

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

How to Give Your Kids an Unfair Advantage-Part I

Susie came from Asia as an adopted child. She joined a family with solid values, relating to achievement and personal responsibility. In a few short years, she had moved to the head of her class.

Her classmates at school periodically asked her about why she got high grades. They thought it was because Asians usually excel at academics. Her answer was that she always did her homework before she went out to play.

Susie became the valedictorian and gave the address at the graduation ceremony. This caught the attention of many parents of the other children. "Why is this?" they asked.

One couple actually called Susie's parents to try to discover the answer. Susie's father mentioned that they shared the values of hard work, struggle, and personal responsibility. He said Susie was expected to be responsible and when she was not, natural consequences were applied. He also mentioned that their expectations were that Susie would do her chores, be respectful of her parents and apply herself to her schoolwork.

"Susie knows where we stand," said Dad. "She knows that in America she has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; not the right to

life, liberty, and someone else to provide happiness for her. Susie is busy pursuing her own happiness through achievement and personal responsibility."

"Wait a minute!" replied the other parents. "Doesn't that give her an unfair advantage over the other children? Come on, Mr. Tyler. This is America. Whatever became of equal opportunity?"

"I guess if you look at it that way, there may never be equal opportunity. As long as some people work harder than others and place a high value upon achievement through struggle, they will always have an advantage over the others. I guess that's the America I know."

America's founding fathers dedicated our nation to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Americans knew they had a chance for success through struggle, and as a result, struggle made America great. Over the years, we have gradually moved toward an attitude of protecting our children from struggle. Many parents have said, "I don't want my children to struggle like I did. I want them to have a better life and all the things I never had."

The results of this are being seen in our public schools, as fewer and fewer

children appear to be willing to accept struggle as a necessary part of learning. Teachers are working harder and harder to find new ways to motivate students, who often believe the teachers are being mean by asking them to struggle.

The schools are being criticized because children are not achieving as well as in the past. However, changing the schools will not solve this problem. America will be plagued with underachieving students until our entire society changes its message about the value of struggle. That's the bad news.

The good news is that your child can stand out and have a real advantage over others, by learning to struggle and to be responsible early in life. When teachers challenge kids who have struggled, those kids think, "No big deal. I'm not afraid to struggle. In the end, I'll be successful."

In Part II, we'll explore some very specific techniques which, when put into practice, can give your child the advantage. These tried and true approaches will help you stay out of power struggles with your children and, at the same time, convince them that their success depends upon the quality of the decisions they make.

Expect your child to be responsible, and when they're not, apply natural and logical consequences