Teen Brain - Smart Kids, Foolish Choices

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Which 3 characteristics best d escribe your teenager? Which one brings you to the brink?

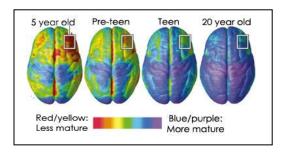
- 1. Quick to find your faults
- 2. Embarrassed by you
- 3. Rapid response pissed off blaming rebellious
- 4. Sleep deprived PM night owl; AM cranky & listless
- 5. Quick to Over-Emote outbursts of tears/laughter/anger
- 6. Prone to overestimate short-term payoffs and underplay longer-term consequences
- 7. Likely to overlook alternative courses of action
- 8. Somewhat disrespectful and self-centered
- 9. Impulsive
- 10. Little knowledge of 'why I just did _____'
- 11. Uncommunicative/Unresponsive
- 12. Obsessed with fashion, persona, fitting in
- 13. Likely to take risks
- 14. Reactive to stress
- 15. Friend-centered

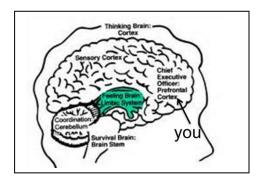
Important to note Teen's list for us Parents:

- 1. Worried, worried, worried
- 2. Obsessed with clean
- 3. Eyes In the back of their head
- 4. Likely to say 'No'
- 5. Focused on us (kids) doing well
- 6. Prone to Emotional Outbursts (tears/anger)
- 7. Likely to bring up 'the olden days'
- 8. Have difficulty believing we would make a good choice
- 9. Selfless always focused on us (like a hobby)
- 10. Stressed
- 11. Need rest
- 12. Do as I say, not as I do

Net Result – they are doing their job as we do ours – their brain is ill-equipped to do the planning without support from adult – perfectly suited for innovating, social cuing, learning

- Pushing you away to figure self out
- Demonstrating independence
- Figuring out what it takes to be taken seriously, trusted, responsible
- Expressing volatility in different ways
- Developing into who they are going to be





So what can Parents/Adults do? – Knowing this is nice, but it doesn't make It easy.

- Accept that it's messy don't take it personally
- Don't be shocked, yet don't let things slide
- He/she needs to make himself proud let them know specifics that make you proud
- Catch them doing good, recognize their friends acts of goodness
- Remember, mistakes and "failures" are critical to growth use it or lose it phase!
- Don't look for trouble you'll find it!

Don't Cave into their TRAPS

- Circular arguments, negotiation, whining, disrespect then they win! Walk away!
- But everyone else is.... "We are not everyone else"
- I have to go too. "We know you may be disappointed, but this is our decision"
- I can never win with you. "What would it take to earn that privilege?"
- Avoid blaming, shaming, and threatening

EXPECTATIONS and CONNECTIONS are Key to Winning the War

- Responsibilities and clear expectations are critical to the development of a young adult.
- Teach your teen exactly what it is you expect before you expect it, not after. Encourage them to take responsibility for planning increases competence!
- Let your child know that you like him, really, truly like him and enjoy being with him.
- Be sure there are others in his life that provide scaffolding coach, youth worker, therapist, teacher. Control is not the key connection is!
- Keep your expectations and standards higher than you hope to achieve
- Negotiate privileges and responsibilities ahead of time 24 hour rule
- Avoid overindulgence Work toward 'industry' Fostering Producers vs Consumers

Transfer Owner of CONSEQUENCES to TEEN – A PLAN

- They need to communicate to you, when, where, with whom, if change, then ____.
- Discussion of potential
 - Risks
 - Non-negotiables
 - If, thens
 - Alternatives
 - Consequences, if not done to PLAN Future rewards based on repeated achievement

ASSUME SUCCESS – and Expect the BEST of your TEEN

- "Thanks for adjusting your attitude, it helps me to..."
- "Your effort meeting your curfew..., it's time you..."
- "Making that choice to...with your friends rather than go to that party....
- "You are getting so much better at managing your... It's time we..."

Tips for CALMING Conversations

Breathe, meet privately, listen, then talk

- When you can speak to me with respect, I want to discuss your feelings about this.
- You are not going to like what we have decided, but I want you to understand why.
- I am truly sorry if that's how my tone/words made you feel.
- Ok we're going there?
- Is this worth losing ____ over?

Resources:

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Teenage Brains: Why They Act the Way They Do, Mark Oestreocher Blame My Brain - The Amazing Teenage Brain Revealed, Nicola Morgan Why Do They Act That Way, David Walsh http://samafoundation.org/youth-substance-addiction/effects-of-drugs-on-adolescent-brain/

Smart but Scattered Teens - The "Executive Skills" Program for Helping Teens Reach Their Potential