

Parental Transitions from Childhood to the Teen Years

And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. Luke 2:47-52

UNDERSTANDING SHIFTING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A majority of problems that teens face have one fundamental similarity – the battle between the teens desire for total **freedom** and the parents' desire for total **control**.
- Children are not adults. Their bodies, brains, and emotions are **underdeveloped** and at times working against them. The older a child becomes the more "brain damaged" they become through the teen years.
- Parents have one role and set of **responsibilities** when our children are toddlers up to the teen years. But when children reach early adolescence, the roles change, and responsibilities change as well.
- In the childhood years we have the role of "**caregiver**" and "**cop**." In the teen years, we change roles to "**coach**" and "**consultant**."

CHANGES IN THE TEEN BODY & BRAIN

- Adult height and **weight** are reached during adolescence
- Ability to have **children**
- Body changes often produce body **aches** and wild sleep cycles
- Physical development **outpaces** emotional and social development
- Adolescence is the healthiest stage of the lifespan and yet morbidity and mortality rates **increase** 200-300% between childhood and late adolescence!
- The brain develops from **inside** out and from back to front.
- The **amygdala** (controlling emotional control) develops first.
- The **frontal cortex** (controlling reason and executive functioning) develops last.
- The brain is not fully developed until age **25-30**.

THE HORMONE ISSUE

- As teens develop, their **hormones** produce feelings they don't understand

- Males develop **testosterone** resulting in aggression and sex drive. Females develop **estrogen** and **oxytocin** resulting in sex drive and social consciousness
- Both have **fluctuating** levels of dopamine & serotonin
- The hormone and neurotransmitter fluctuations produces the “**spotlight effect**” in most teens – the belief that they are on a stage, in the spotlight, with everyone looking at them and scrutinizing them.

WHAT DOES YOUR TEEN NEED FROM YOU?

1. Grace, **unconditional love**, and compassion
2. Guidance concerning important **decisions**
3. Wisdom about **relationships**
4. A positive **example** of how to live
5. Parameters for **healthy** living

HOW DO YOU HANDLE THE INSANITY?

1. Function as your child’s **surrogate** frontal cortex: You are the CEO
2. Monitor sleep, stress, and behavior patterns: The teen brain is **vulnerable**
3. Risk taking is necessary and normal; encourage **positive** risk taking
4. Communicate early and often: The teen brain **wants** to “connect”
5. Remember the **big picture**: The teen brain is still developing into the 30s
6. Model desired behaviors: Neural circuits that are **reinforced** become hard-wired
7. Role play/discuss risky situations. Reverse roles: The teen brain needs **rehearsal**.
8. Don’t go it alone: Build **networks**...Social connectedness = happiness
9. Know where your kids are, whom they are with, and what they are **doing**
10. Be tech **savvy** and teach teens healthy tech habits

Teens are in the perfect storm - overdeveloped bodies, controlled by underdeveloped brains, impacted by unpredictable neural and hormonal mixes along with social pressure and unrealistic perceptions of themselves and the world. Learn to be EMPATHETIC, not PSYCHOPATHIC.

Smartphone Contract

1. The phone you have is mine. I bought it. I pay for it. I am loaning it to you. I can and will tell you what to do with it. If you don't like it, you can get your own.
2. I will always know the password. No exceptions!! And, I will randomly take your phone to see what's on it.
3. I will determine what apps go on the phone. If you install an unapproved app, there will be consequences. Serious ones!
4. If it rings, answer it. It is a phone. Say hello. Use your manners. Do not ever ignore a phone call from your parents or other member of your family.
5. When it goes to school with you, don't use it to text your friends. Have a conversation with your friends. It's a life skill.
6. If it falls into the toilet, smashes on the ground, or vanishes into thin air, you are responsible for the replacement.
7. Do not use this technology to lie, fool, or deceive another human being. Do not involve yourself in conversations that are hurtful to others.
8. Do not text, email, or say anything through this device you would not say in person. The phone gives an illusion of anonymity, but it is just an illusion.
9. No porn. No porn. No porn. Nothing that looks anything like porn. Nothing that in any way hints at porn. The device can make you holy or steal your purity. Stay away from anything unwholesome.
10. Turn it off, silence it, put it away in public. Especially in a restaurant, at the movies, or while speaking with another human being. You are not a rude person; do not allow the phone to change that.
11. Do not send or receive pictures of your private parts or anyone else's private parts. It's not only a bad idea, it's illegal. You are a minor, and nude pictures of yourself or any of your friends is considered child pornography.
12. Don't take a zillion pictures and videos. There is no need to document everything. Your meal really isn't that interesting. Live your experiences – don't view them through the lens of a phone.
13. Leave your phone home sometimes and feel safe and secure in that decision. It is not alive or an extension of you. Learn to live without it.
14. Your phone goes on the charger before you go to bed every night. It is not taken to your room.
15. Play a game with words or puzzles or brain teasers every now and then. Use the phone to become smarter not dumber. You have access to more information at your fingertips than I had my entire childhood. Take advantage of it.

You will mess up. I will take away your phone. We will sit down and talk about it. I'll decide when you get it back.

Child

Parent / Guardian

Parent / Guardian