

08-17-18 Practice Makes Perfect

The saying goes “*Practice makes perfect*”. I ask, “What was the lesson being practiced?”

I saw a perfect example of practice recently with an 18-month-old toddler. She was visiting a cousin and a new friend. Sometimes they shared; sometimes they didn’t. That is to be expected. Looking out for oneself is not necessarily selfish. It is survival and that needs to be taught and practiced as well as sharing.

The little girls who have been out of the womb for less than two years, have learned to speak, to feed themselves, beginning to dress on their own, learned routines and to watch constantly the non-verbal communications of what is going on. They are always watching and don’t miss much. It is truly amazing what they constantly accomplish!

One of the accomplishments that day, learned mostly from imitation, or so I imagine, was playing house. The household toy receiving lots of attention was the plastic kitchen at just the right height for them. The youngest of the three saw her opportunity for using the kitchen all by herself and she went for it! After touching this and that and moving a few things about, she “turned on the water” by turning the plastic handle. She then proceeded to “wash her hands” with the invisible water coming out of the faucet. She stroked her hands around and up and down, each hand rubbing the other. She then gave them a shake and “turned the water off”. I was amazed! I have seen older children who did not know how to get their hands clean and there was this little bit of a human doing so well!

I wish people handling our food in commercial establishments washed their hands as carefully as that young child. Unfortunately, I have dubbed a quick wiggling of the finger tips under running water (no soap) as “the chef’s hand wash”. Don’t get me wrong, I am not saying that is how all chefs wash their hands. Many years ago, I did have to spend quite a while at a restaurant correcting a chef on the lack of hand washing and improper/insufficient hand washing. That was the day I dubbed it the chef’s wash. Then, of course, there are all those cooking shows with the touching of the food with bare hands, the occasional quick dabble with water, and back to fixing the food, just-right-on-the-plate, followed by a wipe on the apron.

Ah, the apron. Is it clean? Who cleans it and how often? Are teenagers given the responsibility of bringing it home to launder? We all know how often teenagers do an excellent job with their laundry and how carefully they keep clean laundry separate from dirty and, of course, always off the floor!

I thought of the apron issue last Friday when I picked up pizza for my grandchildren in another town. I had watched the man make the pizza through a wall opening, although I could not see his hands and I have no idea as to his handwashing procedures but at least pizza is

cooked. That is what health agents consider a safety measure before consumption. And that is one reason I like pizza!

As I was getting in my car to leave with my safety-measured-pizza, I saw the pizza man enter the parking lot. He walked over to a picnic table to take his break. He still was wearing his flour and sauce covered red apron. Ugh...I really don't like to see that. But how do I un-see it?

At least my pizza was cooked. As I said, it had that safety measure. My grandchildren would be safe but how would I fare with the salad I ordered? I can only hope the staff washed their hands as well as that toddler.

What we practice is what we were taught or what we teach ourselves and demand of ourselves to practice.

The love of learning is not a chore to the infant. It is a must. It is a wonder. It is survival. It is a yearning to know more. It is something for adults to remember and imitate. Thus, the adult can take a lesson from the child.

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