



Competitiveness

This follows on from the previous article 'Copycat'.



We live in a very competitive world which can consume us as individuals or as a society. Think back to your school days or the dynamics between the siblings in your family. Some children will aspire to their ambitions because of their abilities, whereas others might have the same aspirations but not the ability to achieve. My eldest daughter was an academic child and not an artist, but her art teacher always wrote a 'C' for attainment but 'A' for effort. She never felt a

failure in art.

I would suggest that having an overall picture for each child helps us to major on what's important for our children as they bring their reports home or enter their competitions or apply for universities. This will help them to achieve their best. It's worth remembering that it's their best, not our best. We need to ask the questions, 'Who is my child?', 'What do they enjoy the most in life?', 'What makes them feel good about themselves?' and 'Can I find a way of encouraging them to accept themselves with their own limitations and potential in a manner that makes them acceptable to their equals and peers?'

Talking is so important but to talk meaningfully requires time, and time is a costly commodity. Plan interesting outings to expand their appreciation of life, the world they live in and the people they mix with. Show them how to accept those who are different from them, culturally, physically and educationally. Show them the value of encouragement, acceptance and forgiveness, toward themselves and others. It's not good to boast or lord it over those who are less fortunate in life. Our primary aim, as those responsible for young lives, is to teach fairness, how to win and lose well and to be kind. There's nothing wrong with competitiveness but it must never be at the expense of devaluing another person.

Merle Sparkes