

Summary:

October 10, 2011

Topic: Top 20 Training: Discovering the power of choice

Speaker: Paul Barnabei

Top 20 Parents: Develop Potential: a power within us that wants to make a positive difference

Live above the line:

- cultivate a positive view on life
- energetic moods and emotions
- Focused on what is important
- Hopeful and optimistic

VS. Below the line:

- Negative view on life
- depressing moods
- powerless victim of events

Being below the line isn't a bad thing; it's a human thing.

Our kids are developing mental habits at home based on "where we live" above, or below the line.

Awareness of where we are relative to "the line" will allow us to re-align our attitudes, for more positive outcomes.

Mr. Barnabei defined several strategies for "bouncing back" from below the line (called "trampolines".)

They include physical activity, pets, hobbies, listening to music, and reading, among others. He encouraged us to be aware of "indicators" in ourselves and in our family members, which would signal when we are "below the line". He urged dynamic action to improve our internal mental state, which will cause external conditions to improve. He also has a strategy called "submarining," which is going below the line with dignity, by explaining and apologizing to those around you that your mood is influencing your actions.

Mr. Barnabei continued with another topic exploring the word, "stupid," and contending that it doesn't exist except when we allow ourselves to be equated with it. He described reactions to feeling stupid: withdrawal; emotions like embarrassment and anger; defensiveness; etc. He urged us to teach our children that in order to succeed, we all need to fail (which can "feel" like being stupid.) He encouraged us to help kids discover how they are smart. Self-awareness is what we are after. We want our children to discover more and more of their inner life.

He contends: if children think they are stupid, they will achieve less. "Stupid" doesn't exist; real experiences are what exist. "Stupid" destroys curiosity. Confusion is necessary to learning. Celebrate confusion. Failure is a principal of learning. If our kids are afraid to fail they will never venture outside their comfort zone. Schools determine *which* kids are smart. They should determine *how* kids are smart.

Mr. Barnabei closed with a strategy called an "instant replay": when you realize you have had an interaction that you could have handled differently. Basically, you ask if you can "do it over". Then you rewind and say it the way you realize you should have said it in the first place, being sensitive to everyone's moods relative to "the line."

Following the presentation, he sold copies of several of his books, and buttons with supportive words that were made by a young man with "special needs" in St. Paul. Mr. Barnabei emphasized how this young man channels his orderly nature into products that are appreciated for their messages of encouragement, and how he inspires others by living "above the line" every day.