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The following is a KSCO commentary. Here is Kay Zwerling:

This commentary is in my book. I wrote it on 2-20-2003.

Political correctness emerged in the late 1960s as the brainchild of the academic left, borne of emotion.

That is to say, feelings – not facts, not reality. It was decided by the left that to be politically correct, one must no longer use the word “handicapped”. Instead, that word was replaced by the words “physically challenged”. Nothing really changed. The handicapped person was still handicapped, and probably came to terms with that situation a long time ago.

Anyhow, the word “challenged” came into vogue, and any condition remotely negative or sad became hyphenated followed by the word “challenged”.

About five years ago, a local high school accustomed to honoring the student graduating with the highest grades by naming that person the Valedictorian, had to withdraw that traditional singular honor because eleven students had the same grade average.

Had the administrators factored in other individual accomplishments, one student would have stood out front, but rather than hurt anyone’s feelings, that year there were eleven Valedictorians. So much for the joy of achievement.

Likewise in the 1960s, UCSC initiated a Pass-Fail grading system to replace letter grades, primarily because it was more compassionate for students who were unable to attain A’s and B’s.

The pursuit of excellence was no longer rewarded – in fact, it was disdained. In the name of feelings, there came a settling for mediocrity.

Political correctness heralded the dumbing down of our educational system. Competing has become politically-incorrect. Students are no longer expected to be high achievers. Everybody's comfort level must be equal. Nobody must have hurt feelings – nobody except maybe the innocent victims of Affirmative Action. The best and the brightest have to defer to the less able. Many brilliant students have been locked out of medical schools, law schools, dental schools, etc.

There must be a way to implement Affirmative Action without punishing those with the most potential. The feelings of everyone affected should be considered.

Because of political correctness, children are not being properly disciplined, not at home and not at school, because that might stifle creativity. Parents were admonished to avoid saying "No" or "Do not" to their kid for fear that those restrictions might damage Junior's psyche.

Feelings have replaced discipline and common sense. Children are being cheated out of having parameters. As a result, respect for parents and teachers has eroded. In some schools, teachers are being cursed, assaulted, and in extreme cases, some have even been raped by students.

Because of political-correctness, many parents have abdicated their roles as guiding influences. And, instead, have opted to be their kid's buddies – not all parents, only those who have allowed themselves to be seduced by the misguided notion of political-correctness.

So, if the shoe fits, wear it.

For KSCO, this is Kay Zwerling.

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