

YOUR TWEEN/ TEEN DECODED:

UNDERSTAND WHY THEY BEHAVE THE WAY THEY DO
CREATE A BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM
MANAGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR MORE EFFECTIVELY



WELCOME

A TRICKY BUSINESS...

As a parenting coach and a Dad to 14-year-old twins, I know how challenging the tween and the teen years are; for parents and kids alike!



In this guide, I will share some of the ideas that help my clients so you can:

- understand your tween/ teen and their behaviour.
- develop a better relationship with your child.
- manage their behaviour more effectively.

The guide will take you less than 10 minutes to read and has four simple but powerful ideas you can put apply straight away.

I will also be co-hosting a free workshop for readers of Motherhood: The Real Deal on Tuesday 19th of July at 1pm UK time. We will be discussing how you can implement these ideas into your day-to-day parenting, and will also include a Q&A session so I can answer your questions and walk you through your concerns and any specific issues you might be experiencing. Click [here](#) to watch the workshop.



UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD



The first step to being a great parent to your adolescent is to understand why they behave the way they do. Challenging behaviour and emotional outbursts are usually attributed to 'hormones', but that's not entirely accurate.

According to Dr Dan Siegel, clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine, two other developments are the key drivers:

BRAIN REMODELLING:

From age 10, your child's brain undergoes a huge remodelling process. The part of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, impulse-control, and decision-making- the pre-frontal cortex- is the slowest to develop. For good reason as you will see next.

INDEPENDENCE:

Your child is preparing for adulthood and independence. To do that successfully, they need to discover themselves and their boundaries. This involves new behaviours and taking risks. Emotions play a crucial role. They provide the impetus and energy your child needs to experiment and try new things.

Growing up is complicated.

On top of these changes, your child has new expectations, responsibilities and situations to contend with at home, in school and with their friends. And that's just when things are going well! Now imagine having to deal with:

PEER PRESSURE
MEAN KIDS THEIR FUTURE
STATE OF THE WORLD TRYING TO FIT IN
SOCIAL EMBARRASSMENT
PRESSURE FROM PARENTS **WORRYING ABOUT GRADES**



Your child's behaviour is consistent with how the world looks to them: uncertain.

Uncertainty is the breeding ground of insecurity and fear. And without the maturity, experience and mental tools to cope, is it any wonder they behave the way they do?

So, what looks like defiant behaviour, a lack of respect, or a challenge to your authority is a necessary part of your child learning to stand on their own two feet. And when you see them through this lens, it's easier to cut them some slack it also points us in the direction of how to manage them better.

FOUR POWERFUL IDEAS...

1 YOUR CHILD IS NOT THEIR BEHAVIOUR

Remember that your child is not their behaviour: when you look at your child, you don't actually see them. When you listen to your child, you don't actually hear them.

Instead, **what you see and hear is the sum total of your opinions about them.** Your past interactions and your beliefs about them act as a filter.

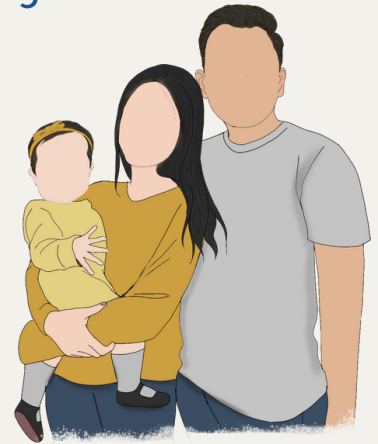
You don't see and hear them as they are, you see and hear them as who & what you already know them to be.



When we see our kids only through the lens of their behaviour, we label them as bad, rude, rebellious, defiant, disrespectful etc. **This is the person they become for us.** It's who we see. It's who we inadvertently create them to be. Your child is not their behaviour. They are so much more than that.

A beautiful way to remind yourself of who they really are is to get a photo from when they were much younger. Just look at the photo for a while.

Let the feelings you felt then come flooding back to you now. See the magnificent, one-of-a-kind human being that they are. Marvel at how much they have grown, physically, mentally, and emotionally.



See how capable, how loving, how open, how smart, how generous, how funny, how fragile, and how strong they have become.

If you can see and speak only to this part of your child, you help them to see this about themselves too. This helps to create a much more harmonious relationship with them.

You also help your child learn to trust themselves and develop the self-belief and the confidence to be themselves, to express who they really are.

I can't think of a better parenting objective than that!

When we see our kids making mistakes or behaving in ways we think are unhelpful, out of love and a desire to help, we try and change them. We have no idea how our kids internalise what we do and say, but when we tell them they need to be different, to change who they are being, we:

- **Sow the seeds of the limiting beliefs** we are all plagued with as adults: I'm not good enough, I'm a failure, I'm not worthy etc. Ironically, this only serves to make their behaviour worse.
- **Lose their trust** and damage our relationship with them. This is a problem because your influence over your child is determined by the quality of your relationship.
- **Help them lose sight** of who they really are. Our kids trust themselves less when we teach them that it's not ok to be them.
- **Mould them** in our image of who and what we think they should be.

The key is to accept your child, warts and all. This gives them the confidence to make mistakes and be who they are without fear of rejection.

So, does this mean we just let our kids screw up and do nothing? Not at all.

You can help your child to grow, expand and be more aligned with their potential. This is a subtle shift, but it makes all the difference: you need to change vs let me help you fulfil your potential. It's a much **more empowering and loving way to parent** and help your kids to grow and develop.

When our kids behave in ways we don't like or want, **it's natural to take this personally**. We feel let down or hurt. This can cause us to withdraw our affection or to be critical and judgemental.

What we don't see is the damage it causes below the surface.

When we aren't available for our kids, we only serve to deepen their insecurity. Often this causes them to act out even more.

This also has a knock-on effect on their self-esteem, self-worth, confidence, resilience etc. The very traits we want them to have.



They are trying to make sense of the world and their place in it, but without the maturity, experience and tools to do so. When things are going wrong for them, they need our understanding, love and support more than ever.

They need someone they can turn to, someone they can trust, someone who has their back no matter what. They need us to believe in them more than they believe in themselves. Their behaviour says nothing about you. Instead it's a signal. They need you to be and do more for them.

LOOK AT HOW YOU ARE CREATING YOUR PROBLEMS.

At the heart of every single parenting problem you have, is an unwritten rule about how you think your child should be. For example:



I'm not saying these rules are wrong, or that these outcomes aren't desirable, but each rule you have forces you to parent a certain way.

Here's an example: my child needs to respect me.

If we have a rule that our child needs to respect us, and they say or do something that we deem disrespectful, that will force us to be, see and do things in a way that reflects that rule.

Be - we might become upset or hurt and withdraw our love and affection.

See - we might see them as uncaring and that they were deliberately challenging our authority.

Do - we might take away privileges [screens etc.] or force them to apologise.

If however, we have a different rule; eg my child needs my unconditional love and understanding, and they do that same disrespectful thing, then we would respond in a completely different way. For example:

Be - we might still be upset, but we'd also be more loving, understanding and compassionate.

See - we might see that they are having a hard time and that they were just lashing out and didn't mean it.

Do - we might hug them and ask if they need anything from us.

Later, when everyone is calm, we could talk to them about how that's not appropriate behaviour and ask what's happening in their life that could have caused it. The exact same incident.

Two different rules and two completely different parenting outcomes.

Which one would you prefer?

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS GUIDE

Hopefully, this has been a useful and worthwhile download. Please feel free to pass it on to other parents you know.

And, if you have enjoyed thinking about your parenting in this way, please [join my free Facebook group](#), it's where I share my ideas first and it's the best place to contact me if you have any parenting questions. I'll be very happy to help in any way I can.

Also, please do let me know how you get on with putting your insights into action. I'd absolutely love to hear from you.

And finally, I appreciate that some of these ideas are a little unconventional, I'm not suggesting that they are any kind of Truth. They are just the way that I like to think about parenting my kids; they are **ideals that I try my best to live by**. I often fail, and when that happens, I know what I need to do to try my best again tomorrow.

Take care and happy parenting.
With love,

Dominic