

Silence

by Loweta Kimball

Folks use the phrase 'silence is golden.' To me, the word 'golden' relates to the warm smile shown toward someone you cherish or the unspoken message of love shown by a big bear hug from your precious grandchild – the silence of acceptance and love.

We expect spectators at a sporting event to be loud and dramatic, definitely not silent; at a public library, a movie theater or the symphony we expect silence or at least low tones to not disturb others; when a mother has comforted a colicky baby all day, we'd better not yell out, 'I'm home' when we enter the house or we'll get what for; if we – heaven forbid – witness a hit-and-run accident we would not be silent but immediately call 911 and report what we saw to the police.

Many folks remain silent when we should shout our disapproval, even in the courts (we must be silent during court proceedings, however). When a 4-year-old is beaten unmercifully by his father; when a woman is punched unconscious in a public elevator with security cameras rolling, then dragged out of the elevator and no one stops the perpetrator, silence is not an option. These are victims of domestic violence.

Why would a mother leave her toddler in the care of a man she knows is violent? Why would a woman marry a man who beats her? How will her children react when they see the act portrayed over and over on television? The best answer I can give is that these perpetrators were violent before and the victims remained silent.

If you saw a child sitting alone on a park bench looking frightened, you would not hesitate to contact authorities; if you saw a child with tattered clothing walking alone on the street, or looking in trash cans, you would not hesitate to contact authorities. While these are extreme cases that we can easily recognize, there are situations in our cities not so easily recognized, but will become extreme if we remain silent – homeless teenagers, most of whom are victims of domestic violence.

Recent statistics state that over 80% of the homeless teens in our cities are victims of domestic violence. Of this staggering statistic, over 60% of the male teens will become abusers as adults with the same percentage of the females becoming victims as adults. Six percent of both groups will perish from suicide or homicide before reaching adulthood.

One positive way to help young people involved in dysfunctional households is to become a mentor through Big Brothers or Big Sisters; volunteer with Boys and Girls Clubs; volunteer at a public school library, an after-school tutoring program or a day-care center, and help the children discover all they can be; or serve as a helper on a school field trip to the museum (note, you'll have to pry the little one's hand away at the end of the day.)

You won't be silent when the Broncos make the playoffs, when the Rockies player hits a grand slam; when the Nuggets win, so do not keep silent when domestic violence is evident. Parenting today truly is more stressful than when our children were young.

And know that silence is golden when we help somebody as we travel along.