

Talk to Me.....

By Deb Landry

Do you believe in karma, that you reap what you sow or what goes around comes around? Is it true that the universe deals us a predetermined hand but it is up to us to play the cards? Do you ever notice that people talk about, around and at each other instead of to each other?

I believe that we are accountable for our own actions and being an optimist, when life throws me lemons I make the proverbial lemonade. Nevertheless, how do we teach our children to choose lemonade over the sour lemons? Believe it or not, the answer is on the tip of our tongues.

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in the bleachers with several parents, cheering on my son at a soccer game. A group of adults walked up and stood directly in front of us, blocking our view of the field. One squatting woman said, "what is up with these people can't they see us sitting here?" Then another squawked, "They are so ignorant and inconsiderate just standing there talking and laughing". Blah Blah Blah, this went on for a couple of minutes.

I, who decided to take matters into my own hands, said to my husband, "honey can you ask them to move so we can see?" What a concept, but just in case they were rude and obnoxious and to spare my own confrontation, I asked my husband for protection.

He kindly tapped them on the shoulder and said, "Could you please move so we can see the game?" You'll never guess what happen then.

All the parents turned and immediately apologized to the seated fans. " We are so sorry, we were gabbing away, watching the game and didn't even notice what was going on around us. Then they moved to another local, never to stand in front of us for the rest of the season. How simple, ask, communicate, problem solved.

Yesterday it was my turn to be oblivious to my surroundings. When picking up my granddaughter after school, I parked in a long line of other parents, waiting for her to come out of the building. An oversized truck pulled up between two cars, blocking us in. She drove directly into the curb with the side of her vehicle adjacent to the van leaving no room or either vehicle to move. The lady in the truck glared at me as she got out of the truck and walked to the school.

My granddaughter jumped in the van and I began to back up to leave, when her teacher knocked on my window. We exchanged greetings and then she told me that the rear of my van was too close to the handicap parking section, blocking the truck from enough space to make a turn. Of course, I immediately apologized, as I thought I left enough room for a car to adequately park.

The wise young teacher was gracious and stated that the parent could have advocated for herself. Ah, what a concept.

As we pulled away from the school, I rolled my window down and apologized to the lady who was now pushing a child in a wheelchair to the truck. You'll never guess what happen then.

Like Linda Blair, her neck turned in fury and she glared off into space and said, "That's what they all say, sure you are sorry, and you are so inconsiderate, you're sorry you got caught." Ouch! I again apologized for my part in the mishap and drove away, hoping that my accountability and actions set a good example for my granddaughter.

I guess it's not so simple for everyone to ask and communicate their feelings in an appropriate behavior. It's much easier and less confrontational to complain and not take responsibility or be accountability for your own actions.

Research shows that communication skills for youth is declining rapidly. Where do they learn such bad habits and behaviors? We are raising our children to be confident, smarter and more independent, but are we doing them any favors by making them so confident that they lose the skills to respect one another and to cohabitate as a society? Are we setting good examples on how to deal with life's minor mishaps? Do we apologize and mean it? Are we accepting?

Teach children to talk it out with words and eye contact, not through blame. Go ahead, try it, pass it on. You may be surprised at the response you get, I sure was!