

Menlo Park School District PTO Council and Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation
present



The Price of Privilege

How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids

With New York Times bestselling author

Madeline Levine, Ph.D.

Wednesday, March 26, 7 to 9 p.m.

Hillview Middle School Multi, 1100 Elder Avenue, Menlo Park

Adults only, please. Childcare information below.

Madeline Levine, a Marin County practicing psychologist for 25 years, recently started to observe a new breed of unhappy teenager. When a bright, personable, 15-year-old girl, from a loving and financially comfortable family, came to her office with “empty” carved into her left forearm, Levine was startled. This girl and her message seemed to embody a disturbing pattern Levine had observed. Her teenage patients were bright, socially skilled and loved by their parents. But **behind a veneer of achievement and charm, many suffered severe emotional problems.** What was going on?

Conversations with educators and clinicians nationwide as well as meticulous research confirmed her suspicions that something was terribly amiss. Studies show **privileged adolescents are experiencing epidemic rates of depression, anxiety disorders and substance abuse**—rates higher than those of any other socioeconomic group of young people in the country. (A substantial group of U.S. children enjoy high levels of privilege, e.g., use of televisions, computers, video games, cell phones, whether their families consider their incomes to be modest, middle or high.)

The elements of a perfect storm—materialism, pressure to achieve, perfectionism, disconnection—are combining to create a crisis in our culture of affluence. This culture is as unmanageable for parents—mothers in particular—as it is for their children. While many of these kids project confidence and can make a good impression, **alarming numbers lack the basic foundation of psychological development: an authentic sense of self.** Even parents often miss the signs of significant emotional problems in their “star” children.

Join us when Dr. Levine explodes one child-rearing myth after another and offers thoughtful, practical solutions to parents who see these traits in their kids. With empathy and candor she’ll **identify parenting practices that are toxic to healthy self-development. To illustrate how parents can best support kids, she’ll define what it means to be consistent, create real boundaries and cultivate warmth** without trying to be a friend, since children need parents to *be* parents.

Registration: The PTO Council and MPAEF have funded this educational event so all may attend. In order to prepare adequate seating, please register by e-mailing number/names of attendees to yesdr.levine@yahoo.com.

Childcare: Cost is \$12 from 6:50-9:15 p.m. for toilet trained preschoolers – 6th grade. To reserve space or request a scholarship, e-mail your name, children’s names/ages and school, as well as home and emergency phone numbers, to yesdr.levine@yahoo.com by Friday, March 21. Space is limited; please reserve only if attendance is certain. Nannies from Town & Country Resources, Palo Alto.

Parking: On playground behind Hillview, accessible by drive on left when facing school.