

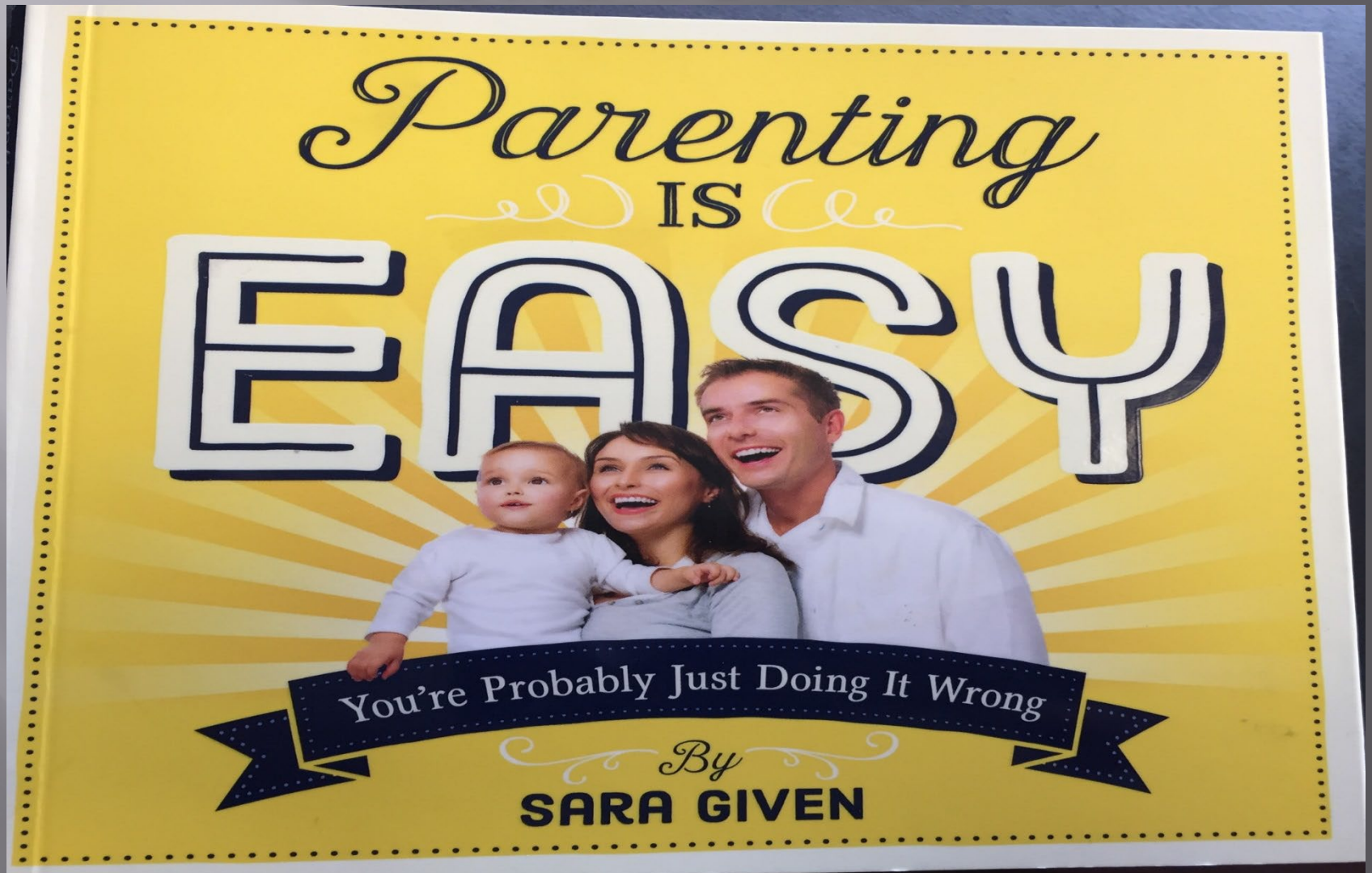
MANAGING THE BUMPS IN THE ROAD DURING ADOLESCENCE: BUILDING A RESILIENT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TEEN

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They Grow Up Fast!

What Did You Think Parenting Would Be Like?



Key Ingredients For Managing Bumps in the Road

1. Know your parenting blind spots
2. Demonstrate humility and forgiveness
3. Less control
4. Less micro-management
5. Allow for mistakes to build independence
6. Set up a system to instill a work ethic
7. Show unconditional love during hard times
8. Less problem solving
9. Make it safe to express vulnerable feelings

Top 5 Ways to Make the Bumps Worse!

- ▣ Set up a “Perfection Trap”
 - Shame versus Guilt
- ▣ Get too involved in their school and friends
- ▣ Live vicariously through them
- ▣ Parent them exactly the way we were parented or the opposite way
- ▣ Give them too much

Roadmap for Managing Bumps in the Road

Step 1) Become an expert in normal development

Step 2) Continually assess your child's abilities and
potential

Step 3) Set limits

Step 4) Nurture love and vulnerable feelings

Step 1) Normal Development

- 1) A lot of work to do: cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development
- 2) Most important characteristic is that the brain is under construction so that they can _____?
- 3) Top 3 Ways their Brain is different than ours:
 - Seek out increased emotional intensity
 - Most creative time in human development
 - Rewards of risk taking are intense

Step 1) Normal Development

- 4) Teen brain reactions emotionally instead of logically
- 5) Increased: sex drive, sadness, risk taking, dominance, poor impulse control, amplification of emotions, anxiety, increased stress, and appetite
- 6) Becoming peer oriented, but not peer driven
- 7) Behavior may swing from childlike to adult-like
- 8) Become more sophisticated protecting vulnerability

Step 2) Continually Assess Your Child's Potential: Nature or Nurture?

1. Normal Development
2. Temperament
3. Intelligence
4. Love
5. Limit Setting

How do problems arise? We either Help or Hinder natural development

Get in Touch with Your “Inner Teen”

- ▣ What were you like in Middle or High School?
- ▣ What is your most salient memory of that time?
- ▣ How did you handle puberty?
- ▣ How did you think about adults and other teens?
- ▣ When did you start to feel sexual?
- ▣ What did you feel most awkward about?
- ▣ What kind of pressure did you have?
- ▣ How was your development uneven?
- ▣ How did you protect your vulnerability?

The New Normal

- ▣ Increased pressure/expectations
- ▣ Fast-tracked sexuality
- ▣ Disrespect
- ▣ Accessibility of drugs and alcohol
- ▣ Disconnection through technology and community
 - delaying gratification

Step 3) Set Limits

Limits: Button Pushing Starts Early

- ▣ Teens... the masters of process
 - Who is controlling the mood and direction?
 - How does the parent's age drop?
 - Who is bringing out the worst in whom?

Who is Controlling the Mood and Direction?

Remember these days...

Top 10 Teen Button-Pushing Tactics

(Sells, 2001)

- 1) "You never let me do anything"
- 2) Lying
- 3) "You don't care about me."
- 4) "Your not my real mother/father."
- 5) A disgusted look or improper gesture
- 6) Finding your most vulnerable area and preying on it
- 7) " You play favorites."
- 8) " I hate you! "
- 9) " I'll do it later "
- 10) Chronic, unbearable whining

Top 10 Parent Button-Pushing Tactics

(Sells, 2001; Walker 2004)

- 1) Hovering
- 2) Talking in Chapters
- 3) Labeling
- 4) Futurizing
- 5) Instant Problem-Solving
- 6) “You’re so moody!”
- 7) Not tolerating experimental behavior
- 8) “When I was your age.....”
- 9) Collecting criticisms
- 10) “Why can’t you be more like.....”

Strategy #1: Stay in Charge of the Mood and Direction

“Limits and acceptance creates resilience”

- 1) Don't take it personally
- 2) Exit and wait
- 3) Short and to the point
- 4) Deflectors
 - Nevertheless; regardless; the rule still stands
- 5) Secret Signals

Strategy #2: Couch criticism

- A. Make positive *intention* known
 - B. Give the *criticism*
 - C. Make sure they hear your *confidence* in them
-
- ▣ *Remember to Privatize it!*

Strategy #3: Family Agreements

- ▣ In-home accountability training
- ▣ Encourage responsibility with teen input
 - Involve choices
- ▣ Focus on behavior, not person
- ▣ They are easier to accept than punishments
- ▣ Helps teens build internal locus of control

Family Agreements



STEP 1

Parents Unite

- *Rank order the problems*
- *Check your gas gauge*
- *Convert problem into a rule*
(Family Agreement sheet)



STEP 2

Parents & Teen negotiate

- *Top 10 things teens care about*
- *Negotiate Rewards and Consequences*
- *Troubleshoot*

Cautions about Consequences

- ▣ Focus on behavior, no character assassinations
- ▣ Needs to be reframed that they chose it and you don't want to give it
- ▣ Teens live in dog years
 - Earn back item quickly or they will adapt!
- ▣ Credibility/respect is on the line
 - give consequences when you are calm
- ▣ Make sure you are on the same page

Step 4) Strategies to Nurture Love and Vulnerable Feelings

Strategy #1: Assess your Connection (Steinberg, 2004):

- What do they like to read or watch?
- What is their most favorite thing to do with you?
- What is their favorite love language?
- Do you know how your child shows they are happy, sad, lonely, anxious or afraid?
- Who does your child go to when they are upset? Ask them why. (it's a roadmap for what you can do).
- Do you know which feelings they show the least?

Strategy #2 Slow Down the Race to Maturity

- ▣ Provide opportunities to rebuild trust
- ▣ Support and accept bouts of immaturity
- ▣ Emphasize courage more than achievement
- ▣ Emphasize work ethic more than intelligence or talent
- ▣ Take the focus off getting into the “best” college

Strategy #3: Release Them From the “Perfection Trap”(Brown, 2014)

- ▣ Dinner talk: Share one thing that was hard about today and one thing that was good

Strategy #4: Befriend their Friends

- ▣ Get to know them
- ▣ Make sure you spend time with them
- ▣ Make your house the place to be
- ▣ Get to know the parents

Strategy #5: Create Tech-Free, Quality Time

- ▣ In the car
- ▣ During a meal and 20 minutes after
- ▣ Random interruptions
- ▣ Stop all technology 1.5 hours before bed

Strategy #6: Find a Mutual Interest

- ▣ Unconditional one on one time
- ▣ Prioritize it and schedule it
 - Special Outings

Strategy #7: Positive Reports

Craving to be Praised

Criticism is futile because it puts a person on the defensive, wounds a person's precious pride, hurts his or her sense of importance and arouses resentment...

Instead, the deepest desire in human beings is the craving to be praised and appreciated. It is an unfaltering human hunger.

Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*

Positive Teen Reports

- ▣ Who thinks criticism crushes the human spirit?
- ▣ Do you think we ever grow out of the need for praise?
- ▣ Anybody want to talk about a time when criticism stung you as a kid?
- ▣ Think of this like medicine: they might not act like they like it, but they need it to succeed.

Writing Your Positive Teen Report

- ▣ Think of what your teen has done over the past 30 days.
- ▣ The second part of the form is most important.
- ▣ Try to go deeper as you think about why the thing they did or said means so much.
 - Write about how the behavior shows their potential
 - Write about how the potential or behavior makes you feel (e.g. pride, hope, love, etc.)

Strategy #8: Get a Hot Tub

- ▣ Set up “hot tub etiquette rules”
 - No annoying topics or behavior
 - Talk about anything they want with only one response from the parent: unconditional loving acceptance

Strategy #9: Accept feelings

- ▣ Separate behavior from feelings
- ▣ I get it
- ▣ That makes sense
- ▣ Tell me more
- ▣ I love the way you describe things
- ▣ That must have been hard
- ▣ I can see why you would think that
- ▣ Sometimes I love you so much I just can't take it!

Strategy #9: Help Them Talk about Vulnerable Feelings

- A. **Self:** Compassionate, understanding, patient
- B. **Parts:** always vulnerable: insecurity, sadness, rejection, shame, hurt, disappointment, etc.
- C. **Managers:** Rationale, humor, denial, anger, annoyance, frustration, etc.
- D. **Fire fighters:** *temper tantrums, eating, video games, hitting, yelling/screaming*
- F. Help them talk about vulnerable feelings after the negativity stops

We Protect Ourselves
From the Following
Vulnerable Feelings :

Sad	Embarrassed/humiliated
Insecure	Shame
Worried/anxious	Rejected
Scared/fearful	Invisible/unimportant
Grief/loss	Failure
Lonely	Powerless
Hurt	Hopeless
Accused	

Why Do We Protect Ourselves From Vulnerable Feelings?



Top Reasons Why We Protect Ourselves from Vulnerable Feelings

- ▣ Everyday functioning
- ▣ Fear of **judgment/shame**
- ▣ Don't want to be a **burden**: Feel like others can't handle it
- ▣ Fear of losing someone you love
- ▣ Concern others will **minimize** or **ignore**
- ▣ We don't want the attention and get **overwhelmed**
- ▣ Loss of **pride** (e.g. can't ask for directions)
- ▣ We don't want to get hurt.
 - Fear that the feeling we have pushed away will take over
- ▣ Survival

First Way We Try to Protect Vulnerable Feelings...

Common Ways Teens Try to Protect:

- ▣ Acting like they don't care
- ▣ Getting angry
- ▣ Getting distracted by something else
- ▣ Taking it out on others

Common Ways Parents Try to Protect:

- ▣ Getting sarcastic or negative
- ▣ Start monitor/hover
- ▣ Lecturing
- ▣ Acting as if everything is positive
- ▣ Nagging and complaining

The Second Way Is, Fight, Flight, or Freeze

1) *Flight*

- ▣ Leave
- ▣ Threaten divorce
- ▣ Temporary Parent strike
- ▣ Drink
- ▣ Technology

2) *Fight*

- ▣ Yell Scream or threaten
- ▣ Physical punishment
- ▣ Threaten divorce

3) *Freeze*

- Disassociate
- Shut Down

Why, What Don't we Want to Feel?

We Don't Want to Feel:

Sad	Embarrassed/humiliated
Insecure	Shame
Worried/anxious	Rejected
Scared/fearful	Invisible/unimportant
Grief/loss	Failure
Lonely	Powerless
Hurt	Hopeless
Accused	

There is a Small Window of Opportunity to Help Someone Feel Safe Enough to be Vulnerable

- ▣ How long does it take for your teen to calm down?

Top 5 Things to Make it Safe Enough to be Vulnerable

1. The listener needs to wait until the person is ready.
2. The listener cannot minimize or blame once the person starts talking.
3. The listener needs to realize that the negative behavior protects vulnerable feelings.
4. The listener needs to try to show the person you are strong and **you “get it”**.
5. The listener needs to reassure the person they care about them.

Parents Could Say These Things While They Wait for Their Teen to Calm Down

- ▣ “We can talk when things calm down if you want to.”
- ▣ I’ll give you your space while you calm down.
- ▣ “We can talk about what you want once things have calmed down.”
- ▣ “When things get calm, I want to know what you think and feel and I will respect your opinions.”

How Would We Know If Your Teen Was Calming Down?

- ▣ Business as usual
- ▣ Humor

Calm Yourself Before you Help Your Teen Be Vulnerable

“Parenting can expose us to our own deep, dark self – the pretty and not so pretty – some of which we were probably hoping to keep out of sight! These moments of awareness are painful and can get in the way of our desire and commitment to be calm and speak kindly and reasonably to our kids. Of course, our explosion leaves us feeling more guilty and hopeless as parents – and the cycle continues”

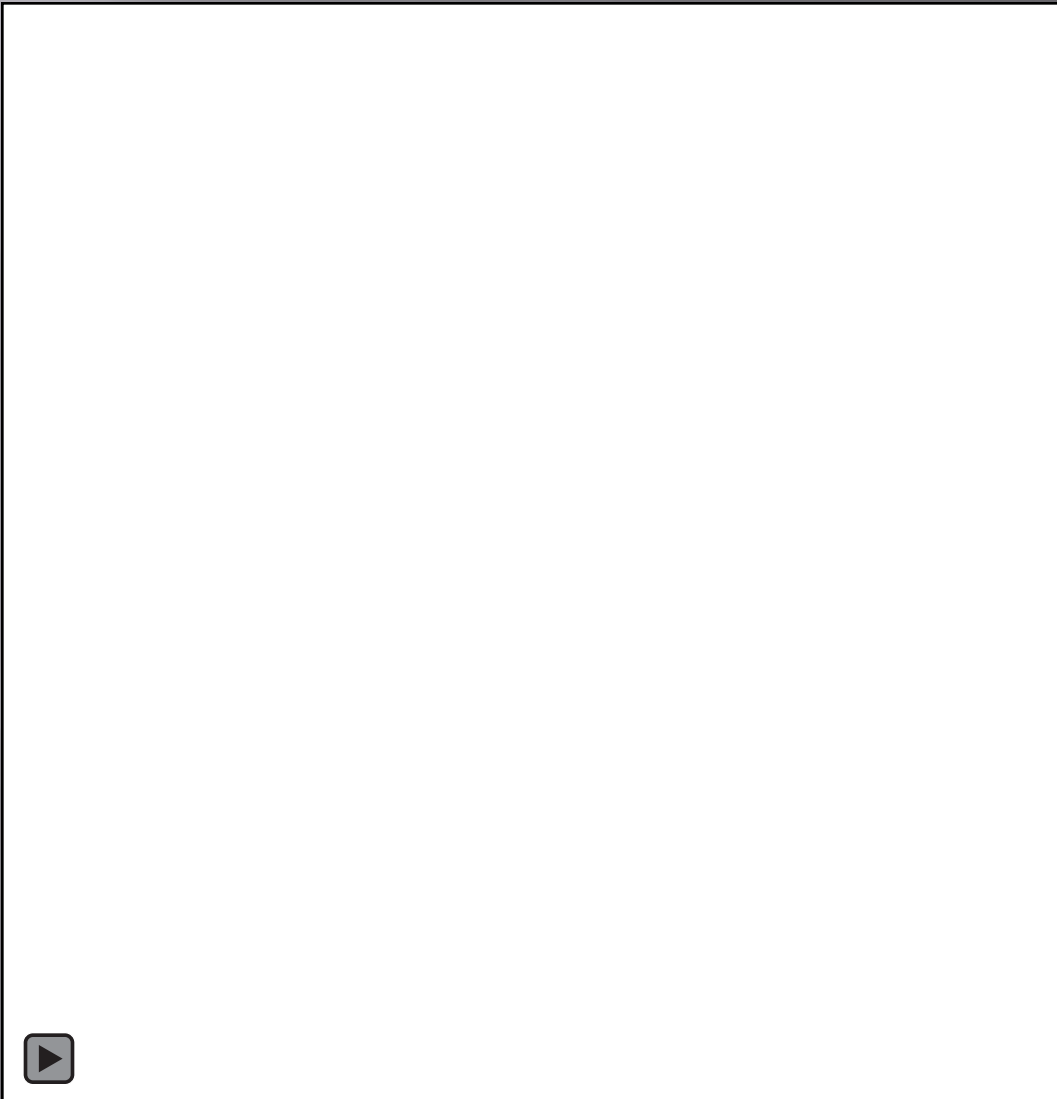
1) When my teen is triggered, I will do these things to keep myself calm:

- ☐ Take a walk outside
- ☐ Take time to realize I am doing my best and that I am trying to keep my family safe and happy
- ☐ Talk to a friend who “gets it”
- ☐ Listen to music
- ☐ Make sure I feel calm and in control of myself before I try to help my teen be vulnerable.

2) Wait until my teen calms down

- ❑ “We can talk when things calm down if you want to.”
- ❑ “We can talk about what you want when things calm down.”
- ❑ Remind myself that it will pass like a thunderstorm.
- ❑ Think of how you have been stubborn *even* when you didn’t want to be.
- ❑ Remind myself that their anger is a way to protect their vulnerable feelings
- ❑ Remind myself that “I cannot control” the situation

Remember the gentle and cute part of them!



Step 3) Make it safe and prove that you “get it”

Prove that you “get it”, even if you have to throw yourself under the bus to find out how they got triggered.

☐ Did I trigger when I said or did _____?

☐ Did _____ trigger you when they said _____?

☐ It makes sense why you would be _____.

☐ I know there is a good reason for why you feel that way.

Help them identify the vulnerable feeling

I will ask them if they feel one or more of the following vulnerable feelings:

- ☐ *Sadness*
- ☐ *loneliness*
- ☐ *worry*
- ☐ *fear*
- ☐ *Rejected*
- ☐ *Helpless*
- ☐ *other:_____*

After they say a vulnerable feeling, say Something Reassuring

I will say one or more of the following things in a calm and compassionate voice that does not trigger them more:

- ☐ *I love you so much, I get it.*
- ☐ *That makes so much sense.*
- ☐ *Its okay to feel _____ when things get this way, it makes sense.*
- ☐ *No matter what has happened, I know you are the same person I have always loved.*
- ☐ *It is so good you told me that. Now I understand.*

“The most precious gift we can give our children is to let them know we will guide them towards success and sit with them until thunderstorms pass over and over, and over, and over and over, and over....”

Discussion

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