



## ***Buy a lawnmower...don't be one!***

You've probably heard the term, HELICOPTER PARENT. Well, there's a new one out, and it takes this idea to a whole other level (literally):

### **LAWNMOWER PARENT**

What have we come to understand as the helicopter parent?

- They hover over their kids.
- At the first sign of DANGER they either parachute in or airlift the kid out.
- They make a lot of noise.
- The air they displace ruffles a lot of feathers.

So, if those are some of the characteristics of helicopter parents, what are lawnmower parents like?

- They mow over their kids.
- In addition, they mow down anything that gets in their way.

***By cutting the grass short,  
they suppress  
any possibility of growth.***

- They are cutting with their words and actions – not only toward their kids, but their kids' friends, parents of their kids' friends, teachers, coaches, the list goes on...
- They think by mowing "the grass," they'll give their kids a smooth, comfortable path through life.

DANGER, DANGER...

## ***What happens when we make things too easy for our kids?***

- Certain muscles atrophy, while others don't grow in the first place.
- Our kids can begin to believe the lie that the world really does revolve around them.
- Spoiled...rotten...is that the fruit you want borne in your kids' lives?
- Alienation from others. Human existence is predicated on relationship. Lawnmower parenting alienates and tears at relationship.

## ***Sometimes the blade on the lawnmower gets set so low that we kill the grass...***

I've done quite a lot of reading and my own observation and research on generations. There is an emerging trend: some parents are showing up at job interviews with their kids...Put yourself in the interviewer's position. Honestly, parents at an interview with the applicant – this is a total non-starter. *No way am I hiring this kid!*

## ***No parent INTENDS (sets out) to have lawnmower IMPACT.***

None of us want to intentionally stifle or “kill” our kids. If we consider the potential impact, maybe we won't act as lawnmowers in the first place...

***The best tool to combat  
a lawnmower mentality?  
VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT.***

Let me explain. Eight years ago, our daughter was a senior in high school. Rather than go directly to university, she took a gap year. She was an au pair in Switzerland for a year. Mid-way through the year, we were on Skype with her. She was shoulder-shaking crying...not characteristic of our daughter. She was literally so distraught she was unable to put a complete sentence together. She was really struggling living with the family whose kids she was nannying. I wanted to reach through the computer and put my arms around her – or, parachute in and set the family straight and bring my daughter home. At that moment, a voice whispered,

***“Don’t you dare!  
Something way bigger  
than you know  
is going on here!”***

I had to practice VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT. And by doing so, my daughter battled through a dark time in her young life. She moved on to be a nanny with another Swiss family and had an incredible second half of her year abroad.

***Her perseverance through adversity  
helped her discover who she is,  
not who we wanted or***

***expected her to be.***  
***The fruit of that adversity***  
***will last for the rest of her life.***

I'm so grateful for that whisper, at that moment, to not be a helicopter or lawnmower parent. And I'm glad that, at least in that case, I wasn't...

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