



# The Catalyst™

**Catalyst** - noun - pronounced (kat-l-ist):  
A person or thing that precipitates an event or change.

**David's Monthly Inspirational Newsletter**

**August 2007**

**You CAN Make A Difference™**

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## **"...you just wait until you have kids!" - Part 1**

Please forgive me for being so tardy on this month's issue. My goodness it's almost September! I will make no excuses. I merely ask that you accept my sincere apology, and I also make a commitment to you to do a better job managing my time. I think you will find this issue compelling. It is also in two parts as I had a hard time keeping it short and sweet. It could actually be a great book.

The title/phrase of this month's message is a statement I often hear from parents who refuse to acknowledge that parents are the number one most important stimulus in their child's adolescent development (birth - 5 years old). The majority of these parents insist that: "kids today are different from kids of the past." All of these parents typically make excuses for the poor behavior and performance of their own kids, and the youth of today, citing: peer pressure, drugs & alcohol, MTV, and the internet as culprits in the ruination of kids today - not poor parenting.

A good friend of mine, Dr. Ryan Hayes, a.k.a. The Marlboro Man, recently directed me to the following article entitled: *A Leadership Primer from General (Ret.) Colin Powell, Secretary of State written by Oren Harari.*

### **Lesson 1 - Being responsible sometimes means pissing people off.**

*"Good leadership involves responsibility to the welfare of the group, which means that some people will get angry at your actions and decisions. It's inevitable if you're honorable. Trying to get everyone to like you is a sign of mediocrity: You'll avoid the tough decisions, you'll avoid confronting the people who need to be confronted, and you'll avoid offering differential rewards based on differential performance because some people might get upset. Ironically, by procrastinating on the difficult choices, by trying not to get anyone mad, and by treating everyone equally "nicely" regardless of their contributions, you'll simply ensure that the only people you'll wind up angering are the most creative and productive people in the organization."*

As some of you know I am often accused of being "confrontational" and/or "argumentative." I will concede the possibility of being both; however, do these qualities innately have negative connotations? I do not shrink from information that will help me grow or from pursuing the truth - in telling it or hearing it. I think not to do so is a sign of weak character. Therefore, it is my position (with the desire to broach solutions, and not to attack parents) that I make the following statement: the solution to most of the problems in contemporary society will only be resolved by the complete acceptance of responsibility by individuals in that society, and parents are the foundation for the construction of our children and our future.

I am acutely aware that until I actually have children of my own that there will be certain feelings, emotions, and/or circumstances that happen to parents that do not happen to me or non-parents. I realize that I will not be able to completely empathize with parents in that regard. Concurrently, that does not mean that I do not understand how to raise a child. It also does not mean that I do not understand the complexities and situations concerning the development of a fully functioning human being, and making informed educated decisions to that end.

I write about things that I have been through before, and guess what...I have first hand experience being a child, and in all modesty, I turned out to be a pretty good person. My parents did something right; ergo, I concede that some of the things that worked for my parents raising me a few decades ago will work for parents raising children today. Is that a stretch? I was probably just as wild as the kids today running through the store, but my Momma would never allow me to disrupt other people, or embarrass our family name. My Momma taught me "home-training." This point is the core of my position in this debate, as the parents I have talked to seem to feel that children today are somehow "different" from children of generations past.

**Parental Point:** *"Kids today are different from kids of previous generations."*

**My Counter-Point:** *Kids are the same. Parents and parenting is different. There are no bad kids, just bad parents.*

Babies born today are no different from babies born 50 years ago or 1000 years ago - they are geniuses! Human beings are born that way. We have no fear and possess unlimited curiosity and creativity. At birth we are pure potential - nothing is set! As human beings we are not born with limitations or beliefs about ourselves. Each of these qualities we learn from our environment - from our parents; therefore what we become as adolescents is a direct reflection of the stimulus we receive in our developmental stages which should be controlled by our parents. Children today want the same things we wanted when we were children: love, appreciation, attention, and acceptance. These emotional factors are the undisputed major motivators for human reciprocity. Obviously there are several major environmental factors that affect the development of children in the 21st century, but the problems do not emanate from children. There are 3 major factors that influence human behavior in the Information Age:

### **1. Excuse-itis**

Excuse-itis is the inflammation of the excuse gland, and a large portion of American society suffers from it. Not only have I seen parents accept excuses for the poor behavior of their children, in a lot of cases today, parents actually make excuses for their children. I believe this to be extremely irresponsible, and the biggest challenge our society faces. This reality only exacerbates the problems we experience in our society. We have all seen kids running through our local store on a rampage while their parents shop, having no regard for the behavior of their kids. Is that poor behavior the kids fault or the parents? I say that is poor parenting.

### **2. Information flows much faster in the Information Age than in generations past.**

All of the perils of raising a child today existed generations ago: drugs, sex, violence, rock & roll, peer pressure, disease, etc...these are not new phenomenon. The difference today is that children are exposed to this stimuli at a much earlier age than generations past. The speed at which our children are exposed to this deluge of information forces parents to address issues like violence, drugs, sex, and the like far sooner than they desire. It's much more complicated to protect a child's modesty and innocence today because we live in the Information Age. Marketers have better vehicles to expose their products and messages to the masses, meaning, successful parenting today may be more time consuming than ever before because parents have to be more vigilant of the information that comes into their homes, and in contact with their child. That process takes time, and time is one of the two things most people complain about not having enough of - the other is money!

There is not enough time to do everything, but there is enough time to do what is important, and I believe that we will make time for what we deem to be important. The reality is there is no more time today than there was a generation ago, but individual/parent priorities and what they value has changed. Most people value jobs, money, and their lifestyles more than they value their relationships with their kids, family, and support groups...and that my friends is the rub! That is the truth most people don't want to hear! See...I am not like most people. My relationship with God, my emotional and physical health, my relationship with my spouse and family come way before any job. My former employers and co-workers will attest to that.

Today parents put their jobs at the top of the list of priorities, and literally neglect what's most important: their spirituality, their health, and their children, but it's not the kids who are different, and it is not their fault that they don't get the right home-training in the early stages of life. It is up to the adults to make the commitment to do what works, not just to do "their best".

### **3. The mores of our society have changed for the worse, and they are much less conservative.**

Our expectation for what is acceptable has dramatically fallen. Individualism and desire for self gratification has led to one of the most selfish indulgent eras in human history. Power hungry robber barons and self serving aristocrats have always existed, but the bourgeois and proletariat (the middle class and common man) were always engaged in the betterment of society, and they fought for a better way of life. We are the fruit of their labor. Today the contemporary descendants of those social classes (which make up 80+ % of this pseudo democratic country) sits around waiting for "someone else" to make things better. Money, violence, drugs, sex, and indulgence reign supreme today. The statement "If someone doesn't want to watch they can turn the channel" is a cowardly excuse for being a person of low moral fiber. Yes, we have the freedom of expression and of speech, but we cannot use it to shout fire in a crowded theater - why? Doing so might cause harm to others and adversely affect another person's ability to pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have a civic duty to be responsible with our rights, unfortunately our society is so self-centered, we make excuses instead of making a difference.

Now that I have successfully depressed you, you are probably thinking: "Ok...Mr. Know-it-all?...what can we do about it?" That's why this is a multi-part issue. I'd like to get your feedback. Email me with your comments and let me know your thoughts. I will incorporate them into the next issue.

Remember...You **CAN** Make A Difference!<sup>TM</sup>

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