

# BASS: Today, we mourn the loss of Common Sense

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It's finally here we're on the cusp of the Labour Day weekend and then back to school.

I'm a mother and, normally, I would welcome this reality with open arms and huge smiles.

After all, summer is such a long time for the kids to be at home and, even when they're teenagers and no longer whine that they're bored, you just know they are.

And, it's your fault.

Even when it's not.

But, this year is going to be difficult because one son is going into his final year of high school and his brother is just a year behind him.

The days of not attending parent-teacher interviews or school plays, and not visiting the principal, is no longer way over the horizon.

As I was contemplating how to write about this, a dear friend sent me an obituary that ran in the *London Times*.

It's full of the kind of knowledge we all wish our children would not just learn, but take to their heart and soul.

It's written in that simple, smack-you-in-the-face way our kids won't learn after 13 years of schooling.

It's an obituary not for a person, but for something we all have met in the past and which some of us have lost track of through the years.

It begins like this:

"Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years.

"No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

"He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: Knowing when to come in out of the rain; why the early bird gets the worm; life isn't always fair; and maybe it was my fault."

Aren't those the simplest, yet most essential, rules to live by?

Live smart, be smart, accept reality and accept responsibility.

The obituary continues:

"Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

"His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

"Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition."

I remember when my youngest was in kindergarten he's starting Grade 11 and a support worker told me she wasn't sure what to do because sometimes he needed a hug, but she had been told students shouldn't be hugged.

I told her to ignore the rule and, if he needed one, hug him. I'd deal with any fallout. Just made sense to me.

"Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

"It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

"Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

"Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault."

Doesn't that sum up the world into which we're sending our children? Don't you wish it wasn't?

There is more to the obituary, but I thought it best to recognize the deceased's family:

"Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason."

Maybe our kids can breathe new life into Common Sense.

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