



Valley Center Counseling, Inc.

Life Transitions Newsletter: April 2009



Dear Clients,

Thank goodness spring has arrived! With that, the feature article takes a fresh look at teenage morality. Let me know what

you think. Don't forget the "Just for Laughs" section – during these challenging times a good laugh is just what the doctor ordered. Also, the author of "Pure Womanhood" will be presenting soon – for more information go to the announcement section.

Happy Easter/Spring!

*Penny Blazej, LCSW, BCD
President of Valley Center Counseling*

Are the Morals of our Teens and Young Adults Declining?

The last twenty years has shown declining rates of crime, divorce, drug abuse, traffic accidents, smoking, abortion and even environmental pollution.

So why is the media so focused on getting people to believe that we are facing a teen sex crisis? There are many who do not believe what the media is trying to sell the American public. According to Parker-Pope who wrote *The Myth of Rampant*

Teenage Promiscuity, "While some young people are clearly engaging in risky sexual behavior, a vast majority are not. The reality is that, in many ways, today's teenagers are more conservative about sex than previous generations."

She cites three statistics that directly counter the Media's hype that our teens are in a moral crisis:

1. The National Youth Risk Behavior Survey recently showed that the majority of all high school students, both male and female, remained virgins. In 2007, only 47.8% had ever had sex – a sharp drop from 54.1% in 1991.
2. Meanwhile, a 2002 report from the Department of Health and Human Services also showed that teenagers seemed more determined to postpone their first sexual encounters. Only 30% of 15-to-17 year old girls had experienced sex—dramatically down from 38% in 1995. In the same period (just seven years, remember), the percentage of sexually experienced boys in that age group declined from 43% to 31%.
3. Younger teenagers also showed significant decreases in sexual experimentation. In 1995, an alarming 20% said they had had sex before age fifteen, but by 2002 the numbers decreased to just 13% of girls (and 15% of boys). Professor Kathleen A. Bogle agrees with Parker-Pope stating that the general belief that things are getting worse, that kids are having sex younger and that it is much wilder than ever before is not supported by the data. Professor Maria Kefalas also agrees stating that the virginity rate in college is higher than people think and the number of partners is lower.

So what is this whole hooking up culture that the media focuses on to support the moral decline of teenagers? Hooking up more often than not does not mean intercourse. It can mean anything from hanging out to kissing to oral sex to intercourse.

How about the reported increase in teen pregnancy? In fact only 16 states have seen an increase in teenage birth rate from previous years.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report an overall USA increase in teenage birth rate of only 3%. This was the first increase they reported in 15 years – before they reported 15 consecutive years of decline in the rate of teenage births— 33% decrease over the 15 years!

One question that I have is this overall decrease in teenage birth rate accompanied by increased rates of abortions? For this last year the answer is no. A decrease in abortions has been reported, which might account for the slight increase in teenage births. It seems to me that this might indicate a rise in teenage morality with teenage mother's treasuring life and choosing not to have an abortion.

So what does this all mean to the parents of teenagers? Valid reports show that the morality of our teens may be higher than when we were teens! But that does not negate the need for proactive frequent sex conversations starting at age 10 and continuing through high school. As many of you know the vast majority of all studies show that sex education by parents prevents early sexual behavior. I guess that means that even when we think they are not listening they are – keep up the communication!

Resources

I just recently joined Facebook just to get an idea of how this internet communication site works. I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to use, the on-going communication allowed me to keep up with loved ones and it is a great way to share photos! Just remember, that what is written on any one of these “social” website can become public information accessible, for example, to future employers, litigants, predators.... So keep the topics simple and positive without revealing too much personal information. I can recommend Facebook as an easy way to keep in touch with your loved ones.

Book Reviews

“*Heaven Is Real*”, By Don Piper. His follow-on book was informative however I thought that it repeated concepts often, mirrored “*90 Minutes in Heaven*” too closely and frankly was not written very well. Hence, I would not recommend reading this book. You get the vast majority of information from his first book.

Wise Words

“Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain.”

Author Unknown

“A wise man on how women dress: If you bring groceries home and take them out of the bag people passing will just glance at them. However, if you leave them in the bag, they will stop and take great interest.”

Friend's Grandfather

Announcements

Crystalina Evert, author of “*Pure Womanhood*” will be giving a presentation at the Magnificat gathering on Saturday, April 18th 9:00 a.m. at the Escondido Center of the Arts. To get tickets call **Mary at 760-489-5588**. \$21.00 before 4/11 and \$24.00 after – the price includes a great breakfast.

Just for Laughs

This may be the best Living Will I've Seen



I, _____, being of sound mind and body, do not wish to be kept alive indefinitely by artificial means.

Under no circumstances should my fate be put in the hands of pinhead politicians who couldn't pass ninth grade biology

if their lives depended on it, or lawyers/doctors interested in simply running up the bills.

If a reasonable amount of time passes and I fail to ask for at least one of the following:

Glass of wine, Chocolate, Margarita, Martini, Cold Beer, Chocolate, Chicken fried steak, Cream gravy, Mexican food, Chocolate, French fries, Chocolate, Pizza, Ice cream, Cup of tea, Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate

It should be presumed that I won't ever get better. When such a determination is reached, I hereby instruct my appointed person and attending physicians to pull the plug, reel in the tubes, let the 'fat lady sing,' and call it a day!

Wise Words

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark.



One : Don't miss the boat.

Two : Remember that we are all in the same boat.

Three : Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

Four : Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

Five : Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

Six : Build your future on high ground.

Seven : For safety sake, travel in pairs.

Eight : Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

Nine : When you're stressed, float a while.

Ten : Remember, the Ark was built by amateur; the Titanic by professionals.

Eleven: No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

Grandma Ain't Always Right

Little Tony was 9 years old and was staying with his grandmother for a few days. He'd been playing outside with the other kids for a while when he came into the house and asked her, "Granma, what's that called when two people sleep in the same room and one is on top of the other?" She was a little taken aback, but she decided to tell him the truth. "It's called sexual intercourse, darling." Little Tony said, "Oh, Ok," and went outside to play with the other kids. A few minutes later he came back in and said angrily, "Grandma, it isn't called sexual intercourse. It's called Bunk Beds. And Jimmy's mom wants to talk to you."

Breathing Space



Grand Tetons