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Can We Handle the Truth?

By Gary Revel

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Most people in America are busy with the details of achieving their goals and making their own place in the world. They have little time for themselves and don't want to spend it on some lost cause that most people don't care about. So it is with the injustice of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Even though most don't believe James Earl Ray killed Martin Luther King Jr. or at least not by him-self, they also don't have the time to try to figure it out. Some would say they just don't care; so what's the use of making a movie of the story of my investigation of Martin Luther King Jr's assassination?

What good will it do to have a full-length feature movie presented throughout the nations theaters that explores this matter when nobody has the time to care about it in today's environment? This is a question that I have asked myself for years; and continue to ask. Many believe very strongly that the story needs to be told and it needs to be told in just such a motion picture. Some believe that it is a story that has historical importance and is best served by being written in conjunction with a treatment of the civil rights movement and presented in a non-fiction literary work. Still others tell me that it should be a TV movie done in the tight commercial presentation that is best suited for today's contemporary television audience. Some would like to see it as a documentary or docu-drama. There are also those that just don't care about anything related to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and would rather everyone just quit talking about it.

If it is to be done in a film there are those that believe it can only succeed if it is a big budget, major studio production with the top producers, writers, and stars directed by the hottest new director. Others believe it can only be done independently with lesser-known talent and production entities.

There are also those who believe that the music is the key to the success of the film. The song I wrote in 1977, "They Slew the Dreamer" is now published by Sony Music. Sony has an opportunity to bring a successful music project to bear via the marketing of the movie. It's a little like which came first the chicken or the egg, and so the question; which should come first the music or the movie? The truth is, the music came first.

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Of course to many, none of this should matter at all, a good cover-up deserves to stay covered. Real conspiracies are never to be known about; only conspiracies that cover up other conspiracies have a right to reach the light of day. What the people don't know can't hurt them, right? Only time will tell whether or not the story of my investigation of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. is ever told. If it isn't then maybe it's because it is too much of the truth and we just can't 'handle the truth'.

Born, June 29, 1949, in Florala, Alabama, United States of America. Wrote songs and taught him-self guitar, formed Rock 'n Roll band at 15. Graduated High School in June 1967, Holmes County High School, Bonifay, Florida, USA. Served in U.S. Navy, 1967-1969 during Vietnam War Era. Story of his MLK Assassination Investigation optioned by Producer-Director-Writer William Sachs.

Should Dads Tell their Kids the Truth?

By Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC

Some day, you'll be sitting with your child, listening to the radio or watching a program on TV. Somebody will be talking about premarital sex, illegal drug use, breaking the law, or some other highly charged issue. And then, your child will start to ask questions. What did you do when you were younger? How often?

While some fathers might consider leaving the room, the best idea is to have a plan to address these kinds of questions.

So how should you handle this?

Do you just tell them everything, and hope they don't do the same things you did, or do you avoid telling the truth? For a while, psychologists were suggesting to parents that the best strategy to use was telling the truth about your past. If you experimented with or used drugs, just let your kids know. Being honest with your kids was more important than any other consideration.

The problem with this strategy is that it doesn't take into account your child's maturity level. It doesn't consider their readiness to hear this kind of information. Some kids just aren't ready to handle the fact that Dad smoked pot when he was younger, or that he had sex with other women before he was married.

If you're telling your kids this kind of information just to feel better, and "get it off your chest," you're guilty of trying to make yourself feel better at the expense of your kids. This may not only shatter an image your kids have of you, it may seem like an endorsement for them to have the same kinds of experiences.

Kids often have an idealized vision of their parents (although their comments and behavior may belie this), and information about a parent's prior transgressions can be very difficult for them to handle. It adds confusion to an already complex and difficult relationship.

While honesty with your kids is important, one should also consider timing, and a child's readiness to

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hear. All of these factors should be considered when fathers decide on a strategy to use with their kids. And when a strategy is used, it should be consistent. Here are a few of the strategies that can be used with your kids, with a few of the advantages and disadvantages:

. Only speak about your past if asked. This strategy will work for almost everyone. There's no need to go into your past transgressions if it's not necessary. In this case, "What they don't know won't hurt them." However, it's important to be ready with your responses, because the questions can come at any time.

. Tell your child that you'll talk about these things at a later date. If you don't feel your child is ready for this kind of information, there's no need to lie to them. It's far better to be honest, and let them know you'll fill them in at some later time. They may howl and accuse you of being guilty, so you'll have to handle it.

. If you do feel your child is ready to hear about your past transgressions, make sure you tell them as little as they need to know. They don't need to know the specific details of what you did, or exactly how many times. If they ask for this information, you can tell them you're not quite sure (Which I believe for most fathers would be true). And by all means, don't give them the message that, "I did these things, and look how well I'm doing now!" This is a clear message to your kids that doing these things can work for them, too.

. Gather the "lessons learned" from your experiences, and relay that to your child. If you had negative experiences, be very clear with your child concerning what these negative experiences were. Be careful not to preach to them. The "lessons learned" can be lost in a flash if your child feels "lectured to." Just let them hear what you have to say, and make their own decisions. Your negative experiences will speak loudly enough. Whether you speak about your own experiences, or just talk about the perspective you now have as an adult, let them know the risks associated with the behaviors.

. When your child asks about your past, find out the reason they're asking. Is it something they're experiencing at school, or do they want to find out some "secrets" about their parents? It's important to make this issue about your child, and the reason for the questions, not about your past, and whether you did the "right" things. More often than not, your child is seeking some guidance on this issue, and would like to share your experience. Ask them directly about what's going on, but ask in a way that shows concern, not in a way that accuses them.

This doesn't have to be a huge dilemma for fathers to face. Being prepared is the best way to turn this process into a learning experience for both sides. Fathers who want to remain "perfect" in their children's eyes will struggle mightily with this issue. But your kids don't need perfect fathers. They do need a father who's willing to keep growing with them.

So tell them the truth.

Just tell them as little as possible, and tell them when they're ready.

Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC, coaches busy parents by phone to balance their life and improve their

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family relationships. For a FREE twenty minute sample session by phone; ebooks, courses, articles, and a FREE newsletter, go to

. or email him at



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