

The Counselor's Corner

“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown” (Shakespeare, William, *King Henry VIII*)

During Christmas vacation, I started watching a series called *The Crown*, which is about Queen Elizabeth II. Not only am I learning history, but I am beginning to understand the significance of Shakespeare's quote for all of us.

Royal titles bring to mind palaces, jewels, crowns, and coddled lifestyles, rather than responsibility and the inconvenience that comes with life after coronation. Some royals chose to forgo their titles like King Emperor Edward VIII who abdicated to marry a twice divorced American woman. The crown fell to his brother Albert, a man with a severe stutter problem, who was not thrilled with the title. However, he chose to accept rather than dishonor. He died at age 56, leaving his 25 year old daughter to assume the title. Normalcy stopped for this young woman, wife, and mother. Instantly there were changes in residency and family roles (all had to bow to her). When Elizabeth accepted the title of queen, she was forced to live in the public eye, and had to learn to deal with strong political figures, starting with Winston Churchill. Even though Elizabeth II was not mentally prepared to take on these challenges, she has worn the crown with dignity for 63 years. In some ways, her life is parallel to ours.

Americans do not have a royal birthright, but most of us do or will wear invisible crowns. For example, bosses have titles that come with lots of responsibilities and situations (good and bad) that are often unimagined. Good bosses lead, affirm, and work side by side with their employees when an organization encounters a crisis. They encourage teamwork, a productive work environment, and fairness. Even when they are at their best, bosses cannot escape confrontation. There will be employees who do not complete their work, who may steal, who will spread negativity. If a boss lets things go, respect from the employees diminishes and everyone loses.

In the world of education, principals are bosses. They need to inspire and lead, but they must confront teachers, other staff members, parents, and students when things are not going well. Ignoring issues that threaten the foundation of our school system or failing to help those who are not achieving to their potential is not a good thing. Some will not understand and may lash out at the leader rather than accept advice. Teachers are next in line. They have to make sure that students follow rules of behavior and do their work. In today's technological world, there are no secrets about what is happening educationally, because everything is posted. Yet, there will be some parents across the nation who will be dissatisfied when their children earn poor grades or receive a conduct referral. They will choose to assign blame to everyone else but the child or themselves. This is unfortunate. Enabling can deprive the child from growing up and learning about responsibility; thereby, defeating the goal of the parent to lead the child to independence. Teaching is rewarding, but the educational crown always brings out a few who choose dissent rather than support.

As parents, we are blessed. We are madly in love with our children, and they often bedazzle us into a state of wonderment. However, our crowns also came with unexpected and unpleasant duties. We had no idea our children could be so crabby, lazy, and disrespectful at times. We never imagined vomit duty, hospital runs, less than desirable report cards, laziness, and more. If we are to wear our crowns properly, we must put as much as we can on hold to nourish and lead our children. We must act like parents, not buddies. We need to shower our children with love, but we must give them reasonable consequences when they do things that are not in their best interests or the interests of the family. We must know their schedules, check their grades and planners, and trust their teachers. We may want to run away at times, let things go, or choose the easiest route. Like a king, we might want to abdicate! It is natural for us to mess up at times, but we can't make lax parenting our gold standard of operation. We must always reflect on the days when our cute, cuddly babies were born and we accepted the parenthood crowns. Let us wear them with pride, and let a higher power always guide us.

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