

Parenting with Love and Leadership

A Seminar by John Rosemond, M.S., Licensed Family Psychologist

Children need the significant adults in their lives—parents, teachers, caregivers—to provide them with the two “L-words” of Love and Leadership. In the case of Love, it must be unconditional. In the case of Leadership, it must be unequivocal. The effective transmission of these qualities form the foundation of a child’s sense of well-being and promote the greatest degree of social and emotional health as well as optimal levels of achievement.

Many of today’s parents, as well-meaning as they might be, tend to weaken Love by engaging in significant enabling behaviors (solving problems for children that they are able to solve for themselves), and tend to weaken Leadership by striving, first and foremost, for relationship with their children. Unlike pre-1960s parents (generally speaking) they want their children to like them. What begins as well-intentioned attempts to help children experience success in life—e.g., helping with homework, arranging play dates, enrolling children in organized sports—often leads to ever-increasing degrees of parental micromanagement. In the contemporary “family-friendly” dental practice, this micromanagement and its effects are often all-too evident.

Post-1960s parenting has been driven, largely, by professional advice—advice based on psychological theories that have been disproven. For example, the best research indicates that high self-esteem is highly associated with anti-social behavior, poor coping skills, and underachievement. It appears that the classical ideal of humility and modesty is still the most personally and interpersonally functional. The failure of high self-esteem and other “progressive” parenting theories has contributed to a significant lowering of child mental health, as well as a significant increase in parenting stress. By all accounts, today’s children, when compared with children in the 1950s and 1960s, are five to ten times more likely to experience a significant emotional setback by age 16.

In this often humorous yet provocative and thought-provoking seminar, family psychologist John Rosemond describes the contemporary parenting conundrum in clear, compelling terms and then describes a practical, tested solution. He teaches how to motivate maximum child compliance, no matter the setting, by using “leadership speech.”