

s stunts, high school hazing and herd mentality. How can parents of teenagers protect kids from doing stupid things?

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By Sue Blaney

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The video clips are disturbing indeed. The melee that occurred in north Chicago was competing for air time with the Sarasota, Florida boys who jumped off a 5 story building into a swimming pool. "Why would they do that?" parents ask. And their next question, stated out loud or not, is "Would my teenager do stupid things like this?"

There are no guarantees. Group mentality has affected people for centuries. The adolescent sense of invincibility wasn't invented with this generation. Thrill seeking is embedded in our culture. What are parents to do?

I have a friend whose son was arrested for arson. Another whose daughter was arrested for shoplifting, and yet another whose daughter ran off to live with her boyfriend in a crack house. Are these bad parents? Knowing them, I can say they are not. Do good parents have kids that do stupid or dangerous things? No question about it. What are parents to do?

I say it's time for parents to practice some "herd" mentality and get together to make a difference. It's too easy for parents to be isolated. It's too easy for our teenagers, who may think they are invincible, to humble parents into "non-action."

Non-action is unacceptable.

Parents will not always be able to keep our kids safe. Parents will not always be listened to, or obeyed. But parents who don't make an active attempt to keep the communication open, to express and teach

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their values, to apply some rules and boundaries, are guilty of abandonment. A majority of teenagers in America live in households where the parents exercise minimal - if any – authority. Exercising authority isn't always easy. But imagine if the parents got together and talked. Imagine the power parents could have if they created a forum to enhance their connectedness and their communication. That's how safety nets are formed. Imagine how it could increase the chances of keeping our kids safe.

When do kids become responsible? When do they no longer need to be protected from themselves? My daughter is quick to point out that not all kids do stupid things like jump into pools from five stories up. Thank heavens for that. But even "good kids" do stupid things occasionally. What can parents do to keep them safe?

The answers will only come from parents who take the time to sort through the challenges themselves. Those who grapple with the issues, the questions. Those who are willing to live in the messiness, the ambiguities, the challenges and opportunities that come with raising teenagers. It's a big effort. Are

your kids worth it?

Parents should do this together. We should dig in, discuss, argue even how to raise our teenagers. The answers will come when we spend the time to examine the questions. Our positions become clear and easier to articulate and defend when we've discussed them together. We don't have to agree on how we handle things, but our teenagers benefit when we've invested time and energy into a thoughtful examination of how we're raising them. No parental isolation allowed. Herd mentality... talking and doing things together. We can take a page out of the teenagers' book.

You've got to dig in and engage. What are your rules, and why? What limits are negotiable? Which ones aren't? What does your kid think of them? Have you helped him/her figure out how he can live within the rules? What are his escape hatches? Does he buy into your belief system? Is she likely to engage in some of these stupid maneuvers?

There are no guarantees. Our kids are likely to surprise us - and not always for the better. Chances are they will make some mistakes along the way. But the best chance they'll have is when their parents dig in, engage with them, establish a support and communications network in the community, and let them know we are there for them. Short of that, you're leaving a lot up to chance.

Sue Blaney

Sue Blaney is the author of *Please Stop the Rollercoaster! How Parents of Teenagers Can Smooth Out the Ride*, a guide for parents and self-facilitated discussion groups. She is reachable at www.PleaseStoptheRollercoaster.com.
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Sue Blaney is the parent of two teenagers and a communications professional experienced in training and improving team performance. Her book titled *Please Stop the Rollercoaster! How Parents of Teenagers can Smooth Out the Ride* is a guide for parents and for self-facilitated parenting discussion groups. In this book she summarizes the most pertinent points from experts in the field of adolescent

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development, while sharing input and perspective from parents who have been there.

How One Simple Concept Can Increase Your Sales

By Al Martinovic

We all want to belong. As humans we feel the need to fit in somewhere, anywhere. I call it the "herd mentality"... we tend to follow what everyone else is doing.

Well, Bob and Bill across the street each have satellite dishes... that means I have to get one too.

Everyone is driving around in a SUV... that means I have to drive one too.

Everyone is wearing baggy pants... that means I have to wear them too.

Everyone is carrying around a cell phone... that means I have to carry one around too.

My friends are drinking Smirnoff Ice... that means I have to drink it too.

Can anybody say moooooo?

The herd mentality is an interesting phenomena that YOU as an internet marketer can take advantage of.

You need to convey to your potential customers that everyone else is buying your product and they would be missing out if they didn't do the same.

How you may ask?

Well, one way is by using testimonials on your website. Lots of them! Most people will gladly give you a testimonial. All you have to do is ask.

Testimonials establish trust and credibility too, which by the way, are the two biggest things you need to close out a sale online.

When people see that everyone else is buying the product from you they tend to want to get it for themselves.

Let me share a story with you. A while back I was about to purchase some advertising. I was just about to click the order button and then I stopped myself.

I asked myself why I wanted to make the purchase...

Well, first and foremost was the price. It was a good deal. It piqued my interest but it didn't seal the deal for me.

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What did it? It was all of the testimonials I read of satisfied customers. It was the "icing on the cake"...

the extra push needed for me to say mooo and to whip out my credit card.

Now, whether you understand my "herd mentality" concept or not... it really doesn't matter, the point I'd like to drive across is this...

Do not underestimate the power of testimonials!

They are one way to increase your sales by just using your existing traffic.

Ask for them! Use them! They work!

Al Martinovic is the publisher of the Millenium Marketers Newsletter where you will find powerful internet marketing concepts, killer strategies, useful tips, no bull business advice.

How One Simple Concept Can Increase Your Sales

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Cheap Auto Insurance For Teenagers

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Help Your Child Succeed In School

Disaster Preparedness and Crime Protection Manual

Understanding Acne: Causes, Cures and Myths

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