

## **Freedom comes with living an Accountable Life**

This morning my seven year old commented that he couldn't wait until he was older so that he could do as he wished. I asked him what he would do, to which he replied "I'd make a huge mess around the house!" When I asked him who would clean up the mess he promptly replied "You!" ..... Well now isn't that typical, - expecting the freedom to do what we want without taking the responsibility of what comes with that freedom?

In this age of "fast," "easy," "quick" it seems that we as a society have allowed ourselves to ignore the consequences that come with this approach to life. While there may seem to be freedom in making choices without considering the consequences, I believe that this freedom is short lived compared to the freedom that comes with choices where the consequences are considered and planned. Consider the obesity issue we are facing today. Every day there is a show on TV or an article in the paper addressing this crisis. The two main causes – poor diet and lack of exercise, underscore the much larger problem we are facing – the unwillingness to take full responsibility for our choices and decisions. We want to have the freedom to eat the fast, nutrient deficient foods, not put the effort into exercising and yet still have the slim, well cut bodies that go with healthy diet and exercise.

Living in a society that values freedom where we can have almost anything we want (if we are prepared to work hard enough for it) has led us to sometimes believe that we can have everything we want. This I believe is where we have gone off course. While I love the freedom of choice our society offers us, I believe that we do not do a very good job of teaching the awesome responsibility that goes with having that freedom. The entitlement we see in organizations and in the frivolous lawsuits are, I believe, a consequence of people willingly accepting the freedom to choose while refusing to accept the consequences for those choices.

If we accept that each choice comes with its own set of baggage – both good and not so good, and we take the time to consider, accept and plan for the implications of that baggage, then we are accepting responsibility for our choices. Today I chose to eat a cookie with my tea. In doing so I am aware that to lose that extra pound , I am now going to have to put in an extra round of exercise or give up on the idea of shedding that weigh. My freedom comes with taking full responsibility for the consequences of my choice. In doing so, instead of falling victim to an unconscious or ill considered choice (giving no thought to consequences), I have created further options for myself. The more accountable I am, the more freedom I create.

As for my son, given my strong feelings on this subject, his "You!" response opened the door to us having a lively debate. My hope is that in the end he is left with at least the glimmer of an understanding of how true freedom can only thrive when we are accountable.