect high remuneration for little effort, are often unreliable, move on if the boss expects 'too much' and they are often disrespectful. Parents, it is our job to shape our children to meet the expectations

required in adult life and in employment. The schools are there to reinforce what we, as parents teach our children, not to do the job for us.

We need to hold back on praising our kids. I am a huge believer in praise, so I am not void of feelings. It is better to regularly encourage our kids and be honest with them. If what we asked them to do is not of a high standard yet, tell them you are pleased with their effort so far, but this or that still needs to happen. When they do achieve that higher standard then lay on the praise. If you praise before it is due, a ceiling has been set and a child will feel that no more effort than that is required.

When our children behave in a Christ-like way and when they conform to your boundaries and standards praise them. Children feel great when they are pleasing you. Set them tasks that, when finished, is an accomplishment born out of hard work, great attitude and tenacity. Here you are developing a positive work ethic that also has to be seen in your performance. You are fitting them for the real world. I thank my parents that this is exactly what they did for me, and it has had its major payoffs. Hard work and accomplishments make us feel good. We will never find our purpose or reach our potential through mediocre performance and hapless 'feel good philosophies'.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.