

## Role Modeling Is a Powerful Teacher

Dr. Ron Kaiser January 18, 2014 No Comments

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Hi every one this is doctor Ron Kaiser with your July 2013 podcast from The Mental Health Gym. I hope that this month finds you enjoying good health, a positive attitude and a true enjoyment of the season whether it be summer or winter depending on which hemisphere you reside in. This month's podcast is entitled "Role modeling is a powerful teacher".

It's something I had been meaning to talk about for quite a while and I think it's obviously kind of important so let's get started. Do you remember the saying "do as I say not as I do", it's kind of the oath of the hypocrite. We used to hear more about it in past years, people have tended to shy away from choosing the hypocrites. You can see this with a lot of parents, a lot of young parents, who as they start to have children or as their children begin to take after them, the parents may go into patterns of changing certain habit behaviors.

It's not unusual to see young adults either contemplating having children or already having them, who decide to stop smoking, moderate their drinking, learn to drive a little more safely, tend to watch their language a little more and do a little less testing the limits of the law as one might do when they were teenager or as they are moving out into creating a timing for themselves as a young adult. And the reason for that is quite simple, many of us don't want our children to pick up our bad habits and one of the best ways in which to do that is to be positive role models for them.

I have heard of more than one parent say you know I am really glad that my child does not take after me but role modeling in the home is not the only place where role modeling takes place. If you are a leader in a group, if you are in the work place and have friends or followers you know they consider you a role model and most people pick up on that. So that they try to exemplify good behavior in the work place, if you want your employees, if you want your coworkers to function in a particularly positive way then it becomes very important to treat them appropriately and to demonstrate good work habits.

Now that stuff is pretty obvious but what I would like to spend a few minutes on is something a little more subtle in terms of role modeling and that is the role modeling of attitudes. A lot of people who pay close attention to the fact that their behavior can be pretty appropriate in many circumstances so that they don't display bad language, they don't violate the law, they don't get drunk, things of that nature, sometimes forget that their attitude, how they convey a sense of optimism or positive thinking also becomes one of the factors involved in role modeling, thus some people who are very conscious of how their behavior affect others tend to forget that their negative attitudes also can be passed along to children, other family members, friends ,co-workers, people who may be influenced by you at work or in organizations and so on .So if you are the type of person who tends to be pessimistic who tends to feel that you have little control over the ability to make positive changes in your life, if you tend to be argumentative, if you tend to be sarcastic, I know people who will put down their spouse in front of other family members even though they purport to love them.

These kinds of attitudes, the notion that it's okay to convey something negative whether it be criticism whether it be pessimism, the notion that it's okay is not okay .The reality is not only does it make you feel

pretty lousy to display a negative attitude and to feel negative inside but you are also impacting upon others .Depression is one of those disorders that has a heavy environmental contribution. Certainly there are indications that biological factors can play a role but we also know that in many cases appropriate psychotherapy can reduce depression and restore emotional health even without medication, so it's very important to recognize not only impacting upon yourself, your only physiology, and your own ability to do things, but also you are impacting upon others when you think in terms of negativism. Try not to, it's not healthy.

It's very important to think in terms of what can go right because that impacts on your entire attitude and it impacts upon the influence that you have on others. When I used to do testing of children in the past and I did it on an individual basis I would run into kids who at some points would say you know I am not going to try, you know, then I would encourage them to try and so on you know ,guess, let's see if you can put an appropriate answer together and they would say well I was taunt if you don't know don't guess, what a terrible lesson that is if you don't know don't guess if you don't know you should try may be it will come out alright you can learn from that, you will learn nothing if you don't try, that's pretty clear.I think another you know lousy attitude that's conveyed some time is the notion is that I always think the worst does that if something good happens I will be surprised and I will be happy.

There is really no down side to thinking positively before the event, even if you don't have a guarantee , you don't have to think in terms of the fact that you do have a guarantee, you know, if you buy a lottery ticket there is a really good chance that you are not going to win but you are certainly not going to win if you don't buy it ,if your sports team is not favored ,is a heavy underdog against somebody else you are not going to win if you don't play the game but occasionally underdogs win if they do play the game.

So it's real important to develop the type of attitude that will lead toward more positive thinking, more willingness to try and more comfort with the notion of not carrying around negativism, pessimism and depressed mood .If you do you, are not just affecting yourself but you are having an impact on others.

Keep in mind that role modeling is a very powerful teacher. Hope this made sense to you and as always I would like to hear from you with any thoughts, comments that you may have with respect to these podcasts, always am happy to hear your comments with respect to blogs and newsletters and other things you may find at the mental health gym. So until next month this is Dr. Ron Kaiser its good taking with you, and look forward to speaking with you again in August.