

# HIS VIEW: Witnessing the death of personal responsibility

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Johnston

Personal responsibility.

I learned those two words as a child and continue to live by them on a daily basis. They are also two words that seem to be quickly escaping the vocabulary of most Americans.

It's not a hard concept to understand. If you do something wrong you fess up and admit it and then do everything in your power to make things right again. It's the way I handle things in both life and work, and I really wish others in my generation felt the same way.

But how can they?

We are all products of the 1990s and the "self esteem" movement brought about by the leading child experts of the decade.

To be quite frank, that mentality has come back to bite us in the ass.

I remember soccer and Little League games where everyone won a trophy, so that we all felt as if we contributed something to the team. Gone were the terms "winners" and "losers" and, consequently, there was never an urge to do better because you got stuck with the title of loser.

I was in fifth grade when the term "close" entered into my teacher's vocabulary as part of her teaching style. She was told that it would be better for our "self esteem" if instead of telling us we got the answer wrong that we were "close," even if I answered 2 plus 2 as 579 instead of 4.

And quite possibly the worst result of the 1990s was the thought that parents should do things to make their kids lives easier. The problem with that concept is parents sometimes forget when to cut the strings with junior and often- times junior doesn't know what the word "no" means.

Just last week I refused to return a product from a young college student because it was far beyond the parameters of our normal return policy. After he had spent some time yelling at me and stormed out of my store, I received a phone call from his mother. She wanted to set up an instant "conference call" between the three of us so we could "discuss an appropriate resolution to the matter."

Give me a break.

Why can't junior fight his own battles and take responsibility for the fact he didn't follow the rules that were printed on the receipt in the first place?

If you think that story is an exaggeration, I can honestly say it's not the first time I've had a phone call from an out-of-town parent because they felt their kid was treated unfairly. Each time I get a call like that, my hope for the future of our country dies a little bit more.

But how is change to be brought about in a society where, instead of admitting their faults and resigning in shame, leaders of major corporations claimed they were entitled to "golden parachutes" and separation bonuses, even though they drove their companies into bankruptcy?

How are we to learn personal responsibility when the idiots in Congress spend taxpayer money to bail out businesses that should have been left to sink? Now those same idiots want to spend even more money on a health care program that is destined to fail even before it starts.

I'm holding out hope our country will once again reward hard work and responsibility, stop these ridiculous government bailouts, and that instead of holding our hands out to Uncle Sam, we will take it upon our own selves to make things better.

That's the way things were in the not-so-distant past, and that's the way they need to be again in the very near future.

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