

*December 12/2017*

## *School of life*

When I first heard about SNAP, I am honest to say, that I was thinking and saying: "Oh boy! Not again?" We have seen and spoken with school counsellors, psychologists, and have gone private at our own expense to seek help, but to no avail.

So why would SNAP be any different, I asked?

I missed the first week due to the Jewish holidays, but I noticed that my son enjoyed the session as well as my wife, when I spoke to them later on that night. She felt the warmth of the group, and the genuine care and professionalism of the dynamic duo, as did my son. At first, I didn't want to join. I told my wife, since he is lacking that alone time with her, to go at it without me, but my wife insisted that I come and do this as a family, I abdicated, ofcourse.

At my first session, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, I admit, I liked the vibe, the topics and the openness of the group. The last thing I want is to go somewhere and to be lectured...I would step out without shame, that is for sure! But the fact that we could state our opinions, express ourselves freely, agree and/or disagree and to find common ground was a pleasure; and a more efficient way to find solutions to our dilemmas.

What SNAP taught me is that SNAP was not for the kids... ... but for us, the "adults" the parents. One may think and assume that going to SNAP, we will learn techniques to mould our kids and teach them how to listen and be obedient, and maybe even have them on auto pilot mode thanks to SNAP techniques, but it couldn't be further than the truth.

I am a different father, I am trying. I want to think that I am simple, but I am complex. I am not perfect, I am full of faults, and I know that. Afraid to adapt, change and recognize my shortcomings, I am not...well, that's what SNAP helped me do.

Not after a day or a week, and not even now, after 13 weeks do I know how to react to every situation, but it is a long journey of learning; and I will use what I learnt here, what we agreed/disagreed on and debated about; to help me navigate through the rollercoaster of parenting.

I will end it by saying, if I reach the point of consequencing than I have failed, but it does not mean that I have lost the war. I will learn how to communicate and show how to be consistent, so my son, not through my words but through my actions, becomes a strong, respectable honourable man - a dream of every parent.

I pegged this testimonial "***School of life***" because the way we live in our home, with our children, is a microcosm of what awaits our children in the outside world . Life is a school, and we try to have the best tools to not only survive, but to strive, excel and be good humans; that's what parenting is about; showing and not telling, our kids that yes, you can reach for the stars, and that change of "dynamics" is very possible and well within reach.

***"My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me." –Jim Valvano***

*Thank you Ron, Kirsten, Sabrina & Line*

*Avi Benchimol*