

# NEW HORIZONS

**Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing**

**(Albert Schweitzer).**

'It's a rat race'. Higher and higher grades secure entrance to the IITs or foreign universities-we egg our children on...these are the yardsticks of success. Parents, teachers, students all seem enmeshed in these strivings. These laurels must be achieved at all costs.

Not to belittle academic excellence. But when the laurels become the end overshadowing the learning and even the learner, something is amiss.

True, we churn out proficient beings equipped with mathematical, scientific and linguistic skills. But we seem to have forgotten the human being within. In the long years of schooling have we instilled a sense of values: to love beauty, knowledge and creativity, to discern between right and wrong and a heart to feel compassion for others?

During the early 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C, a Persian boy's basic education was by tradition, learning to ride a horse, to draw a bow and to speak the truth.

The real horror I think, is our insensitivity. As we skim through the newspapers, we hardly notice them. These headlines scream out that our society is ailing.

## **What can we do?**

I don't think values can be really 'taught'. They must be imbibed as a totality in all aspects of life-with no boundaries between home and school.

- ❖ **Role Models:** This is perhaps the most difficult. Every time you point an accusing finger at you child, watch out for your own three fingers pointing back at you. Children have their antennas up-for any slips you make. Conversely, you can also be a most effective living lesson.
- ❖ **Self-esteem and confidence:** Varun would quickly stuff his Hindi answer sheet into his bag and lie about having received it. He was ashamed to accept the low marks he scored in the subject.

But in the next examination when he was among the class toppers but Hindi marks were still considerably poor, he didn't have to hide. He was good at something else-that gave him the confidence to face his failure.

It is a fear of rejection or ridicule which often prompts us to lie and cheat.

## ➤ **The inner guide**

Neither parents nor teachers can really 'police' children. A continually monitoring is probably an indication of our failure. Values must be internalized and so check our action, and cause feelings of remorse. Religious or moral instructions do help in achieving this end.

### ➤ **Loving relationship**

A loving, warm atmosphere at home and school would promote the growth and development of young people. Feeling 'cared for', being trusted and loved for what we are nurtures people, building their self-esteem and their capacity to love others.

"My son can never lie to me", said a mother, "we love each other far too much". These are the bonds we should strive to build. Respect born of love rather than fear goes a longer way.

### **When Things Go Wrong**

Despite our best efforts, we mustn't forget-things will still go wrong some-times.

When our children lie or cheat, do we see it as a reflection of our own failures as parents and teachers? Venting our frustration in anger only has a negative chain effect.

Often, when things go wrong, our children are hurting inside. They usually put up a defiant front, but are desperately looking to us for support and love. Teach them to face up to the consequences, of their actions, but also provide them a broad shoulder to cry. Hate their deeds-not them.