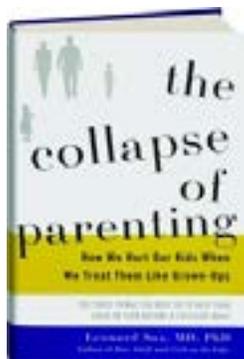


Smart Summaries break down important books, texts and other educational resources into an easy-to-read synopsis and provides busy education professionals with ideas to help develop greater leadership skills, intellect and innovation within classrooms and educational systems.

The Book



Date of Creation:
February, 2017

Title:
The Collapse of Parenting
Author: Dr. Leonard Sax MD, PHD
Copyright 2016
ISBN-13: 978-0-465-04897-7
Category: Parent and child.
Children and adults.

[Author Site](#)
[Youtube](#)

Behaviors of Parents

- Have high expectations
- Be a role model
- Family first
- Teach perseverance, joy and be real.

At a Glance

Kids have been given and have taken control of their lives.

Parents undermine the natural order of authority for fear their children won't like them.

Medication is too often prescribed instead of parents simply parenting.

Children need parents to influence their choices, set limits, enforce rules and follow through on consequences.

Diet and sleep matter.

Focus on three simple parenting strategies: teach humility, enjoy time together and teach the meaning of life.

Introduction

The Collapse of Parenting, by Dr. Leonard Sax is a quick read and should serve as a ready reference for parents and school staff. Sax takes the current generation of children and using research, data and his own anecdotal experiences outlines the current challenges of the early 21st century. In an era of education where the school system is accountable for everything from attendance, behavior, learning, and career and college readiness, Sax demonstrates how simple parenting could solve many of the problems faced by educators and parents alike.

Huge systems have been created in schools to ensure that students follow rules, adhere to values and do what is expected. However, too often those expectations are undermined and emboldened children fail to follow the expectations. Sax demonstrates how the American child lacks sleep, is overmedicated, has taken control and has become so focused on their friends' acceptance that many parents have taken a backseat to the simple responsibility of parenting. You'll enjoy this summary, but you'll love the book. This is a must read for all educational professionals and a fantastic tool of intervention for parents.

"Over the past three decades there has been a massive transfer of authority from parents to kids."

Chapter Review

CHAPTER 1: The Culture of Disrespect

KEY QUOTE: "We now live in a culture in which kids value the opinion of same-age peers more than they value the opinion of their parents, a culture in which the authority of parents has declined not only in the eyes of children but also in the eyes of parents themselves."

- The core purpose of a long childhood is enculturation. This is the process of teaching children "the customs and behaviors required for competency in the culture in which you live."
- Children are not born with the knowledge of expectations and rules. "Every child must be taught."
- We have created role confusion between parents and children. Moving authority to the kids.
- In the American culture, children value their peers' opinions and acceptance more than their parents.
- Too often it is suggested to parents that their children have ADHD or Oppositional Defiance Disorder. This often leads parents to focus on prescription drugs as a solution instead of strong parenting behaviors.
- Authority in the home means that the parents trump peers.
- "For the first time in history, young people are turning for instruction, modeling and guidance not to mothers, fathers, teachers and other responsible adults but to people whom nature never intended to place in the parenting role – their own peers."
- Too much is placed on being friends with the child instead of teaching right from wrong and demonstrating the qualities of responsibility.
- "Sometimes you have to wait before you eat the doughnuts. Sometimes you don't get to eat the doughnuts at all. That's life."

CHAPTER 2: Why Are So Many Kids Overweight?

KEY QUOTE: "Thirty years ago, we would not have expected to see 12-year-olds with symptoms of cardiac disease. Now we've had to start a pediatric preventive cardiology clinic."

- Three factors responsible for the rise in obesity among today's youth:
 - What kids eat
 - What kids do
 - How much kids sleep
- Schools in 2009-2010 served:
 - \$458 million worth of pizza
 - \$241 million worth of chicken nuggets
 - \$104 million worth of hamburgers
- "New evidence suggests that allowing kids on-demand access to food may be one factor promoting obesity."
- In 1965 the average American watched 10.5 hours of television a week.
- Today the average American teenager spends 70 hours in front of a screen weekly.
- In 2001 13% of American children walked or rode a bike to school.
- Devices and screens in the bedroom are dramatically impacting the sleeping patterns of American youth.
- Bedrooms are for sleeping – not electronics.
- Children who are "defiant and disrespectful" have greater incidences of obesity and being overweight compared to their better behaved classmates.
- Parents need to teach their kids to:
 - Eat right
 - Eat less
 - Exercise

CHAPTER 3: Why Are So Many Kids on Medication?

KEY QUOTE: "The job of the parent is to teach self-control. To explain what is and what is not acceptable. To establish boundaries and enforce consequences."

- For every child diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 1994 there were 40 diagnosed in 2003.
- "Many clinicians find it easier to tell parents their child has a brain-based disorder than to suggest changes in their parenting."
- Naughty children who have temper tantrums are now being treated as if they have a psychiatric illness.
- While bipolar disorder diagnoses have increased in the United States, they have decreased in Germany.
- For each child in the United Kingdom diagnosed with a bipolar disorder there are 73 diagnosed in the U.S. – that statistic is adjusted for population differences.
- Too many children are sleep deprived and may be misdiagnosed as being ADHD as a result of being on their devices and not sleeping.
- For every 1,000 American teenagers 103 are taking medication for ADHD. In the United Kingdom it is 7.4 out of 1,000.
- If you're a child in the U.S. and your parents take you to the doctor for behavior, you are at risk of being medicated.
- "Instead of correcting our kids' behavior, we American parents are more likely to medicate our kids in hopes of fixing the behavior problem with a pill."
- Remove devices from the bedroom and stop medicating children.
- Many times teachers and administrators suggest medicating children because the child's behaviors at school are so poor.
- A child in the U.S. is 93 times more likely to be put on an antipsychotic drug than a child in Italy.

In 1970 obesity among adolescents ages 12-19 was 4.6%. In 2010 - 18.4%

CHAPTER 4: Why Are American Students Falling Behind?

KEY QUOTE: "American students who enroll in college are now less likely than the average student in other developed countries to graduate from college."

- As a result of an increase in student/child misbehavior we've seen an increase in student discipline issues and a decrease in student learning.
- One researcher found that creativity scores also have dropped in the last 20 years. Kids have become "less emotionally expressive, less energetic, less talkative and verbally expressive, less humorous, less imaginative, less unconventional, less lively and passionate, less perceptive, less apt to connect seemingly irrelevant things, less synthesizing, and less likely to see things from a different angle."
- Four differences between the U.S. and other developed high performing nations:
 1. Overinvestment in technology
 2. Overemphasis on sports
 3. Teacher training programs
 4. A culture of disrespect – in other nations children are more likely to share their parents' values.
- Parents need to take a more active role in their child's education to ensure they get a good education.

CHAPTER 5: Why Are So Many Kids So Fragile?

KEY QUOTE: "Many college faculty and staff report a noticeable fragility among today's students."

- There is an overall lack of perseverance in the current generation of young people.
- Fragility is often caused by a "weak parent-child relationship."
- "If parents don't come first, then kids become fragile."
- Kids need as much love and acceptance today as they did in the past; however, kids can't get this level of unconditional support from their peer groups.

Chapter Review

CHAPTER 5 CONTINUED

- “Part of your job as a parent is to teach desire. To teach your kids to go beyond whatever floats your boat.”
- How you parent needs to change as your child develops.
- Your kids can’t develop a relationship with you, be modeled proper behaviors or have their behaviors corrected if they never see you or are allowed to bury their face in a device.
- Phones and tablets are creating a divide in the parent-child relationship.
- Fragility in American children is a result of “the breaking down of bonds across generations, so that kids now value the opinions of same-age peers or their own self-constructed self-concept more than they care about the good regard of their parents or other adults.”
- “The willingness to fail, and then move on with no loss of enthusiasm, is a mark of character. The opposite of fragility.”
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CHAPTER 6: What Matters?

KEY QUOTE: *“If you want your child to be healthy and wealthy and wise, then your first priority should not be measures of cognitive achievement, such as grades or test scores, but measures of Conscientiousness, such as honesty, integrity and self-control.”*

- A child with self-control at the age of 11 is most likely to have high life satisfaction when they are 31.
- One area to focus on as parents is conscientiousness. It is the one trait that ensures success in life: income, happiness and health.
- Kids who are conscientious also are less likely to engage in risky behavior: sex, drugs and alcohol.
- “The best measure for conscientiousness is self-control.”
- Parenting matters. Support self-control by creating parameters, setting limits and reinforcing your expectations.
- It’s never too late to increase a child’s self-control. How you do it for a teenager: “No TV or internet until you finish your homework.” Don’t negotiate - expect!
- Model your expectations by demonstrating self-control as the adult.
- Mindset matters. Teach your kid that if they “try harder, you can become smarter.”
- As parents, if we want kids to change their behavior, we have to change our own.
- “Self-control is not innate. Honesty is not innate. These virtues have to be taught.” It is the responsibility of parents to model and teach these behaviors. Especially in an era of “me first” and when kids are set free to browse on the internet and all the temptations and poor behaviors modeled on YouTube and social media.

CHAPTER 7: Misconceptions

KEY QUOTE: *“If you are doing your job as a parent, then sometimes you will have to do things that will upset your child. If you are concerned that your child won’t love you any more, that concern may keep you from doing your job. Do your job.”*

- Permissive parents have children who are more likely to get in trouble as adults. “Issues include: alcohol abuse, drug abuse, anxiety and depression.”
- Authoritarian parents have children who are more likely to do better in school, less likely to take risks and sustain good habits into their 20s.
- Three types of parents: too hard, too soft and just right.
 - Too hard - rarely show affection or love and have demands that are difficult to achieve
 - Too soft - are good at showing their love but not good at enforcing rules and setting parameters.
 - Just right - demonstrate love, enforce rules and are characterized as strict and loving.
- Too many parents in the 21st century think you have to be either strict or loving but not both. Mistake.

Two false parenting assumptions: It’s important for my child to be popular. It’s unrealistic for me to hold my child responsible for behavior outside of my home.

CHAPTER 7: CONTINUED

- Years of playing violent video games have consequences. Research demonstrates that the effects are not immediate; instead, years later those who’ve played violent games tend to be “more hostile, less honest and less kind.”
- “It is never acceptable for your child to be disrespectful to you.”
- Children are more likely to lie to parents because they do not want to disappoint their mom/dad.
- Do not confuse happiness and pleasure.
- The old alliance between schools and parents now is very weak. Too often parents fail to reinforce the consequences from school or they question and challenge the rules or actions of the staff.

CHAPTER 8: The First Thing: Teach Humility

KEY QUOTE: *“The antidote to the culture of bloated self-esteem is the culture of humility.”*

- Do your children demonstrate humility when they use social media to present themselves? What words do they use to describe themselves in the captions? Are they choosing terms like: awesome, sexy or phenom (sic)? Are kids even capable of being humble in a social media world?
- Humility means: listening to others, showing interest and concern for others and being empathetic.
- Too often we mislead our children when it comes to dreaming. Failing to be realistic and presenting a world where dreams come true without effort. Sax suggests that we need to be more realistic: “Work until your dreams come true.”
- Two perspectives:
 - “A culture of self-esteem leads to a culture of resentment.”
 - “The culture of humility leads to gratitude, appreciation and contentment.”
- In a “look at me” world where every action is a postable opportunity, teach humility and remind your children that getting ready to go out is not news, getting a cup of coffee is not really that important and what is important is family and humility. Create an environment where having dinner with your family is the expectation and showing off your world is not important.

CHAPTER 9: The Second Thing: Enjoy

KEY QUOTE: *“Don’t push your child to live her life as though she were continually preparing her college application. Teach her not to worry about being amazing in the eyes of other people. That means doing less and becoming more.”*

- Too often parents and kids are too busy to really have fun and enjoy each other’s company. Driving to and from events is time together - but is it joyful?
- Take time to be together and learn and have fun together by design.
- In a study of working mothers, “time with children” was ranked 14th behind things like socializing, napping and watching TV.
- “When you are sitting at the table together, the focus should be on interaction. Listen to your child and talk with your child.”
- Parents are very busy in the 21st century. That doesn’t mean that our kids should be. The stress parents have in their lives is being replicated by scheduling too much for the kids.
- When you are with your children, devote yourself completely to your child.”

CHAPTER 10: The Third Thing: The Meaning of Life

KEY QUOTE: *“One of the most difficult obligations of responsible parenthood is telling your son or daughter that their dream isn’t going to come true, that they need to find another dream. Parents unsure of their own authority, whose top priority is pleasing their child, will never speak these difficult truths. But if you don’t, who will?”*

- “The willingness to fail is one of the keys to success in real life.”
- We often protect our children from failure or allow them to quit when the task is tough.
- “One of your tasks as a parent it to instill a sense of meaning, a longing for something higher and deeper.”

CHAPTER 10: CONTINUED

- A life with meaning allows a child to focus on what is really important. Opposed to continual self-aggrandizing on social media.
- One answer on what is the meaning of life in the 21st century: "Meaningful work. Someone to love. And a cause to embrace."

Conclusion:

FINAL QUOTE: "We Americans have gone far astray in the past three decades with regard to understanding what kids need to become fulfilled and independent adults. We have undermined the authority of teachers and parents. We have allowed kids to be guided by same age peers rather than insisting on the primary guidance from adults. As a result, American kids now grow up to be less imaginative, less adaptive and less creative than they could be."

Where is the text most applicable

Classroom	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Leadership	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Motivation	★
Parents	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Personal Development	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Schools and Systems	★
Teaching	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ted's Take

Like Sax, I've noticed a difference in the behaviors and attitudes of both children and parents over the last 25 years as a teacher, coach and school administrator. I used to think that I was getting older and less cool (true) and as a result less understanding or tolerant of certain behaviors. However, while reading this text I reflected upon all of the systems that are now in place that were not in the past. I thought of how I used to call home to the parents and they would agree that their son/daughter should have a consequence for swearing and how more recently I was asked to show where in the handbook it says that children cannot express themselves. Sax is right; we are living in dramatically different times when kids are overmedicated, overweight and overstimulated with their own self-image. A time when parents are afraid to parent and schools are afraid to confront bad behaviors and instead employ systems to teach behaviors that were once expected. This text is a must read for everyone in the educational field and this Smart Summary may be a great opportunity to start conversations with parents who do not even know they are a contributing factor to their own child's misdirection.

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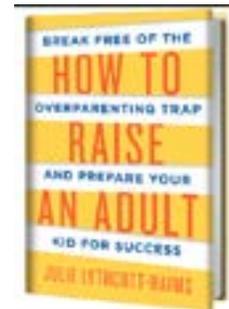
Lessons

Reflective questions for the reader - 5-6:

Have you:

- Established clear rules and responsibilities for your children
- Defined the limits for the use of technology and enforced them
- Modeled respect, perseverance and self-control
- Made the family the center of the child's universe
- Learned to say no
- Focused on preparing them for life

If you liked this book you will enjoy:



[Author Site](#)

Notable and Quotable

"There is no greater responsibility between human beings than that of a parent to a child."



About Ted Neitzke

Ted Neitzke is the Chief Educational Officer and Agency Administrator for CESA 6, a non-profit cooperative that serves 40 public school districts in Wisconsin. Ted is an advocate for children and public education. He believes that everyone in a school is a servant leader. "A leader is anyone who has influence over another person." This, Neitzke believes, "makes all of us leaders." These Smart Summaries are his way of helping pay-it-forward for the leaders in the classrooms and schools. "Not everyone has time to read or search for great texts that will help them develop as learners, leaders or innovators and these briefs help to increase personal intelligence and support the strategies necessary to help leaders in the 21st century educational world. Ted Neitzke has been a superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, high school and middle school teacher and, while in high school, was an aide in a summer school program for students with significant disabilities. He is the father of two and is married to Megan, a 7th grade teacher in a public school. Ted is the son of a kindergarten teacher and is surrounded by relatives who are leading classrooms and systems.