

# CBTS NEWSLETTER

April 2009



CBTS

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## ANGRY KIDS

By Jim Fay

"Why does my child always have an attitude? She's often disruptive and disrespectful. She's always the one with a chip on her shoulder." This frustrated parent expresses the feelings of many—Why is my child angry and how do I deal with it? A child who acts out may be expressing other emotions through anger. They may be experiencing a loss, a divorce or a move. They may be trying to let the world know that his/her life is not what it ought to be. Regardless of the reason, it looks the same. But how can we deal with this angry attitude without being a psychologist?

### *A Parent's Job is to Understand, Not to Fix Things*

Listening for understanding is impossible when a child is 'drunk' on anger. Never reason with an angry child. Instead say, "It sounds like you're really mad. I want to listen and understand. I will listen when you're voice is as calm as mine. Come back then." If you can't make the child leave, you leave. Be prepared to repeat your calm statement if the child is determined to yell out the anger without leaving. "Don't worry about it now. We'll talk when you're calm." You may need to say this several times. Be prepared to play 'broken record' with, what did I say? Use these phrases instead of reasoning. Reasoning will only fuel the anger.

### *"Thanks for Sharing That"*

Once the child is able to discuss the anger, listen without reasoning. Try to avoid telling the child why he/she should not be angry. Avoid telling them things will be okay and how to make it better. Your job is to prove that you understand—"It sounds like you get mad when I tell you it's time to do your chores. Thanks for sharing that with me. I'll give it some thought. If you think of a better way for me to remind you, let me know."

### *Parents Can Make It Worse*

Parents who do not treat their children with respect send a message that says, "You're not worthy." These parents often communicate with a lot of yelling. This encourages the child to yell and scream back while the parents retaliate by getting madder. It's a vicious cycle that breeds chronic anger in the child. In place of anger, parents should work on listening to their children in a non-threatening, honest and open manner. Most children will talk openly only after they truly believe their parents are interested in what they have to say and recognize their feelings.

### *When Anger Continues*

If, despite your best attempts to understand your child's anger, there is no change in behavior after three months, parents should seek professional counseling. In some instances, chronic anger is best helped by a professional.

# Ouch



## DEALING WITH DISRESPECT

**Back talk** - when your teenager rudely tells you that you are a tyrant or an idiot - has to be one of the hardest things for parents to deal with.

Respect for parents is highly valued in every culture. Ways of showing respect differ from family to family. Some require prompt obedience without protest; others are more relaxed. But disrespectful behavior is a tough challenge regardless of the specific form it takes.

As with other dilemmas of raising teens, there are no magic prescriptions to cure back talk, but some ways of dealing with it are more helpful than others.

**First, calm yourself.** The natural response to back talk is anger. You might notice that your pulse has picked up and the muscles in your face, hands and chest have tightened. Your body is preparing to fight, but fighting with a mouthy teenager usually just makes things worse; both of you are likely to end up resentful and exhausted. Instead of lashing out, take a moment or two to calm yourself down. Take three, deep relaxing breaths and notice how your shoulders soften as you exhale. Now you are ready to respond effectively.

**Give clear feedback.** Let your teen know what he has done and how it makes you feel. Try to be specific and keep your comments simple. For maximum effect, speak quietly but clearly and look your child squarely in the eye. This sort of response does several good things: it lets your child know precisely what he did that was unacceptable; it lets him know that he does not have the power to shake your self-control; and it teaches him to use words to communicate emotions like anger, rather than acting out the emotions.

**Refocus on your goal.** One of the reasons teens talk back is that it diverts their parents' attention from whatever it was the parents wanted in the first place. Part of your response to back talk, then, should be to repeat whatever it was you said in the first place. "I know it makes you mad, but you still need to clean up your room."

**Resist the temptation to retaliate.** When a child talks back, it's natural to want to put him in his place. Often this involves words like 'spoiled brat,' 'ungrateful,' 'smart mouth,' and so on. None of these is helpful. All name-calling does is deepen your child's resentment and allow him to feel justified in calling you names.

**Try to hear your child.** Even though your teen chooses to respond in an obnoxious fashion, what he has to say might actually have some merit. In any case, it's helpful for you as a parent to know how your child feels about things, even if that's not always positive. For example, imagine that your teenager has called you something completely unacceptable. Once you've calmed down and given him feedback, you might reflect his statement back, using more civilized terms: "So, you feel that I am mean and unreasonable? Why, exactly is that?" You have taken a confrontation and made it into a conversation. You've also shown your child that you are willing to consider his point of view, as long as he expresses it appropriately.

**When it's over, it's over.** Back talk can be upsetting, and it's easy to let the upset linger. You may think that reminding your child that he has been disrespectful will help him to act more appropriately in the future. It won't. A more helpful response is to just get on with life and focus on positive things you and your teenager can enjoy together. Consequences for back talk are usually not necessary, and it may be wise to save consequences like grounding or removal of privileges for more serious offenses. Once teens see that back talk is unnecessary and not helpful, they tend to use it less and less.

# MAKE YOUR KIDS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS



"A joke hit the Internet recently. The problem is that it is not a joke. It's a serious concern to all those who work with today's youth. A high school staff met to design the perfect recording for their telephone answering machine. The staff looked at several possibilities and finally agreed on the following:

- To lie about why your child is absent - Press 1*
- To make excuses for why your child did not do his work - Press 2*
- To complain about what we do - Press 3*
- To swear at staff members - Press 4*
- To ask why you didn't get information that was already enclosed in your newsletter and several flyers mailed to you - Press 5*
- If you want us to raise your child - Press 6*
- To request another teacher for the third time this year - Press 7*
- To demand your child get a higher grade - Press 8*
- If you realize this is the real world and your child must be accountable/responsible for his/her own behavior, class work, and homework, and that it's not the teacher's fault for your child's lack of effort, hang up and have a great day.*



Many of today's parents are obsessed with the desire to create a perfect image for their kids. This perfect image, or perfect life, is one in which their kids never have to face struggle, inconvenience, discomfort, or disappointment. It is a life in which the child can be lauded into adulthood with the best credentials. These kids look great on paper. Their high school and college diplomas show high grades even if they were not earned. They lead a life where their mistakes are swept under the table. I have often heard these parents say, 'It's a competitive world out there and I want my kids to have every advantage. What they do when they are young should not hold them back later.'

These parents, in their zeal to protect their young, swoop down like jet-powered, attack helicopters on any person or agency who might hold their children accountable for their actions. Armed with verbal smart bombs, they are quick to blast away at anyone who sets high standards for behavior, morality, or achievement. Declaring their child a

victim is a favorite tactical maneuver designed to send school personnel diving into the trenches for protection. Teachers and school administrators become worn down by this constant barrage. As they give in to parental demands that their children not be held accountable, standards are eroded and teachers gradually think, 'What's the use?'

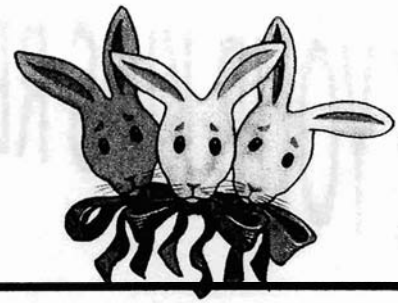
It is horribly disappointing to watch kids learn to blame others for their lack of success instead of becoming people who reach goals through effort and determination. Is it possible for children who have never had to stand on their own two feet, never had to be responsible for their own actions, or never had to face and solve the smaller problems of childhood, to have the tools to face the rigors of adult life in America? We all know the answer to that. Can the young adult who gets that perfect job perform well enough to keep that job if his grades from school were the result of teacher intimidation instead of vigorous study? The company who hires this person won't be easily intimidated by parental pressure in the face of substandard performance?

A perfect image and perfect school transcript are poor substitutes for character and the attitude that achievement comes through struggle and perseverance. I have worked with many parents who have fallen into this trap. They all love their children. They all want the best for them. They talk about how they don't want their kids to struggle like they did. They are prone to rush to blame others for any lack of achievement on their children's part. These parents are willing to hold others responsible for their children's actions. However, they are often willing to change their parenting style once they see the crippling effects of this parenting style. There is a huge group of kids growing up today who won't have the character and resilience to compete in the labor market. If they grow up knowing how to get what they want through struggle and character they will be the one with the true advantage."

## RAISING RESPONSIBLE YOUTH

What can a parent do to help their teen move safely toward independence and young adulthood?

- ◆ **Love unconditionally.** Parents should tell their teens they care. Parents need to accept teens for who they are, not what the parent wants them to be. Love and acceptance do not mean parents have to approve of everything their adolescents do.
- ◆ **Be proud.** Teens want and need approval and want to know their parents are proud of them. Show appreciation for the positive things they do.
- ◆ **Be involved.** Parents are important in the life of an adolescent. Adolescents need their parents to be involved in their lives. Parents need to be available to them.
- ◆ **Talk each day.** Establish a set time to talk each day. Try to 'create' additional time to talk to each other such as going on a ride, playing a game together, etc. By establishing these times, the adolescent becomes comfortable talking to the parent and will feel more comfortable talking about serious issues of concern as they arise.
- ◆ **Guide and advise.** Adolescents look to parents for guidance and advice. Parents can help adolescents explore and clarify issues and the consequences of actions through discussion. They can talk about what might happen 'if.'
- ◆ **Establish boundaries.** Adolescents need and want limits. Limits need to be clear, reasonable, age-appropriate, and change as the youth moves through adolescence.
- ◆ **Parents may need to say "no."** A parent's reason for saying "no" needs to be logical. It may be hard to say no and the teen may not be very happy with the parent, but in some situations "no" is the right answer. Parents should remain calm and not change their minds.
- ◆ **Recognize limits will be tested.** An adolescent will not always follow the rules. Parents need to recognize that rules will be broken and they cannot control what an adolescent does away from home. Adolescents need to accept responsibility for their own behavior.
- ◆ **Use fair consequences.** When a limit is not followed, a consequence follows. The consequences have been predetermined so both the parents and the adolescent know what will happen.
- ◆ **Model appropriate behavior.** Actions speak louder than words. Parents should strive to set a good example in the way that they live. Adolescents can learn appropriate life skills as well as how to solve problems effectively by watching parents and adults.



### ONE-LINERS

Kids seem to have a repertoire of 'hooks' they use to get their parents to argue with them. Here are some Love and Logic One-Liners that will get parents off the hook and cause children to do more of the thinking.

**Remember:** The 'one-liners' are only effective when said with genuine compassion and understanding. These are never intended to be flippant remarks that discount the feelings of the child. If an adult uses these responses to try to get the better of a child, the problem will only become worse. The adult's own attitude at these times is crucial to success.

- 'Probably so'
- 'I know'
- 'Nice try'
- 'I bet it feels that way'
- 'What do you think you're going to do?'
- 'I don't know. What do you think?'
- 'Bummer. How sad.'
- 'Thanks for sharing that.'
- 'Don't worry about it now.'
- 'That's an opinion.'
- 'I bet that's true.'
- 'Maybe you'll like what we have for the next meal better.'
- 'What do you think I think about that?'
- 'I'm not sure how to react to that. I'll have to get back to you on it.'
- 'I'll let you know what will work for me.'
- 'I'll love you wherever you live.'



## CBTS PROCTOR MEETING

Wednesday, April 15, 2009  
6:30 p.m.  
220 East 3900 South

Presenter: Planned Parenthood



## CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING

West Jordan Library (1970W. 7800 S.)  
Wednesday, April 15 5:30 p.m.

West Valley Library (2880 W. 3650 S.)  
Saturday, April 4 10:15 a.m.

Hunter Library (4800 W. 4100 S.)  
Wednesday, April 8 5:30 p.m.

Holladay Library (2150 E. 4800 S.)  
Tuesday, April 21 5:30 p.m.

For more information contact  
Save-A-Heart  
at 1-888-582-7114

Make certain if you attend that you let  
them know you are with CBTS.

## SPRING CLEANING

Spring is here! Hormones surge...instinct takes over...a woman's thoughts turn to...House Cleaning! Yes, it's true. Dust is in the air. It is time to celebrate the honored ritual of spring house cleaning.

Here are a few of the tell-tell signs that your house needs cleaning:

1. Your family is eating off paper plates so you don't have to open the cabinets.
2. You need a gas mask when you open the refrigerator.
3. You can't find the cordless phone unless it rings.
4. You can't turn on the ceiling fan without creating a dust storm.
5. Your chore for the day is to find the vacuum cleaner bags -- and the vacuum cleaner.
6. The cat has been missing for three days.
7. You can't decide whether to clean the windows or just buy mini blinds.
8. The dog has offered to loan you his doghouse.
9. The mail hasn't been opened since last tax season.
10. You wonder if a hose down would ruin the carpets.
11. There is something sprouting in the dishwasher.
12. It seems easier to move than to clean the house.
13. You are wearing clothes from the floor of the closet--inside out.
14. You can't go outside because fresh air makes you dizzy.



## TOP TEN SIGNS YOU'VE HIRED A BAD EASTER BUNNY

10. Reeks of Tequila and Easter egg dye.
9. Immediately asks if he can have Easter off.
8. Refuses to hop because it aggravates his double hernia.
7. For an extra 20 bucks, parents can buy an ounce of his special "Easter grass."
6. Only gives the kids candy after they attend his presentation on time-share condos.
5. For an Easter bunny, he sure has a lot of stories about prison.
4. With every hop, his bunny pants drop another inch.
3. He shows up wearing his Arby's uniform and asks the kids to just "play along."
2. Dyes Easter eggs by throwing them in the washing machine with his colored load.
1. He's in his bunny suit ready to go...and it's October.



# PRS ACTIVITY

## RESPONSIBILITY



"Being responsible puts you in charge of your life".

### Are You a Responsible Person?

I do what needs to be done.	True	False
I am reliable and dependable.	True	False
I am accountable for my actions; I don't make excuses or blame others.	True	False
I fulfill my moral obligations.	True	False
I use good judgment and think through the consequences of my actions.	True	False
I exercise self-control.	True	False



"Take your life in your own hands, and what happens? A terrible thing: no one to blame."



### WRITING ASSIGNMENT

(choose one)

1. Write about a time you were let down by someone's irresponsible actions.
2. Can you think of a time you did something really irresponsible? Describe it in detail. Why did it happen? How did you feel about it at the time? Did it affect anybody else? Did it cause any problems for you? How do you feel about it now? What did you learn from it?
3. What responsibilities do you believe you personally have for: 1) yourself, 2) your family, 3) your community, 4) the world?



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you consider yourself to be a responsible person? Why or why not?
2. Do you consider it important for your friends and family members to be responsible? Why?
3. Think about somebody you know who is very responsible? How does that person demonstrate responsibility?
4. What does being responsible have to do with the quality of your character?
5. What are the benefits of being a responsible person? How do you benefit from the responsibility of others?
6. How does behaving responsibly affect your relationship with your parents? Friends?
7. Do you think there is any connection between being responsible and being trusted?
8. How might taking responsibility give you power over your life?



"When you blame others, you give up your power to change."