

Spanking as a form of discipline had its merit

Written by admin

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by Robert Randle



There is an old African proverb which goes something like this: ***"It takes a village to raise a child"*** and it is so true. One of the things that probably contributes the most to juvenile delinquency is a lack of discipline; starting in the home. This is the environment where a child is first introduced to the values and conduct which will make him a productive and law-abiding member of society. If a child was seen doing anything wrong 'back in the day' then any adult, especially a neighbor or friend of the family would grab their belt and call the child over to them and give them a whipping [spanking]. Not only that, but word would get back to the parents who would beat the child; and maybe the aunt, uncle, or even the grandparents, might choose to administer their dose of discipline, too.

There was no such thing as the child cussing out anyone, threatening them or even fighting back because nearly everyone [in the Black community, especially] has heard, ***"I brought you into this world and I can take you out of it, as well."***

And just about every boy has feared his dad growing up, who was usually meaner-looking and a lot bigger and someone that you didn't want to get on his bad side. The one cardinal family or house rule that was almost sacred was

"respect for your elders"

or any adult person; regardless as to whether you knew or even liked them or not.

This attitude was especially important in the schools when it came to interaction with teachers. Just like Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, discipline in the form of swatting an unruly student's butt was school policy, and the long walk down the hall to the principal's office was a much dreaded affair and effective deterrent in most cases. This method of enforcement seemed to keep at a minimum schoolyard violence, expulsions and delinquency. Then one day a few

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Social Scientists and Mental Health Professionals in addition to a growing number of White parents began to allege that this treatment traumatizes the students [their children] and it was deemed as "abusive." Since it later became "Law" that a teacher could no longer discipline a child in this manner, afterwards, this law was extended to include the home, also.

Now with all the legal protections in place a child could virtually do what he or she wanted with impunity because after-all, no one could lay a hand on them; at least, no one except the police. So, what is the legacy today from people like Dr. Benjamin Spock and other proponents of letting the child sit on "time out" or take away some of their privileges [like watching television and other favorites] or, if they want something then just let them have it? Well, there are more school dropouts and students failing to graduate, increases in teenage alcohol and drug use, pregnancy, gang affiliation and criminality leading to incarceration in jail or prison.

Obviously, there are other socio-economic factors at work here and the blame cannot be placed entirely upon the shoulders of a few medical experts, lawmakers, and parents [many of them single-parents] and it just may be too late to reverse course because the genie is already out of the bottle. It does make one wonder, however, if there wasn't something right and good about ***"spare the rod and spoil the child?"***

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