



School Daze

Life Skills

It's September already. Kids are returning to school. The good news is most are returning to in-person learning, with remote learning as a backup. Many will be wearing masks as the school year begins. Some can get the vaccine, some cannot, and some will not. I am not here to comment on the choices being made by school districts or parents.

Today, I want to talk about what exactly we are teaching our children in school and at home.

I have some concerns.

I have some questions.

I also have some suggestions.

Dare I begin?

There are certain life skills that will serve every child throughout their life.

Are we teaching the life skills that will allow our children to become Leaders, Problem Solvers, and Productive members of society?

How will we teach and encourage them to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem?

- When did we stop teaching Civics?
- Why did we stop teaching Cursive?
- When did math become suggestive, approximate, estimating, and so complicated?
- Why are we falling behind in Science, when those in India and China are excelling?
- Why are schools eliminating programs for the best and brightest?
- Why does it seem that standards are being lowered instead of bringing those falling behind up to the standard?
- Whatever happened to the pursuit of excellence?
- Who decided that grades don't matter?
- How did the pursuit of diversity become so divisive?

All the arguing and dividing into us vs. them on masks, remote learning, vaccines, and curriculum is not serving the children. We must find the common ground that connects us.

What is it we want for our children?

We want them to have opportunity. We want them to grow up knowing that they can be and do whatever they choose, but it will not be handed to them on a silver platter. We want them to grow up to be self-sufficient, confident, happy, and fulfilled in their life and their work.

So what should we be learning?

Practical math that we can apply to everyday life: Recently I interviewed Linda Springer on my TV show on Financial Literacy for Kids. She brought up the shocking point that many children do not know the difference between a deposit or withdrawal, they have no idea where money comes from, and they have no idea how much things cost.

Civics: We are not a Democracy. We are a Representative Republic. Understanding the difference and why the United States was set up to give power to the States that is not specified in the Constitution. Understanding why we have 3 branches of government and what their roles are is essential to being a good citizen able to vote for our representatives, senators, presidents, as well as state and local governments.

Science: Have we become lazy? It is so easy to look things up on the internet when we have a question. But...that can only tell you what was or what is. The internet cannot tell you what could be. That requires curiosity, imagination, and problem-solving skills. We need to encourage our kids to become problem solvers instead of complainers. Science is the gateway to unlocking the possibility of what could be. Our children have such a pure way of looking at the world unencumbered by all the garbage we carry around as adults. They can often see the simplest solution to a problem leaving us saying 'Why didn't I think of that?'. Encourage them to be part of the solution instead of the problem. Check out: www.TheScienceLabs.com

Cursive: Please bring back the ability to sign your name with a flourish like John Hancock. If children are not being taught cursive, how will they be able to read our founding documents enshrined in the National Archive? How will they be able to read the family history recorded at Ellis Island or found on Ancestry? There is something special in receiving a handwritten thank you note, love letter or birthday card in the mail. Writing is becoming a lost art. What if one day there was no internet? No texting? No Cellphone? How would you communicate with those important to you?

Leadership: Are we teaching our children to be leaders? There are huge differences between being a boss and being a leader. What skills would they need? They need the ability to think logically and set goals for themselves and others. They should be willing to do it all but able to allow others on their team to do it. Leaders take 100% responsibility when things go wrong and give credit to the team or team member that did the work.

Kindness: Are we teaching our children to be kind to themselves and others? Are we teaching our children to like themselves and accept others for who they are? Bullying continues to be a huge problem in schools. Gossip and Social Media have made it worse than ever before. Are we eliminating Hate and teaching Love instead? Every child is unique and has special gifts. Are we aiding them in unwrapping those gifts, encouraging them, and allowing them to soar?

Work: Are we teaching our children the value and rewards of work? It starts with a focus on their schoolwork, to doing their best, seeking help when they are stuck, and seeing how everything they learn has a practical application. I have always said that every child struggling to learn the Gas Laws in high school should be taught to Scuba Dive. The understanding of this is essential to prevent the Bends, an embolism, and oxygen toxicity. Your life depends on understanding these laws when you are diving.

Life Skills: Are we teaching our children basics in taking care of themselves? How to sew a button on. How to do laundry. How to cook for themselves. The importance of Hygiene and keeping their personal space neat and tidy. Do they know how to change a tire or when to change the oil? I say we need to bring back Home Economics and Shop Class for everyone. Another life skill class that

everyone needs today is keyboarding. When I was in school it was typing. My mom insisted that I take typing in High School. Learning to touch type has served me every day in my working career.

Responsibility: Are we teaching our children personal responsibility? They are responsible for the decisions and actions they take. Choose wisely. There are rewards and consequences for their choices. Accepting responsibility for the actions and choices they make will serve them throughout their lives.

Self Confidence: Teach your child to take pride in whatever they are doing. At the same time help them understand that perfection is unattainable. You can always do it better the next time. Do your best, and your best varies from day to day. The most important thing is to always be learning from both your successes and your failures. Thomas Edison failed nearly 1,000 times before he had success in inventing the lightbulb. He recorded each failure as a stepping-stone to finally succeeding.

Diversity: Celebrate our differences. Seek to understand that we each have unique experiences. No one group needs to be torn down. Everyone benefits when we lift everyone up. Add to our history with the rich diversity of people who have made contributions to make this the amazing country that it is. Acknowledge our mistakes and learn from them. Understand that we are constantly striving to do our best and be our best. Listen to one another. Laugh at ourselves more. Release the anger, hostility and hate that only serves to divide us. Find the common ground that unites us and build on its strong foundation.

Gratitude: Are we teaching our kids to be grateful? Do they see the good around them? Are they grateful for even the smallest things in their life? Teach them to shout positive affirmations that express gratitude, happiness, and love. Start with I am grateful for.... I am Happy that... I love...

Celebration: Be a cheerleader for your child. Celebrate their achievements. Give them credit for trying if they fail. Remind them that they can do better the next time. Help them develop their skills. Guide them to unwrap their special talents. Give them the space to fly or fall and be there no matter what the result. Every child has dreams. Have your child share theirs with you. Help and encourage them to turn their dreams into reality with goals, action, and results. Be the wind beneath their wings.

This is just some food for thought for the beginning of the school year.

There is also value for wherever you are in your life journey...

Think about it.

I believe that children are the future, teach them well and they will lead the way...



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