

## Is America Facing A Parenting Crisis?

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It has happened again. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. Another deranged young man has entered a school, with the intent of killing a bunch of people and going out in infamy. It has become predictable, as has the news coverage and political rhetoric to do along with these events.

But wait; there wasn't just one school shooting; there were two. Everyone is talking about the Santa Fe High School Shooting in Texas. But nobody is talking about the one that happened in Dixon, Illinois. Perhaps that's because of the old newsroom adage, "if it bleeds, it leads;" although I wouldn't be surprised to find that the reason the Dixon School shooting isn't getting any press is because it doesn't match the liberal narrative that the leftstream media loves to push.

The Dixon shooter didn't manage to kill anyone. That's because Mark Dallas, a 15-year veteran police officer, who was assigned to work as the school resource officer, was on hand. Reacting to the shooter properly, Dallas ran to the sound of shooting and stopped the shooter, by shooting him with his own service firearm.

In this, Mark Dallas did what resource officers and other police are supposed to do in an active shooter event, protect the people. In this case, he protected a lot of students, unlike the officer who didn't respond to the shooter in the Parkland, Florida shooting which has gotten so much press.

But there's no way the majority of the press is going to give Officer Dallas the kudos he deserves. The problem for them is that this story proves the point that the best defense against a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun, just like the Sutherland Springs church shooting and a number of other similar events proves. The only victim in this case was the shooter himself.

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I suppose one could write off the press' reaction to the Dixon shooting as not being newsworthy from the sense that "everything worked as it should have." The perpetrator was stopped by the police and nobody other than the perpetrator was hurt. There's nothing to shock anyone there. Just like there was nothing to shock anyone in the Forest High School shooting in Florida, one month beforehand. While there was one victim injured before the school resource officer could stop him, that injury wasn't even life threatening. Just too boring for the news to bother covering.

In selecting the news that the public sees, the news media has incredible power. Even if they didn't spin everything to their personal political slant, ignoring news stories about heroic acts by the police, which prevented these gunmen from accomplishing their nefarious goals, the news makes things sound worse than they actually are.

### Reactions are Typical

You could just about write a script for the reactions to these events now, pre-planning the responses from the various interested parties, especially the press and politicians. Most of that is coming out of the political left, who are once again clamoring for gun control, as they always do.

As part of that, liberal talking heads are once again attacking a cherished American institution, the

National Rifle Association; an organization which I have been a member of for years. Their claim that the NRA's lobbying is responsible for causing mass shootings is preposterous. While the NRA does spend money on lobbying for laws that are in line with their organization's goals, they have only spent \$45.9 million in the last 20 years. That's \$2.3 million per year, a mere pittance in lobbying terms.

Yet the left continues to vilify the right, as they do in everything. The NRA is merely the biggest target in this particular arena, so they receive the most broadsides against them. Were leftists to really look into the NRA, they would find that it is made up of law-abiding citizens and that it was the NRA which proposed and lobbied for the current system of background checks. Before that, there was nothing.

But as anyone who really knows anything about guns knows, no gun control law will stop mass killings. Such events predate the invention of firearms and still exist in places where private ownership of firearms is prohibited. Criminals will use whatever means necessary to achieve their aims; and breaking laws to do so doesn't mean a thing to them.

The recent Santa Fe shooting is a perfect case in point. The perpetrator was 17 years old, which meant that he could not legally own firearms. So he stole his father's. His principle firearm was a sawed-off shotgun, which is illegal. He also carried a revolver, which he couldn't own either. Finally, he was carrying a molotov cocktail, which is legally defined as a bomb and is therefore illegal. Since he broke so many laws already, what new laws could have stopped this?

But of course, the left goes after their usual boogeymen, the AR-15 sporting rifle, "high capacity" magazines, gun shows, and background checks. They don't care what happens; nor do they care if their proposed new laws will actually change things for the better. They just care about getting rid of guns.

But will that solve anything? Sadly, no. There is ample evidence to prove that disarming the population doesn't stop criminals from being criminals. All it does is ensure that there isn't anyone like Stephen Willeford, who stopped the Sutherland Springs shooter with his AR-15, the same basic type of firearm the killer was using.

## We Need to Get to the Root of the Problem

Information is already coming out about the Santa Fe High School shooter. Like so many of the others in whose footsteps he walks, this shooter was a very troubled young man, who couldn't cope with life's problems. Rather than dealing with those problems, he decided to punish those he felt were responsible: his classmates, teachers and a girl who turned him down for a date.

It is already clear that the shooter had been planning this horrific event for some time, another thing that is typical in these cases. Yet for some reason, it appears at this time, that nobody seemed to notice. This differs from the Parkland shooting, in that law-enforcement authorities in the Parkland case had been warned about that shooter multiple times. That tragedy was more a failure of law-enforcement, than anything else.

But in both cases, as in many others, there is a more basic failure that took place; a fault in parenting. Where are the parents of these young men? Why are they not seeing what is going on in the lives of their children and recognizing the danger they are to their classmates and society in general?

I've had children. They're grown up now and managed to make it through the trials of their teen years without shooting anyone. That's in a home where guns are the norm, where I carry concealed and

where all of my children know how to shoot. While I am sure that they all had things happen in their lives which might have caused the thought of picking up a firearm to protect themselves or to exact revenge, I'm also sure that they wouldn't have allowed that thought to stay in their heads.

As a responsible parent, I intruded in my children's lives. I barged into their bedrooms. I looked in their dressers. My wife and I got on their social media accounts to see what they were posting and who they were following. We knew our children's friends, and became surrogate parents for them as well.

My oldest daughter worked for Chick-Fil-A while in high school. Of the 50 or so teens working there, I was the only parent who took the time to get to know the other kids that my daughter worked with. I'd stop to talk to them, learned at least some of their names, answered their questions and asked some of my own. When they would try to give me free food, I'd turn it down, providing them with a good example of being a responsible adult. At times, I even acted as a counselor for them in their problems. I was involved.

Where were the involved parents in the lives of these young men and so many others like them? For that matter, where are parents in the lives of countless other children and youths, who struggle with life's problems on their own, because they don't have an adult they feel that they can talk to?

The sheriff's department in the county I live in tells me that there are 87 known criminal gangs in this county. Those gangs exist because the young people who create them and join them are trying to form a family for themselves, because they feel like they don't have one. Ask any psychologist who has studied gangs, that's what they'll tell you.

I understand that young people are troubled; they all are. I understand how hard it is, when you aren't accepted; I was there too. I understand the feeling of hopelessness that drives our youth to suicide; especially those who are socially marginalized. I can even understand the desire to lash out at those who seem to be the source of your problem. I felt that a time or two myself. But that doesn't excuse anyone. An important part of maturity is the ability to control our emotions, rather than allowing our emotions to control us.

What I can't excuse, is parents who allow their children to get to this point, and don't do anything about it. Parenting is hard; it requires work; it requires time. If someone isn't willing to put that effort into their children's lives, maybe they should avoid becoming parents.

It doesn't really take all that much effort to see that something is troubling your child. All it takes is interest in them. Yet I see cases of children all around me, whose parents don't have enough interest in their lives to see what is going on. Only a miniscule percentage of those children will grow up to be mass killers, but even that small an amount is unacceptable, especially when it is preventable.

My oldest daughter just gave birth to her firstborn, a little girl. I'm not worried about her becoming a mass killer or even a gang member, because I know that my daughter and son-in-law are going to be involved in her life. Not only that, but she's got two sets of grandparents who will be there for her as well. She will receive the love and attention she needs to get through the tough times in her life.

Sadly, she is probably in the minority in the area where we live. While there are many wonderful people around here, there are far too many who are just too busy with their own lives, to invest in the lives of their children as they should.

Even sadder than that, are the countless single mothers who are trying to make it on their own, being both mom and dad to their kids, while working two or three jobs to feed them and buy them clothing. Many of those children won't have the least idea of the sacrifices their mother is making for them until it is too late. By then, she will have spent her life for her children and not been able to be enough.

Mothers can't be both mom and dad. Regardless of what the political correctness of our time says, men and women are different. We look at things differently. We react to them differently. We have different strengths and weaknesses. We even discipline our children differently.

I applaud those single mothers who are trying to do right by their children. Some even succeed. But the reality is that our prisons are filled with inmates who are there because they didn't have a father figure to teach them how to be a man. That's not the mother's fault, that's the father's.

How can a boy learn to be a man, by watching his mother? He needs a godly example of a man; one who will stand up for what is right and at least try to do the right thing. But with the high rate of absentee fathers in our country today, the only example of a man that many boys have is sports stars and rap singers. Not hard-working men who obey the law and take care of their families.

If we want to fix the problem of school shootings and other mass shootings, we have to start at the roots of the problem. Those are the breakdown of the family and the breakdown of morality in our country. No law is going to fix that. No amount of gun control can make a change. We're dealing with hearts here, and the only thing that can do a work on a human heart, is another human heart filled with love.

I'm not talking about the kind of love that gives the child everything they want either. That's merely a substitute for real love. No, the kind of love I'm talking about is the one which invests time and interest in the child, through all stages of their life. It's the kind of love that caused Derek Redmond's father to run out on the track and help his son finish the race, when he was injured during the 400 meter race at 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

But Redmond's father wasn't just there to help his son across the finish line. He was there every day of his life. Redmond attributes a lot of his success to his parents, who cheered for him, supported him, and most importantly, gave him the discipline to become a winner.

This is what most children are missing today. If we are ever going to see an end to these tragic murders, it's not going to come from disarming law-abiding citizens. It's going to come from raising the next generation to be law-abiding as well. That can only happen, when parents return to fulfilling their god-given role of raising their children, disciplining them and teaching them enduring values.



## Simple Shooting Hacks

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