

Welcome to

# **TREATING THE OUT-OF-CONTROL ADOLESCENT AND CHILD**

## **A 7 STEP MODEL TO RESTORE LOVE AND LIMITS**



**Savannah  
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Institute**

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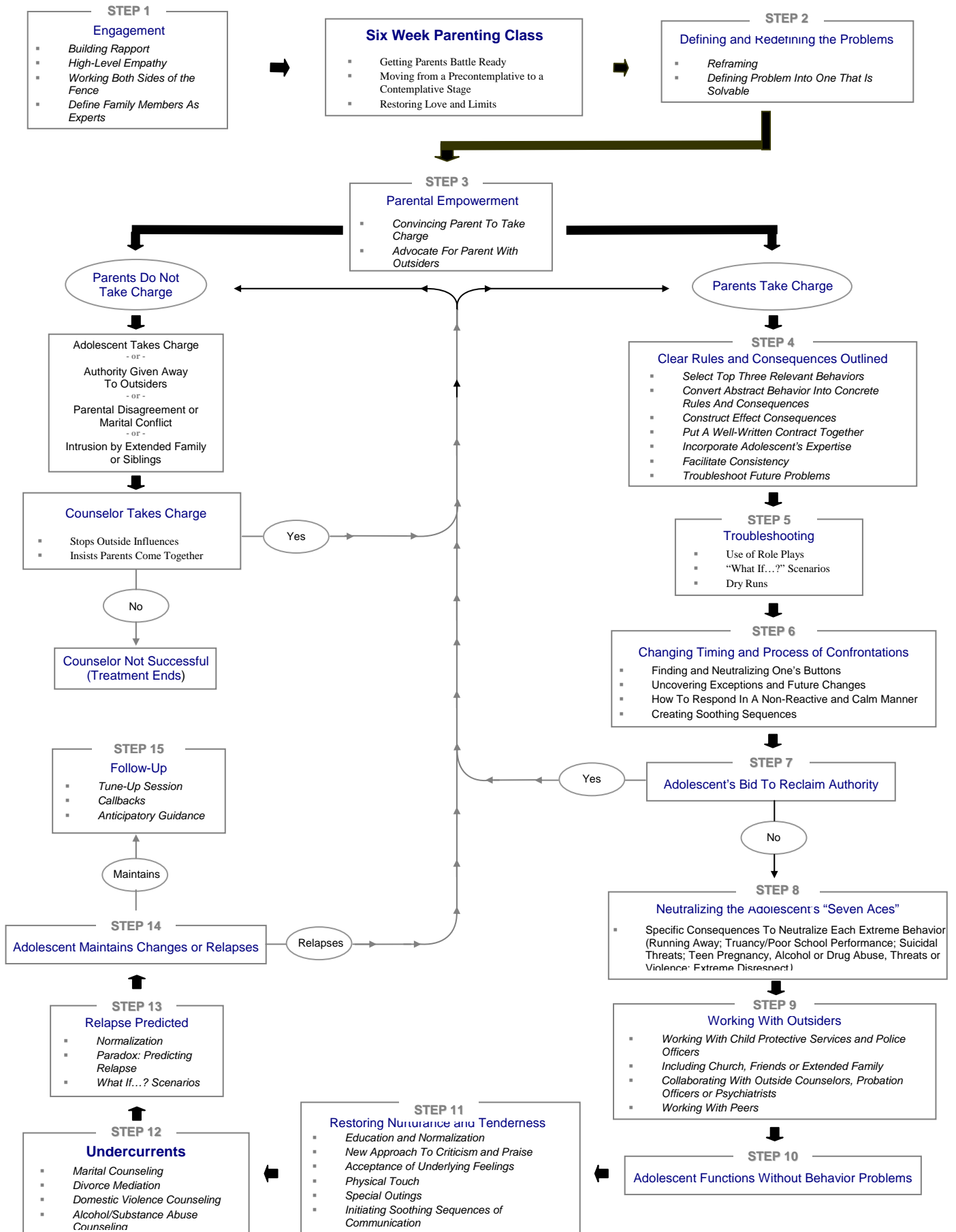
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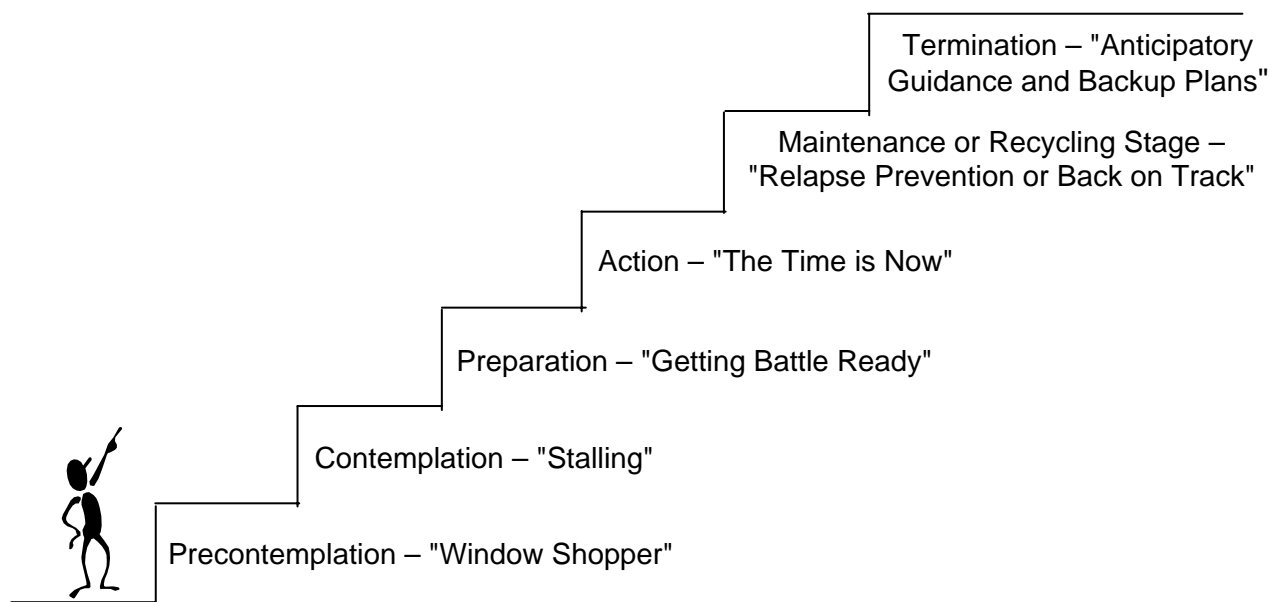
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# The SFI Model of Practice



# THE 6 STAGES OF READINESS FOR CHANGE



## Precontemplation

- ▶ Do not see that they are part of problem/solution
- ▶ Feel situation is hopeless
- ▶ No intention of changing
- ▶ Want others to change
- ▶ Others see problem they cannot
- ▶ Minimize or rationalize



## Action

- ▶ Person or family tries to change or stop problem
- ▶ Person or family tries to change environment
- ▶ Overlooks possible relapses
- ▶ If relapse or change fails recycles back to one of three earlier stages
- ▶ Others see problem they cannot



## Contemplation

- ▶ Acknowledge problem and their part in it
- ▶ Not ready for change yet
- ▶ Stalling – "analysis paralysis"
- ▶ Wait for magic sign
- ▶ Focus only on problem not solutions



## Maintenance

- ▶ Consolidate gains
- ▶ Relapse prevention-troubleshooting
- ▶ Potential to recycle is initially high
- ▶ Communicate that relapse is normal
- ▶ Goal: Spread moments of relapse further apart



## Preparation

- ▶ Contracting and troubleshooting
- ▶ Ambivalent-need final reassurances
- ▶ Dry Run Role Plays
- ▶ Make final adjustments

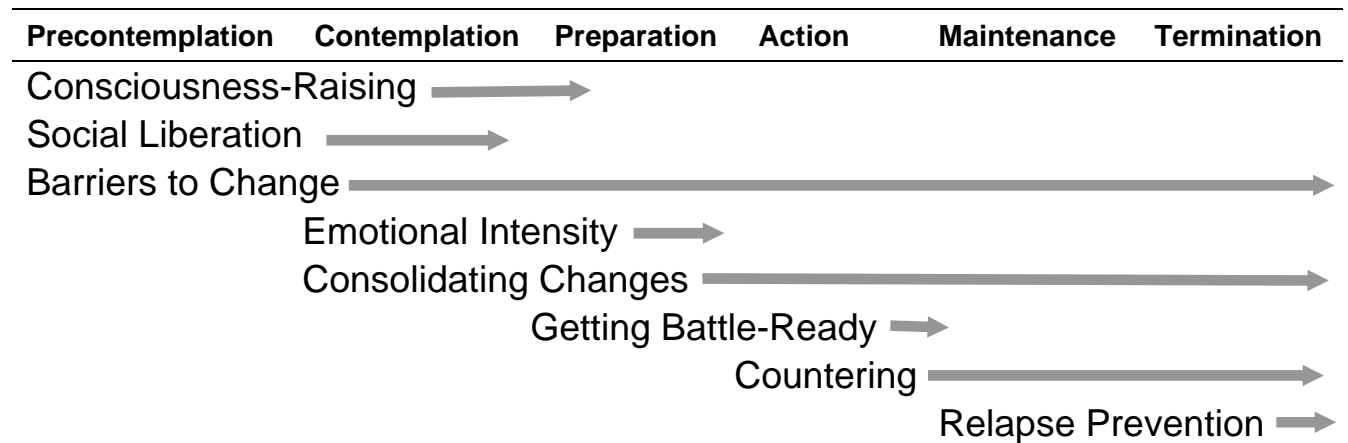


## Termination

- ▶ Anticipatory guidance
- ▶ Letting go of "old self"
- ▶ Back-up plan
- ▶ When to use tune-ups
- ▶ Line up support systems and secure a co-therapist


Prochaska, J.O., Norcross, J.C., & DiClemente, C.C. (1994).  
Changing for Good. New York: Avon Books.

## Meet the Client at Their Particular Stage and Move Them from One Stage to the Next



### Ethnographic Interviewing to Locate Barriers to Change

- ✓ What has been most helpful in our meetings together so far?
- ✓ What have I done or said as your counselor that has been most helpful?
- ✓ What has been least helpful in our meetings together so far?
- ✓ What have I done or said as your counselor that has been least helpful?
- ✓ What do we need to do in the future to make these meetings more helpful?

 Content Therapy vs. Process Therapy	Content Therapy	Process Therapy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freudian</li> <li>• Change = Insight</li> <li>• Focus = Past</li> <li>• Style = Non-directive</li> <li>• Symptom Change Individual Insight Biological</li> <li>• Models -&gt; Biomedical, Cognitive, Object Relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ System Theory</li> <li>➤ Change = New Dance</li> <li>➤ Focus = Here and Now</li> <li>➤ Style = Directive</li> <li>➤ Symptom Change- Interaction Change Environment Structural Change</li> <li>➤ Models → Solution- Focused, Strategic, Structural</li> </ul>



## **POINT OF ENTRY WHY OUR KIDS MISBEHAVE?**

### **Button-Pushing Skills**

Teenagers are sometimes more skillful than parents during arguments. They know how to push parents' buttons through words or actions so that the parents become angry and lose control. By controlling the general mood or direction of the argument, the adolescent is able to maintain a status quo position of authority.

### **Unclear Rules**

Teenagers are extremely literal and will continue to get into arguments about the interpretation of rules or consequences. Therefore, rules and consequences must be clearly written down beforehand in a contract format.

### **Misuse of Outside Forces**

Parents often turn to outside forces (judges, police, counselors, medication, hospitals) to stop their teenager's problem behavior, but in the process they inadvertently undermine their own authority and effectiveness.

### **Teenager in Charge and Drunk with Power**

A mixed-up hierarchy exists in which the teen is in charge and more powerful than the parents. Whenever the parents try to restore their authority, the difficult teen will use extreme behaviors such as running away, becoming truant, or threatening suicide to intimidate the parents into giving their authority back to the teenager.

### **The Pleasure Principle**

The teenager operates on the basis of the pleasure principle, or whatever feels good at the moment. The teenager would rather suffer the consequence than give up immediate gratification the misbehavior brings.

### **Thinking Two Steps Ahead**

Teenagers often possess what is called "advanced social perception." This is the ability to think two steps ahead. They foresee the sequential steps necessary to unravel any rule or consequence.

### **Peer Power**

Today's peer groups have a tremendous hold on the teen's heart, mind, and soul. If it is a positive peer group with good morals and values, the teen can thrive. However, if the same group of friends has a negative influence with poor values, the teen is likely to get more and more out-of-control.

# From the Parent Survival Kit



**Study Question:** (After you watch the video)  
**Are You Beginning to See How Your Teenager Thinks and Why You Must Troubleshoot By Thinking Two Steps Ahead to Win the Game?**

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### **Reason #3: Button Pushing (Please Read Pages 14-15 of Book)**

Teenagers are more skillful than their parents during confrontations. They know how to push their parent's buttons through words ("I hate you," "You suck as a parent") or actions (rolling of the eyes, mumbling) so that the parents become angry and lose control. By determining the general mood or direction of any argument, your teen is able to control you by making you angry, upset, or frustrated.



### **The Art of the Game (2 minutes)**

After you read **pages 14-15** of *Parenting Your Out-of-Control Teenager* watch this 2-minute video segment and then stop the tape.

Watch how the son gets out of his chore of dish duty by skillfully pushing his dad's hot buttons of "swearing" to make him lose control of his emotions, cloud his judgment, and win the game. The boy gets out of doing dishes by controlling his dad's mood through button pushing.

To stop button pushing, Step Four: Button Pushing (**pages 85-114**) will show you six different button buster strategies to stop your teen from pushing your buttons.



**Study Question:** (After you watch the video)  
**Can You Begin to Identify the Top Three Buttons Your Teenager Pushes on You to Make You Mad or Frustrated?**

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## Top 10 Teenager Button-Pushing Tactics

- 1) **"You never let me do anything."** This statement invites the parents to point out specific times when they have let the teenager do what he or she wanted. This forces the parent away from the real issue at that moment and gives the adolescent the upper hand in the discussion.
- 2) **"You don't love me."** This statement is intended to induce guilt and make the parents question their own self-worth. Unfortunately, many parents take this bait instead of recognizing that asking the adolescent to do something they do not like has nothing to do with love. Parents often have to administer medicine that may taste bad, but is necessary for growth/healing.
- 3) **"I hate you" or "You're a liar/a\*\*hole/bad parent."** These statements are meant to get the parents to lose their tempers through personal character attacks. This clouds the parents' thought process and limits their ability to effectively enforce consequences.
- 4) **"You're not my real mother/father. I don't have to listen to you."** This statement really unnerves stepparents, but rarely is about the parent not being a biological one. It is merely another tactic designed to get the parent flustered and angry so that the real issue is not addressed.
- 5) **A disgusted look, improper gesture or whiny voice.** Body language, gestures and tone of voice are some of the most powerful tools an adolescent may use to play with someone's emotions. Unfortunately, if the parents respond to these barbs by losing control of their emotions, it gives the adolescent a great deal of power as he/she now knows how to get under his parents' skin.
- 6) **Finding your most vulnerable area and preying on it.** Adolescents have an uncanny ability to find the areas that bug each parent the most and apply pressure to that area. For example, some adolescents will intentionally keep their rooms messy because of their mother's emphasis on cleanliness. Again, this behavior is not a personal attack, but just a clever way of throwing the parent off balance.
- 7) **"I'm gonna kill/hurt you/myself/others."** These statements are meant to scare the parents so that they will back off and remove pressure from the adolescent. Teenagers usually use threats of violence as a last resort when nothing else has worked.
- 8) **"I'm gonna lie, lie, lie."** Lying is a pet peeve of most parents and one the teenager knows will get the parents to emotionally lose control so that the teen can win, win, win. Parents do not like lying and will often lose control of their emotions quickly when they catch the teenager in a lie.
- 9) **"I hate school."** Most parents value education, so this statement invites a lecture on how the teenager is throwing away his future. Teenagers normally cannot see past tomorrow, so they do not see failing in school as a problem in the immediate future. However, they do know that education is important to the parent and how to use this to their advantage.
- 10) **"I'm going to leave/run away."** This statement gets parents to back off from exerting their authority because they fear what might happen if the adolescent runs away and is living on the streets. Adolescents know this and use this statement as an effective tool to paralyze their parents from taking action or enforcing a rule or consequence.

## Top 8 Parental Button-Pushing Tactics



- 1) **Preaching or Using Clichés.** As soon as adolescents hear lectures coming with clichés like "when I was your age," they instantly go deaf. Adolescents do not want to hear how bad they are or how good another family member is by comparison. They will usually get angry, walk away or ignore the parent. In turn, the parents get angry and the argument escalates.
- 2) **Talking in Chapters.** Adolescents may ask a short question but not receive as short an answer from the parents. For example, instead of simply saying, "Take out the garbage," parents often talk in chapters and state: "I have told you for weeks and weeks to take the garbage out. How many times do we have to go through this? I am sick and tired..."
- 3) **Labeling.** Adolescents hate when parents say they are "always" this way or that way. This can be especially dangerous, because adolescents will eventually live up to these labels as they become a permanent self-fulfilling prophecy.
- 4) **Futurizing.** This happens when parents talk about their teenager's future within a negative framework. These are statements like: "You'll never get into college," "No one will hire you," or "You'll never get a date for prom with that attitude."
- 5) **Instant Problem-Solving.** Adolescents do not want instant understanding and problem-solving when they come to their parents with a problem. When troubled by conflicts, teenagers feel that they are different from everyone else and that their emotions are new, personal and unique. Parents mean well by saying they understand just how the teenager feels and offering instant solutions, but the teenager just needs to feel that he or she was listened to.
- 6) **Questioning the Teenager's Restlessness and Discontent.** Developmentally, this is a time of uncertainty, self-consciousness, moodiness, and suffering. These feelings usually pass over time. However, until they do pass, parents only aggravate the situation when they ask questions such as "What is the matter with you?" and "What has suddenly gotten into you?" These are unanswerable questions for a restless and discontented teenager. Even if the teenager did know what the problem was, she could not say, "Look, Mom or Dad, I am torn by conflicting emotions, engulfed by irrational urges and confused by raging hormones."
- 7) **Not Tolerating Experimental Behavior.** Parents can be shown how to tolerate certain behaviors without accepting them. Changes in clothing and hairstyles are symbolic of a teenager trying to find an identity. If the parents constantly focus on these changes rather than simply expressing their disapproval once and letting it work itself out, the teenager might rebel further causing a power struggle between parent and teenager to ensue.
- 8) **Collecting Criticisms.** Insults and criticisms cut deeper when they come from parents. They damage the inner spirit of the teenager and, unlike physical bruises, often take years to heal. When parents push this type of button by focusing on unpleasant facts about the adolescent's behavior again and again, or by pointing out defects, no one benefits. Parents also often keep a mental scorecard handy for rehashing past behavior problems during current arguments.





## 5 BUTTON BUSTER STRATEGIES

### EXIT AND WAIT

Sometimes it is possible to act more calmly and in control if you are angry or frustrated, but this is the exception, not the rule. For this reason, the two most important four-letter words to remember are: "Exit and wait." The best thing about this strategy is that by saying nothing, you never have to take back harsh words or criticisms said in anger. As the adult, you are older and wiser than your teen. Therefore, you are the designated role model. *Exiting* a heated confrontation before you lose your cool and *waiting* until you are calmer to enforce the consequence shows great wisdom on your part.

### USE SECRET SIGNS

Together, you can develop a set of secret signs or "Morse Codes" to quietly signal one another that your teen is skillfully pushing your buttons or that it is time to exit and wait. For example, one parent held up the word "Stop" on a sign, while another used a cutting motion across the throat as a sign to exit and wait.

### SEPARATE MISBEHAVIOR FROM PERSONAL ATTACKS

Button pushing is not personal. As a teen, you probably pushed buttons on your parents. How many of you would pout to push your mother or father's guilt buttons? Your parents understood that it was a game and a form of manipulation to get your way. They did not take it personally and neither can we. The real intent is to get you to let him go to a party, back down on a punishment, or leave him alone.

### SHORT AND TO THE POINT

Lecturing or offering long explanations only gives your teenager the upper hand to push your buttons and achieve victory. You will also run the risk of pushing your teen's buttons and throwing more gasoline on the fire. Think of it this way, the longer you spend arguing or trying to justify your actions, the greater the chance you will regress to your teen's emotional age.

### USING DEFLECTORS

You can use "deflectors" to help ensure success with "exit and wait" and "short and to the point." "Deflectors" are words or phrases like "nevertheless," "regardless," "that is the rule," or "no exceptions." These words are called deflectors because they help you deflect or direct the conversation back to the issue at hand.

## A LOOPHOLE FREE CONTRACT: DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A CONTRACT THAT LOOKS LIKE THIS ONE?

### Rule #1: Obeying Curfew

Regina's curfew time will be 5 pm on school nights (Sunday through Thursday) and 10 pm on weekends (Friday & Saturday). If Regina returns home even one minute past the curfew hour, she will be considered late. These times will not be changed or altered until I [your dad] decide otherwise. Trying to change them on your own breaks this rule.

#### Consequence A (positive)

If Regina comes home on time, she will receive one hour added to her curfew time the next night. If it is on a school night, the temporary curfew the next night will be 6 pm and, if it is on a weekend, it will be 11 pm. Regina keeps these hours as long as she comes home on time. If not, she receives Consequence B and loses this extra hour until she finishes her punishment. She can then start all over again to get her extra hour, if she comes home on time for an entire week without being late.

#### Consequence B (negative)

For every night Regina is late, she is grounded the next weekend night. If she is late again that same week, the same thing happens. If she runs out of weekend nights, it will be tacked onto the following weekend.

# From the Parent Survival Kit



## TOP SEVEN REASONS WHY TOUGH TEENS MISBEHAVE



### Reason #1: Unclear Rules (Please Read Pages 11-13 of Book)

One of the biggest reasons why your teen misbehaves is that you don't have a clear, written contract. Without a contract, your rules are open to interpretation and your teen can "drive a Mack truck" through the loopholes. If you don't have a written contract, you are not alone. Up to 90% of the parents I work with simply make up the rules and consequences as they go along without anything written down. When you do this your teen smells blood in the water and, like a shark, goes into a feeding frenzy.



### The Best Lawyer Money Can Buy (2 minutes)

After you read **pages 12-13** of *Parenting Your Out-of-Control Teenager*, watch this 2-minute video segment and stop the tape before the next video clip comes on.

In this video, you will see and hear the thoughts inside this teenager's head as he receives a verbal contract from his parents on the rule of "no ditching school." Watch how the teenager skillfully finds loopholes in the contract like a master chess player, easily defeating his parents. This is a special skill known as "literal disease." In other words, if the rule or the consequence for breaking that rule is not written down and concretely defined, your teen will find the loophole and defeat you.

However, your teen is in for a big surprise after you read **pages 29-66** in *Parenting Your Out-of-Control Teenager*. It will give you the playbook you need to understand the game and play it better than your teen.

# SEVEN TEENAGER ACES THAT CAN CAUSE PARENT ABUSE



## **Ace #1 — Disrespect**

Swearing, a disrespectful attitude, or refusing to comply definitely pushes parents' buttons and makes them lose control of their emotions.

## **Ace#2 — Truancy/School Performance**

When a teen ditches or fails school, it can send the parent into a state of anxiety or panic. Parents then back down out of a fear. If they push too hard, the teen will ditch more or drop out of school.

## **Ace #3 — Running Away**

This ace scares the parents tremendously, because out on the streets, the teen could die or come to harm. This fear often paralyzes parents from taking any action.

## **Ace #4 — Threats or Acts of Violence**

When a teen threatens to hurt someone or commits an actual act of violence, parents and society react with fear or retaliate with more violence. This behavior is one of the scariest and one of the most difficult to stop. It works almost every time to get the parent to back off and give up.

## **Ace #5 — Threats of Suicide**

This is the teen's biggest weapon. They learn that if they say the words "I am going to hurt myself," everyone will back down and get scared.

## **Ace #6 — Teen Pregnancy**

This ace is not just about teens having sex. This behavior can be a very destructive force in the parent-child relationship.

## **Ace #7 — Drug or Alcohol Abuse**

A major reason for this problem is that teens do not think they have an alcohol or drug problem. How many teens that use drugs or alcohol think they have a problem? My guess is the answer is zero. The major difference between teens and adults is that adults have usually experienced the ill effects of drug or alcohol abuse, while teens have not.



## **POINT OF ENTRY WHY OUR KIDS MISBEHAVE?**

### **Little Known But Important Facts**

- **Americans spend 40% less time with children than in the 1960's - dads spend an average of 8 minutes a day with teens - moms 10 minutes a day.**
- **Average working parent spends twice as long dealing with e-mail than with their children.**
- **Newsweek poll of 10,000 teenagers in 2000 - 73% of these teenagers reported that their parents spend too little time with them.**
- **Average family meal lasts 11 minutes - little more than re-fuelling pit stops.**
- **Benjamin Franklin predicted that with the onset of technology, we would work no more than two hours a day**
- **Heart attacks double if you work 60 hours per week and triple if you sleep less than 5 hours a night twice a week.**

*Source: In Praise of Slowness: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed  
by Carl Honore*

*The principles used to be the same for every generation until the 1960's. In the 1960's parents stopped listening to Grandma and went to doctors instead. People with new ideas constructed a new vision of childhood which related to the child's psychological development rather than focusing on the child's character. There was more emphasis on "feeling good" than developing character. It was all about self-esteem rather than consistent discipline, humility, and honesty.*

**"We are often befuddled when the same children cooperate for Grandma." That's because the grandparent is . . . saying, 'Your place at the table is right there,' while the parent [suggests], 'How would you like to sit over there? Is that all right?' The child knows that everything in the final analysis is negotiable with the parent, but that nothing is negotiable with the grandparent."**

# THE BATTLE FOR STRUCTURE

## THE GLASS IS HALF EMPTY

Rodney's father viewed Rodney's temper tantrums as being caused by a chemical imbalance in his brain (although there was no medical evidence to support this). As a result, the father did not hold Rodney responsible for beating up his younger brother or throwing food against the wall. Instead of punishing Rodney, the father said, "It's OK, Son. Just let your anger out. We all know that you are doing the best you can."

Without any accountability, Rodney only got angrier and more violent as he grew older, bigger, and stronger. Unknowingly, the father had hurt, not helped Rodney by defining Rodney's problem as a chemical imbalance. The father communicated to Rodney through inaction that Rodney was not responsible for the angry outbursts. There was no reason for Rodney to change. He always had a "Get Out of Jail Free" card.

### **"My Teenager Has a Problem, *But* I Can't Fix It"**

- ▶ My teenager is sick and has mental problems.
- ▶ My teenager is frail and if I push too hard he will only get worse.
- ▶ If I get tough, I will lose my teen's friendship
- ▶ My teenager has a chemical imbalance and only needs medication to solve the problem.
- ▶ My teenager has had a tough life and I feel guilty if I am tough.
- ▶ My teenager will grow out of it / hormone imbalance.
- ▶ My teenager is on drugs. If I push too hard she will use more drugs.
- ▶ My teenager wants to be left alone and I need to respect that.

## **THE GLASS IS HALF FULL**

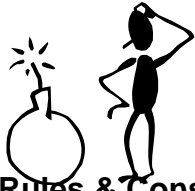
Rodney's mother disagreed with her husband. She had a completely different viewpoint. She saw Rodney's temper tantrums as a clear sign that he was spoiled and manipulative. Whenever Rodney became angry, everyone in the house got scared and backed down. If Rodney had chores to do and threw a temper tantrum, he did not have to do them. If Rodney threw his plate against the wall because he did not like the food, he got pizza for dinner. Rodney's mother begged her husband to see the problem from her eyes – Rodney was a spoiled teen who needed limits and had to be held accountable.

The father would not hear of it. Instead, the family consulted an outside expert who tried to solve Rodney's problems with one medication after another. Nothing worked.

One day the father woke up to find a small note on the bathroom mirror. It read, "I can't take it anymore. I'm leaving you and taking Rodney with me. Maybe now he and I will have a fighting chance."

### **“My Teenager Has A Problem, *And* I Can Help Fix It With the Right Set of Tools”**

- ▶ My Teenager is Stubborn.
- ▶ My Teenager is Stuck in a Rut.
- ▶ My Teenager Needs Parental Guidance to Show Them the Way, Even If They Act As If They Want to Be Left Alone.
- ▶ My Teenager Shows Signs of Depression or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). It May Require Some Medication But They Are Still Accountable for Any Misbehavior.
- ▶ My Teenager is Not Frail. They Need Consistent Structure to Get Stronger.
- ▶ My Teenager Has Too Much Power For Their Developmental Britches.
- ▶ My Teen Will Not Grow Out of It On Their Own. It Has Been Over a Year.
- ▶ They Need My Guidance to Get Unstuck.



# Locate Potential Stumbling Blocks

## Rules & Consequences Not Clearly Outlined

Teenagers are extremely literal and will continue to get into arguments about the interpretation of rules or consequences. Therefore, rules and consequences must be clearly written down beforehand in a contract format.

## Rules Clear and Mandatory

A mandatory rule is one that the teenager must obey. If the rule is not clearly stated, it becomes optional and ineffective.

## Too Many Rules At One Time

Rather than focusing their time and energy on the most important issues, parents often want to correct every negative thing the teenager does at one time.

## Consequence Not Effective

Consequence or punishment is not severe enough. Therefore, the teenager has no reason to give up the extreme behavior.

## Parents Not Consistent

Parents don't follow through on a consistent basis or function "off the cuff" and change rules & consequence as they go along.

## Rules Not Predetermined

Rules and consequences not predetermined in a contract format. As a result, both parents and adolescent get confused as to what was said and how the rule was to be enforced.

## List Top Three Problem Behaviors

Mother's List	Father's List
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Son will not go to school #2</li> <li>• Son is disrespectful by swearing and by not doing what I ask him to do the first time #4</li> <li>• Son will not come home on time for curfew #3</li> <li>• Stealing #1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Son sulks, always in a bad mood #4</li> <li>• Will not listen to me #2</li> <li>• Does not appreciate us as parents #3</li> <li>• Lying #1</li> </ul>
Combined Relevant Behavior List (rank order of priority)	
#1 Son will not go to school #2 Stealing #3 Son will not come home on time for curfew	

## Questions to Keep in Mind When Developing Problem Behavior Lists...

- Is this behavior really important?
- Can I let this behavior go?
- What would happen if I just waited?
- Is this problem a safety issue?



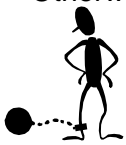
## Remember...Safety First!



If the teenager is currently engaging in the following behaviors, they must be included at the top of your list:

- 1 Threats or acts of suicide
- 2 Running away or leaving the house without permission
- 3 Threats or acts of violence to other people or animals
- 4 Setting fires
- 5 Drug or alcohol abuse that goes beyond simple experimentation

The reason has to do with safety issues. Any one of these problems could cause death or serious harm to the teenager or others. For example, if the teenager is running the streets for days or weeks at a time, he risks getting hurt or killed. If he is using alcohol, he could be killed drinking and driving. For these reasons, other problems (not cleaning one's room, ditching school, disrespect, etc.) have to take a back seat until these dangerous issues are under control. Otherwise, the teenager might not be alive long enough to address less serious problems.



## Find the Loopholes in This Contract

### Sample Rule Contract

**Problem: Daughter will not obey curfew.** Regina's curfew time will be 5 pm on school nights (Sunday through Thursday) and 10 pm on weekends (Friday & Saturday). If Regina returns home past her curfew hour, she will be considered late.

#### Loophole #1: How Late is Late?

The statement, "If Regina returns home past the curfew hour, she will be late," is way too open for interpretation. "Late" could be considered 5 minutes or 5 hours. The teen can easily say to their parent, "You never told me an exact time, so I am not technically late." A good lawyer would tell you that the teenager would be right because the term "lateness" was not literally defined. The contract should read:

"Regina will be considered late if she is one minute past 5 pm on weekdays (Sunday through Thursday) or 10 pm on weekends (Friday and Saturday)."

#### Loophole #2: By Who's Watch?

The literal and savvy teenager can argue that her watch only reads 5 pm while the parent's watch (and accurate time) reads 7 pm. The contract should read:

"Regina will be considered late if she is one minute past 5 pm on weekdays (Sunday through Thursday) or 10 pm on weekends (Friday and Saturday) according to our kitchen clock."

# From the Parent Survival Kit



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## STRATEGY #2: CONVERT PROBLEMS INTO CONCRETE BEHAVIORS (pgs 37-39)

After you write down your teen's top two problems, it is time to convert each problem into a concrete rule by answering this question:

**"What are all the things that my teenager says or does that clearly indicate that he/she is... (disrespectful, ditching school, violent, etc)?"**

You must convert your problem (my teen uses drugs, lies, runs away, etc.) into a set of concrete behaviors. Otherwise, your teen will eat you alive. For example, if the problem is a "dirty room" you will argue over the correct interpretation of what constitutes "a clean room" unless you concretely list the things that will make your teen's room clean (no food in room, clothes picked up, bed made, etc.)

This problem is avoided when you concretely define the problem behavior you want to address. Look at how a single mother answers the question above by taking the problem of "violence" and a "clean room" from her problem list and converting it into two clear and concrete rules.

Combined Problem List	Converted Problems to Concrete Rules
1) Sam physically hits his younger brother.	<p><b>Rule #1</b> Sam's behavior toward his brother will be considered an act of violence if he does one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Push, shove, hit, thump, kick, squeeze your brother, or anyone else.</li> <li>2) Threaten to hurt your brother or anyone else.</li> <li>3) Any behaviors not on this list that may cause physical injury to someone else.</li> </ol>
2) Sam refuses to clean his room.	<p><b>Rule #2</b> Sam's room will be considered clean only if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Every piece of clothing is picked up off the floor, closet floor, and any other piece of furniture and placed in the laundry basket in the laundry room.</li> <li>2) No food items of any kind in any part of your room.</li> <li>3) The bed is made to my satisfaction. I will show you what this looks like.</li> <li>4) Hang up or put away clean clothes.</li> <li>5) Floor vacuumed on Monday and Thursday.</li> <li>6) These tasks are completed and ready for inspection by 6 pm each day.</li> </ol>

# Top 10 Consequences Teens Care About

## 1) Money

Giving money or taking it away is a powerful incentive.

## 2) Telephone

Friends are extremely important to teenagers. Therefore, restrictions from talking to friends can get their attention quickly.

## 3) Freedom

A loss of any kind of freedom (grounding, not being allowed to go to a party, see friends, watch television, go on the Internet, etc.) can quickly get a teenager on the right track if done correctly.

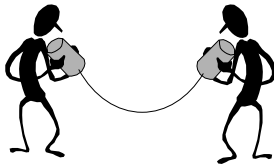


## 4) Clothing

Clothing makes a statement and represents identity. (Prep or designer clothes for the popular kids, and dark clothing and body piercing for a Gothic look.) Taking away certain clothes or making your teen wear “nerdy clothes” can be a great motivator.

## 5) Cars

This one has not changed since cars were invented. At 15 and 16, the ability to drive becomes critical to your teen. Parental transportation, if one cannot drive, also becomes important. Taking the car away or forcing the teenager to take public transportation can be a powerful consequence.

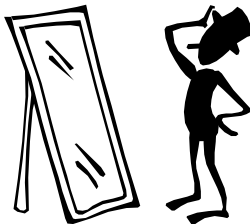


## 6) Loosened Restrictions

When a parent modifies past rules like extending curfew or bedtime, this communicates trust to the teenager and that they can be treated like an adult. This is a tremendous motivator.

## 7) Trust

Earning and keeping your trust is very important to your teen. Finding ways for teens to slowly earn back trust can make all the difference in the world.

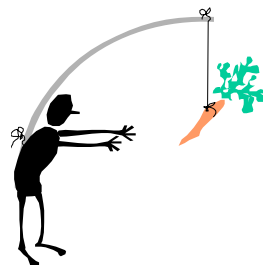


## 8) Appearance

Looking good in front of peers is very important and goes beyond the type of clothes you wear. It becomes a matter of how you talk, who you are with, and looking cool.

## 9) Material Objects

More and more, material things (CD's, Pagers, Cellular Phones, Jewelry, etc.) are becoming important to the teenager. Removing these items can be a great motivator.



## 10) Spending Time

Many teenagers will not admit it, but reconnecting and spending quality time with a parent, mentor, or caregiver is extremely important.

## Positive Teen Report (PTR)

<p><b>Excelled in Academics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An A or B on a tough test</li> <li>➤ Completed homework on own</li> <li>➤ Remained focused on homework</li> </ul>	<p><b>Excelled in Artistic Expression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Wrote a poem or story</li> <li>➤ Drew an expressive picture</li> <li>➤ Performed in a play</li> </ul>
<p><b>Excelled in Job Performance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completes extra chore</li> <li>➤ Doing chores without being told</li> <li>➤ Going to work outside the home</li> </ul>	<p><b>Excelled in Concern for Others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Listen to another's problems</li> <li>➤ Helping brother or sister</li> <li>➤ Visited a nursing home</li> </ul>
<p><b>Excelled in Sports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Loses but is a good sport</li> <li>➤ Tries a new sport</li> <li>➤ Scores a touchdown, home run</li> </ul>	<p><b>Performed Well Under Stress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gets rejected but talks about it</li> <li>➤ Comforts another in pain</li> <li>➤ Does not lose cool if stressed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performed Beyond the Call of Duty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Helps cook</li> <li>➤ Does something unexpected</li> <li>➤ Makes a positive leap</li> </ul>	<p><b>Used Self Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Avoids a fight</li> <li>➤ Takes a time out on own</li> <li>➤ Talks through anger</li> </ul>

### Positive Incident Report


For: \_\_\_\_\_

You Did It!    \_\_\_ Academics    \_\_\_ Athletics    \_\_\_ Creativity  
                  \_\_\_ Concern For Others    \_\_\_ Performed Well Under Stress  
                  \_\_\_ Performed Well Under Tough Circumstances  
                  \_\_\_ Did Chores Without Being Asked    \_\_\_ Avoided An Argument  
                  \_\_\_ Job Performance    \_\_\_ Respectful    \_\_\_ Other

You earned this PIR because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**I Saw It!**

*You are being recognized for going beyond the call of duty!  
Keep moving forward!  
You're fantastic!*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **Troubleshooting: “What Will I Do If” Scenarios for the 7 Aces**

### **Disrespect**

- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen continues to swear even after I tell him that he will lose his phone, will be grounded, fined etc?
- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen continues to follow me around the house and yell at me when I try to exit from the situation before losing my cool?

### **Ditching School or Failing Grades**

- ❖ **What will I do if** the teacher or school principal refuses to back me up?
- ❖ **What will I do if** he or she refuses to do any homework?

### **Running Away**

- ❖ **What will I do if** I try to ground or stop my teen and he simply leaves the house?
- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen finds parents that will not require that they leave?

### **Alcohol or Drug Abuse**

- ❖ **What will I do if** I suspect that my teen is using drugs or alcohol?
- ❖ **What will I do if** I know that my teen is using drugs or alcohol on a regular basis and he or she refuses to acknowledge it as a problem?

### **Teen Pregnancy or Sexual Promiscuity**

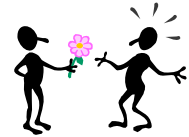
- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen refuses to use birth control?
- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen gets pregnant?

### **Threats or Acts of Violence**

- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen threatens to push, shove, or hit someone?
- ❖ **What will I do if** my teen actually commits an act of violence?

### **Threats of Suicide**

- ❖ **What will I do if** I place my teen on 24-hour watch with my counselor and he still verbally threatens to hurt himself?
- ❖ **What will I do if** I cannot take the time off to place my teen on a 24-hour watch?



## When to Introduce the Topic of Nurturance

Option #1: The Soft Side Before The Hard Side	Option #2: The Hard and Soft Sides Simultaneously	Option #3: Addressing The Hard Side First
<p>The behavior problems are so minimal that the soft side of nurturance is the only area that needs to be addressed. However, with difficult adolescents this is an exception, not the rule.</p>	<p>This is possible when behavior problems are less extreme or when problems first emerge. In both instances, family members are not burned out and the negative interactions have not had a chance to seriously impact the family's closeness.</p>	<p>Years of conflict have taken their toll on the parent-child relationship. The parents feel out of control and helpless. Consequently, nurturance cannot be addressed until the bleeding has stopped by neutralizing the teenager's aces and maintaining the parents' position of authority.</p>



## Timeline of Stages Leading to Emotional Deprivation

Stage 1 Behavior Problems	Stage 2 Negative Interaction	Stage 3 Conditional Love	Stage 4 Emotional Deprivation
<p>A preadolescent or early adolescent becomes rebellious and has behavior problems.</p>	<p>The child fails to comply with parental requests and lecturing &amp; negative interaction jumps to 90% to 100% of the time.</p>	<p>Special outings or signs of affection then become contingent on how good the behavior was each week.</p>	<p>Emotional deprivation sets in when the parents and teen stop physical affection and special outings. Both parents and teen feel "burned" so many times that they stop trying.</p>
Stage 5 Second Family Takes Over	Stage 6 Parent and Teen Get Stuck In a Vicious Cycle	Stage 7 Teen Becomes Hardened & Lacks Remorse/Empathy	
<p>If teenager does not receive nurturance in the family, he or she will look to an adopted "second family" of peers, gangs, or drugs.</p>	<p>As parents see the teenager pull away, they will lecture or impose more rules, which in turn will push the teenager further away until both parties get stuck in a rut and are unable to make the first move to break down the walls of emotional deprivation.</p>	<p>As this rut continues, the teenager becomes more and more hardened. Over time the teenager develops an inability to show remorse or empathy and may even develop an antisocial personality disorder. As adults, they pass these problems on to their children, where it begins all over again.</p>	