

Introduction to VBP 01

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How does Values Based Parenting (VBP) work ?

Values Based Parenting is a tool for you - parents - to ensure your children develop and use the values and behaviours you want them to have. The Values Based Parenting program is aimed at pre-schoolers and primary school age children but has been used successfully with both children and youth (and occasionally with adult children in their 20s, still living at home).

Values Based Parenting takes a learning approach (that we are all learning and moving forward) so it is helpful if *learning* is one of the values in your family (see VBP Information Sheet: Family sayings 01.doc). Children take years to learn the information, skills, decision making and other resources they need for a well prepared start to their adult lives, but there is no rush, as most values and skills are important, not urgent. In Values Based Parenting we take our time, gradually building children's values and related skills throughout their childhood.

The Values Based Parenting program is supported by many resources (some enclosed), generally follows the process, below ('generally' because all families and children are different) and is explained in more detail in informative group sessions that include 'question and answer' time. The standard process uses numerous resources, and professional consultations if the parents choose to use them, to guide and support parents through six steps which are:

1. Parents clarify their values;
2. Parents learn about the VBP sequence: Values > Decisions > Behaviours > Safety;
3. Parents assign wanted behaviours to values, and identify unwanted behaviours;
4. Parents reward children for wanted behaviours and discourage unwanted behaviours;
5. Parents use simple learning experiences to help children learn how to make healthy decisions;
6. Parents link wanted behaviours to their family's values and reinforce across situations;
7. Parents repeat steps 3 > 6 for next value.

One parent described VBP as "a vehicle for parents to use to get to places easier and quicker than walking", and we agree with that description. How you drive the vehicle, what additions, modifications etc you make to it, are all up to you.

Values Based Parenting never tells you what your family values should be.

Benefits of Values Based Parenting

Values Based Parenting empowers parents by prompting them to think about their values and make more decisions based on their values.

Implementing Values Based Parenting usually:

- Gives most parents more confidence in their decision making and, with more clarity and confidence in decision making, reinforces the parent's role as the

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- natural leader/s of their family (see VBP Information Sheet: Natural Laws of Families.doc);
- Results in,
 - less conflict and debate with children about what should, and should not, happen in your family, therefore leaving more time for;
 - more harmonious activities and interactions in your family.

Background

Why was Values Based Parenting developed ?

Values Based Parenting was created in response to parents approaching Walsh and Associates (Clinical Psychologists) with concerns regarding their children's unwanted behaviour, or problem behaviour. However, Values Based Parenting soon developed to satisfy the needs of parents whose children had no persistent behaviour problems, and who were seeking a framework to gather many threads of their parenting into a small number of themes (values), making family conversations, decisions and boundaries more manageable.

The service to manage problem behaviour became Task Master, a module that operates within the larger service of Values Based Parenting.

How was Values Based Parenting developed ?

Values Based Parenting has two key sources of information:

- families;
- the science of psychology.

Adults have been parenting since there have been families – for hundreds of thousands of years and have usually done a good job, or a very good job. In recent decades we have all learned that some parents, and other men and women in positions of authority, do not act responsibly and use their power to abuse children. However, it is also true that most parents do a good job of parenting, and are generally open to ways of doing even better.

Values Based Parenting believes we should not lose sight of the good parenting that exists in most families. Hence, families are one source of useful information contained in Values Based Parenting: we have benchmarked certain practices (for example, encouragement, rewards and star charts - and a host of other methods) that many families demonstrate are effective, healthy tools for parenting.

For other topics (for example, internalisation of values, ratios of reward) we look to the science of psychology to show ways to manage different issues.

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Technological change

Industrial and technological developments have influenced all of us in some way. Some of the industrial and technological developments that have influenced families include:

Photography	1850s	At first on glass plates, then on paper and allowed people to see the first permanent images of themselves, or any view, as a very accurate image rather than a recreation of the image as a painting. The family photo album quickly became a significant feature of family life.
Film	1890s	At first, films were black and white, silent, only lasted for a few minutes and were for entertainment but soon were also used for documentary and also developed into much longer 'feature' films. Films portrayed families in many different situations.
Flight	1900s	From a wooden and fabric plane to motorised planes for World War I in just a few years, to massive jumbo jets today. Families can travel together much further, or be separated by greater distances, then ever before.
Vinyl records	1900s	Allowed most people to hear sounds from other environments for the first time. Pre-recorded sounds were generally musical and so music influenced many more people than before pre-recorded sounds. Families had greater exposure to a wider and wider range of music.
Radio	1920s	Before radio, people were only advised of news and other information through newsprint (if they could afford it and if it was distributed to the village), the town crier and gossip. Now families are advised of news, current affairs, gossip and other information in any room, in the car on through the mobile phone.
Film	1920s	In the 1920s technological developments allowed audiences to hear sound recorded with the 'moving picture', and 'talkies' - or modern movies - were born. Films were watched by families and, especially in recent decades portrayed dysfunctional families as comedy.
Film	1930s	In the 1930s movies were made in colour for the first time.
TV	1940s	Black and white TV allowed soap operas, news, current

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		affairs, game shows, feature films (till then only seen at theatres, then broadcast through TV) and many other programs to flourish. First available in USA and Europe in the 1940s, in Australia in the 1950s. Families quickly began watching TV together.
Colour TV	1970s	In the early 1970s colour TV gave more depth to previously black and white shows.
VHS Audio tapes	1970s	Instead of waiting for a film to be shown on TV, VHS allowed us to rent it from the late 1970s onward. Hence any family member could go down to the video shop and rent a movie. If there were limits on children's capacity to borrow R rated movies, they quickly disappeared. Audio tapes (magnetic tapes) allows up to record off the radio, and purchase music in a more mobile and less fragile format than vinyl.
DVD and CD	1980s	Music and film on much more stable and transportable formats.
Internet	1990s	Extraordinary access to information – and almost instantly. Only less than 20 years old and any family member can access anything on the internet unless they are supervised. Even so, when at friends houses etc, children may have unlimited access to all the content of the internet.

All of these amazing changes have occurred at the end of many tens of thousands of years of comparatively unremarkable technological development, followed by all of the above changes between 150 years ago and the last decade.

As a result of these changes we have more choices, a less arduous life and more pleasure (from music, films etc) but we also have more risk in our lives. At the beginning of the 21st century we are aware of more risk of harm to children (now accepted as widespread), serious injury from home appliances and electric tools, road death (which was non-existent until the very late 1800s), risk of children gaining access to pornography (easily available through the internet), being influenced through films (especially dysfunctional and/or unrealistic role models), violent lyrics of songs and so on. Most parents are concerned about managing the many messages children receive from outside of their family's influence, plus the increased physical risks that need to be managed when raising a family.

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Social change and parenting

There have been many changes in society in the last few decades, and it is useful to note how some of the changes have influenced families and parenting. Values Based Parenting does not put forward a point of view as to whether the changes described are desirable or not, but simply identifies the changes that have taken place, including changes in families, parenting and children's behaviour.

The decades since World War II (1939 – 1945) have seen enormous social change.

Set out below are just a few comparisons.

In the 1950s:

- The word 'damn' was not allowed to be broadcast, and only decades later we can hear all known swear words in the media;
- Full nudity on the screen (or in magazines) was prohibited, but those standards no longer apply and – even if they did – are no longer enforceable (see technology/internet, below);
- Violence in the media was limited, but today is brutal and gory - yet unrealistic in that it does not convey the real physical, or emotional, consequences of violence;
- Sex in the media was tame or non-existent (in the 1930s in Hollywood, regulations insisted that when a couple were kissing both had to keep at least one foot on the ground - to prevent them lying down), but today just about anyone can download sex from the internet or - if they are patient enough - purchase books on line;
- Very few children were precocious (a word we rarely hear these days) but this seems to be widespread.

Some people think that changes in public standards, and other social changes, have caused changes in parenting, family lifestyles and standards of acceptable behaviour for a child. Other people think that changes in public standards, and changes in parenting, family lifestyles and children's behaviour etc are coincidental, and are part of the same forces that create social change. Either way, changes have occurred in parenting roles, family lifestyles, technology, exposure to risk and other areas as summarised below.

Families have historically been two parents, plus children (sometimes, many children). The 'bread winner' was usually the father, and the mother usually stayed at home with the children and managed the home. Traditionally, fathers were somewhat remote, and mothers were the nurturers, however this has changed a great deal in recent times – many single parent families are headed by loving capable fathers (and 15% of single parents pensions are for fathers, more than three times the figure in the early 1980s).

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It is only in very recent history that children have had significant rights – in the 1800s (only about 150 years ago) there was great debate and conflict in England over laws that proposed to outlaw children as young as ten working in underground mines, and it was only in the 1970s that child abuse was considered seriously by the western world.

It took until the early 20th century for various professionals from Freud to Piaget to Vygotsky and others to suggest theories of children's development. Much research was done (particularly in the second half of the 20th century) to ultimately accept or reject those theories and it took until the 1950s until the teenage years were recognised as a clear stage of development.

Permissive parenting (that is, parenting with few rules or boundaries, letting children do what they want) emerged in the 1960s and was a popular ideology for a while. Then research and follow up studies showed that permissive parenting had poor (or very poor) results and it has become less common in recent decades, but is still practised by some people. In the new millennium other parents have questioned the motives of permissive parents: is permissive parenting a clear choice in parenting style (or parenting ideology ?), or is it low level neglect ?

Families having same sex parents, or one parent, or (if the family had two parents) both parents working, or one working (or neither working), all became common place in the second half of the 20th century.

A significant unexpected consequence of so much social and technological change has been its influence on children and youth. We are all surrounded by technological advancements and social change, but those advancements now compete with parents for influence over their children. It is not surprising that many parents feel overwhelmed, and feel as if they are 'fighting a losing battle'. Parenting has always been challenging, satisfying, fun and occasionally demanding, but should not be overwhelming.

However, there are simple, methodical ways (which do not cause conflict) parents have used to re-assert their place as the natural leaders of their family, and prime decision makers in their family.

Values Based Parenting offers to provide you with resources to empower you as a parent and to make your parenting path smoother, and more rewarding.

End.