

Chapter 11: Standing Up for Yourself

The Five Step Approach-

We are now going to eliminate the rest of the behaviors that are in your column.

List the remaining behaviors that your child is doing that directly affect you.

Now decide fair and reasonable change in behavior you would like to see.

Items Still in my Column

What is Happening now	Fair and Reasonable Change I would like
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Step 1:

We are now going to target each item individually.

The first step is to let your teenager know what you want and expect.

This step is *extremely* important. Although it is quite clear to you that what you are asking for is fair, your teenager probably does not see it that way. In fact your teen probably feels the he or she is the one who is being fair and your demands are unreasonable.

Your teen probably feels that he or she has the right to treat you this way or even that this is the way you want to be treated. So you need to do this step first to inform your teenager that this is not the case and that you want and expect a change.

The goal of this step is to establish the fairness of your request in your teenager's mind and in your own mind, also. Since you are applying this technique to things that are in your column, that is things that your teenager does that affects your life, what you are requesting is something that any normal person in our society would consider fair and reasonable. If you present your request in a non-accusing matter of fact way, your child will also be very likely to consider it a fair request.

In Step 1, it doesn't matter whether your child gives in and negotiates an agreement that is acceptable to you or he or she continues to push you off. Either way, if you have calmly and quietly stated what you expect and think is fair, then you are successful.

The goal of this step is not to get to an agreement. It is to establish your justifiable and legitimate right to have what you want. You have accomplished this.

If your teenager is like most other teens, then your child knows and will recognize what is fair and reasonable when it is pointed out to him. Most likely your teen doesn't act that way usually because he or she just never thought about it.

Executing Step 1

Here is a how you should approach your teenager.

Choose a time when you and your teenager are fairly relaxed and there is relative peace between you. Now in a neutral voice you are going to make a three statement declaration. The format is:

1. You are dissatisfied with the situation you are targeting
2. You want to see the situation changed
3. You would like your teenager's help to change it

Here is an example:

You are tired of loud music blaring in the house at all hours of the night. You can handle about two hours a day, but more than that is too much for you. So let's begin.

Sentence 1: Bob, I am bothered by having loud music blaring all the time.

Sentence 2: I would like to have some quiet in the house.

Sentence 3: I would like some help from you to make this happen.

Your child will either respond in one of two ways.

1. He will respond in a way that says he is ready to negotiate a deal
2. He will push you off

If he responds the first way, that's great. Negotiate an agreement that you both feel is fair. If the conversation goes this direction, be sure to make a specific agreement.

Here is an example:

First your three statements:

You: Bob, I am bothered by having loud music blaring all the time. I would like to have some quiet in the house. I would like some help from you to make this happen.

Bob: I'm sorry. I didn't realize the music was so loud. (Notice Bob acknowledged your statement but did nothing toward working out a solution. If you stop here you have not accomplished anything. No agreement was reached.)

You: I would like some help from you to keep it a bit quieter in the house. (You are sticking to the subject and looking for a definite commitment)

Bob: I won't play the music so loud anymore. (You are not done yet. This is in the right direction but it is not a definite commitment. What is called 'so loud' is really a matter of opinion.)

You: I would like something a bit more definite than that. I can handle about 2 hours a day, but after that I would like you to wear headphones.

Bob: Okay, I play music loud from 10 – midnight and the rest of the time I'll wear headphones.

You: That's a bit late for me, how about from 5- 7.

Bob: Could we make it from 8-10?

You: That is fine we me. From 8-10 is your loud music time. Other times you agree to wear headphones. (Be sure to summarize the agreement you have made so that there is no mistake. You might want to write it down on paper.)

Now you have a fair verbal agreement with your teenager. And believe it or not, every once in a while your teen might surprise you and be respond this way. It does happen on occasion.

What also happens is the second scenario. Your teen is not willing to discuss it and tries to push you off, change the subject, insults you, or just ignores you and walks away.

Here is an example:

You: Brenda, it bothers me when I go into my closet and I can't find my clothes. I want to know when someone is using my things. I would like some help from you on this.

Brenda: Why are you coming to me? Sheila uses your clothes more than I do? (This is a push off. Your job is to stick to your point and get a verbal agreement.)

You: I would really like your help with this.

Brenda: I don't believe it. You're coming to me? You are so unfair. You let Sheila get away with everything. (This is a second attempt to change the subject. Stick to your goal.)

You: I would like your commitment to change this situation.

(What you are doing is just rephrasing your third sentence a different way. Do not let your child get you off topic. The issue here is not Sheila, it is Brenda. If Sheila is using your clothes, you can talk to her later privately.)

You should deliver your message quietly and politely. If your child responds to you in an inappropriate tone of voice or makes some unreasonable remark, just ignore that.

You must not let your child get you off topic and onto the "how dare you talk to me like that" topic. Your teenager is on comfortable ground there. He or she is much less comfortable when you are the one being reasonable.

Every time you make a fair and reasonable request, you are putting pressure on your teenager to respond in a like manner. You want to use this pressure to your advantage. Your teenager may break down and show some signs of willingness to negotiate.

You: Brenda, I really expect your cooperation here.

Brenda: Okay... okay, get off my back already. (Ignore any swearing or reluctant tones. Just go forward with your agreement.)

You: I don't mind you using my things, but I want you to ask first. And I want them put back when you are done.

If after fifteen or twenty minutes, your teenager is not willing to discuss the topic or if he or she walks out on you, then drop the subject for the moment. Then either in a few hours or the next day begin Step 1 from the beginning.

Repeat this process three or four times. Your child will either break down and start to negotiate or will continue to push you off.

If after the third or fourth attempt, your child still pushes you off, then state clearly and one time only the arrangement that you would like.

You: I do not mind others sharing my things, but I expect to be notified first. And I want them put back in order when the person is finished. That means I expect my clothes laundered and ironed and put away and my makeup cleaned up and in order.

Target Item 1:

What is happening: _____

The changes you would like to see: _____

Your Three Part Statement:

1. I am dissatisfied with the situation
2. I want to see the situation changed
3. I would like your help to change it

Date Delivered _____

Sentence 1: _____

Sentence 2: _____

Sentence 3: _____

Results:

Number of times your teen pushed you off: _____

Your Agreement (if your child is willing to negotiate): **Date:** _____

Final Statement of What You Expect (if after 3-4 tries your teen still pushes you off.) **Date:** _____

Target Item 2:

What is happening: _____

The changes you would like to see: _____

Your Three Part Statement:

- 4. I am dissatisfied with the situation
- 5. I want to see the situation changed
- 6. I would like your help to change it

Date Delivered _____

Sentence 1: _____

Sentence 2: _____

Sentence 3: _____

Results:

Number of times your teen pushed you off: _____

Your Agreement (if your child is willing to negotiate): **Date:** _____

Final Statement of What You Expect (if after 3-4 tries your teen still pushes you off.) **Date:** _____

Target Item 3:

What is happening: _____

The changes you would like to see: _____

Your Three Part Statement:

- 7. I am dissatisfied with the situation
- 8. I want to see the situation changed
- 9. I would like your help to change it

Date Delivered _____

Sentence 1: _____

Sentence 2: _____

Sentence 3: _____

Results:

Number of times your teen pushed you off: _____

Your Agreement (if your child is willing to negotiate): **Date:** _____

Final Statement of What You Expect (if after 3-4 tries your teen still pushes you off.) **Date:** _____

Target Item 4:

What is happening: _____

The changes you would like to see: _____

Your Three Part Statement:

- 10. I am dissatisfied with the situation
- 11. I want to see the situation changed
- 12. I would like your help to change it

Date Delivered _____

Sentence 1: _____

Sentence 2: _____

Sentence 3: _____

Results:

Number of times your teen pushed you off: _____

Your Agreement (if your child is willing to negotiate): **Date:** _____

Final Statement of What You Expect (if after 3-4 tries your teen still pushes you off.) **Date:** _____

Target Item 5:

What is happening: _____

The changes you would like to see: _____

Your Three Part Statement:

- 13. I am dissatisfied with the situation
- 14. I want to see the situation changed
- 15. I would like your help to change it

Date Delivered _____

Sentence 1: _____

Sentence 2: _____

Sentence 3: _____

Results:

Number of times your teen pushed you off: _____

Your Agreement (if your child is willing to negotiate): **Date:** _____

Final Statement of What You Expect (if after 3-4 tries your teen still pushes you off.) **Date:** _____

Step 2

The purpose of step two is to be persistent in attaining your goals and to become adept at not being distracted and sidetracked away from what you are trying to achieve.

Even if your child does not yet comply with what you wish him to do, if you can maintain your focus and not get dragged into other things, then you can consider this step a success.

Preparing for Step 2

Here is what you do:

Prepare a short statement describing exactly what you want.

For example:

For a job that needs to be done:

"I want the bathroom cleaned up this morning."

"I expect the dog fed and walked this afternoon."

"I would like to see the laundry folded and put away."

If the item is something that already happened and can't be fixed you should say something like this:

"I expect no more foul language in my home."

"I don't want any guests in the house when I am not at home."

"I would like to be able to go to sleep at night knowing that no one is going in or out of the house."

When you have your statement ready, memorize it and get ready to use it.

Realize that you are standing up for a fair and reasonable right and your child knows this. But you should also realize that as part of the game, your child is going to put up resistance.

To that effect, your child is going to do what he or she can do to get you off track and drag you into some side issue. That is why it is so important for you to stay directed and be prepared for this. You must be firm and stay on track and resist any temptation to address the other issues that you can be sure your child will throw up to you.

So your goal is to start this conversation on the subject that you choose and to stay on topic, no matter how important any issue that your teenager might throw at you seems to be.

When you engage your teenager, be prepared to be fully involved in the conversation. This is not something you want to discuss when calling out from the next room or when cutting up vegetables for a salad. This topic requires your full attention.

Target Item 1:

Your statement: _____

Target Item 2:

Your statement: _____

Target Item 3:

Your statement: _____

Target Item 4:

Your statement: _____

Target Item 5:

Your statement: _____

Executing Step 2

The next time the situation that is bothering you comes up, this is what you must do.

Go to wherever your teenager is, stand in front of him or her.

Now you are going to make a polite request. The purpose of this request is not to get your teenager to cooperate, which he probably won't. Rather it is to lay the foundation for the process that is about to follow.

It is to remind your child that:

- You have rights
- You are courteous and
- You are going to stand up for yourself.

Here are some examples:

"Bob, will you please take out the garbage?"

"Betty, will you fold and put away the laundry?"

"Jeff, will you please tell me whether you plan to continue going to school or start paying for your room and board?"

Now your child will respond in one of two ways: Either he will say something that is in line with what you like or he will say something that leaves you dissatisfied.

If your child says something that puts your mind at ease, then you should acknowledge this and you are finished.

You: Bob, will you take out the garbage?

Bob: Oh, sorry, Mom. I forgot. I'll do it in five minutes when I finish this game.

You: Thanks, Bob, I would like that.

You: Betty, will you fold and put away the laundry?

Betty: I am not really so good at the laundry. Would it be okay if I washed the dishes instead?

You: Sure, that will be okay.

You can be flexible as long as your child says or does something that satisfies you.

It is much more likely that your teenager will respond in a way that will not satisfy you.

You: Bob, will you take out the garbage?

Bob: I'm doing my homework now.

You: Betty, will you fold and put away the laundry?

Betty: But it's Sarah's turn.

Or your teen may say something like:

"Okay, I'll do it later."

"How come you make me do everything?"

"You are always picking on me."

These are all statements designed to get you off topic and get stuck talking about something else. You have already given your teenager a chance to express his concerns and objections in Step 1. If objections come to surface now, it is fair to ignore them.

When Your Teenager Tries to Sidetrack the Issue

The most common response is that your teenager will try to get you onto a different topic. One with which he is much more comfortable.

If your teenager tries to throw you a curve at this point, your response is to make a three part assertive sentence.

Part one acknowledges that you heard your child's objection. To do this you just parrot back what your child says to you. This is simply to establish that you are listening and not ignoring what your teenager is saying.

"I hear you are doing your homework..."

"I understand you want to do it later..."

"You feel that it is not your turn..."

The second part of the sentence is the word 'and'. You may be tempted to say 'but', however 'and' is a better choice.

'But' expressed the idea that what is to follow is in conflict with what was said previously. It invites an argument.

'And' just establishes that there are two separate wishes and that they may coexist. It will help you avoid being sucked into an argument.

The third part of the sentence is the statement you have already prepared.

...I would like to see the laundry folded and put away."

So the whole dialogue goes something like this:

You: Betty, will you fold and put away the laundry?

Betty: But it's Sarah's turn.

You: You feel that it is not your turn and I would like to see the laundry folded and put away.

You: Bob, will you take out the garbage?

Bob: I'm doing my homework now.

You: I hear you are doing your homework and I want the garbage taken out.

So how long do you keep this up? Until either you get the response that you are looking for, your child runs out of the room, or you have gone through the process **twenty times**.

If your child has held out for twenty times, you should stop the three part response. Now either do the job yourself, or make some other arrangements to have it done.

Be sure not to give your child any negativity at this point.

Even if your child holds out for twenty times, you should be quite satisfied at this point.

The outcome of this step is not what is important. The main purpose of this step is to go through the process. If you make your statement twenty times and walk away without showing anger or disappointment, you have won this round. It does not matter how your child responds.

If your teenager agrees to do what you ask, then you are finished for the moment. If he or she still resists, you are now ready to go to step 3.

Executing Step 2 Worksheet

Record here what happened when you executed step two:

It is important that you record exactly what happens when you execute this step. That way if it goes well you can review exactly what you did to make it happen.

Alternatively, if it does not go well you can review what happened to see if you executed the step properly.

Remember, your goal in this step is to stay on track. It doesn't matter if your teen listens and complies or if he or she doesn't. That is not the purpose of the step.

After you delivered your statement and your teen tried to side track you, what exactly did you say?

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused____ **Sidetracked**_____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused____ Sidetracked_____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused____ Sidetracked_____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused____ Sidetracked_____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused____ Sidetracked_____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Step 3

What you are going to do in step 3 is to repeat exactly what you did in step 2.

I want to stress to you how powerful this is.

What happened in step 2 is that you stood up for your rights and either your teenager complied, ran out of the room, or went twenty rounds with you. You came out calm and looking like the one who was fair and reasonable.

Now you are showing your teenager that it is not a problem for you to start the whole process over again. He or she will have to comply, run away or go another twenty rounds. This is after you have already shown your teen in step one that you are the one who is being fair and reasonable.

Any person, your teenager included, will only fight so hard when he knows that he is the one who is wrong. You have already established that you are right and he is being unreasonable. Now you are showing that you are going to stand on what is right. You are not giving up, backing down, or going away.

Step 3 is where most teenagers finally break down and give in.

Executing Step 3

This is what you do:

The next time your teen does the behavior you are targeting go up to him or her again and make your polite request.

"Betty, will you fold and put away the laundry?"

"Bob, will you take out the garbage?"

I can guarantee your teenager was not comfortable during step 2. All people, your teen included, feel very uncomfortable saying no to a reasonable fair request, when it is made in a polite friendly way.

Even if your teen gave you an attitude and lasted through all twenty rounds, I can guarantee you that he or she did not enjoy it. Now you are showing your child that you are ready to start the thing over again and there seems to be no end in sight.

As I said before, most children will give in at this point provided you let them save face while giving in. That is the reason you must remain calm and courteous, so they have no excuse to find you unreasonable and demanding or controlling. That is also why you thank your child and let him know that what he or she agrees to do makes you feel better.

You: Bob, will you take out the garbage?

Bob: Again? Oh, alright already, I'll take it out now.

You: Thanks, I am glad you will do it now.

You can repeat step 3 when necessary over the next few days or weeks. You should be able to see some pretty quick improvement. Be sure that you execute this step properly; that is be courteous friendly and persistent throughout the process.

Executing Step 3 Worksheet

Record here what happened when you executed step three:

It is important that you record exactly what happens when you execute this step. That way if it goes well you can review exactly what you did to make it happen.

Alternatively, if it does not go well you can review what happened to see if you executed the step properly.

This is the step where most teens break down and comply.

Record here exactly what happened when you applied Step 3.

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused____ **Sidetracked**_____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes_____ **No** _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes _____ No _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes _____ No _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes _____ No _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes _____ No _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes _____ No _____

Date: _____

My Request: _____

My Teens push off: _____

My three part statement: _____

Part 1: _____

Part 2: "and"

Part 3: _____

Did I Stay focused or did I let myself be sidetracked?

Focused _____ Sidetracked _____

Did My Teen Comply? Yes _____ No _____

Chapter 12: Before Going Further

If you have not taken care of every problem or challenge that you are facing to your own satisfaction, you need not worry. There are still two more steps in the process. However, if you are still facing some challenges at home there are a few things that you should review before you go on.

Probably the main reason parents still have problems at this point is that they have not executed the previous parts of the program correctly or thoroughly. Often parents are still getting involved in things that really are solely in their teen's column. That means they are taking upon themselves responsibilities that do not belong to them.

Before Going Further Checklist

List the Items that are still Bothering You

1- _____

2- _____

3- _____

4- _____

5- _____

6- _____

7- _____

8- _____

9- _____

10- _____