

## Apples & the Trees They Fall From

By Cheri DeMoss

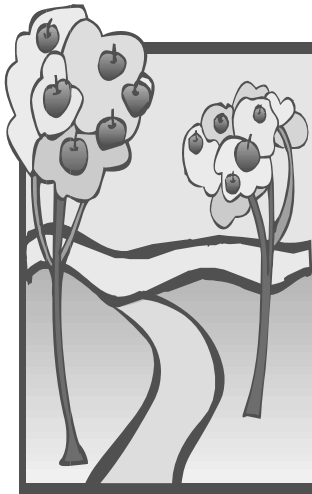
(Continued from Apples & the Trees They Fall From - Part 1)

Children are like little camcorders with legs. Everything you do, say, feel & believe gets recorded. The way you punish, pout, shame, blame, laugh, have fun, lie, mislead, listen or lecture - all of it is recorded. And your child will act out all of this when they become a teenager.

Your child's teen years & throughout their 20's become parental payback time. This is when a teen's brain "turns on". It's when their brain is now developmentally capable of recognizing what you have said, done, do, say; the way you shame or blame them, the double messages & all the crazy-making things you have done & currently do.

**The acting out in teen & early 20's becomes payback time for parents**

If, for example, Dad has a drinking problem & Mom has been telling white lies, justifying Dad's behavior when drunk, denying the emotional reality of this dysfunction - the child can feel all this but cannot intellectually articulate or recognize what is going on.



*The greatest impediment to discovery is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge. The experience the parents think their child is having is not the experience the child is actually having.*



## Confident Kids Parenting Classes

**O**ur parenting classes are for parents who want to learn healthy & effective parenting to give their kids the essential skills to handle conflict & resist negative peer pressures that they need to be self-assured, content & productive.

You'll learn you don't need to feel helpless nor infallible. You'll understand how to set clear, firm guidelines that are important to the child's development, safety, & esteem.

### You'll learn how to:

- Create self-acceptance in your child
- Recognize your child's behaviors
- Reduce power struggles
- Reduce your stress
- Set clear limits
- Give your child the essential tools they need to be successful, esteemed, happy & confident.

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But once that child becomes a teen they now realize the behaviors & emotional reality of what is going on & they become angry, acting out, reactive & confrontational.

Prior to the teen years you have had a fairly large window of 11-13 years to effectively use guidance parenting. Once your child hits 13 you now have a very small window in which to reset some of the ineffective results caused by power parenting.

A valuable way to help your child through these difficult teen times is to set up guidelines that are reasonable & clear, fair & consistent. To do this you will need to avoid trying to get your teen understand you & see you are right. Most parents attempt to make their child understand them instead of trying to understand the emotional & developmental experiences of the child. Continuing to do this when it hasn't worked with your child shows that it's unlikely to work with your teen.

As described in Apples & the Trees They Fall From Part 1 newsletter an extremely effective parenting strategy for both kids and teens is for parents to

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## Power & Guidance Parenting

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make a list of the things their child/teen does that is a concern. Once they have the list completed & put into the listed categories you want to go through each category & think things through in terms of a new strategic recipe revolving around the key ingredients: of reasonable fairness, clarity & consistency.

**Help your child through the difficult teen times by setting guidelines that are reasonable & clear, fair & consistent**

**Child / Teen's Personal Things** - Children of any age need to feel they have a space for themselves. This is the same need adults have at their home or office when they set it up, decorate & organize it up their way. It's esteeming & creates a sense of self that is especially important to children & teens.

A child's, *and especially a teen's*, room needs to be considered their "domain" with little parental interference. It's the space they can have any way they like. Aside from the occasional cleaning the child / teen can leave their clothes on the floor or have their room messy & the parent, for the most part will allow this.

Most children will keep their rooms in a similar manner as they see their parents

keeping their own rooms & the house in general. This is because children copy their parent's behaviors, thoughts, habits and beliefs (*whether the parents is aware of it or not*). For example, if the house is kept very clean & neat but the parent's room is messy the child will most likely keep their room messy.

When the child hits their teen years but the parents now keep their own room neat & clean - the teen has already recorded the messiness from when they were small & will continue to keep a messy room.

Most parents are unaware of this "recording pattern" that all children do. So when the child become a teen the parents finds themselves in a "keep your room clean" power struggle with the teen. The parents

feel as if the teen is disobeying when, in fact, the teen is simply playing back the behaviors they recorded the parents doing when they were small. If parents are unaware of this universal dynamic they will engage in a power struggle with their teen as if this issues is of vital importance.

Parents need to allow the child / teen to express themselves & have their own habits, room, & personal grooming style without parental interference.

If the teen decides to stop showering there is no need for the parent to choose this as something to power struggle about.

The teen's peers will typically point out the smell & exert peer pressure that will naturally cause the teen to shower.

**Being Part of the Family Team** - All family members, including the children, need to be included in the day to day things that have to be done in order for the family to function.

**Parents need to allow the child / teen to express themselves**

Whether it is chores, tasks or taking care of family pets - setting up age appropriate tasks the child or teen can do to contribute to the family is esteeming & creates a sense of self that is vital to the maturing process of children & teens.

How parents end up in power struggles with teens

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## Power Parent's Beliefs = Their Behaviors (cont.)

Power parents believe that the most effective way to raise a child is to demand the child make them (the parent) emotionally comfortable. They do this, often, with no awareness that they are making their a child, feel bad about who they are, what they do, say, think or feel. These parents are unaware of the experience the child is having. Here are some of the behaviors power parents believe is okay to do.

- **Lecture a child.**
- **Set the child up to feel bad & wrong.**
- **Point out they know more or are better than the child.**
- **React to the child based on their own childhood issues.**
- **Demand the child make them emotionally comfortable instead of doing it for themselves.**
- **Do "crazy-making" and or double message behavior .**
- **Act accountable by telling the child what the child did wrong.**
- **Be emotional enmeshed with the child & use the child as their friend.**
- **Doing anything that makes the child feel & believe that they are bad & wrong.**

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<p>about these things can be traced back to when the teen was small child.</p> <p>If the parent gave the child tasks that were not age appropriate the child will feel unsuccessful &amp; as a teen will simply stop doing tasks.</p> <p>A typical parental mistake is to give the child a task. If the child doesn't do it the parent opts to do the task themselves and makes the child feel bad &amp; wrong for failing to do what was asked of them.</p> <p>Unfortunately most parents will (<i>whether they are aware of it or not</i>) choose to make the child feel bad &amp; wrong rather than to simply insist the child complete the original task.</p> <p>Making sure the child does the task asked of them without guilt or shame teaches the child they must keep their word &amp; participate in family functioning.</p> <p>Making the child feel bad &amp; wrong and then doing the chore yourself teaches the child that, not only do they not have to do what is asked of them, but what is asked of them isn't really that important.</p> <p>Most parents were raised to think that this inconsistent manner of parenting is effective. They find out only when it's too late (when the child is a teen) - that it doesn't work. By then they are caught in an continual stream of power struggle wars.</p> <p>An effective approach to getting your teens to do reasonable, age appropriate tasks that are part of being a family is to create a reasonable &amp; clear, fair &amp; consistent structure that in-</p>	<p>cludes a clear explanation of the chore, a reasonable amount of time to complete the chore &amp; an equally clear natural consequence that the parent can consistently enforce.</p> <div><p><i>Making the child complete the chores without making them feel bad &amp; wrong is the most effective</i></p></div> <p>The key is reasonable clarity and fair consistency. If the parent cannot do these things then there is no point in trying to get the teen to help with the day to day family functioning – they simply will not &amp; the parent will find themselves caught in an endless stream of power struggles.</p> <p><b><u>Making &amp; Keeping Agreements</u></b> - Most parents use a mood-determined approach to making agreements with their child or</p>	<p>teen. When the parent's mood changes so does, either, the agreement or the consequence. Doing this with your child is like lighting a firecracker knowing it is a matter of time before it will blow up in your face.</p> <p>Agreements &amp; promises are things that are between family members not between the teen &amp; their peers. If the teen makes agreements or promises to those outside the extended family &amp; doesn't follow through the natural consequence of peer pressure will teach the teen in a more effective way than parental intervention.</p> <p>When you make an agreement with the child or the teen it's your job, as the parent, to make sure the agreement is reasonable, fair, and that both the agreement &amp; the consequences of breaking the agreement are clearly understood by all parties.</p>
<div><p><b>Guidance Parents Beliefs = Their Behaviors (cont.)</b></p><p>Guidance parents believe that the most effective way to raise a child is to help the child be emotionally comfortable. They use mindful awareness to make the child, feel good about who they are, what they do, say, think or feel. These parents work at being aware of the experience the child is having. Here are some of the behaviors guidance parents believe is okay to do.</p><div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Let the child explore, practice and learn with the least amount of parental interference.</b></li><li>• <b>Do not blame the child for their own behaviors, reactions.</b></li><li>• <b>Let the child effect change in their environment.</b></li><li>• <b>Be consistent &amp; avoid double messages.</b></li><li>• <b>Act as if the child is likable &amp; has value even if the parent is upset.</b></li></ul></div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Help the child be, feel &amp; think different than the parents.</b></li><li>• <b>Set clear &amp; fair boundaries and limits.</b></li><li>• <b>Respect the child's emotional, sexual &amp; physical boundaries as they develop.</b></li><li>• <b>Not convince, convey or tell the child they are bad and wrong.</b></li><li>• <b>Let the child teach them things the parent may already know.</b></li></ul></div></div></div>		
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<p>Even if the small child was not raised with agreements that were reasonable, clear, consistent &amp; fair you can let the teen know that this is how things will be going forward and achieve effective results.</p> <p><u>The key is parental consistency without attitude.</u> The less sarcasm, judgments and less “you are bad &amp; wrong” attitude the parents has towards the teen, the sooner the teen will understand the consequences if they break the agreement. This results in less power struggling &amp; stress on the parents.</p>	<p>can tell when this dynamic is in play because these will be the things the parent is most judgmental of &amp; intolerant of feeling powerless about.</p> <p>Things like: my child/teen should make lists; should wear slippers; must wear a watch; must drink 8 glasses of water; should kiss me good-bye; must use a black pen, etc. These are completely subjective and based, not on reality, but on the subjective reactions of the parent.</p> <p>Parents need to be concerned about serious issues that will actually have a negative impact on the teen. If the teen doesn't wear a watch; put on slippers; kiss you good-bye or use a black pen nothing awful will happen to them.</p> <p>The parent may feel uncomfortable because they don't like feeling powerless. They may miss feeling right, in control, &amp; important like when the teen was a small child, but nothing awful will happen to the teen.</p>	<p>Serious parental concerns like unsafe sex; encouraging or allowing the teen to have sex when the teen is too young (ages12-15) to handle the emotions that will surface; parties where there are drugs or alcohol; gangs; drunk driving; or activities that are illegal in any respect are the things that require fair, consistent, parental structure &amp; control.</p> <p>On critical concerns, the parent needs make sure the parameters are extremely consistent, clearly explained &amp; reasonably enforced – whether the teen agrees or not.</p> <p>One of the hardest things for parents to understand is that power struggling over the irritating, but basically insignificant things, and attempting to be get the esteem that came from being the powerful, important parent you were then the child was small is what causes <u>permanent damage</u> to the relationship they want with their adult children.</p> <p>Parents have a difficult time resisting the desire to</p>
<p><b>Parents need to be concerned about serious issues that will actually have a negative impact on the teen</b></p>	<p><u>Things Parents Think Child / Teen Should Do</u> – As previously explained many of the power struggles between parents &amp; kids are about things that parents think their kids should do based on their own reactions, beliefs, and childhood experiences.</p> <p>Very often these tend to be things the parent has not really thought through but are reactions to the kid/teen based on the parents own issues. These types of things are often preceded by words like “should” or “must” when they are really just subjective. Parents</p>	<p>win the power struggle; make their teen feel bad or wrong; use sarcasm to make the teen feel stupid or dumb; or set the teen up to fail so the parent can feel right or important.</p> <p>It's on the significant issues that the parent needs to realize that part of teen development is that <u>the teen believes they know how to handle all situations</u>. It's the parent's job to know when to step in and be parental and when to let the teen “push back”.</p> <p>Guiding your child into adulthood requires the parents not have to win all the battles - but to step back, look at the big picture &amp; <u>understand the needs of the teen</u>. Being consistent, applying reasonable fairness and allowing the teen a substantial amount of independent space is the foundation of helping them successfully mature. With this foundation in place it becomes clearer to the parents when they need to step in and assert parental control on seriously significant issues.</p>
<div><p><b>About Empowering Options - Counseling Innovations</b></p><p>Empowering Options Counseling Innovations is remarkably effective because our philosophy is to be on the side of the client. We concentrate on helping you learn, explore &amp; create your options; your life adventure. We help you view yourself &amp; your life differently. Our individual, couple's &amp; group sessions, classes, workshops &amp; trainings are all about being on the side of the client &amp; giving you more accurate observation, insights &amp; effective, innovative options. There is no assumption that what you are doing or feeling is wrong. We don't presume that you need to be fixed. Our goal is for you to feel empowered, esteemed &amp; effective in your own life. We strive to keep you interested &amp; interactive; energized &amp; supported. The goal is that you leave each session with a new, more powerful way of looking at things. We fit people's lives by providing innovations that make it possible for you to create the changes you want at the pace you're most comfortable with. You can get more information about our approach, services &amp; download our newsletters at <a href="http://www.EmpoweringOptions.com">www.EmpoweringOptions.com</a>.</p></div>		
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