

The return of good manners Parents trying to be friends with children lose respect

By Matthew Hoekstra
Staff Reporter
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When Denise Dumais returned to Canada from a 12-year experience in Jamaica, she noticed something different. People weren't using their manners.

In Jamaica, parents believe it's important to raise their children in a traditional authoritative way. In Canada, Dumais observed parents whose children saw them more as friends and less like parents. Manners were missing.

"You lose the boundaries and kids do not respond to parents in the way that they want them to respond," said Dumais, an organizing consultant and life coach. "They're considering you as a friend, it's an option to respond to you."

It became inspiration for a workshop entitled "Manners Matter," which Dumais is hosting at West Richmond Community Centre next week.

The workshop isn't just about keeping elbows off the table. It's designed to raise awareness about the power of manners in parenting.

"Manners are a way of life, it's not something you do. It shows people that you appreciate them, you respect them and you honour them. In doing that, you have such an impact on their life and then in turn they'll have an impact on other people's lives."

Parents who are strictly authoritative figures lack rapport with their kids. So many parents have gone to the other extreme: friends.

"What we need to have is that balance. We need to be right in the middle where we have the authoritative figure and being able to talk to your children."

The workshop will equip parents with tools to instill the idea of manners in their children, but key among them is where it starts.

"It has to start with themselves. They have to be an example for their children. Everybody knows what good manners are, we just don't actually practice them, or if we do, we practice them outside the home and not inside the home with our own family," she said.

While Dumais focuses on restoring a positive parent-child relationship, her sister Sue Dumais is focusing on restoring balance in the lives of mothers.

Her workshop, "Meditation for Moms," encourages mothers to create a balance between caring for their children and themselves.

"I found that it's very easy to lose your sense of self being a mom. Women are very nurturing and very giving, and when I became a mom I found that nurturing side really flowered more and I found it more challenging to maintain a balance in my own self care," said Sue Dumais, a personal trainer and life coach.

"A lot of women are adding career to motherhood, but it takes them out of balance."

That's where meditation can help in reducing stress and anxiety.

We tend to live in our head, she explained, so the effects of stress have a reaction in our bodies we don't always connect with.

In the workshop, mothers are guided through a series of meditations so they can find what works for them to relax and keep calm through the chaos of parenting.

Meditation for Moms will be held Monday, Oct. 16 and Manners Matter is Tuesday, Oct. 17.

Both workshops have a fee and run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Register at 604-276-4300.

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