



***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...