

## When Kid's Go Bad: Dealing with Anger, Defiance and Rebellion | Gary Sibcy, Ph.D.

When kids become angry, defiant, and isolated it can be a time of frustration and anxiety for parents. The family experiences times of stress and eventually, depending upon the severity, causes parents to eventually seek professional help out of frustration and exhaustion. This lesson will help leaders be able to offer hope and encouragement to parents as they navigate through these times of extreme emotional discomfort.

**Introduction:** The reasons why kids become angry and defiant are as varied as the ways they demonstrate their frustration. From isolation, stress, and anxiety to running away from home, this behavior is detrimental to family peace and harmony. How you can help a parent lead a teen through these turbulent times with success, and come out on the other side with a healthy relationship, is what this lesson is all about.

### I. Adolescence is a time of change

- A. Begins with the body
- B. Hormones
- C. Brain: Adolescence is a time of mental change. More capable of thinking abstractly and the ability to process information.
- D. Self-awareness: It's overwhelming because they're caught up in
  - 1. Spotlight fallacy: they're living their life on a stage and everyone is super-focused on them.
  - 2. Brush fire fallacy: if anything is wrong with you and people will pick it up and they're tell people.

### II. The developmental needs of an adolescent

- A. Who am I? This is at the core of who they are.
  - 1. They were previously an extension of their parents
  - 2. Teens begin to define who they are as they begin moving more toward their peers and away from their parents. Also, they try to define who they are not.
- B. Later adolescence – Different relationship with parents
  - 1. What and why they believe what they do
  - 2. Goal – To turn out okay and internalize a healthy worldview. In order for the kids to do this, the teen has to go through some trial and tribulation.

### III. The challenge – Create a context of learning in the home with secure-based parenting (Parenting from the inside out). The brain is developing and it needs some challenges.

- A. Focus on the parent first. The very problem that they're coming in for (non-compliance), those are the ones we want to focus in on. These moments (issues of aggression, etc) are called Compliance Interaction)
  - 1. Compliance interaction
    - a. Take parental concerns seriously
    - b. Take the child's concerns seriously
    - c. Prevent meltdowns and explosions
  - 2. The teen needs to be able to feel, think, and relate at the same time. Then you are creating a situation where the kid can use these skills
- B. Three options: Pathways
  - 1. Pathway A: Force parental concerns – usually escalates into emotional explosion. There is no skill building here – no cognitive understanding.
  - 2. Pathway C: Three possibilities
    - a. Overindulgent/permissive: where you drop the concern because you don't really care.
    - b. Acceptance: what we don't like but it's what teens do.
    - c. Temporarily drop a concern due to high emotion
  - 3. Pathway B: Middle road
    - a. Emotion coaching
    - b. Correctly done – Leads to inside out change

- C. Five skills in Pathway B/Compliance interaction (use in this order)
  - 1. Empathy (parent allows the kids to express their concern)
    - a. Acknowledge concern
    - b. Not patronizing
  - 2. Assertiveness – State concern (hard skill for parents because they have to state what the rule is; state what your core concern is)
  - 3. Respect: at it most base level – you refuse to be mean and nasty even if your teen is mean and nasty. Biblically, you are to model respect.
    - a. Type 1 – Biblical respect states that you show respect even if it is not reciprocated. Why? Because you are to model a level of respect to anyone (even your children)
    - b. Type 2 – We don't use disrespect as a form of punishment. No scriptural basis. Respect means you don't judge your teen and that you don't assume the worse about them.
  - 4. Invitation: We want the teen to come up with their own solution. Now we're helping them use their problem solving part of the brain.
    - 5. Collaboration: teens can learn how to comply with it...but that's only surface level
- D. Five cognitive skills a teen needs in compliance interaction
  - 1. Problem solving: state what the problem is and generate a range of solutions and monitor how it works.
  - 2. Cognitive flexibility: kids & parents see everything in either white/black. Your emotions go from 0 to 100 very quickly. Blow up easily.
  - 3. Language processing skills: Your ability to state what they feel and make sense. Work with them to help them figure it out
  - 4. Emotional regulation: handle your emotions and frustrations in a way that allows you to solve problems.
  - 5. Social skills: ability to negotiate and collaborate; ability to go through these things. And the thing is that teens and parents need to practice this skill set.
- E. ABC Model – Teach them how to use C. The reason is why you want to eliminate a lot of the conflict. Reduce a lot of the rules to a basic level. Parents worry that kids will go crazy...but you help them get the base level. Then pick one problem at a time.
- F. Agenda setting
  - 1. Only work on one problem at a time.
  - 2. Describe specific time and place it occurred. Watch out for ultimate language "he always, she nevers"
  - 3. Three column situation analysis sheet: Date and time/what you said (verbatim)/what was the child's response & did it make it better? Then the parent needs to determine how well they did. Did the use the E-A-R skill set? Empathy/Assertiveness/Respect

#### IV. Pathway B concerns

- A. Crisis oriented: You wait until the problem is upon you and at that point you use E-A-R. But the problem is that both parent/teen is emotional charged.
- B. Preventative style: The problems that the children struggle with are very predictable (same time same place). If we can help parents predict and help the parent address the problem. "It's Wednesday and I know that Friday you're going to want to do \_\_\_\_\_, let's talk about that now instead of dealing with it later"

**V. Family system issues**

- A. Polarized family: You have one parent that uses A parenting and you have another that uses the C parenting. Trying to get both to use B more.
  - 1. Identity core fears: A parent opposed to B parent.
  - 2. Origin of fears: Their own wild teen years; culture scared; worse-case-scenario parent
- B. Empathize with parents
- C. Resistance – address it and expect it
- D. Cost-benefit analysis: Highlight the fact that using this certain pathway isn't really working
  - 1. Cost of using Pathway B
  - 2. Cost of using Pathway A

**Study Questions:**

1. Explain the changes that occur in adolescence.
2. What are the developmental needs of teens?
3. Why should you focus on the parents first?
4. Explain the five skills of Pathway B.
5. Discuss the five cognitive skills a teen needs.