ForeWord Reviews

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Choking on the Silver Spoon: Keeping Your Kids Healthy Wealthy and Wise in a Land of Plenty

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The American Dream has always signified the quest for a better life. But what happens when the dream becomes reality, and the reality isn't so great after all? When the kids and grandkids, who have been showered with advantages and privileges their elders could only dream of, turn into ungrateful brats who always want more, who can't make it in school, who can't hold a job?

Though many people may feel that wealth is a problem they are only too willing to take on, the author, a Florida psychologist with twenty-five years' experience working with families on their personal and financial problems, asserts that even parents without great wealth are in danger of passing on the disease of "affluenza" to their children. In a society where many parents work hard chasing a new version of the American Dream, he says, things become a substitute for time and attention. Regardless of where the problem stems from—great riches or merely great aspirations—Buffone offers a prescription for avoiding a "slippery downhill slope to boredom, financial irresponsibility, dependency, addiction, narcissistic entitlement, and abject failure."

The author's previous books include *The Myth of Tomorrow: Seven Essential Keys to Living the Life You Want Today* and *Transcending Trauma: Assessment, Stabilization, and Growth*. This volume is divided into three parts: in the first, Buffone explains how today's American Dream differs from decades past and offers quizzes designed to identify the Silver Spoon Syndrome. In part two, he details the five immutable laws of financial parenting: The Law of Necessity, The Law of Loving Limits, The Law of Reciprocity, The Law of Fiscal Responsibility, and The Law of Example. Lastly, he suggests methods for living the five laws, from "cradle to grave."

The book covers the full range of financial parenting pitfalls, from the six-year-old whose birthday party costs more than a family sedan, to the teenager who promptly crashes his new Mercedes, to the freeloading thirty-five-year-old who is running the family business into the ground because he can't be bothered to show up for work. Buffone wraps up by providing

advice on how parents and grandparents can protect their assets and decide how, or even if, to leave a windfall to their progeny.

Presented in a pull-no-punches style, which can be a bit unrelenting, and packed with true stories taken from the author's practice, this book will certainly provide some uncomfortable moments for readers who recognize their tendency to shower their children with the best of everything. But, for anyone who wants to ensure that the dream does not turn into a nightmare, the book offers an antidote to the creeping epidemic coined "affluenza."

Vicki Gervickas