

What Is Your POS

(Hint: this is not your car)
(Parental Operating System)

In 1986, my wife and I purchased our first computer. I remember the store on 38th, by the Tacoma Mall. The cost for this screaming machine with 2 floppies, a 30-megabyte hard drive and the multi-colored amber screen, was \$3200.

By today's standards it was expensive and in those days it was a fortune. After I paid for my computer and prepared to leave, the salesman asked what system I was going to use on my machine. Having no idea to what he was referring, I explained my wife was going to use the computer for data key entry and that I was sure the employer would provide a specific program for it.

My first non-sequitur out of the way, he asked another seemingly non-sensical question, "With what software are you going to run your computer?" My mind raced to comprehend his meaning, each word was English, of that I was sure, but used as a full sentence, the words didn't produce anything concrete in my mind.

In a panic I flapped my lips while my mind tried to find a connection. "Well, I'm just going to plug the computer in when I get home and work on it," I explained.

A swing and a miss on my second non-sequitur. "No sir, what I mean is which DOS will you be using?" DOS? You mean dangers, opportunities, and strengths? This man is suffering from a severe case of the "Curse of Knowledge" and needs a remedy. We are both speaking English but neither of us is communicating.

Throwing my pride to the wind, I finally explained that I didn't know what he was talking about. After explaining the difference between hardware and software, he kindly loaded PC DOS onto my machine, gave me a few instructions in geekish and off I went.

Now imagine me trying to run my current PC using the 1986 version of PC DOS? I have 2 gigabytes of ram compared to 30 megabytes of storage. How effective will that operation system work?

Today's parents too often find themselves running an operating system learned two or three upgrades ago. In human terms we call that generations. The POS (Parental Operating System) we learned from our parents, is similar to the one they learned from their parents and the success rate has been on the decline since WWII.

There is a mismatch between what a parent knows as a child and what that same child does as a parent. The 21st Century POS (our assumptions and protocols of how we apply our resources to motivate and teach our children) is broken and full of viruses.

Modern science has learned that even the most hardened parent has the ability to reboot his/her software and upgrade to a newer version. Download the following files to your POS and try this newer system on your children.

Children need the three A's:

1. **Authority** – the right to be in charge of decisions
2. **Autonomy** – the power to be creative and take action
3. **Accountability** – the benefit of proper consequences without risk of being rescued

Too many POS systems only initiate accountability at the expense of authority and autonomy. In order for all three to be present, a parent must be teaching (dialogue) instead of telling (monologue) and must develop trust as their guiding tool. In order to develop trust and space of neutrality between parent and child must exist.

Learn to listen to your child and understand their point of view before you tell them about yours. Trust is an earned trait. It is the catalyst to developing the proper relationship between parent and child.