

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE By Jeanite Leigh, The Melbourne Age, 11th September 1998

A process known as SleepTalk™ is building the esteem and self-image of children.

Some people can't say I love you, not even to their Children. It doesn't mean that they don't love the child, yet the importance and impact of these three words are paramount. The expression of love for children has been a focus of Joane Goulding's life for 25 years. Joane developed a program called Sleep Talk "" for Children, designed to ensure that a child knows that he or she is loved and lovable, Joane says at the very least the program will assist a child to be happy; at best it will enhance self-esteem and self-image.

She also claims the process can aid childhood difficulties such as bed wetting, behavioural problems, physical illness that may be emotionally linked, fear, anxiety, peer pressure and scholastic achievement.

Her bottom line is that if people feel good about themselves, they can cope better with whatever life hands out to them. 'We cannot stand guard over our children 24 hrs a day' she says.

Most parents would agree that the most important skill for a child is the ability to deal with life's trials. She notes that the physical and mental fitness of children is encouraged through sport and study but a child's emotional fitness can often be neglected.

'If we have the belief that we are unconditionally loved by our primary caregivers, we have an inborn sense of security, confidence and self-image" she says.

Joane's interest in SleepTalk™ began with the birth of her daughter, Michelle. It was seven years before doctors worked out what was wrong with Michelle. Her behaviour was terrible, her development was slow, she was very clumsy and she couldn't speak. Doctors told Joane that if she went home and became a better mother, her daughter would not be so difficult.

Michelle has cerebral palsy, dyspraxia of the throat and severe intellectual disabilities with an I.Q. of about 45. Joane was advised to leave her at Kew Cottages.

Fortunately, she found a better way to help her daughter make the most out of what she had.

‘Whatever you believe deepest in your heart, it will be afforded unto you,’ she quotes from an ancient saying in the handbook of SleepTalk™ for Children.

The guide is called How to protect your Child from the thieves of Self Esteem.

Joane calls the process ‘powerful, positive parenting’ and says it is suitable for children from infancy to puberty.

The Sleep Talk™ process is simple and is based on the concept that the subconscious mind contains all our beliefs. Every thing we do or say is a reflection of our basic belief system about ourselves and life.

The parent delivers the message to the child about half an hour after the child has gone to sleep. This is the time, Joane says, that you are able to bypass the conscious, critical, judgmental mind that acts on any negative beliefs, and tap into the subconscious mind.

The message is simple, just a few lines telling the child that they are loved and lovable. The suggestions are repeated several times, with the intention of a new suggestion or set of beliefs being carefully laid down in the child’s mind.

The script has been carefully designed by Joane in consultation with a number of psychologists.

Generally, it takes about three weeks for the suggestion to take hold and become a part of the belief system. Parents will notice changes, either subtle or dramatic. Joane says, ‘it is the foundation process that creates self-esteem.’

She says this may be enough to solve the problem. “By the time you have put the foundation back in order, a lot of the effects of lack of self- esteem and self-image fix the problem that the child has been having. It corrects itself.’

But, for more difficult cases, the package can be tailored to individual needs and a new script will be adopted or created accordingly.

One such case, reported by a psychologist, involved a previously healthy, high-achieving, active, 12 year old girl. She presented with severely curled toes and so much pain in the back and legs, she was unable to walk without crutches.

Testing in the Royal Children’s Hospital found no neurological abnormalities. There was no traumatic experience and the only thing she complained of was that she had little time to her self. The parents were trained in SleepTalk™. The foundation process was administered, as well as a script tailored to her needs, and after four weeks her toes uncurled.

Shortly after that, she made a complete recovery. Her parents are trying to ensure that she doesn’t take on too much for herself again.

Joane admits the process may not work for some people. “Is there a situation in life that doesn’t have a basis in self-belief?” she asks. ‘Commitment is the key.

Thee parents must understand the process and take on board the fact that they must also utilize the knowledge throughout the day by not giving the child mixed negative messages.’

SleepTalk™ Consultants stress that you must be prepared to continue the process for three months. Although the commitment is simple and can take a maximum of 5 minutes a night, it will not be effective if parents don’t do it regularly.

Children are very literal creatures and, until the age of five their minds are like sponges. Joane

says 'they absorb everything that is said and experienced.

Children and adults alike receive all sorts of mixed messages that work in conflict with one another. As adults, she says, we are often more equipped to work out where the truth lies.

We have a stronger sense of who we are. But when a child runs to mummy and mummy says 'Here's my little monster' and gives her a big kiss, what does the child think? I am a monster and I am lovable because I am a monster. The belief is confirmed. The parent may not understand that the child is acting out what he or she thinks is going to get her love.

Sue McDonald, a Melbourne family therapist, has used Sleep Talk™ with many of her clients. 'When working with our children's difficulties it is hard to overcome the bafflers that we as parents feel, whether we acknowledge them or not,' she says.

'Parents do the best they can. This process gives them the additional skills to reinforce and encourage the positive self-image of the child.'

'One family I worked with were 4 weeks from the divorce courts and now there is almost complete harmony,' she says. This is primarily because I introduced the family to SleepTalk™ for this 'disruptive child,' as the parents called him.

Through dealing with their child's difficulties in this way and recognizing that he was a reflection of them, the parents came to understand who they were and everything improved.

Joane Goulding's background is in psycho-nutrition and stress management. She has a diploma in clinical nutrition, as well as membership of a number of complimentary medicine associations. Joane Goulding believes that Sleep Talk™ is a way of protecting our children.

It is not recommended that SleepTalk™ be used instead of other types of treatment. If there are other difficulties that need the support of therapy, diet or medicine, it seems that Sleep Talk™

is a very useful adjunct.

'I called my business, Creating Miracles', Joane says, 'because people see such dramatic improvement in their children that they often say. It's like a miracle has happened.'

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