

## **Have Our Standards Changed?**

My husband took me to Fogo De Choa early one evening recently for a nice dinner. My husband was wearing slacks and a nice shirt and I wore dressy jeans, a nice top and high heels.

I noticed there were many children eating with their parents. My immediate thought was about how our economy must be better in Houston than other places since people were able to afford to take their kids to such an expensive restaurant. Very nice. Then my pleasant thoughts shifted to not so pleasant as I noticed to clothing and behavior of the children.

Many of the children were wearing attire appropriate for the beach rather than a higher-end restaurant. They wore flip flops for a \$50/person meal? Is eating out not special enough to those families to warrant dressing in appropriate clothing?

Then I noticed their manners--less than desirable, to say the least.

My husband and I began to discuss how formality has been lost and how that might coincide with the lack of respect we see more and more among the younger generations now. Could it also be partially linked to the sense of entitlement also often seen more with those generations?

I think so.

Children learn a variety of things from the formality certain occasions deserve.

Dressing "to the Nines" for eating out teaches that it's special and is a treat, not a given right. It teaches them to take pride in themselves. Children are all beautiful and should be taught they deserve to be framed by well put together clothing. This can also

teach them that looking nice doesn't have to be expensive. So, they can learn that during the financial ups and downs of life, they still have the ability to dress nicely and take pride in themselves.

If children were taught to respect themselves more, perhaps they wouldn't post as many questionable things on Facebook as they do now. (I digress and will save that for another blog. :) )

Formality teaches structure, discipline and gives children the security they crave. It requires discipline to carry out the various tasks encompassed by the structure of formality, and the structure offers security for children in its predictability. It has been shown that children thrive under structured environments. They know what to expect and take comfort in knowing future outcomes.

They will need these skills and abilities in the work place as they interview for positions and interact with coworkers. Their work ethic and discipline in their future work place is established at an early age.

They'll also need these tools for dating. Learning to respect and revere themselves will help them respect the person they're dating.

So, how do children learn formality and manners? They are taught by example. Do you tell your children to not talk with their mouths full, while chewing on your own food? As parents, we need to make sure we're not sending mixed messages to our children.

Show them how to take pride in themselves by taking pride in yourself. Teach them to be gracious and thankful by indeed being gracious and thankful. Teach them politeness by allowing them to see you expressing politeness to others, as well as them.

The saying, "You are who you surround yourself with" applies not only to your child's friends, but to you, as well.

