

THE GOOD LIFE

Talking out of turn, Chewing gum, Making noise, Running in halls. Cutting in line.

Dress code infractions, And Littering.

According to CBS News Reports there were the top seven school problems in the 1940s.

But in the 1980s, they were:

Drug abuse, Alcohol abuse, Pregnancy, Suicide, Rape, Robbery, And assault.

In the 1940s and for generations before, we relied on family, religion, and schools together to impart essential civic and moral values across generations.

Over the last three decades. We have witnessed the gradual erosion of the family, the secularization of our society, and the evacuation of values from public school instruction. The moral development of our children has suffered greatly.

Can anything be done? To improve the quality of our own family and religious life, we need look no farther than the mirror. But to reach a larger society, we must turn again to our schools

To ask our schools to share the responsibility for the character formation of our young people is not to burden schools with *one more* responsibility. It is merely to ask them to do what they were created to do in this country (and for generations did *well*)—that is to help prepare our children to bear the responsibilities of citizenship in a free society.

But whose values will be taught? A decade ago the Maryland State Values Education Commission answered that question by specifying eight civic values and ten moral values that the people of Maryland want to see in their children. Maryland returned some responsibility for character development to its public schools. Today all across Baltimore County, and

elsewhere in Maryland, the teaching of values is infused into every subject, written into the teachers' daily lesson plans. New York, New Jersey, Georgia, and California are among the states beginning to follow Maryland's lead.

If your school isn't teaching your children to be honest, caring, and responsible—if they aren't teaching them that acts of senseless violence are *wrong*, that the "good life" is not an economic but a moral concept, *find out why!* And then do something about it!

It's not too late for our children. But it's up to us. At home, in church or synagogue, and in our schools. Get Involved! See your own ethics at work.

This is Gary Edwards.