

Put on the swimming trunks, life is about taking a dip

By Tim Linscott

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There are a lot of things right in this society—and a lot of things wrong.

I try to focus on the positive aspects of life. It is easier to continue to move upward and forward than pull yourself out of the muck and try to go forward.

One thing that has bothered me in today's society is the 'everyone is a winner' attitude.

My middle daughter, Olivia, was in karate last year and when she started out there were several tournaments available to her in the Omaha area.

One of tournaments that actually bothered me was one where all the participants received huge trophies. No matter how well your child did, they received the exact same prize as all the other children.

Organizers of the tournament explained that this was to encourage the children to keep up with their martial arts studies and prove that they all were winners.

'No one child was better than the others in this division,' one of the organizers told me.

My daughter spent weeks working on her forms, practicing nightly to get things perfect. I sparred with her several times a week, watching her punch and kick and look for openings in an opponent's defenses. She was prepared and ready to go to the tournament.

At the tournament she did well. She had her forms perfect and was literally one punch away from getting to the finals of the sparring division.

She received a very nice trophy—as did all the other children.

This is where I began to see things going wrong in our society. She worked hard on getting her forms down perfect and worked hard on her sparring. She did equally as well as the kid that did nothing to prepare for the tournament, had sloppy form and didn't even try in the sparring.

The kids that didn't do much effort and the kids that put forth the effort were treated the same in the tournament.

It was explained that in older divisions, there were first, second and third place finishes and that each child would receive at least a participant medal. To me, however, by the time they reach the older divisions, they are accustomed to having equal treatment and the 'that's not fair' attitude is too prevalent.

I think teaching children that you can go through life without really trying and someone will bail you out eventually is wrong.

The real world does not work this way, you have to work hard to accomplish things in life.

In college our newspaper was put together over the course of a weekend. You learned, gathered news, formed ideas and prepared for the last weekend of the month, when the entire issue would be put together.

My very first weekend of layout, I sat in class and our instructor, Jean Dederman, said, "It is Friday afternoon gang. The paper is due Monday morning."

And with that she put on her coat and started heading out the door.

We all looked at her with panic in our eyes.

"Hey, wait. Where are you going?" we all asked.

“Aren’t you going to help us with layout? You aren’t staying?” we pleaded.

“In the real world, an editor or publisher won’t sit and hold your hand. They will tell you to get something done and expect it to be done,” Jean said. “Now get to work.”

We went to work immediately. After an entire weekend of sleeping on the floor, drinking countless pots of coffee and putting pages together, we finished the paper in the wee hours on Monday.

This process would go on all through college for me, a process I have never regretted.

When I got out into the real world, sure enough, a superior would ask me to complete a task and expect it done, not holding my hand or helping me in any way.

That is the real world, folks.

Fred Arnold, my publisher in Fairbury, purchased the Wymore Arbor State. The paper needed to be re-designed, changes needed to be made and a direction was needed for the publication.

He came into my office one day, tossed a ring of keys on my desk and said, “Go run Wymore. Don’t screw up.”

That was all he needed to tell me because I was prepared to win or lose, fail or succeed in the endeavor because I had been trained to prepare myself for these situations.

Life isn’t always fun or fair, but it is life.

I think teaching our children that things aren’t always fair is crucial and if they don’t like how things are, change them through the necessary channels.

I had a farmer tell me once, “My dad always told me, ‘work hard, live honestly and you’ll be fine.’” I believe those words. Life doesn’t always give you a fair shake, but when dealt with a bad hand, be prepared to lose, learn from that mistake and come back stronger, wiser and a little more thick skinned.

Most of all, win, lose or draw, live honestly and work hard.