

Transcript – Teenagers 3

In this final clip I am going to give you some tools in your box.

We now have an understanding about what's going on for teenagers. We have an understanding about what's going on for parents.

When I run these programmes and we come to this last session parents say "Well I don't need any tools in my box". Because of their understanding they have been communicating better, but that isn't always the case.

So here are some tools to have in your box. The first one I am looking at is how to respond.

Using empathy (as I talked about in a previous clip), that's about tuning into their feelings and the supposed behaviour.

"I can see your frustration; I can see you are angry. We use kind hands and kind words in this house. Maybe we need time to calm down".

Empathy is your "ace card" and that is your first one, a really useful tool for response.

But we know it doesn't always work and we don't live in an ideal world, but empathy - if we get it right - can really help.

The next one - do you know rewards work better than consequences?

Reward the good behaviour and start to focus on the positives and to see the good and reward that. We are noticing when things go well.

We are devils for focusing on the negatives. Try and notice the positives and reward them.

What we pay attention to is what we get more of. Pay attention to the good stuff; we get more good stuff.

If we pay attention to the bad stuff we get more of the bad stuff - so rewarding and noticing when things go well.

We know sometimes that rewards don't always work.

There are times when we have to be fair and firm. There are times when we will have to say there is a consequence for your actions because that's a life skill.

If I speed on the road I get caught by the police; I get fined, I get 3 points on my licence. There are consequences to our actions.

Sometimes we do have to issue sanctions. It's about having sanctions and sometimes perhaps confiscating something, and choosing a consequence that matches the "crime". So sanctions can work.

One of the biggest sanctions is the parent's disapproval. The other one is using an 'I' statement. "I'm feeling frustrated and what I would like is for the room to be tidy." So that's an 'I' statement.

Ignore minor irritating behaviour - choose your battles. I think that's really important.

Try to let some things ride.

I told you that there's personal choice and consequence and I've talked about sanctions.

But to add to that, sometimes teenagers feel powerless because they are always being told what to do. "Go to bed." "Do your homework." Sometimes they feel very powerless.

By giving a choice and consequence you're giving them the feeling that they have power. Sometimes when you give them the choice, they might pick the right one. They may pick the wrong one, but then they will experience a consequence to their action and they will learn from that.

An example of that - if you have your 17 year old and they want to go out that night to a party. You have choice, "You can choose to tidy your room and then you can go to your party, and I will drive you to your party. Or you can choose not to tidy your room and then you don't go to the party. You know what, you have choice". Then you give them two minutes to decide and if they choose to not tidy their room then they are not going to the party.

Choice and consequences can work.

Then problem solving and negotiating are two really useful life skills as well.

In this book we have a format for the choices and consequences, for problem solving and for negotiating. So if you do need more help with that don't hesitate to ring the Family Support Team and we can go through those and actually give you the format for the problem solving and negotiating and choices and consequences.

These are really useful tools to have.

Ok thank you very much.

I just want to go over the top tips again.

You, the parent of a teenager are important. I really hope you see that now. Remember to listen. Communication as opposed to confrontation. The hardest part of communication is listening.

Have structure, not too much but not too little either.

Remember your teenager is unique.

Appreciate their strengths. There are so many good things about teenagers. Always look for the positives.

Be open and listen to their views. I cannot be bothered about sport but for the wellbeing of my teenager I listen to his views about sport, TV programmes, music, news and events.

Keep some emotional distance. If they are angry it's more about them than you.

You are probably doing a better job than you realise. The fact that you are listening to this means you are doing a good job.

But we know it can be difficult and once again you are not on your own. There is support out there. Don't hesitate to contact us if you need to speak.

You all take care and you are doing a brilliant job.