

Parenting Tweens & Teens

Presented by:

Nicole Pormilli, Assistant Superintendent

Theresa Licitra, Director of Humanities

Robert Rotante, Director of STEM

Remember the “good old days”....

Napping

Toilet training

Sharing toys

Monitoring the T.V. shows watched

Bed times

Controlling what they ate



We shared and discussed these things with our family and friends.

It's Not As Acceptable to Talk About The Struggles at This Stage

Grades

Bad decisions

Disrespectful

Self-centered

Peers – social pressures

Alcohol, Drugs, Sex

Depression/Anxiety

I'll see your toddler
tantrum and raise
you a teen that just
had their phone
taken away.

We need to know we are not alone. We need to know that others struggle.
Not the social media version...the REAL version.

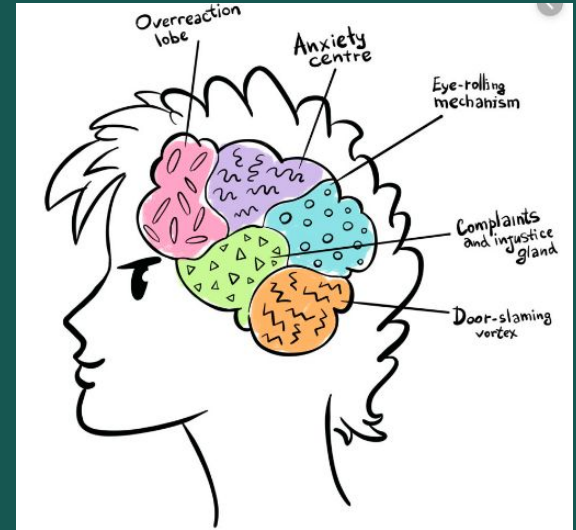
DEAR PARENTS OF TEENS -
THIS IS HARD.

Tonight's Agenda

- **Share information about the teenage brain**
- **Share some real stories & suggestions**
- **Discuss our struggles**
- **Share some tips**

What Should We Consider About Our Tweens/Teens?

Roller coaster ride
Time of great transformation
Great advantages
Vulnerabilities



VIDEO: [Why the Brain Has an Evolutionary Advantage](#)

(Credit: Univ. of California)



Understanding the Teenage Brain- The Neuroscience

- The brain is the most incomplete structure at birth, just above 40% the size it will be in adulthood.
- Scientist have learned that the brain is not fully developed until at least age 25
- Teen brain is powered up for reaction to rewards and for learning.
- The teen brain (gray matter) is in abundance as the area responsible for thought and learning is at great capacity
- The connective wiring (white matter) in the brain is still developing



Understanding the Teenage Brain- The neuroscience

- The brain matures from back to front during the teen years. The frontal lobes are least mature and least connected (executive function – judgement, insight, good decisions).
- The frontal lobes are responsible for our ability to generate insight, judgement, abstraction, and planning.
- The brain can be changed by experiences – Brain Plasticity
- The teen brain is only about 80% of the way to maturity

Our Stories



Our Tips

Calm Shell Theory
(Drop everything and listen
when it's open)

Tell real-life stories
(& consequences)
every opportunity
you get

Create Time
(walks, drives, dinner
together)

It's not personal.

Engage your child
in activity
with you.

Don't 'undervalue'
their feelings.

Unconditional love

Communication –
Talk even when we
think they're not
listening.

Pick your battles.

Letting go...

1

What are some of the biggest struggles?

Write your struggles or situations
on a post-it note.

Roundtable Discussions

Tips/Suggestions

- Offer authentic praise
- Model – You are being watched ALL THE TIME
- Cool off first before reacting
- Stuff their brain with real stories & real consequences
- Explain the teen brain to your teens
- Sleep is extremely important
- Stay connected (know their friends & interests)
- Remind them they are resilient and competent

Tips/Suggestions

- Stick to your values
- Assume best intentions
- Foster growth mindset (abilities are not “fixed” and CAN improve with work)
- Timing – Remember the clam shell
- Listen & use reflective listening (offer idea back to them to ensure it’s been understood)
- Ask “Do you want me to respond or just listen?”
- Choose your battles
- Try not to take it personally
- Encourage healthy risks

Tips/Suggestions

- Remember YOU are the parent
- Lead with a plan
- Listen to your child
- Have clear expectations & boundaries
- Discipline when needed
- Allow for some self-expression
- Have clear rules about phone, internet and social media
- Teach them to earn trust
- Remind them of privileges (and earning those privileges)

Some Good Resources

The Teenage Brain by Frances Jensen

Attack of the Teenage Brain by John Medina

The Power of the Adolescent Brain by Thomas Armstrong

How to Talk So Kids Can Learn at Home and In School by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

The Power of Our Words by Paula Denton (Educator Book - but can apply to other situations)

Guidance counselors in our schools are excellent resources as are our administrators.

The funny thing about kids is
they are the reason we lose it
AND the reason we hold it together.



Table Talk Prompts

Finding ways to get your teen to communicate can be challenging.

Use these table talk prompts to help!

Use them when you see the opportunity for conversation, but are not sure how to begin.

This could be at the dinner table, during a car ride, a walk, etc.

**Created by McAuliffe Middle School Teacher
Lauren Komanitsky**

TABLE TALK

WHAT ARE TWO CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAKE UP AN ADVENTURE AND WHY?



TABLE TALK

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WOULD BUY IF MONEY WAS NO ISSUE?



TABLE TALK

IMAGINE LIFE HAD A REMOTE CONTROL. WHAT IS ONE PART OF YOUR DAY YOU WOULD FAST-FORWARD THROUGH IF YOU COULD?

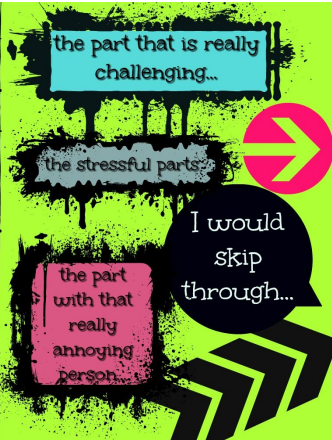


TABLE TALK

WHICH OF THESE MAKE YOU THE HAPPIEST AND WHY?

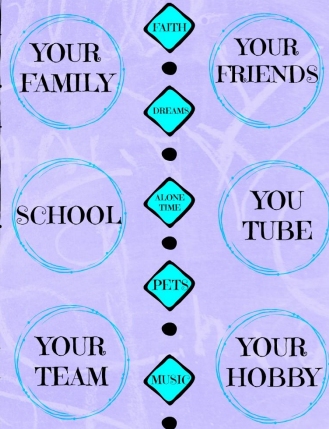


TABLE TALK

IF YOU COULD BE ANY FLAVOR ICE CREAM, WHICH WOULD YOU BE?



TABLE TALK

WHAT THREE QUALITIES OF YOURSELF DO YOU SHOW ON THE OUTSIDE THE MOST?

THESE WOULD BE THE THE WAYS THAT FRIENDS AND FAMILY WOULD DESCRIBE YOU.



TABLE TALK

WHAT IS ONE THING THAT YOU DO DIFFERENTLY THAN MOST PEOPLE?



TABLE TALK

IMAGINE LIFE HAD A REMOTE CONTROL. WHAT'S ONE PART OF YOUR LIFE YOU WOULD REWIND BACK TO IF YOU COULD?

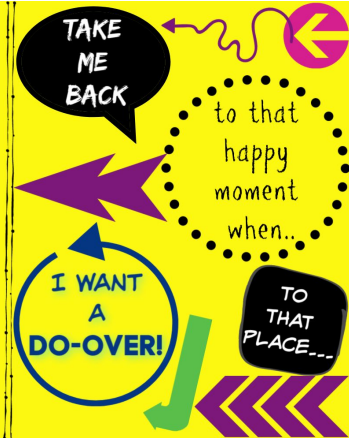


TABLE TALK

MEANWHILE...

IF YOU WERE A
COMIC BOOK HERO,
WHAT SUPERPOWER
WOULD YOU HAVE?

WHEN SUDDENLY...



TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER...
BE GIVEN \$100,000 CASH
OR
\$1,000,000 IN AMAZON
GIFT CARDS?



AMAZON



TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER
READ A BOOK ON
YOUR OWN OR LISTEN
TO ONE ON AUDIO?

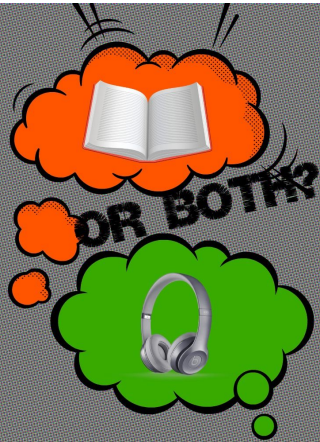


TABLE TALK

WHAT WAS THE
MOST CHALLENGING PART
OF YOUR DAY TODAY?



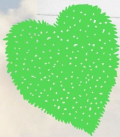
AARGH!



TABLE TALK

DESCRIBE
YOUR DREAM
JOB.

WHAT WOULD
YOU DO EACH
DAY?



WHAT
WOULD
YOUR HOURS
BE?

HOW WOULD
THIS JOB
MAKE YOU
FEEL?



TABLE TALK

WHO DO YOU THINK
IS THE
SMARTER SPECIES?
DOGS OR CATS?

SMARTEST PET CONTEST



TABLE TALK

IF YOU WERE GIVEN \$10,000
TO DONATE TO ANY CHARITY
OR CAUSE,
WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?



TABLE TALK

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN
YOU FEEL
REALLY ANGRY?
WHAT HELPS YOU CALM
DOWN?



TABLE TALK

HOW OLD WOULD YOU BE RIGHT NOW IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOUR EXACT AGE AND YOU HAD TO GUESS?



a. older than 10

b. younger than 25

c. 30ish

TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER...
BE ABLE TO READ MINDS
OR
TRAVEL AT LIGHTNING SPEEDS?



TABLE TALK

NAME SOMEONE YOU ARE A LITTLE BIT JEALOUS OF... AND EXPLAIN WHY.



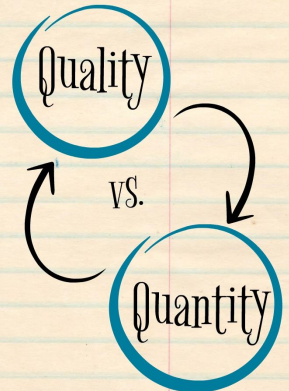
When we look at the things that hurt or bother us, we figure things out about ourselves and our own insecurities...and then we need to remind ourselves of our own AWESOMENESS and continue on our way without comparing ourselves to anyone else!

NO JUDGEMENT...THIS IS A NATURAL REACTION TO LIFE THAT GIVES US GOOD INFORMATION ABOUT HOW WE ARE FEELING.
SHINE SOME LIGHT ON IT!

TABLE TALK

WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

HAVING A LARGE GROUP OF FRIENDS THAT ARE FUN TO HANG OUT WITH
OR
A SMALL AMOUNT OF LOYAL AND DEPENDABLE FRIENDS?



IS ONE BETTER THAN THE OTHER?

TABLE TALK

DESCRIBE
A REALLY HAPPY
MEMORY.

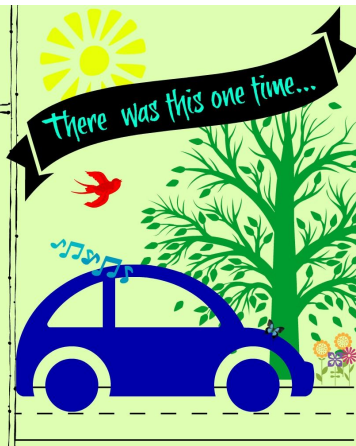


TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER EARN
MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AT A JOB
THAT YOU HATE
OR
EARN JUST ENOUGH TO GET BY
AT A JOB THAT YOU LOVE?



TABLE TALK

IF YOU COULD PICK
ANY
TALENT OR ABILITY
FOR YOURSELF, WHAT
WOULD IT BE?



TABLE TALK

WHAT IS ONE THING
ABOUT YOURSELF
THAT
YOU ARE PROUD OF?

- ✓ Was there a specific moment when you realized you had this quality?
- ✓ Have other people noticed this about you?
- ✓ How does this quality come in handy?

TABLE TALK

DESCRIBE
A SITUATION
IN YOUR LIFE
THAT IS MAKING YOU
NERVOUS.



TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER...
BE THE BEST PLAYER ON A
LOSING TEAM
OR
THE WORST PLAYER ON A
WINNING TEAM?



TABLE TALK

NAME ONE GOOD THING
THAT PEOPLE DO ON
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONE
THING THAT MAKES YOU
ANGRY.



TABLE TALK

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT
YOU ARE INTERESTED
IN LEARNING
MORE ABOUT OR
LEARNING HOW TO DO?



TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER...
BE FAMOUS
OR
BE BEST FRIENDS
WITH SOMEONE FAMOUS?



TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER...
BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE
WEATHER
OR
TALK TO ANIMALS?



TABLE TALK

WHAT IS THE
MOST IMPORTANT QUALITY
THAT YOU WANT IN A FRIEND
AND WHY?



TABLE TALK

WHICH SUPERPOWER IS
BETTER?
THE POWER TO FLY
OR
THE POWER TO TURN
INVISIBLE



TABLE TALK

NAME SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU ARE TIRED OF DOING.

SHARK WEEK.
Enough said.



TABLE TALK

CHOOSE ONE FAMILY MEMBER AND THANK THEM FOR SOMETHING THEY DID.

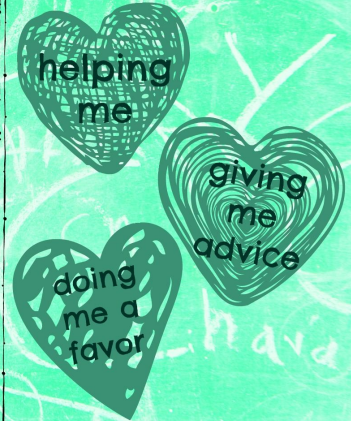


TABLE TALK

WOULD YOU RATHER...
TAKE A 1 WEEK VACATION TO A TROPICAL ISLAND
OR
A 2 WEEK VACATION IN YOUR HOME TOWN?

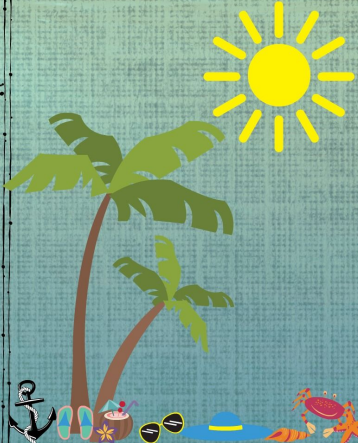


TABLE TALK

WHAT IS YOUR "GO-TO" SONG RIGHT NOW?
WHAT MUSIC ARE YOU LISTENING TO THE MOST AND WHY?



TABLE TALK

WHICH WOULD BE WORSE FOR YOU?

BEING BANNED FROM USING YOUR CELL PHONE FOR A YEAR OR BANNED FROM EATING SWEETS FOR A YEAR?

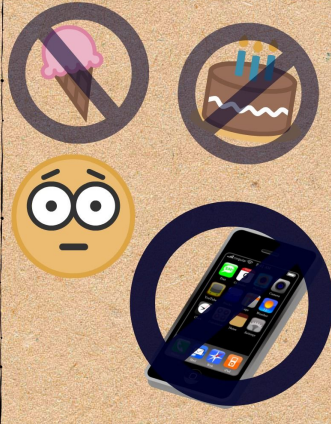


TABLE TALK

WHERE IS THE WORST PLACE OR SITUATION YOU COULD BECOME STUCK IN?

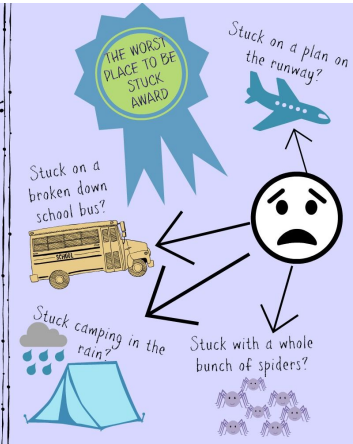


TABLE TALK

DESCRIBE AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT THAT YOU HOPE NEVER HAPPENS TO YOU!

Sometimes I worry that...

I'll mess up when I'm reading out loud in front of my class.

I won't know that I have a booger hanging out of my nose.

I'll pee my pants when I'm laughing too hard!



TABLE TALK

WHAT IS THE STRANGEST THING YOU'VE EVER EATEN?



TABLE TALK

WHICH DO YOU SPEND MORE
TIME THINKING ABOUT?
DOING THINGS RIGHT
OR
DOING THE RIGHT THING

A+ Super!

Be kind to others.

Don't let anyone sit alone at lunch.

Don't be a bystander.

Be kind on social media.

Talk to an adult when
you need help.