



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

There's a culturally-accepted tenet that we employ throughout life's landscape. Here it is: Monkey see; monkey do. Don't think evolution here, that's not the point. Critical issue: decisions about behavior don't just come out of the blue. People are influenced by what they see, placed before them as examples. Most people are not innovators; they are replicators. Put a model in front of them, and they're likely to fashion their own life - the way they think, the decisions they make, the words they speak, the actions they pursue - after those flesh-and-blood models.

As a society, we're in new terrain. We have limited history from which to draw answers to a troubling question: how affected are the weakest among us - all of the young, and, then, the follower crowd among the adults - to the influences of what we call "entertainment?"

Entertainment is a curious part of our public environment. By definition, entertainment is "something affording pleasure, diversion, or amusement, especially a performance of some kind." But, does entertainment have the ability to influence people to think/say/do/be what they would never have imagined, apart from the entertainment?

Last night, CBS broke new ground for entertainment when they imported a new



series, originally produced for their sister enterprise, SHOWTIME cable network. Did you miss it? Here's the brief: Dexter Morgan is an incredibly likable forensics expert for the Miami Metro Police Department who also happens to be a serial killer - but one with his own moral code in that he only kills murderers who can't otherwise be brought to justice. "We're excited to work with our corporate cousins at SHOWTIME on this unique programming opportunity," said Nina Tassler, President of CBS Entertainment. "'Dexter' is a high-quality, compelling series that will be new and original programming for most CBS viewers."

One more time: "... a serial killer, but one with his own moral code..." Their agenda? "We're thrilled to have the chance to expose 'Dexter' to a wider audience on CBS," said Robert Greenblatt, President, Entertainment, SHOWTIME Networks. "I think it will be very compatible with their lineup as well as be a

great opportunity to promote our brand on a platform that reaches every home in America."

Let's expose every home in America to a serial killer/vigilante who can balance being a murderer with being a law enforcement professional, and make him a hero in the process.

The same week, we had counselors attacked with meat cleavers and school campuses invaded with armed insiders. Where does all of this behavior come from? I'm sure that CBS and SHOWTIME would disavow any influence on the way people live their lives after a long term exposure to their "entertainment," but - come on now - would any thinking person agree with that defense?

While Tassler and Greenblatt are spokespersons for the networks, the Apostle Paul is a spokesman for the movement called the Christian faith. Listen to his insight about a moral code that is sourced in God, rather than in a prime time drama: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9).

Look, you can dismiss the claims of the Christian faith, you can marginalize its teaching as out-of-date, but you can't convince an objective, thinking person that the popular approach - fill your mind with refuse, under the guise of "entertainment" - is superior to the biblical approach. Garbage in, Garbage Out.

The storm drain in the curb outside my home - which is 15 miles from the coast - says, "No Dumping; Drains to Ocean." I ought to have a sign posted next to my eyes and ears: "No Dumping; Drains to What I Think / What I Say / What I Decide / What I Do." Sooo.. Got Serial Killer?

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