

Surviving Adolescence

Outwit, Outplay, Outlast

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What You're Dealing With...

- ✘ Separation from family of origin
- ✘ Who am I?
- ✘ Capacity for intimacy
- ✘ Mastering impulses
- ✘ Physical changes
- ✘ A brain that is not fully grown

The Adolescent Mandates

❖ Allergy to Parents

- Boys
 - Vanishing experts
 - The problem of mom
 - Fathers and sons
 - Fight or flight
 - Slugs
- Girls
 - Never-ending battle
 - Battles equal contact
 - The home (baby) self versus the outside (adult) self



The Adolescent Mandates con't.

- ❖ Parents are to be taken for granted
 - Adults are jerks
 - Parents as flawed
- ❖ Parents are an embarrassment
- ❖ Looking up to other adults
- ❖ Friends are everything
- ❖ Fitting in
- ❖ Tyranny of "How I Look"



Gaining Respect

- ❖ Respect must be earned, not demanded
- ❖ Accept the teen's right to say what he/she has to say – no matter how stupid or unreasonable
- ❖ Say what you have to say, stand your ground and don't get blown away by the inevitable response
- ❖ It's (gaining respect) in the strength to *not* descend to the teen's level of name calling – it's in the strength to walk away
- ❖ If an adolescent is complaining but complying – you win.

"Your teenage children cannot diminish you unless you allow them to." – Anthony Wolf



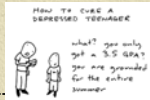
Parenting an Adolescent

- ✘ Letting go
- ✘ Preventing disaster
- ✘ Letting them fail
- ✘ Acceptance of who they are
- ✘ Setting limits
- ✘ Making decisions
- ✘ Gentle nudges
- ✘ Giving too much
- ✘ The unconditional deal

Most adolescents are just normal horrible and they still deserve our unconditional love." - Wolf



Mastering Impulses



- ✘ The parent within
- ✘ Establishing boundaries
 - Rules
 - Keeping the rules in place
 - Obeying the spirit of the law
- ✘ Parents' greatest error – believing that disobedience means total loss of control
- ✘ Devious defiance
- ✘ Direct disobedience
- ✘ Confrontation
 - Clear statement that a rule has been broken
 - Emphasis that such behavior is not acceptable
 - A declaration that the rule remains in effect
 - A short-term consequence that fits the crime

Teenagers' Traps

- ✘ "I don't care"
 - Correct response – no response at all
- ✘ "Yes, I will" or "No, I won't"
 - Deal with disobedience only if it happens
- ✘ "You're an !@\$#"
 - Ignore if possible
- ✘ "I can't do anything right"
 - Correct response to failure talk – does depression really coincide with taking out the trash?



How Parents Trap Themselves

- ✘ Misreading behavior and shutting teens down
 - Are you worried about something?
 - Do you need my attention?
- ✘ Ranting and raving only serves to make parents feel better
- ✘ Asking the “yes” or “no” question



Nagging...a parental tool with little or no results...

- ✘ If you do not nag, they will not do what you want
- ✘ They may not even do it if you nag
- ✘ If having a teenager do nothing is acceptable to you, then do not nag. But if it is not, you are stuck with nagging
- ✘ Try “As soon as...”



Communication

- ✘ Speak in “I”
 - “So long as you continue to act like a lazy jerk around the house, don’t expect any favors from me.”
 - “I feel frustrated that the dishes were left in the sink, so I don’t really feel like driving to the mall.”
- ✘ Pick your moments
- ✘ Use description
- ✘ Listen!
- ✘ Understand your teen’s behavior as a language
- ✘ Collaborative Problem Solving



Important Adolescent Issues..

- ✦ School
 - Academic Performance
 - Socialization
- ✦ Sexuality & Pregnancy
- ✦ Drugs & Alcohol
- ✦ Technology and TMI
 - It's here to stay
 - It's how they socialize
- ✦ Productivity and finding a job



How to Deal With It...

- ✦ strategies for parents who are parenting teens
 - CPS
 - Catch Phrases



Catch Phrase #1

- ✦ "As soon as..."
 - You've said yes!
 - You've created a win-win opportunity
 - Sure! As soon as your room is clean I'll be glad to drive you Joey's house
 - Absolutely! As soon as your homework is done you can have as much video game time as you want



Catch Phrase #2

✧ "That"

- Use to replace "you" when talking to your teen
- That sounded a little rude, do you want to say it again?
- That wasn't okay with me
- That seemed like avoiding what needed to get done



Catch Phrase #3

✧ "Yes or No"

- Beware the "yes" or "no" questions when the "no" answer is really an option
- Do you want to help me carry in the groceries?
- Do you think it's time to do your homework?



Catch Phrase #4

✧ "I" Statements

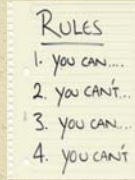
- I Feel - When - Because - and I Would Like (Prefer)
- Compare: (Yelling) You are such a slob. Every time I come home the kitchen is a disaster area!
- To: I feel frustrated when I've left the kitchen clean and come home to find a mess, because I'm tired at the end of the day and I would like some help returning it to clean



Catch Phrase #5

✧ "Set Your Own Limits"

- For teens who tend to be in trouble or get spoken to by adults quite a bit
- Gives some empowerment
- Suggest to a teen that if he set his own limits and followed the rules all on his own, adult wouldn't have to



Catch Phrase #6

✧ "In My Opinion"

- Argument prevention
- Let's teens know it's okay to respectfully disagree



Catch Phrase #7

✧ "My Mom or Dad will kill me"

- Let your teen know it's okay to "use" you to avoid getting involved in risky situations
- "Gee guys, I'd like to, but my dad will take the car away..."



Collaborative Problem Solving

✦ Use the ABC's

- A – Adult Will
- B – Both
- C – Child/Teen

✦ "The Explosive Child" by Ross Greene



Plan A - Adult

✦ Plan A

- Tantrum and melting causing
- Imposing adult will on the situation
- The language of "A" is "no you can't," "you have to," because I'm the parent" etc.
- Use for safety issues



Plan C - Child

✦ Plan C

- Meltdown prevention
- Let's the teen have some power and control
- Typically used for non-safety issues that are personal (clothes, hair, food, etc.)



Plan B - Both

✦ Plan B

- Empathy
- Define the Problem
- Problem Solving Party



A Little Adolescent Humor

- ✦ Adolescence is a period of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 and 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years. -Author Unknown
- ✦ Telling a teenager the facts of life is like giving a fish a bath. -Arnold H. Glasow
- ✦ There is nothing wrong with today's teenager that twenty years won't cure. -Author Unknown
- ✦ You can tell a child is growing up when he stops asking where he came from and starts refusing to tell where he is going. -Author Unknown
- ✦ The troubles of adolescence eventually all go away - it's just like a really long, bad cold. -Dawn Ruelas
- ✦ No one knows his true character until he has run out of gas, purchased something on the installment plan and raised an adolescent. - Marcelene Cox
- ✦ Arguing with a teenager is like wrestling in the mud with a pig. Sooner or later you figure out that he/she is enjoying it. - Author Unknown

Tips from the teens...

- ✦ Please don't hate my mood swings - it makes me feel that you hate me. Try to remember that it's part of hormonal changes and I can't help it.
- ✦ Please listen to my side of things before you assume what's going on
- ✦ When I get angry, please give me lots of time and space to process and cool off before you try to work it out with me
- ✦ Don't over-analyze or "hyper-parent" me
- ✦ Teens aren't "open" because we don't think we can be. We'll give very subtle hints that we need to talk about something...please watch for those clues and ease into a conversation
- ✦ Sometimes when I'm in my room, I'm not depressed or suicidal, I just want some peace and privacy
- ✦ If I'm helping out with something, please let me do it my way
- ✦ Spend time with me when I'm in a receptive place, please don't force family night

Tips from the teens con't...

- ✦ Let me try to be responsible, even if I've messed up before
- ✦ Video games – look further than the rating
- ✦ You can solve anything with a teen by talking to them instead of at them. Work together on setting limits and making compromises
- ✦ If you say no to something, please give me a reason. "Because I said so" makes me feel shut out.
- ✦ Please knock before entering my room.

No matter how hard it gets..

- ✦ Keep in mind that no matter how hard it gets, or what they put you through, the brain grows again in the late teens and early twenties, and all of a sudden you'll have a young adult that decides you're not so bad after all 😊



Other Resources

- ✦ *"Get out of my life: but first could you drive me and Cheryl to the mall?" ~ Anthony E. Wolf, Ph.D.*
- ✦ *"Wonderful ways to love a teen...even when it seems impossible." ~ J. Ford*
