

ALERT: Viral Family Pandemic- You Might Already Be Infected



There is a family pandemic that has been around for centuries called “affluenza.”

af·flu·en·za / ,afloo'enzə/ noun

the inability for an individual to understand the consequences of their actions because of their social status and/or financial privilege.

(Source: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/affluenza.asp>)

Affluenza is a social condition of family entitlement that causes many families around the world to become infected with a dysfunctional relationship with material possessions. The pursuit of financial gain entraps family members with perpetual dissatisfaction and prevents them from developing empathy for other families with lesser means.

The rising generation who grow up in an environment with everything they want with little to no effort in return can lose sight of the value of hard work, personal achievement, and self-worth. The family relationships may erode over time as the other family members distance themselves from the person who exhibits individualistic behaviors without genuine care of others. Over time, this may lead to the deterioration of a family's unity and continuity especially when the first generation passes away and financial inheritance is on the table.

What is a cure to this condition? Below are three ways family leaders can inoculate this virus from their families:

1. Establish strong family values and share them with their family.

When the family leader integrates values into their everyday life, such as patience, kindness, love, respect, it is more likely the rising generation will honor the same values and may choose to integrate them into their adult life for their own reasons. Furthermore, family leaders can create opportunities for the family members to live out the family values together through shared experiences.

2. Follow the “Golden Rule.”

The “Golden Rule” of life is to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” One way for family leaders to daily live out the Golden Rule and vaccinate against affluenza is for them to recognize and teach the rising generation that every family’s situation is different and to help them understand that it is important to help others in need. This develops an empathy for others, which often instills a feeling of personal gratitude. It also helps the rising generation recognize that an abundance of resources can be used as a tool to assist others, which also causes a positive emotional enrichment.

3. Vaccinate from the top down.

The order of vaccine distribution for COVID-19 is first being administered to the older generations and then to the younger ones. Likewise, it is important for family leaders to first recognize their own responsibility to combat affluenza by reflecting on their own attitudes and behaviors. Then, once the family leaders begin to combat the problem, it positively affects the rising generation, regardless of their age, because they are watching how the family leaders conduct themselves, exhibit their habits, and how they treat other people in society.

A person cannot predetermine what kind of family they will be raised in, but the family leader can create the kind of family they want the rising generation raised in.