

Being a Parent – The Most Difficult Job of All

by Rob Conley, Director of Pupil Services/Psychologist



I am in the privileged position of being a psychologist here at Ruamrudee. My job is mostly to listen to students talk about themselves and to help them define and achieve their goals. It is a great job for so many reasons. One of these many privileges is to be able to meet the parents of our children and to listen to their concerns and try to help to generate solutions to family problems.

It usually becomes apparent that we simply cannot expect problems to go away and leave us alone. Alternatively, it doesn't help to blame someone else for our problems and then demand that they fix it for us. We simply have to manage. "Problems are not the problem; coping is the problem...life is not what it is supposed to be. It's what it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference." This is a quote by Virginia Satir.

Virginia Satir was one of the great family therapists and a prolific writer on families. She talked a lot about love and nurturing as being the most important aspects of healing for families. She wrote a great deal about how families need to learn how to solve problems because there will always be problems to solve. Satir believed that the presenting issue (or surface problem) that parents talked about was not the real problem; the real problem comes from not really knowing how to cope.

Satir also wrote about particular problems that low self esteem could cause in relationships within families. How parents feel about themselves, and their own feelings of self worth, are directly transferred to their children. "Every word, facial expression, gesture, or action on the part of a parent gives the child some message about self worth." (Satir)

This must make parenting the most difficult job of all. It is also the job for which we receive the least training. There is no 'how to' manual to consult in how to raise happy, confident children. However there is help out there. There are many approaches in parenting that can help children and young people to grow and develop high self esteem.

The Parent Auxiliary and the Pupil Services Department have invited Dr. Nongpanga Limsuwan to present a workshop entitled Raising Kids with Self Confidence for the parents of Ruamrudee and Redeemer. Dr. Nongpanga is a respected expert in presenting Virginia Satir's ideas on parenting slightly adapted to incorporate some principles from Buddhism.

Satir defined a person with low self-esteem as having a great sense of anxiety and uncertainty about himself. Thus, individuals suffering from low self-esteem tend to be more concerned



with what others think of them and less concerned with how they feel about themselves. The workshop can provide help for parents to raise children and teenagers with high self esteem. People with high self esteem are more successful, have more satisfying relationships with others and are thus much more happy and content.

The workshop is planned for some time in February, 2010. We hope to offer a one day workshop on two separate days; one day in Thai and one day in English. This will be determined by how many people are interested in attending. We will let you know the details when arrangements are complete. To help with planning please let the Parent Auxiliary know of your interest to attend by calling Khun Sioux on 081 8131136 or Khun Miaow from Pupil Services on 02 5180320-9 Ext 125.

Please remember though that our school counselors and psychologists are always available for you to talk to about your children.