

Helping hands

Misbehaving children need a dose of disciplinary spanking



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All right, this week's topic was almost "Porn: There's Nothing Wrong With It."

I scrapped that, though, when the Artist Formerly Known As My Girlfriend - who acts as my legal counsel in matters like this - told me: "That's fine, but you'll never get a date at this school again."

And because she knows more about dating me than anyone else, I agreed and filed that one away in the archives with other classics like "Plane Crashes: The Bright Side." Those'll be released as part of my boxed set, after my death.

Anyway, instead of extolling the virtues of Penthouse, I'm going to write about spanking.

And when I say "spanking," I don't mean the kinky stuff we know

really goes on at regents' meetings. And I don't mean the monkey-spanking condemned by the Roman Catholic Church.

I'm talking about walloping your kids.

Child psychology and sociology majors, read on. What I'm about to say may threaten your jobs.

I consider myself an expert on kids, having been one.

I also consider myself an expert on spankings, having received my fair share thereof.

And, cats and kittens, I long for the days when spanking was an integral part of our society, as American as baseball and Grandma and apple pie.

Why do I say this?

On a personal level, I say it because I work in the customer service field. Specifically, I wait tables. And a lot of people go out to eat, and many of them have children.

And many of these children need to be spanked.

Folks, I know it sounds harsh, but the J-Dogg pulls no punches. I am sick and tired of seeing children who are not even 10 years old push their parents around. I am sick and tired of watching these children run rampant around my restaurant, ignoring their mothers' and fathers' pleas to "Come sit down. Please, sit down. Honey, sit

down."

These parents look haggard and weary. Their voices are barely louder than a whisper. They refuse to yell, shout or holler because, I believe, they think that children are special, that children must be treated only with gooey-gooey mushiness, or else children will grow up bitter and resentful and angry at the world.

That's a load of crap.

And if these parents are scared to yell at their kids, the idea of actually hitting the little beasts almost makes them faint.

I'll be honest. Better that these parents hit their kids - firmly, on the rear end - a few times and get the brats to sit down. Because if the kids keep racing around Carlos O'Kelly's, eventually, they're going to run into me.

And I'm not that coordinated. I'm going to trip over them, lose my balance and drop a heavy, sizzling plate of fajitas on their cute little heads.

And I really don't want that to happen.

Somewhere in the last few decades, this idea infiltrated our society that it is wrong to hit our children.

I understand the motivation, and I know it stems from the best intentions. Child abuse is bad - I think we

can all agree on this.

But there's a big, big difference between genuine child abuse and the occasional, well-deserved spanking.

My mother, God bless her, was not afraid of spanking. She was also not afraid of shoving a bar of soap into my mouth when I used bad language, or of hiding my He-Man action figures in her room when I threw them at my brother.

Consequently, I was afraid of her.

Actually, most of my friends were afraid of her too. Fear not - around the time I hit age 13, she melowed a heckuva lot, and she is just as beloved as any of my other friends' parents. But still we look back on those bygone days with a bit of awe, and we know full well that, really, her almighty wrath was partially responsible for our growing up to be good citizens.

Anyway, I love her a lot and send out mad props to her. (For the jive-impaired, that means "thank you.")

And I wish more people shared her views on discipline. It is shocking to me that anyone can condemn spanking in one breath, and in the next, moan and groan about gang violence, teen-age pregnancy or the dozen or so high school massacres we've seen in the last few years.

Am I the only person who sees a correlation?

I am not saying we should beat kids on a regular basis and for no good reason. That would be child abuse.

And I'm not saying we should do away with other childhood punishments. Time-outs, grounding and the soap-in-the-mouth trick all have their place, and far better to use one of those - if it'll work - than move straight to spanking. But only if it'll work.

What I'm saying is, to paraphrase Ecclesiastes, there's a time to smack your kids; and there's a time not to smack your kids.

Robert Heinlein wrote: "... Pain is the basic mechanism built into us by millions of years of evolution which safeguards us by warning when something threatens our survival. Why should society refuse to use such a highly perfected survival mechanism?"

Exactly.

If you're too squeamish to spank your children, if you don't mind being pushed around by someone 20 years younger than yourself - hey, that's your deal. The J-Dogg will not show up at your house to do it for you.

I have only one request when that fajita plate scars your 8-year-old for life; or when your 14-year-old heads for the lunchroom with a hand grenade.

Please - don't come crying to me.

Not too hot

Jerry Springer's entertaining style appeals to masses



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The time is 3 p.m. and you're flipping through the TV stations. What grabs your attention?

Yes, it's "The Jerry Springer Show."

Whether you are an admiring fan or not, I'm sure you've definitely heard all about this crazy show.

Whether you're on campus or at home, you're likely to run into someone who'll say: "Did you watch Springer last night?"

We just love to hate "The Jerry Springer Show." We can't get enough of him. If you miss the early show, you can catch Jerry in the evening. He's on twice a day.

So why is Jerry Springer so successful? Is it because Jerry discusses the most controversial topics, from teen-age pregnancy to drugs to infidelity to female escorts? Is it because the ratings continue to increase as we plug into the show?

"The Jerry Springer Show" is like a drug. We tune in and become addicted. We become so absorbed in the interesting titles like "I have a secret - I'm really a man" or "Sisters who are lovers," or "I'm 12 years old and I'm a prostitute" that we just have to watch it. We see the commercials, the fights and the screaming and we just can't resist it.

My 16-year-old sister is obsessed with Jerry's show. She thinks Jerry is the bomb! She has recorded every show possible and believes that "The Jerry Springer Show" is the best entertainment there is on TV.

Entertainment? Definitely. That's what Jerry is all about. Jerry aims to please his viewers, and that is just what he does. He is, perhaps, the king of talk show

hosts, in terms of entertainment.

He is a funny, intelligent, smooth-talking and entertaining host. Jerry is unique in his own way. Jerry has the ability to keep his viewers tuned in when other talk show hosts like Montel and Geraldo can leave you turned off by their boring discussions.

When watching the Springer show, you know what to expect. You are guaranteed to see something humorous, witty, exciting and action-packed. You'll probably hear the lines "talk to the hand" and "don't even go there."

In the space of an hour, one can expect to see violence, cussing, hair-pulling, biting and kicking, just to name a few. If you ask me, half of Jerry's guests should be arrested for assault and battery, considering the amount of criminal activity seen on the show.

The question I have to ask is simple: Why go on the Springer show and tell the whole world your business? Why not discuss your problems at home like most "normal" people do? No, not Jerry's guests.

Instead, they prefer to expose themselves on TV.

The

show's format is simple. Guests comes on the show and explain their situation. Jerry introduces the next guest, and the first guest confesses a hidden secret. A typical scenario one can expect follows: Guest one bluntly says something like, "Well, sweetheart, you know we've been dating for some time now, and you know I love you, but there is something I've gotta tell you - I'm really a man and not a woman. Ha, ha, ha!"

Okay, what reaction can people really expect? Of course, guests are going to be mad, even furious.

Imagine being embarrassed and humiliated in front of the whole world. Before you know it, there is a massive boxing match - everyone is fighting, and the audience helps create more action by cheering.

It all looks like a comedy show, full of comedians doing their sketches. The security staff gets paid to stop fights, but the guests do their best to

continue fighting. Sometimes there is so much screaming you just have to guess what is going on. Why can't the guests just behave like civilized, rational people?

Many argue "The Jerry Springer Show" is fake, but they still watch it. Whether some of the stories are exaggerated or not, I'm sure the guests on "The Jerry Springer Show" are real people with real problems. Most of them obviously should be in a mental institution seeking treatment rather than on television trying to gain attention.

I'm not a major fan of Springer, but I do enjoy watching. Despite his crazy guests, he is always in control.

Unlike shows similar to Oprah and Ricki, who bring in so-called "experts" to comment on every problem, Jerry doesn't rely on professionals. Instead, Jerry has his own remedy with final thoughts at the end of the show when he tries to summarize his main points. Jerry

attempts to end on a positive note by solving problems, not creating them. He always leaves his viewers with an important message.

I also like the fact that Jerry is able to deal with any situation from the extremely serious to some very funny stories. Whether Jerry is discussing sex, drugs, pornography, serial killers or racial and social problems, he is able to handle delicate topics professionally. Jerry is always sensitive to the needs of his guests, making him very popular and successful.

People from all over the world travel to Chicago to see a glimpse of the show in person. These people have made Jerry the No. 1 talk show host. At the end of every show the audience is sure to chant "We love you Jerry" or "Go Jerry, go Jerry."

Remember, not just anyone can be a guest on the Jerry Springer show. I think you have to be either very brave and courageous, or very insecure and have very low self-esteem. I once watched an episode about child prostitution.

Girls as young as 10 years old were proud to tell the world what they did for a living. At times, it's sad to watch such stories. It makes you wonder about the types of families Jerry's guests come from.

There is, however, one important element missing from Jerry's shows. This is communication, a skill all Jerry's guests seem to lack. If Jerry's guests could only communicate with each other, there would be no need for his show. Communication is a process, the exchanging of thoughts, opinions and ideas. But, if Jerry's guests effectively communicated it would take out the excitement of the whole show.

"The Jerry Springer Show" really isn't a something to take too seriously. There are plenty of other things we could do with our time ... like study. But whether you think the show is trash and only sad, pathetic people watch or you're a total fan, Jerry definitely sells. "The Jerry Springer Show" appeals to the majority as melodramatic, light-hearted entertainment.



MATT HANEY/DN