

## What Our Kids Need To Survive

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Our kids aren't learning the lessons they need and the lessons we want them to know. Here's how to correct that. Find the home site of author Bill Allin at <http://billallin.com>

Cleanliness and order are not matters of instinct; they are matters of education, and like most great things, you must cultivate a taste for them.

- Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister (1804-81)

We humans are naturally inclined to gather into clusters of individual living spaces, whether hamlets or cities, when doing so means we can produce more food than we need to survive. But we aren't naturally inclined toward any particular form of order (government) or forms of cleanliness, other than we don't usually foul our own nests.

Order and cleanliness must be taught if they are to be followed. If they are to be followed by everyone, they must be taught to everyone. That means to every child.

That's where modern societies fall down, badly, tragically. So long as most people get the main parts of the society's messages as they grow up, everyone assumes that every child gets the messages.

And they assume that every child gets the same messages in the same manner and with the same effectiveness.

These assumptions are all wrong. Every one.

When members of our communities mess up, such as by breaking laws, having unwanted children they can't or won't support or breaking down emotionally due to excessive stress our only solutions are to punish them or fill them with drugs.

This lesson is not hard, but we aren't learning it. We're screwing up and paying more each year to make up for the messes we're making. Anything we want everyone to know and to follow must be taught to every child or adolescent.

That's it! We can't depend on every set of parents to teach their children the same lessons because they don't know the lessons themselves. If you doubt that, check out how many adolescents are in prison, are homeless or are in gangs because they can't make it on their own.

I am not aware of any government that does not pass laws. I am as well not aware of any government that has a systematic method for ensuring that laws that it passes are taught to the members of the public to which they apply. That doesn't make sense.

I am aware that in many jurisdictions of the world, ignorance of the law is not accepted as an excuse for breaking it.

In the western world, cleanliness is taught. Some would say to a fanatic extent, given the obsession we have for buying cleaning products that are far more powerful than necessary and that harm the environment when they leave our homes. But disease born from unclean and unhealthy environments is in decline. No so in all parts of the world, as we know from the spread of bird flu.

Since we leave the teaching of cleanliness mostly to corporations these days, of course they teach us to use their products. Only later do we learn (the hard way) that their products have done considerable harm to the environment (air, water, land). By then they have moved on to entice us with products that are "cleaner" and "greener."

Our governments and our education systems take no responsibility for teaching either laws or cleanliness beyond what is minimally necessary to get them through the day. They leave that to our media, which means to our corporations.

We have only one way to ensure that every child learns the same lessons that we expect them to follow as adults.

That way is to put what we want them to learn on school curriculum.

In the United States today, over ten percent of adults are either in prison or have criminal records. That's the highest in the world, per capita. But even other countries such as Canada, the UK and Germany aren't far behind.

We also need to teach our children one other kind of lesson. We need to teach them how to cope when their lives get messed up and they might turn to breaking the law, to drugs, to suicide, to abuse or to obsessions such as overwork. They need to know what to do when they realize they have a problem that causes them to get involved with some form of anti-social behaviour.

Let's begin with you. Have you taught your children all the laws they need to follow? Have you taught them how their lives (and probably yours) will be destroyed if they turn to counterproductive measures such as drugs, alcohol or overwork?

Have you taught them what to do with packaging when they have consumed its contents on the street? Judging by the streets of most cities, not every parent has taught that lesson.

The only way to ensure that family-friendly and community-friendly practices are followed is to teach them to every child. Every child.

Will schools have time, given how busy their teaching schedules are already? Yes. They will get the time they gain when they don't have to deal with misbehaviour and lack of attention because their kids want to be taught what they really need but aren't getting.

Oh, yes, kids know that they need to know lots of things to function properly and in a healthy manner as adults. They aren't sure what those things are. They know naturally that they need to be able to cope in the society they will enter as independent adults soon. They don't know how to do that.

Most know that they aren't getting all of what they need. It upsets them terribly, though they tend to demonstrate their frustration in different ways than adults do. Kids misbehave when they aren't getting what they need in life. When they misbehave, we call them brats. They don't know what else to do to get our attention. We punish them.

Don't wonder what's the matter with kids these days. Wonder instead how so many manage to join the mainstream as adults when finding out what they need to know is so hard for them as children and adolescents.

Do you know what laws your national government passed in the last year, laws you will have to obey or find yourself in court? Kids won't either. And they have no way to find out if we don't provide ways for them to learn.

Do you know where to turn when life gets too much for you? Suicide? Drugs? Abuse? That may not be you, but it's what a shocking percentage of people do.

Being the clever and resourceful person you are, you likely can answer these questions positively. Not many can.

Talk about it.

Bill Allin

***Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teaches who want to equip their children with what they need to know to survive and thrive as adults, instead of struggling along on what they learn in school now.***

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