

## A terrible abuse of power

*by Stephanie L. Mann*

Former New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer was elected by 70 percent of the voters. One year later, he leaves in disgrace. Commentators discussing his downfall call him, "arrogant," "self-righteous" and a "hypocrite."

Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick is charged with eight felonies in an obstruction of justice case, and, if convicted, could go to jail.

People who abuse their power will lie and intimidate others to keep their secrets

As a community organizer for more than 35 years, I have seen arrogant politicians and police officials destroy their families and futures when their secret lives were exposed.

Even children reach a point in their development where they go from a self-absorbed child to a centered adult who can handle their emotions and care about others.

It's time to stop making excuses for intelligent men who are emotional babies.

Primarily, men are the community leaders. They run local governments, set standards for companies, implement policies and become role models for the next generation.

For centuries, men have been considered the moral leaders of the family and community. Unfortunately, today, domestic violence, betrayal and divorce find women struggling to raise children alone.

In 2007, every day in America eight children or teens were killed by firearms, 2,261 children dropped out of school, 4,302 were arrested and 17,132 students were suspended from school, according to the Children's Defense Fund.

Without responsible fathers, children are failing at an alarming rate. Arrogant boys control gangs, abuse others and turn violent. Anger allows them to commit heinous crimes without remorse and stops them from developing emotionally.

Boys lacking self-discipline can be emotionally charged. They have little patience and react without thinking. Immature boys have easy access to drugs and guns, which can lead to devastating consequences.

Anyone can handle the good times. It's how we handle conflicts and difficult people that determine our character. When men take charge, boys understand the need to be responsible. Boys need male authority.

It's time to wake up - the U.S. prison system has 2 million people in prison at a cost of \$49 billion annually, according to the Pew Center. Most ex-cons return to the community. Will they be rehabilitated?

Responsible men must get involved and take a stand.

## CHANGE THE WORLD

I met A.J. at an inner city community meeting in Richmond, Calif. At an early age, he was lured into selling drugs and within a few years became a homeless drug addict. Hunger led him to the Rescue Mission. He turned his life around.

Today A.J. has a small recording studio and offers boys an opportunity to sing, play an instrument and record music. He mentors 22 kids on his block and is a community leader. Every Christmas for 10 years, he has raised funds and sponsored a party for 300 low-income children. A.J. changed lives and made his neighborhood safer.

The talent and wisdom of American men are urgently needed now.

- Support boys to do the right thing

- Be a mentor and role model for children

- Become a neighborhood leader

- Coach youth activities
- Befriend a troubled boy at a group home
- Join a committee working to improve your community.

With support, most behavior can change. When children learn about the power of the human spirit, they find safe havens. Faith also strengthens families and provides a network of support around children. With guidance, children can discover their own identity, intuition and conscience, which can keep them safe from harm.

Emotionally centered families must be the goal if America is to remain the leader of the free world.

Democracy depends on involved, honest people with integrity.

Stephanie L. Mann is a crime and violence prevention consultant and author of "Alternatives to Fear: Guidelines to Safer Neighborhoods," which was sold to thousands of police departments around the country and helped popularize the Neighborhood Watch program. © Copley News Service

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