

Smart and Good School Summary Report

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When my kids were growing up and we were homeschooling, encouraging their participation in sports and their other interests, one of the key scriptures I used for motivating them was Colossians 3:23-24, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." Even if they weren't necessarily thrilled with an activity, they should do it as unto the Lord. In learning to get along with others, Jesus' many teachings such as "Do unto others as you would want done to you." (Matthew 7:12) "Love your enemy, bless them that curse, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you." (Matthew 5:44) And that if ye love only them that love you, what reward have ye? (Matthew 5:46) These pretty much covered most relational issues.

However, when working with non-Christian kids in both classes and sports, I struggled with how to encourage the character qualities related to these two major principles. Likona and Davidson have done it! I am surprised and elated.

They have taken two very Christian principles and made them universally understandable and applicable. The redefining character into both performance character and explaining moral character as relationally oriented are brilliant observations.

The community swim team my kids belonged to also cultivated the culture of caring and helped explain virtue in competition. The kids were encouraged to help each other do their best, by encouraging, cheering, etc. Competition was a good thing because when others do their best it sets a high standard and motivated you to do better. In sports the rewards of creating such a culture is obvious. Likona and Davidson have helped me to see how this "culture of caring" can also be transferred to the classroom through the explanation of promoting excellence and helping each other achieve it for a better society. I certainly wouldn't want to cross a shoddily made bridge and neither would most people I know. This gives us another secular reason besides, you do want to be able to get a good job some day...(I am finding some kids could care less about this - their families are doing just fine on welfare).

These principles really work and I am excited to see them expounded on in a way that makes their value evident to all. I look forward to more closely examining the report in the future. It is a shame that the schools are more and more creating school wide Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies which put morality at a lesser Kohlberg developmental level, than implementing something like this, which even by secular standards, pushes kids to a higher moral developmental plane.

This is great!