

The Kids are Amazing

For many American children, the floor has become their closet. This drives me crazy. I walk into a room where an urchin resides and there are clothes scattered everywhere. Believe me, I know the passive-aggressive tactics that kids use to torture their parents, but something else is going on here.

More than a few times, I've heard parents describe their offspring as "amazing." If you look that word up you will see this meaning: "To cause great wonder or astonishment." That's what amazing means. So occasionally, I will ask the parent of an "amazing" child to tell me exactly why that word applies to the tyke. I mean what is the "great wonder" associated with him or her?

"He just is," comes the usual reply, along with a look that could kill a cactus.

Many children fully realize their parents see them as astonishing creatures and incorporate that into their daily presentations. That is, they throw their stuff on the floor because if you are truly amazing you can pretty much do what you want. Right?

When I confront the urchins about strewn clothing, I sometimes get a blank look. So I read their minds. And the brain wave comes back this way: "why are you bothering me? This is interfering with my texting. Someone will pick up my clothes, and if they don't, so what?"

American children are being done a great disservice by adult society. For reasons only Dr. Phil understands, many parents have decided to attach their own self-images to their children. So if the kid is "amazing," that means the father and mother are amazing as well. That's what's going on.

The huge downside is that it takes a lot of work and

perseverance to become amazing, and most human beings never reach that status. But children are generally not told that. They are rarely confronted with the fact that life is tough and to succeed you have to be honest, industrious and disciplined. The discipline part kicks in when you hang up your clothing.

The disturbing thing about childhood these days is that some parents and grandparents excuse a lot of questionable behavior because they want their kids to approve of them. It all goes back to amazing again. If your extra-special kid doesn't like you at the moment, maybe you aren't top notch.

Americans who have parents raised during the Great Depression or World War II understand how drastically things have changed on the home front. My father did not care a whit whether I liked him and it would have been unthinkable for him to pick up my stuff. There were rules in the house and they were enforced.

So today as an adult, I still pick up my stuff and recycle and keep a neat house. That is routine and not at all amazing.

But I'm not sure that tradition will survive the next generation.