

Got Teenagers?

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YOUTHWORK IN ACTION 48

Perilous Passage: Navigating Through the Teenage Years: A Survival Guide For Parents is a copyrighted process which, working with the specific parent/teen interactions as they spontaneously occur, teaches parents of struggling teenagers to (ultimately) speak a 'language' – the LANGUAGE OF POWER – that adolescents instantly understand and respect

An Issue of Freedom

(edited for brevity)

After bringing home an almost unbroken string of A's and B's for several semesters, the 15 ½ year old received a report card with two D's in core subjects (in addition to three B's). His trained-in-the-**Perilous Passage-Language-Of-Power** mom said nothing. Several days later she initiated the following dialogue with her son:

Mom: "Will you let me know when you have several minutes to discuss something I've been carrying around in my head?"

Teen: "Sure."

Mom: "I'm worried that 10th grade may be getting too hard for you. Have you been spending too much time studying (she names the three classes in which he received B grades)?"

Teen: [Confused]. "What do you mean?"

Mom: "I mean you got three B's and two D's so maybe you worked too hard on (the B courses)?"

Teen: "No, I don't think so."

Mom: "You're 15 ½, right? You're not 12 anymore?"

Teen: [Suspicious]. "Yeah. You already know that."

Mom: "Do you have a lot more free time now than when you were 12?"

Teen: [Very suspicious]. "Yeah, why do you ask?"

Mom: "How many classes have you had at school that teach you how to handle all of your extra free time?"

Teen: [Beginning to catch the drift...] "Oh, mom. That's really dumb."

Mom: "How many courses?"

Teen: "NONE. Of course they don't teach that stuff in school!"

Mom: [Feigning surprise]. "They don't? Well then, how have you learned how to handle all this extra time?"

Teen: [Feels mom closing in] "Mom! Can't you just let it go?!"

Mom: "So maybe you had to learn how to handle all this free time on your own? Like what they call trial and error?"

Teen: [Becoming resigned to taking the hit] “Yeah, I guess.”
Mom: “And learning through trial and error means making mistakes and hopefully learning from them?”
Teen: “If you say so.”
Mom: “So the two D’s in core subjects on your report card could be a mistake in learning how to handle your free time?”
Teen: [Becoming more and more miserable]. “Yeah, maybe.”
Mom: “Are 15 ½ year olds much more likely than 12 year olds to be interested in girls?”
Teen: [Throws in the towel.] “OK! OK! OK! I’ve probably been spending too much time on the phone with Plutonia and not enough on school stuff. You satisfied now?”
Mom: “Well, since for some reason your school doesn’t offer courses on how to handle free time and through no fault of your own you have to learn it on your own and that means like learning any new thing you will make mistakes, how about I help you out by checking in now and then with (the teachers of the D courses)?”
Teen: [Under his breath] “#@*&\$(!”

Whereupon mom, as she turns away, allows herself a small Cheshire cat **LANGUAGE OF POWER** smile. Mission accomplished.

Principles followed (in order of appearance):
MAKE NO JUDGMENTS: PARK YOUR EGO AT THE DOOR (*Lessons Along the Pathway* # 3, # 4, and # 26)
BE RELENTLESSLY POSITIVE (*Lesson* # 10)
ASK QUESTIONS, DON’T MAKE STATEMENTS (*Lesson* # 9)
MAKE YOURSELF THE PROBLEM (Lessons # 1 and # 13)
HOW HIGH THE MOON (from **Choctaw Ridge Academy: A Radical New Approach to Managing the Disruptive Student**)
UTILIZE TANGENTIAL TALK (**Language of Power** # 2, from **Parent Power: Stories From the Source**)
CONTROL THE CONTEXT (**Language of Power** # 1, from **Parent Power**)
PAINT THEM INTO A CORNER (**Choctaw Ridge Academy**)

The practice of *youthwork* covers all the bases...

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