

MATTMCWILLIAMS

Live with Passion. Lead with Purpose. Leave a Legacy.

Should You Indoctrinate Your Children?

Defining a Parent's Role in Instilling Values

Someone recently asked me an interesting question. "Aren't you afraid that you're indoctrinating your daughter?" I answered the question with a question of my own: If you don't indoctrinate your children, who will?

NOTE: By the time you read this, my wife and I will most likely have welcomed our second child into the world, so naturally the topic of parenting is forefront on my heart and mind right now. That said, much of this post applies to anyone that you may lead.

Why I am Not Afraid of Indoctrinating Children (The Right Way)

I am not afraid at all of indoctrinating our daughter (or our future children).

The reality of the world is that someone is going to do it. Whether it's the media, the latest pop artist, advertisers, or their friends at school, everyone else is attempting to influence her, so it's my job to do it the *right* way.

Sex Sells

The media is going to indoctrinate your kids into thinking that girls should act like sex objects. That's how much of the world is going to tell our daughter how to act. And it's going to indoctrinate boys into finding it attractive.

So by all means, indoctrinate them to think otherwise.

That is, unless you *want* a pregnant 16-year old with her third STD. In that case, go right ahead and let the television and her friends indoctrinate her.

Big Food

Big food corporations are going to try to indoctrinate your kids (and you) into craving foods that kill you. Even worse, they will make you *think* they are healthy.

The reality is that these companies and the marketing agencies they hire are *really* good at what they do. They are clever at getting you to want to try something and then when you do, they make them highly addictive.

They will trick you. They will play on your emotions. They will lie to you. And you can bet that they will shine a spotlight on their good side (look, our marshmallow sugar puffs are made with WHOLE GRAIN...hooray, healthier diabetes!).

In the end, they will indoctrinate you and your kids into becoming dependent on them for sustenance and happiness. Comfort foods, just add water, microwavable, dinner-in-a-box...it's all so yummy and easy. And then they own you.

So by all means, indoctrinate them to think differently. To not fall prey to clever marketing and schemes. To eat real foods and *stigmatize* the garbage. To make their own healthy choices.

NOTE: The idea of stigmatizing bad foods comes from Tom Rath's book, [*Eat. Move. Sleep.*](#) I highly recommend it.

Do What You Want, Forget the Consequences

Advertisers and banks will try to indoctrinate your kids (and you again) into thinking you should have what you want, when you want it, regardless of your ability to pay for it. That makes me think our government must be listening to these advertisers.

Advertisers and banks don't care about the bad stress that massive debt causes on families. They don't care if it tears them apart or if it leads to suicide, as it often does. They don't care that it leaves children fatherless or motherless. But they sure do care about how your friends are going to notice you in that new car. Oh, how they will envy you.

(If you think suicide isn't common as a result of debt, watch the movie [*Maxed Out.*](#))

From an early age, they will tell you that you can have anything you like. Just use this little card. It's like magic. It makes all your dreams come true.

Others will tell your kids to be irresponsible with money. They will tell them to live in bondage. They will tell them to spend their lives trying to *appear* to keep up with the Joneses, even if it means they are forced to work until they are 80.

So by all means, indoctrinate your children as we have ours.

Dave Ramsey Would be Proud

Recently, Tara and I bought something that didn't work. Tara said that we would have to return it and get a credit.

Aracelli started crying and saying, "No! Credit is bad!" Dave Ramsey would have been proud.

Do I question the financial choices of others? No, that is not my place. But, for our daughter, we've taught her something that will save her from potentially disastrous financial decisions down the road.

The Loudest Voices

Yes, we have indoctrinated her into thinking a certain way about money, food, her body, and so much more. We are only two people against the tens of millions of other voices she will hear, but thankfully we are the two most influential voices she will hear.

Am I afraid that we will indoctrinate her? Absolutely not. Because it's either going to be us or someone else.

You have to *choose* who will indoctrinate your kids.

You or the celebrity who just got out of his third stint in rehab.

You or the company that gets rich off nation-riddling obesity.

You or the advertiser whose sole responsibility is to his client, not your children.

You or the athlete who was suspended for steroids.

You...or everyone else.

By all means, indoctrinate your kids. If you don't, who will?

In what ways have you found yourself indoctrinated by advertising, the media, or others? Positively or negatively.