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FITNESS & PERFORMANCE



The Parents Strike Back

by Tom Langton

A few weeks ago I asked parents a simple question, "When Should You Give Up on Your Children?." It was actually a loaded question and a little unfair, but it got a lot of people to open the e-mail and definitely sparked a few interesting conversations. I guess that was my goal from the start. I wanted to get inside the minds of parents and see what the biggest obstacles were in trying to get kids to eat a little better and live a healthier lifestyle.

Of course, as I expected, I got a large dose of:

"You have no idea what it is like and won't until you have kids of your own."

This is usually the first thing most parents say to me when I bring up how poorly kids eat. That is the reason I wrote the last article as I really don't know how it is, but I do know that I want to help.

The feedback I got from parents was very interesting. The responses ranged from people who felt totally lost and helpless - to others who felt like they had things completely under control. There were certainly some common denominators and many issues and topics that kept coming up in the e-mails I got back and the conversations I had, but 2 really stuck out in my mind.

The first issue and without a doubt the most common thing I heard was about "*picking battles*" and not wanting to have a fight every time the kids have to eat. This mentality leads parents to give in to what their kids *WANT* to eat or what is the *EASY* option. This certainly seems rational, as a fight before every meal could drive anyone crazy.

However, this topic makes me think about those parents who give in to their kids at meal time. Let's say their child had a discipline issue in school -- I'm willing to bet it would become a priority. What if that same child was struggling in class or with a certain subject? I can bet that extra help, closer supervision, a tutor and tons of study time would be #1 on the to-do list.

Well, I can show you hundreds of studies linking poor childhood nutritional habits to discipline issues, attention disorders and poor academic performance. (email me at tom@gabrielefitness.com and I'll send you some).

There is scientific evidence that *PROVES* that upgrading your child's nutrition will improve behavior, academic and athletic performance, mood, sleep patterns and overall health. I know I'm not a parent, but that seems like a pretty important battle to pick.

The other issue that was brought to my attention by a parent, was the fact that a lot of parents are NOT good role models when it comes to nutrition. One thing I do know about kids is that they are very observant and very shrewd. If they see their parents eating poorly and not following their OWN advice, it is not likely they will be responsive to eating well.

I'm not sure if parents lack nutritional education on healthy eating or just do not make it a priority in their lives. (A little tip to all those parents out there - for the hundreds of studies showing how much clean eating can help your kids, there are THOUSANDS showing the benefits for you).

OK, the last thing I have for you is a request to all of you parents out there, my Tony Robbins motivational moment, if you will. I just ask that you make the effort to see your kid's nutrition as a priority, and act on it. It will help them and it will help you, I guarantee it.

I know that many of you struggle with knowledge on the subject, so I will do my best to help you. My future articles will be filled with tips and strategies on how to get your kids on track. Let's step up, take action and together help our kids in their nutrition.

It is very important that we keep this interactive, so please keep writing to me with the hurdles, frustrations, need for information, and success stories, as well. This is a journey. Hope to hear from you soon.

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