

Just Say No.... to TV

We've all been bombarded with the slogan "Just Say No to Drugs" but have failed to catch the irony of this message being propounded by the most pervasive and dangerous drug on the planet: TV.

Yes, TV is a drug. If you don't believe it, try this test: Take a pair of sharp scissors, and cut the plug off the cord of every TV in your home. (Most homes have 3.4 TVs and 2.3 children). Watch the children (and adults) as they go "cold turkey." They will exhibit every major symptom of drug withdrawal: pleading, bargaining, anger, rage, sweats, agitation, increased anxiety, seeking out TV in other people's homes, at school, etc. It will cost you about \$10 to get the plug rewired, if you should be so inclined. Most kids take about ten days to detox from a lifetime of

22 hours a week of drug intake.

During this drug-in-the-den period of their lives, they do not engage in active physical play; they sit immobilized in front of the drug dispenser. During this period of TV watching, they do not read; they sit staring at an image scanned on the screen for them. During this TV wasteland time, they see murder, mayhem, rape, pillage and plunder in a relentless stream. One family has a rule: you can watch TV until there is an act of violence; then the TV goes off for the rest of the day. The kids get to watch an average of 4 minutes of TV each time they turn it on. They've given up on it, as of this writing.

Preschoolers who sit in front of the tube, even during so-called benign shows like Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers, are still sitting in front of the tube. They ought to be

playing, exhibiting active engagement with their environment and fellow living creatures, not sucking electronic stimulation from the great teat of TV. School-age kids who sit in front of the tube are NOT reading, are NOT attending to homework, are NOT actively engaging with adults in conversation as long as they watch TV.

Adults who sit in front of the tube do NOT read to their children, do NOT play with the children, do NOT engage in meaningful dialog with their children, except when they are given permission during commercial breaks. Good way to raise up a family, eh?

Most honest folks will admit that once the TV goes on, it doesn't get turned off until the 10 o'clock news is over. On Saturdays, it disgorges 8 to 15 hours of endless commercial pitch aimed at kids; "television's main aim is to get you to buy stuff you don't need", most kids willingly

admit. But they still cannot muster the psychological strength to turn it off. You must cut the plug off for them to be able to resist. As long as the thing is plugged in, it will get turned on.

Try a month without TV. Try a holiday season without TV. Yes, without football. Yes, without the seasonal specials. Yes, a whole month. Bet you can't do it.

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