

10

Eliminating Triggers and Reinforcement

At this point we are ready to tackle some of the specific problems you may be having with your teenager.

I want you to refer back to the list of items you have in your column. The first thing I would like you to do is edit this list. It is quite common after discussing the things we have discussed that parents tend to look at the conflicts they are having with their teenagers in a different light. Once you execute this program you will find that some of the items on your list may not be there anymore. Also, new things may have come up that you wish to add to your column. So open your workbook to chapter 10 and make any corrections or adjustments that you need to make.

Now that you have your new edited list, take a good look at it. I would like to discuss some of the things you might have been doing to actually encourage these problems. In the past you may have unknowingly encouraged your teenager to act out in certain ways. Now we will address specifically how you may have been doing this and show you how to put a stop to it.

The two common ways parents bring about undesirable behavior is by triggering the behavior before it starts and reinforcing it after it is completed. Triggers usually come in the form of a question or a statement that you make to your teenager. Reinforcement usually comes in the form of negative attention that comes as reaction to unwanted behavior.

The way we are going to eliminate these problems is by avoiding the types of statements that provoke the bad behavior and by focusing on positive attention on yourself rather than negative attention on your child. We are going to illustrate how this works by going over five common problems that parents have with their teenagers. These five items are especially likely to be encouraged by parents.

They are:

1. Lying.
2. Stealing.
3. Saying things to provoke you.
4. Bad attitude.
5. Abusing favors.

I am going to define each of these problems and explain how you as a parent may be encouraging your child to do it, and what you can do to stop it.

Lying

If your child was lying to you in the past, you should be experiencing a lot less of this once you hand over responsibility to him for the items in his column. One of the most common reasons your teenager doesn't tell the truth is because you force him to ask permission to do things that really belong in his column.

If your teen wants to do something and he feels you will say no, then he feels that this gives him an excuse to lie. However, when you let your teenager be responsible for those things that only affect him, then he will have no reason to lie to you.

For example, let's say your son has a friend. We will call him Joe. You know that Joe uses drugs. In the past, if your son wanted to go to Joe's house, you would not have allowed it. That means whenever your son wanted to go to Joe's house he would lie about it. He would say something like he was going to the library to look up something for school. I want to emphasize that your refusing permission was just an obstacle he had to overcome; and not a particularly difficult one. Your son would still do what he wished, because who he spends time with out of the house is entirely out of your control. It is something that is entirely in his control. It belongs in his column. But he still needed to get around your objection, and he did this by lying to you.

However, now you are an enlightened parent. You know you are unable to control who your son sees outside the house, so you leave it entirely up to him to decide. In the past if your son wanted to see Joe he would say, "Mom, I need to go to the library to look some things up for school." You would have granted your permission and he would run off to Joe's. He would feel quite justified in lying to you because he feels you have no right to dictate who his friends are. However, now you have given up telling him with whom he can associate. Now there is no reason for him to lie and say he is going to the library when he really intends to go to Joe's. Most teenagers feel lying is basically wrong and are uncomfortable with lying for no reason.

If your son says he is going to Joe's, then all you should say is:

"I am glad you told me. I must admit that I feel uncomfortable with that because I know that Joe is heavily into drugs and I am afraid he might influence you. Yet I know that you are responsible and you will do the right thing. Thanks for letting me know where you will be."

I would like to take a moment and look at these two scenarios. In the first case, where you are "in control of who your child sees" your son lied to you and went to Joe's anyway. Since he has gotten there by going against authority, he is more likely to continue to buck those in authority and smoke, snort, swallow or inject whatever Joe has with him around the house.

In the second case the situation is quite different. You have acknowledged his right to go where he wants and expressed your concern about drugs. You have expressed your belief that he is responsible and will behave in a responsible way. So in the second scenario also, your teenager is going to Joe's house, but he is going under his own responsibility. While at Joe's, he understands that he is responsible for himself. You view him as responsible and he is being treated as a responsible adult. He also knows that responsible adults don't use drugs. Now if your son gets involved in drugs he has the feeling that he is letting himself down; that he is not living up to what has been entrusted to him. Now it is much less likely that he will join Joe in whatever Joe does.

So in the first case, you tried to control your child and prevent him from seeing Joe. Your reason was that you didn't want him to use drugs. Your child's response was to lie to you and do what he wanted to do anyway. He still went to Joe's. You have also set him up to feel free to use drugs since that is just another part of rebelling against your dictatorship and taking control away from you. In the second scenario, your child didn't need to lie to you. He still ended up at Joe's as in the first case, but this time with the understanding that he is in charge of what happens; he is much less likely to use drugs. This just shows you how giving over control to your child makes it more likely for your child to behave the way you would like him to behave.

I just want to make it clear that in the second scenario you still have no guarantee that your teenager will not use drugs while at Joe's. He is still a teenager and peer pressure is very strong. However what I can guarantee is that if he gets involved with drugs in the second scenario he would certainly use drugs in the first scenario. But in the second scenario he will still have much more restraint and be much less likely to put himself in danger.

So if you have successfully given over to your child responsibility for the items on his list, then you should be seeing a lot less lying. This is simply because your child has less reason to lie. However, children lie about all sorts of things so you may still be having a problem with lying. Therefore, you need to begin to look at your interaction with your child. Pay attention to situations when your teenager lies to you and look for ways you may be encouraging the lie by asking questions or reinforcing the lie through negative attention.

Eliminating Triggers for Lying

One easy way to eliminate the things that trigger lies is to cut back on asking your teen a lot of questions.

Here is a quick exercise you can do to eliminate lies. For the next week or so, I want you to resolve not to ask your teenager any questions. This is a lot easier that it sounds. You just have to pay attention to the way you speak to your teen and reword any questions that you have to make them into statements.

For example:

Instead of saying: Did you clean up the mess you made in the kitchen?

Say: I would like to know that the kitchen is clean.

Instead of saying: Did you put my tools away?

Say: I want to have my things put away when they are no longer being used.

Instead of saying: Why do you play your music so loud late at night?

Say: I need to sleep at night. I expect the house to be quiet after 11:00.

There is one type of question you have to make a special effort to avoid. This is the type of question where you are trying to trap your teenager in a lie when you already know the answer. Let's say your daughter said she was going to study at Jennifer's house. An hour later Jennifer calls and asks to speak to your daughter. When your daughter gets home you may be tempted to ask her, "What did you do with Jennifer tonight?" When she makes up an answer you will spring on her that Jennifer called an hour after she was supposed to be there and then accuse her of lying to you. Many parents handle similar situations this way. This is not a good idea. First of all, it encourages your child to lie. Second of all, it really has the same elements of deceit and manipulation that you find so unpleasant in your child. A better way to handle such a situation is to address your daughter with a statement, "Jennifer called an hour after you left home. I would really prefer it if you would either tell me where you are really going or not tell me anything." When you stop asking your teenager questions, the lying will decrease dramatically. Your teen may still continue to lie, but usually this is because he or she doesn't yet realize that you are changing the way you relate to each other.

When your teen does volunteer something which you know is a lie, it is important that you do nothing to reinforce the lie. Don't act worried or upset or react in any way that will give negative attention. Just say, "Oh," and walk away. When your teenager tells you something suspicious, there is no need to check out if what your teen says is true. Just treat it as if your neighbor's kid said something that you think is not true; ignore it and politely excuse yourself from the conversation.

Results of Eliminating Triggers and Reinforcement

When you use this approach you will dramatically reduce the amount your child lies to you. Many parents are able to eliminate lying completely. In fact, lying is one of the easiest things to stop.

What often happens then is that parents realize that lying was only part of what was bothering them. Many times they are more concerned about what their teenagers were lying about. If you are concerned about your child lying about using drugs, stealing or cutting school you will find it quite easy to take care of the lying. However, what you might find is that what really bothered you wasn't so much the lying but the fact that your

child is using drugs, stealing or cutting school. So taking care of the lying is only part of the solution. You may realize that what you thought was the main problem is only just one aspect of what is bothering you.

Stealing from Parents

Parents often both trigger and reinforce stealing. They trigger stealing by leaving valuables around often to “test” the thief and see if he will continue to steal. They reinforce stealing by focusing negative attention on the person who stole and by asking questions, making accusations and scolding. The more you are bothered by stealing, the more you want to be able to trust your kid, and the more likely you are to do things that encourage your teenager to steal.

Generally the way most parents react to their teenager stealing from them is by saying and doing these very things that are most likely to encourage their children to keep on stealing; that is testing them, questioning, accusing and scolding. Just about anything else you do in response to a theft will have better results than these four things. Therefore there is a lot of latitude as to how you may choose to respond to stealing. The main thing you must do is to do nothing to trigger or reinforce theft.

Reduce Temptation

The first thing you should do is try to eliminate the temptation to steal. That means you should observe what types of things are being taken and make an effort to make these things less accessible.

Treat your belongings as if you were in a strange place or as if you were having workers come to your house. If you would lock them up, then you should do so now if you suspect a theft problem. You should also let all of your children know that you have tightened up security around your belongings. Say something like:

“I have noticed that recently some of my belongings have been missing. As a result I am going to keep them elsewhere for now on.”

This will help a lot since it will make your things a lot less accessible, but it will probably not end the problem completely. First of all, I am sure you don’t want to live in your home like you would live in a strange hotel where strangers have free access to your room. But more than that, many teenagers will take the extra security you are using as a challenge and a game.

Change Your Response

The more difficult thing to do is to change your reaction to the theft. What you want to try to do is eliminate any negative attention. What you choose to do specifically in response to a theft is not so important. What is important is that you choose to do something that keeps you relaxed and comfortable.

For example, one thing you could do is say to your children including the probable thief something like this:

“Dinner tonight is peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Please help yourself. I had \$75 taken from my purse today and I am really upset about it, so your Dad has decided to take me out to dinner to make me feel better.”

Convincing Your Child He Is Good

Teenagers can get almost anything that they would steal from you another way. They choose to steal because they do not want to be considered good or responsible. They want to carry the negative label of being a “bad person” because once they carry this label it allows them to do certain things that “good children” won’t do. So the best way to combat stealing is to make sure that your child doesn’t get what he wants out of it. That means you should not give him any negative attention that will label him as “bad” and you should do what you can to make him more comfortable with the idea that he is a good person.

Telling your teenager he is good won’t do it. You have to treat him like he is a good, responsible person. Again this may be difficult because your child is doing everything in his power to prove the opposite, but this is how you will be successful in eventually stopping him from stealing.

So once again, the basic solution is as follows:

1. You must try to get rid of all temptation to steal. Put the objects out of reach or in some secure place.
2. Make sure that you don’t blame or accuse your child or in any way give him negative feedback for stealing.
3. Do the best you can to trust your child and let him know that you trust him.
4. Do what you can to take care of yourself. Most importantly keep your spirits up and maintain a happy, positive attitude.
5. Be positive. You are being presented with a parenting challenge and you are doing the correct things to successfully meet that challenge. That is worth a lot more than anything your child could steal from you.

When Your Child Is Stealing From Other Family Members

All this is very good if your child is stealing from you. What do you do if your child is stealing from one of his siblings?

You will probably be tempted to take up the victim's cause. Don't do this. You may empathize with the child and give advice on how to protect his things given the situation, but try not to get involved with conflicts between your children. This is a general principle. Your children will work out their problems themselves better without your help.

Saying Things to Provoke You

“Sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me.”

Did you ever hear that before? When I was a kid, children who engaged in verbal battles with their peers used to say that. Well, the truth is that this statement is completely false. In reality sticks and stones can only break bones but words can destroy worlds. If you doubt this, just ask any parent whose teenager is using his words to worry, frighten or attack them.

The truth is words can and do hurt. They can often do more damage than anything physical your child could do to you. Also words can be a great equalizer. You can often control your child physically or financially, but they have complete control over what comes out of their mouths. As a result, teenagers often use words to upset or attack their parents. They can say some very disturbing things. They can:

- Say I hate you.
- Call you names.
- Swear at you.
- Threaten to run away.
- Threaten to kill themselves.
- Threaten to kill you while you are sleeping.
- Threaten to burn down the house.

If you are like most parents, then if your teenager would say some of these things to you, most likely it would upset you.

Why Teenagers Use Words to Provoke You

There are basically two reasons why your teenager uses words to attack you. The first one is that your teen really is thinking this way and is crying out to you to help with a problem that he can't handle himself. The second, and much more common reason, is that he provokes you with words to get a rise out of you. Of course, the way you should respond to the verbal provocation really depends upon the underlying reason for the statements. If your child's motivation by saying upsetting things to you is to get you upset, then the best approach is to ignore the statements completely. However, if these statements are a cry for help, then you need to identify the problem and help your child. The problem is that you cannot be sure which reason your child is using his words to provoke you.

Your Initial Response

Whatever the reason behind your child's verbal abuse, it is never correct to become upset, hit back, verbally attack, shout or get angry. If your child's statements are a cry for help, all you will do by responding this way is to make him feel even more misunderstood and isolated. If the purpose of your child's statements is to get a reaction from you, then you would be doing just that. If you feed your child's desire to get a rise out of you by responding this way, then you can expect a lot more of these types of statements in the future. No matter if your teenager is attacking you or threatening you with his words, or if he is trying to get a response out of you by threatening harm to himself, the way you will handle the situation is the same. What you need to do is to respond to these statements appropriately, either by ignoring them when their purpose is to get a rise out of you, or by taking them seriously when they are a cry for help.

The only problem is how do you tell them apart? The truth is that a lot of times you can't. Therefore, the best approach initially is to take seriously any statements that your teenager makes, express your concern and offer to help. If your child's statements suggest a real risk of danger to your child or to others, then you must do what you can to avoid the danger. If your child is threatening suicide, and you feel it could be serious, you need to get a mental health professional involved as soon as possible. If your child is threatening violence to others then it might be a good idea to get the police involved. Also, do what you can to make it more difficult to carry out a serious threat. For example, if your child is threatening to blow his head off, then you should make sure that there are no guns in the house.

When the Problem Continues

Once you have taken reasonable precautions and done what you can to address any serious problem, if your child continues using words to attack or provoke you and shows no interest in correcting any problem, then you can assume that he is using his words as a weapon.

So how do you approach correcting this verbal abuse once it is clear to you that your child is using words to attack you? The first thing you must do is make sure that you are not triggering these statements or reinforcing them when they occur. We have already touched on how you may be reinforcing these statements. Your child's purpose is to illicit a big response from you. If you respond in any way that fulfills your child's purpose, then you can expect more of the same in the future.

Your child is using these statements to manipulate you. But it is your choice whether or not you are manipulated. The worst thing you can feel is anger, guilt, worry, upset or frustration. The worst thing you can do is to shout, hit, get sucked into an argument or cry.

What you should do is ignore these statements completely. You want to do nothing to encourage these verbal attacks. What most often happens is that your child will see that he is not getting the reaction from you that he is seeking and he will stop trying to get a rise out of you with his words.

On rare occasions the attacks still continue, even after you stop reinforcing them. We will be discussing a bit later in the program some techniques that will also help you put a stop to the verbal abuse you are still receiving.

Avoiding Triggers

There is one more thing I wish to discuss concerning name calling and swearing. If this is a problem for you, then you need to make sure that you are not triggering the behavior.

The next few times your child curses at you or calls you names, make a note of the things you said just before.

- Was it something derogatory, negative or critical?
- Did you just give an order?
- Did you call him or her a name or swear first?
- Did you make an accusation?

These are the types of things that can trigger bad language from your child.

Ask yourself, if you wanted to get your child upset enough to swear at you how would you go about doing it? How you answer this question may describe exactly what you are doing to trigger your child to swear at you or to curse you.

Your Teen Has a Bad or Belligerent Attitude

Does your child walk around acting gloomy all the time? Does your child act like his life is miserable and makes you feel like it is your fault? Does your teenager seem like he is holding back but any minute he is going to strike you?

If this describes your situation, then you could be unknowingly encouraging it.

Your Gloomy Teenager

When your teen walks around with a bad attitude what he is frequently looking for is a reaction from you. He is looking for that pang of worry, guilt, fear or anger on your face.

By showing him these expressions you are reinforcing the behavior. Your job is to break your response and through this you will undermine the motivation for using this behavior. So once again your approach to break this pattern is to eliminate those things that you may be doing to encourage the behavior. That is, things you say or do to trigger these attitudes and the way you respond to these attitudes that reinforce them.

The first thing to do is to observe your own attitude. You must make sure that the way you present yourself to your teenager isn't bringing out his sulky or belligerent attitude as a response to you. You must be sure that you are not being unpleasant to your child by being bossy, saying disapproving or critical things or looking at your child in an angry or disappointed manner. Basically, you must make sure that your attitude is friendly and courteous. Once you are sure that you are not triggering the poor attitude in your child, the next thing you must do is change the way you react to his attitude so you don't encourage a continuation of the behavior.

Often parents reinforce an unpleasant attitude by taking it personally. Usually this is a misinterpretation. True, sometimes your teen will be moping around because he is angry at you. But more often, he is not thinking about you at all. He is upset because of something that happened at school or he is half asleep, or he is worried about a new pimple that you didn't notice yet because it is still too small to be seen without the aid of a microscope. Actually the real reason your child is gloomy doesn't matter. The main thing is not to react to the mood. Because reacting to your child's mood reinforces it and encourages it to continue to happen.

What you need to do is to become a bit more dense. You need to become less aware of and less responsive to your child's mood. That means you must behave as if you have completely overlooked what he or she is doing. You have to behave like you don't see it is happening.

The Threatening Teenager

If your child is walking around gloomy it might be easy to pretend you don't notice. But what do you do if your child is walking around in a threatening way? You might actually be afraid.

The first thing you should do is plan for how you would react if the worst thing that could happen were to occur. Work out in your head what you imagine could happen and how you would respond.

For example, what would you do if your child actually hit you? Plan out how you would respond. Your plan might be that if your child hits you and you are really afraid, you will call the police. Now that you have a worst case scenario plan, you can forget about the threats. You know how you will handle the situation if something bad comes up. As long as your teen's aggression is limited to belligerent gestures, you can ignore what is happening. And if your child does actually turn violent, you have a plan how to respond. What you don't want to do is choose the third alternative; that is live in fear of what might happen.

Concerning the example I gave, I realize you might be reluctant to use calling the police as your worst case response plan. You should know that it rarely comes to this. So long as you are not triggering the belligerent attitude by your interactions, most teenagers will not escalate their attitude into action.

On the other hand, if your teenager is holding where he would escalate to violent behavior without encouragement, then this is something you want to find out as soon as possible. It indicates that your child probably needs more help than you are equipped to give him and getting the police involved may be the first step that is necessary to give your child the help that he needs to correct his problem.

Your Teenager Abuses Favors

How can you stop your teenager abusing the favors that you do for him? This is another very common problem that parents practically encourage their children to do.

How often do you do something for your teenager or grant him some favor, and then have him come back and misuse or show no appreciation for what you have done for him? Here are some common examples of the ways teens misuse the favors their parents do for them:

- Borrows your car and doesn't handle it carefully.
- Borrows money and doesn't repay you.
- Uses your cosmetics and leaves a mess.
- Leaves your things outside to be lost, stolen or ruined.
- Asks you to pick him up someplace at a certain time and then is not there.
- Gets parking tickets and expects you to pay the fines.
- Orders you to drive him places and doesn't ask politely.

If you are a parent who has a teenager who does some of these things you are probably feeling frustrated, ill treated, angry or helpless. But the truth is than any casual observer can see that you are practically asking for this treatment.

For example, let me ask you:

- When your child borrows money and doesn't pay you back, do you lend him money again?
- When your child drives your car carelessly and damages it, do you continue to let him use the car?
- If your daughter uses your makeup and makes a mess, do you allow her to continue using it?
- If your son gets a speeding ticket or a parking ticket and won't pay it, do you let him to continue using the car?
- If you do favors for your teenager or you lend him your belongings and he mistreats them, do you allow him to borrow again before making restitution?

If you continue to do your child favors after your good will and generosity has been abused, you are inviting him to continue the abuse.

Here is the basic pattern that many parents get caught up in:

1. Your child presses you for some favor, such as use of some object belonging to you which he gets by asking or simply takes and assumes he has permission to use.
2. You grant the favor either by verbally giving permission or by not saying no.
3. Your child abuses or misuses what you have given him and does nothing to make right what he did wrong.
4. Your child expects the favor to be granted again.
5. You feel abused, mistreated, angry or frustrated by your child's attitude, yet you continue to grant the favor again.

When you continue to grant the favors after your good will has been abused, this acts to trigger further abuse of your good will and your belongings. Failure to protect your possessions acts to reinforce your child's assumption that he has a right to behave this way.

How to End Your Teen's Abuse of Your Generosity

So how do you correct this problem?

You simply say, "No."

Although the solution sounds quite easy, if you are a parent who is locked into this pattern of behavior with your teenager, you may have trouble saying no. But the key to handling the problem of your child abusing your favors is to stop giving him those favors.

The first step is to think about the different ways your child takes for granted the things you do for him. Things like:

- Dad, can I borrow \$20?
- I need the car tonight.
- Wake me up at 7.
- Pick me up at the mall at 9.
- I need your wrench to fix my bike.
- You need to drive me to school.
- I want a cat.

You do not owe any of these things to your child. If you grant these requests you are doing your child a favor. Because they are favors you have the right to choose to say yes or no.

When your child asks you these types of things, if you feel compelled to say yes you probably have the idea that it is your job to wait on your child and take care of his requests. Your child probably has the idea that it is your job to give him what he wants.

But as we have discussed before, it is not your job to cater to your child's whims. You have obligations to yourself as well as your child, and your child has obligations toward you. That is part of having a fair equitable relationship. When you share mutual respect toward each other and your child does his part to help around the house and behaves in a responsible way, then you probably will be happy to do favors for your teenager. You will know inside whether you want to grant the favor or not. When your child asks for a favor you will know whether or not you really want to grant it. So that is going to be your indicator from now on. If your child asks for something and you are feeling positively toward your child, then you may very well wish to grant the request. But if the request is something your teen has abused many times in the past, when he asks again for the same thing you will feel inside resentment at the request. So this time instead of granting the request, you should refuse it.

You need to change how you respond to favors. You cannot continue to reflexively grant your child's wishes just because he asks and you have always done so in the past.

What to Do

However, in order to be fair to your child, you need to warn him about this change before you actually begin refusing. You should say something like this:

“Brian, in the past I have done some favors for you when I really didn't want to do them. I feel uncomfortable about that, so for now on I will do favors for you, but only when I feel good about doing them.”

You can now go about your life, waiting for the next time your child asks for a favor. When that happens, do not respond yes automatically. Think to yourself whether or not you really want to grant that favor. If the answer is no, then say no. Then you can add an honest short statement about why you don't want to grant this request. Be sure to make this statement in the first person. Don't use it to rebuke or get back at your child. For example:

“No, Jeff, you can't borrow the car. I feel uncomfortable with the way you have been taking care of it.”

Do not make a long winded explanation for why you are saying no. Long explanations are appropriate in situations when you are on good terms with your child and you really want to say yes, but you have some compelling reason that you have to refuse the request. What we are discussing here is how to handle saying no in a situation where your child has been abusing your good will.

Your Teen's Response

So how will your teenager respond? He may do anything from accept it with a smile to throwing a major tantrum, complete with screaming and accusations. He also might try to pressure you into changing your mind. It is critical that you stand firm. Just listen to what your kid says and repeat your short statement.

“No. I don't want to right now.”

Eliminating Your Problems With Your Teenager

We have now discussed five common behavior problems that parents often bring upon themselves, either by triggering or by reinforcing the behavior or both. I chose these common behavioral problems merely as an illustration because they are usually brought about by the parents.

I would like you to turn your attention now to the other items in your column. Now knowing what we have discussed, ask yourself, have you been triggering these behaviors to occur?

Have you elicited these behaviors through:

- Accusations.
- Asking questions.
- Complaining.
- Criticizing and making negative remarks.
- Giving orders.
- Not treating your teen with respect.
- Doing the same kind of behavior to your teen that you find so unpleasant.
- Setting up the situation so that the behavior is more likely to occur.

Have you been reinforcing the behavior by fueling it with negative attention?

Have you been:

- Scolding.
- Lecturing.
- Angry.
- Punishing.
- Feeling and expressing guilt.

Open your workbook now to Chapter 10 and complete the section entitled, **Eliminating Other Problems with Your Teen.**

It is very important that you go over each item in your parent column and honestly judge how much of the unwanted behavior you have been encouraging. You should make a plan to eliminate all the triggers and reinforcement for these behaviors. If you do this you will find that most of the bad behavior you are experiencing is going to go away.

After you have eliminated your part in encouraging the bad behavior by triggering it and reinforcing it when it occurs, your list of things that bother you in the parents column should be quite short. There still may be a few remaining items left in your column. If you have stopped triggering and reinforcing the bad behavior, the only other way you may be causing your teen's behavior is by tolerating it.

Therefore, our next step is to work on not putting up with bad behavior.