

Supporting our tweens

Words: Tanya Curtis

THE TWEEN YEARS PROVIDE MELTDOWNS FOR MANY AND ANXIETY ALL ROUND - BUT WHY IS THIS SO?

It might be hard to see sometimes, but at the core of our tweens is an awesome, amazing and lovable being - and not the monster that they often portray. So what happens? How do we go from awesome being to monster behaviour? The simple answer is anxiety. Anxiety is the precursor to all unwanted behaviour. Let me explain further...

According to Serge Benhayon, "Anxiety occurs when a person does not feel equipped to respond to what's in front of them." To understand further, anxiety is what comes from our tween's body. It is their words, behaviours, thoughts and feelings that are simply communicating there is something in front of them they do not feel completely equipped to respond to. Not feeling equipped equals perceived lack of skill. What's in front of you equals life. Thus in simplicity, when our tween is exhibiting unwanted behaviours, we must simply ask, "I wonder what part of life my tween has been presented with that they do not perceive they have all the required skills to respond to?".

Life starts to change for our tweens. They come into this 'in-between phase'. They are no longer children, but they are also not yet adults. They are a little bit in 'no man's land' which is right where 'tween land' exists.

LIFE PRESENTS US WITH THESE LESSONS:

- ✓ Their expectations of life, that are either self-imposed or imposed on by others, start to change
- ✓ The world starts to feel different
- ✓ Different responsibilities have been offered

- ✓ A larger amount of independence is in sight
- ✓ Hormones start to change
- ✓ Relationships start to alter
- ✓ Peers introduce new aspects of life
- ✓ The world of social media is introduced
- ✓ The requirements of life generally change.

Innately, each person knows at their core what love is, however, our tweens (like all of us) are very sensitive and without understanding what they are feeling and what they are aware of they have two choices. Do they learn to observe and understand the behaviours of others or, do they enjoy the loveless and often hurtful behaviours of others so they don't stand out too much?

It is a difficult time for tweens, so how do we support them? The key is to offer our tweens a haven where they feel safe to express all that they are feeling and all that they are experiencing.

FIVE DO'S AND DON'TS WHEN SUPPORTING YOUR TWEEN

DO'S

- ✓ Create time and allow your tween to express themselves
- ✓ Allow your tween to feel understood in what they are sharing
- ✓ Ask questions about how they are feeling and how they experienced their day
- ✓ When they are talking, allow your tween time/space to express all they need to share
- ✓ Support your tween to feel safe in knowing that there is nothing they can say that it is right or wrong



DON'TS

- ✗ Use words or actions that send a message of "I'm too busy to hear what you have to share"
- ✗ Judge your tween for what has been expressed
- ✗ Ask questions in relation to what they're doing ie. what did you do today?
- ✗ Interrupt, talk over the top, finish their sentences or assume you are knowing what they are saying
- ✗ Make your tween feel 'wrong' for what they have expressed. This will result in them shutting down

The key to your tween is in knowing that "expression is everything" and thus through expression, our tweens' anxiety will reduce. Our awesome, amazing, lovable 'being' will then have permission to do awesome, amazing and lovable things.

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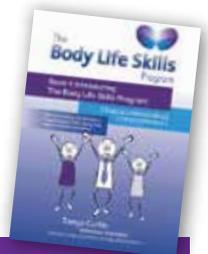
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