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## NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2011

Hi All,

The end of the year is fast approaching and Christmas is around the corner. The kids are busy with exams and I'm sure many of you are wondering what you're going to do with the kids over the holidays. I thought that I'd focus this newsletter on teenagers and how you can stay connected to them.



Adolescence often is nightmare time for both parents and teenagers. All sorts of changes, especially physical are taking place and friends become more important than parents. Teenagers are being exposed to all manner of pressures, which, if they don't feel good about themselves means that they may have great difficulty in coping with peer pressure, relationships, school and parents. Most parents are unsure as to how to maintain an open and trusting relationship with their teenager. Unfortunately parents tend to talk down and give the big lecture warning their kids to the dangers of drink, drugs and sex. What we never seem to do is find out what the kids want and why they make the choices they make. Instead of threatening your child with a year's grounding if you catch them smoking, why not try and hear from him

why he's choosing to smoke. Everything your adolescence does is a choice and what we never seem do is to try and find out from them why they make the choices that they do.

The relationship of trust that should exist in all relationships usually breaks down if the only way you communicate with your child is by warnings, lectures and threats. Many adolescents who tend to underperform and opt out of challenges at school have lost trust in the adults (parents and teachers) in their lives and often cut off their nose to spite these adults without realising that they're spiting themselves as well. They then end up blaming everything and everybody for their underperformance and other problems in their lives. They often choose friends with similar problems and end up involved in anti-social activities viz. drinking, smoking, bored, irresponsible, listless and unmotivated.

I had a teenager and parent in my rooms the other day. He was failing two subjects and just passing the rest. The mom kept on nagging and going on about how all he does is play on his phone and watch TV. He was subjected to nagging on a daily basis. She brought up his lack of performance during the session and the more that she went on at him about never opening a book etc., the more he was defending himself saying things like: 'I'm only failing 2 subjects, I will try'. I then asked him why he was choosing to fail two subjects. This seemed to stop him in his tracks. He did not

know how to respond. I was making him realise that he wasn't studying to please his mom but that he should be studying because he wants to achieve. I then again asked why he was choosing to fail two subjects. He then seemed to become aware that studying was his responsibility as he did not know how to reply to my question.

Many teenagers don't take responsibility for the choices that they make and tend to blame everybody but themselves when things go wrong. The main reason why teenagers tend to get drawn into unacceptable activities, sex, drugs, drinking etc., is due to low self-esteem. Adolescents with low self-esteem tend to be very vulnerable to peer pressure and because they have a strong need for acceptance often succumb to the anti-social activities mentioned above. The problem is that self-esteem manifests itself virtually from birth and the major factor in the development of high self-esteem is the parent. The only way this can be rectified when children become teenagers is with their cooperation and with parents being shown the skills needed to connect with their difficult teenager. A good mediator is imperative to this process. This is because the teenager will only cooperate if they have trust in the mediator.

**Between Parent and Teenager** is a ground-breaking book written by Haim Ginott. In it he makes various quotes and suggestions on how not to interact with your teenager. These include:



- Don't invite dependence.
- Don't hurry to correct facts.
- Don't violate his privacy.
- Avoid clichés and preacher.
- Don't talk in chapters.
- Don't label him.
- Don't use reverse psychology.
- Don't send contradictory messages.
- Don't futurize.

Another quote from his book: 'Truth for its own sake can be a deadly weapon in family relations. Truth without compassion can destroy love. Some parents try too hard to prove exactly how, where and why they have been right. This approach cannot but bring bitterness and disappointment. *When attitudes are hostile, facts are unconvincing*'.

**'Rebels with Causes'** is a unique, very effective 3 session workshop. Parents attend the first session; the second session is for both parents and their teenagers. During this session rules and consequences are negotiated and interaction between the teens and the adults takes place. The third session takes place two weeks after the second and this mainly involves discussion with both the parents and their teenagers as to what's working and what's not. The programme is unique as the interaction between the adults and teenagers takes place on an equal platform.

### **Kensway for Teachers**

There are now three schools that are implementing the Kensway system into their schools with great effect. The teacher workshop consists of 2 sessions where teachers are given insight as to causes of problematic learner's behaviour. This enables them to advise parents as to how and why their parenting style is impacting on the learner. Quite dramatic improvements have been observed by teachers that have implemented

the system into their schools. **Any school principals that are interested in finding out more are welcome to contact me on 082 449 0335.**

### **Update on Parenting 911**



As from January 2012 Parenting 911 will change its format from a one session workshop to a three session workshop. I have found that there is too much to absorb in one session and although parents are experiencing noticeable positive change in their children's behaviour, they tend to fall back into their old ways after two weeks. This means that they need a top up interactive session in order to reinforce the mind shift that's required to maintain the structures. This is an exciting innovation as it will virtually

ensure that parents are able to maintain their mind shift.

Well, that's it for now, enjoy your parenting and help your youngsters beat stress the Biral way!

'til next time, stay in control!

Ken