

Don't Blame Ronald

Literally as I sat down to compile my thoughts on Corporate Accountability International's (CAI) demand that Ronald McDonald be removed as the McDonald's icon; I was able to catch a portion of a television special called *Inside the McDonald's Empire*.

I found it intriguing, but it also fanned my frustrations. I couldn't believe that after all the hoopla about McDonald's removing the toys, they were now being attacked for their icon—an icon that critics say markets towards children.

What happened to parent responsibility? What happened to education? Why have parents gotten so lazy that they feel that eating out of a window is the only option? Don't say "because parents are busy". We already know my thoughts on that excuse.

It seems, to me, that too many parents nowadays are looking for someone to blame for how their children are turning out. Wake up!

When I was a kid, I remember enjoying McDonald's. I loved the play area, the hamburgers, the ice cream and of course, the toys. However, I was raised that moderation is the key. I've passed that on to my own children. They know that a hamburger every once in a while isn't going to kill them, but that it's important to eat healthy meals a majority of the time.

One woman being interviewed on the television special said, "He [her son] will scream 'McDonald's, McDonald's!' and won't stop until we agree to go to McDonald's." She said they eat there at least two times a week. Excuse me?! I wanted to jump through the television and scream, "Who runs your household?"

Just like every other child in America, my children are bombarded with the television commercials, fun packaging and vibrant billboards of candy bars, fast food joints and every child's dream eateries like Chucky Cheese's and IT'Z Pizza. However, you will find my children getting large portions of salad at that salad bar along with their pizza when visiting those pizza buffet fun lands. They know that keeping it balanced is important. Quite honestly, my children have been raised so that their pallets actually appreciate wholesome foods and they actually *enjoy* salads and vegetables.

Instead of attacking McDonald's for marketing to children, CAI needs to launch a campaign to educate parents. If parents stop taking their children to unhealthy places, those places will be forced to adapt.

By saying that Ronald is to blame for obesity, is to say that we are such weak people that we can't help but fall under his hypnosis. We are stronger than that! Parents, take responsibility for teaching your children how to live in moderation—how to indulge without over doing it.

If parents feel like they don't know how to offer their children other options, learn from someone who does.

- Higher a nutritional counselor.

- Find local seminars at churches or colleges that offer advice on teaching your family healthy, balanced ways of eating.
- Read Simply Cy-Fair's own Health Tip Tuesdays blog.
- Visit your local library and pick up some healthy cookbooks like Eating For Life or books similar to Eat This Not That.
- Subscribe to magazines such as Clean Eating and Eating Well.
- "Follow" or "Like" people and companies that can offer you advise. Some of my favorites are <http://jen-fit-training.blogspot.com> and <http://greenlitebites.com>.

The information is out there. It's not Ronald's fault. *We* are responsible for how our children eat, how they learn to find balance, how they look at food and whether or not they will understand that they have the ability to control their decisions.