ForeWord Reviews

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Scary News: 12 Ways to Raise Joyful Children When the Headlines are Full of Fear
Lorna Knox
Crystal Clarity Publishers
978-1-56589-201-9
(Nov 25, 2004)

There have always been unsettling news stories, but since September 2001, the prominence of terrifying headlines-from terrorism to deadly diseases to hurricanes-has increased. Its frightening enough for an adult, who has sufficient life experience to assess risk and decide how to go forward. For a child, who doesnt yet have decades of experience but who does have an active imagination with fears actively engaged by that imagination, the headlines can be truly the stuff of nightmares. How can parents raise children to face life with optimism and find joy in a world where bad things happen and are reported through every media outlet?

The author, an education professional and parent of three home-schooled children, provides a straightforward approach. She believes that the most important weapon against world fears is a sense of joy and security. Her book is divided into two sections with a total of twelve chapters, each covering a different aspect of raising happy children who can cope with the scary news that arises.

The first section focuses on giving children a home environment that itself is safe and secure. Knox emphasizes that very young children need to be protected from the news, because they are psychologically and emotionally too immature to handle it. As they grow older, they will be exposed to the news through various outlets, and parents have a responsibility to filter the media through family discussions and support.

The second section focuses on helping children to grow up with a spirit of joy and a positive attitude in the face of negative world events. As Knox notes, “Continually reacting to possible threats with stress and worry can lead to anxiety disorders that interfere with normal functioning. We want to help our children establish a healthy ability to not react defensively.”

Knoxs approach is as calm and reassuring as the approach she suggests parents use. She asserts that parents cannot fully protect their children, nor should they try to, as experience is still one of lifes best teachers. Children cannot develop a sense of resiliency if they are completely sheltered from the realities of life, whether it is a friend who is mean to them or a massive terror attack in a Russian school. Instead, she highlights the importance of providing

children with shelter when they need it and support when they begin to mature and need to understand whats happening in the world around them.

While there is a spiritual element to this book, the advice and guidelines are valuable to families of any belief system. Whats more, these guidelines may be as useful for parents as for their children.

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