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Parents - Exercise Your Control

By Asma Latif

Just as it is your job to protect your children in every day life, it is your job as a parent to protect your children online. Parents who wouldn't allow their children to go out with people they don't know often think nothing of letting their children spend hours online chatting with strangers. Today, online crimes can easily enter your home, so it is your responsibility to make your child aware of the online dangers that exist. In addition to communicating with your child about online safety, pro-active parents can purchase software that may prevent potential problems.

Filtering programs such as NetNanny and CyberPatrol can offer some restriction to inappropriate web sites that might contain pornography. However, these programs aren't foolproof and do not provide realtime alerts and notification. Your child may still be able to access some pornographic sites and some legitimate sites may accidentally be blocked.

If you are concerned about your child's online activities, a parental control service by OnlineSafetyPAL and program like OnlineSafetyShield can used to help ensure online child safety when you are not around. These programs and services are set-up to record and monitor all computer activity and provide real-time alert notification. Parents can create a list of certain specific forbidden words, such as pornography or sex. If any of these words are typed during a session, the program automatically records it. The online monitoring feature can give parents peace of mind by being able to view online recordings. Working parents can even set the program to send them alert emails to their computer and text messages on their mobile phones to let them know when there has been any improper use of the computer. If your child attends after school care that has Internet access, be sure to check with them to see if they use a control or filtering program.

Asma Latif is a pro-active parent, a California CPA and a founder of OnlineSafetyPAL Inc. (

<http://www.OnlineSafetyPAL.com>

and

<http://www.OnlineSafetyShield.com>

) helping other parents

protect children against online dangers through parental control software and education. She can be reached at

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Martial Arts Training Helps Parents Manage Stress Effectively

By Grandmaster Ralph Chirico

Although, parenting can be one of life's most joyful and rewarding experiences, quite often it can also be very challenging and stressful. As a parent there will be times when the demands and hassles of everyday living will mount and cause overwhelming stress. Some of the pressures can include: financial matters, family and marital life, problems on the job. The additional stress of caring for children can, at times, make parents feel angry, anxious and/or have the need to take a break from daily pressures and relax. Tensions and feelings are a normal and inevitable part of family life, but many parents can take it to the extreme. They need to learn ways to cope before it is too late.

Stress can potentially interfere with the parent/child relationship. Parents who have not learned to manage stress effectively tend to be less tolerant of their children's behaviors and actions and are less emotionally available for them in times of need. Children often react to parental stress by specifically changing the ways they interact with their caretakers. Parents who react irrational can put children at an increased risk of being stressed themselves.

It can be argued that pressure is a positive thing leading to greater productivity, however, excessive stress can be detrimental to an individual's physical and mental well being and can also significantly contribute to irritability, depression, and low self-esteem for the parent and their child. Michelle Borden, Associate Executive Director of NewBridge Services, a nonprofit mental health organization that provides services and programs for today's youth, teens, adults and seniors, said, " The effectiveness of a parent's ability to cope with mounting daily pressures has significant implications not only for them, but also for their child."

What people must realize is that feelings of stress come from inside ourselves and that we can learn to keep our reactions under control. One way to reduce stress is to exercise regularly. Many activities offer the benefit of stress relief, however many are seasonal, and may also become affected by the weather. The martial arts can be practiced year round, and it is a great form of exercise for people of all ages. Many people think the martial arts is just punching, kicking and blocking. Besides learning self-defense, martial arts practitioners develop self-confidence, self-respect, self-awareness, self-control and relaxation techniques.

Students also learn how to focus and breathe properly which not only improves circulation, but it also provides additional stress relief. Martial arts training fully involves both mental and physical aspects,

Parents – Exercise Your Control

thus forcing students to focus on the present and to leave worldly concerns behind. Punching, kicking and striking exercises permit a controlled release of tension and aggression, which allows students to leave behind any negative emotions that they may have carried into the martial arts training area."

Martial arts practitioners learn that anger and frustrations prevents clear thinking and the loss of self-control. As a result they learn to control themselves, and their surroundings physically and mentally. Learning to focus on what is at hand and managing their own emotions as well as others will not only reduce parents' stress levels, but it will also help them accomplish professional and personal goals.

The described benefits of martial arts training may not make stress disappear, but it can help parents take more control of the stress around them. When parenting deals some unexpected challenges or

lessons to learn, often it is not so much the situation or event, but how it is handled that helps parents cope.

With over 40 years of experience, Grandmaster Ralph Chirico (10th degree black belt and Head of the Isshin Shorin Ji Ryu system) has helped hundreds of men and women lead a more balanced, healthier life professionally, physically and mentally through proper, traditional martial arts training. Check out,

<http://www.chiricos.com>

and learn how Chirico's School of Karate can make a positive impact on the lives of your loved ones today.



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