
"Words are real things! They bless or they curse, they lift up or they knock down, they save or they damn!"

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Eph.4:29)

18. BROTHERS & SISTERS NOT GETTING ALONG WELL TOGETHER IS A COMMON PROBLEM, & THE MAIN WAY THEY MANIFEST THEIR DIFFERENCES IS WITH WORDS.—In belittling & criticising & knocking each other down with words & actions. An older child can look down on the younger ones & make them feel "dumb" or not as competent as they, the older ones, are. God's Word is very clear, & our children should all strive to learn this lesson, that

"Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted...And let us consider one another to provoke unto love & to good works. See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." (Eph.4:32; Heb.10:24; 1Pet.1:22, 3:8)


Preparing for Adolescence

(EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK BY
JAMES DOBSON)

The courage to lead

Most teenagers respect a guy or girl who has the courage to be his own person, even when being mocked and teased. An individual with this kind of confidence often becomes a leader. He has shown that he doesn't feel as inferior as the other followers. He's not made of putty inside. Instead, he has the guts to stand up for what he knows is right.

A boy named Jeep Fenders

I was not always sensitive to the feelings of children who couldn't be like their peers. In fact, I had to learn to be kind to others during childhood. When I was nine years old, I attended a Sunday school class every week. One Sunday a new boy named Fred visited our class. I didn't stop to think that Fred might be uncomfortable as a stranger in our group, because I knew everyone and had many friends there. He sat quietly looking down at the floor. During the morning class I noticed that Fred had very strange ears. They were shaped in a kind of half-circle, like this: . I remember thinking how much they looked like Jeep fenders. Have you ever seen the fenders on a Jeep, which go up and over the tyres? Somehow I managed to see a resemblance to Fred's ears.

Then I did a very unkind thing. I told everyone that Fred had 'Jeep-fender ears', and my friends thought that that was terribly funny. They all laughed and began

"If you can't love your brother or sister, your leaders, or your parents whom ye have seen, how are you going to love God or His heathen children whom ye have not seen?" (MOP: "Love One Another") (1John 4:20,21) Many a System family has been ruined by contentions & rivalry between brothers & sisters, & our children should be made aware of the bad results of such problems.

19. OUR CHILDREN HERE ARE PRETTY GOOD ALONG THAT LINE, so some of these problems rarely come up, but I'm glad I overheard her & this minor situation came out as a lesson to all. Techl wasn't doing it to be hurtful at all, she just didn't realise that her drawing attention to David's pimples would hurt or embarrass him.

20. SO, LET'S CONCENTRATE WITH OUR CHILDREN FOR AWHILE ON HOW WE CAN SHOW OUR LOVE FOR OTHERS BY WHAT WE DO NOT DO OR SAY.

calling him 'Jeep Fenders'. Fred seemed to be accepting the joke pretty well. He sat with a little smile on his face (because he didn't know what to say), but it was hurting him deeply. Suddenly Fred stopped smiling. He exploded from his chair and hurried towards the door, crying. Then he ran out of the building and never came back to our church. I don't blame him. The way we acted was vicious, and I'm sure God was very displeased, with me especially.

However, the important thing to understand was how ignorant I was of Fred's feelings on that day. Believe it or not, I didn't really intend to hurt him. I had no idea that my joke made him feel terrible, and I was shocked when he ran from the classroom. I remember thinking about what I had done after he left, wishing I hadn't been so mean.

Why was I so cruel to Fred? It was because no one had ever told me that other people were as sensitive about being teased as I was. I thought I was the only one who didn't like to be laughed at. The teachers of my many Sunday school classes should have taught me to respect and protect the feelings of others. They should have helped me to be more Christlike.

Feeling Inferior

Researchers identified the girls in college who were the most beautiful and those who were less attractive. Then they studied them for twenty-five years to see what happened in their marriages and later lives. Believe it or not, those who were less attractive tended to be more happily married twenty-five years later. So it's really wrong for everybody to feel like they have to be physically perfect. If people were hon-

est, they would all admit being embarrassed about some flaw that becomes a burden to carry throughout life. But it is unnecessary to worry! We all have great human worth, regardless of how we look. And that's the beautiful thing about Christianity. Jesus loves me, not because I am fantastically intelligent or handsome; he loves me simply because I *am*! What a comforting message! I don't have to do anything to earn his love. It is available to everyone as a free gift. For the person who has been damaged by feelings of inferiority that's quite a message.

The Emotions of an Adolescent

Perhaps the best way to begin acquainting you with the emotions of adolescence is to relate a personal story about the saddest day of my own childhood. It began at eleven o'clock one morning when I was thirteen years old. I was sitting in my school classroom when a boy near me motioned towards the door. I looked in that direction and saw my father beckoning me to come outside. He said we were going home and that I would not be returning to school that day. He didn't explain why.

As we walked to the car, I knew that my dad must have something awful to tell me. I could see the tension in his eyes, but I was afraid to ask him what had happened. Finally he turned to me and said, 'Jim, I have some bad news for you and I want you to take it like a man.'

I said, 'Is it my mum?'

He replied, 'No.'

I said, 'Then it's my dog, isn't it?'

My father nodded and then began to tell me the details. He said that my mother had been driving home in our car a few minutes earlier. My little dog (whose name was Pippy) saw her coming and ran into the street to greet her. He jumped on the side of the car as it passed, but apparently lost his footing and fell under the rear wheel. Mother then felt the sickening thud as the dog was struck and run over. Pippy screamed in pain, eventually lying motionless at the edge of the road.

Mother stopped the car immediately and ran back to where my dog lay. She bent over him and talked softly to the pup. He could not respond because his back was broken, but he could roll his little brown eyes to see who it was. When he recognized her, Pippy wagged his stubby tail in appreciation. He was still wagging that little tail when his eyes grew glassy in death.

Now it may not seem so terrible to lose a dog, but Pippy's death was like the end of the world for me. I simply cannot describe how important he was to me when I was thirteen years old. He was my very special friend whom I loved more than anyone can imagine.

It is important to understand that there have been many more *significant* moments in my life since that day of Pippy's death. There have been more meaningful days, and certainly there have been greater losses than the one I experienced on that cloudy morning. However, there have been few sadder days even to this moment. Why? Because I was thirteen years old when Pippy died. That made it all seem so much worse.

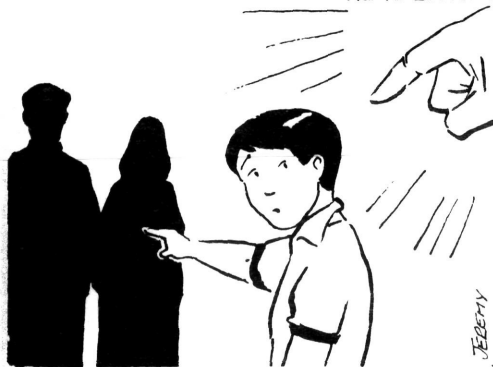
You see, *everything* is felt more strongly during childhood, and especially during adolescence.

My point is that when you're young, the good things seem more astounding and the bad things are more intolerable. That's why the death of Pippy nearly killed me too.

Why have I told you this? What does it mean for your future? It means that your own feelings will probably become even more intense during the next few years. That's just the way adolescence is. Little things that won't bother you later in life will bug you as a teenager. Your fears will be more frightening, your pleasures will be more exciting, your irritations will be more distressing, and your frustrations will be more intolerable. Every experience will appear king-sized during early adolescence. That's why teenagers are often so explosive, why they sometimes do things without thinking and then regret their behaviour later. You'll soon learn that feelings run deep and powerful during the adolescent years.

Teens!--It's Time to Take the Responsibility & the Blame Yourselves!

Maria Letter No. 56, 6/86



1. All teens have problems & most of them at some time or other have some serious problem. But their problems mostly stem from their parents, although not completely. Their parents are the ones that have had the worst problems. The parents or the childcare people—whoever has brought them up are the ones that have usually had the worst problems & where the teens have gotten most of their problems, or if they don't have the same problems, usually their problems stem maybe from resentment against their parents for something or other. In