

Chapter 14: Direct Confrontation

Before Starting Step 5

Step 5 is a very severe step. You should only use step 5 if you have made a serious attempt to apply the rest of this program and your child is still resistant to change on major issues.

Before going further, please be sure that you have done the following:

Have you:

	Yes	No
1. Given up taking responsibility for those things that don't affect you		
2. Given up taking responsibility for those things that you cannot control		
3. Given your child the greatest encouragement possible by letting him or her to be in control of personal items		
4. Demonstrated that you are not interested in being in conflict with your teenager		
5. Demonstrated that you are not interested in controlling your teen's life		
6. Shown yourself to be fair to your teenager		
7. Shown that you expect fair treatment in return		
8. Identified those areas where your teenager is not being fair to you		
9. Given your teen the opportunity to explain why he or she thinks he is being fair to you		
10. Stated how you want the situation to change		
11. Given your teen ample opportunity to make those changes that you request		
12. Shown yourself to be someone who means what you say		
13. Shown yourself to be willing to follow through with what you say you are going to do		
14. Warned your teenager what you will do if specific situations do not improve		
15. Carried out your warnings		

Only if you can honestly answer yes to all fifteen of these items should you attempt to go on to Step 5. If you are unable to answer yes to all fifteen of these things, then go back through the program and apply it again where necessary.

Do not go further unless you can answer yes to all fifteen items and your teenager still has major issues that need correction.

If things are going well and you see improvements, but there just remain some issues that still need work, I would discourage you from going to step 5. You don't want to jeopardize the gains you have made by entering into a direct conflict with your teenager, if he or she has already made many concessions to you.

You are ready to go on to Step 5 if you are locked into a one way relationship with your teenager. That means you are giving to your teenager, but he or she is not reciprocating in any way. Your teenager may be running wild, acting irresponsibly and doing whatever he or she wants regardless of how you feel about it or how it affects you.

Step 5 may improve your relationship with your teenager or it may not. Either way it will get the message across that relationships go both ways and that unless your teen recognizes the rights of others he or she will forfeit the relationship.

Another thing I would like to point out. It could be that your teenager has not come around yet because he or she is physically or psychologically unable to do so. Teenager who are addicted to drugs or have a serious psychiatric condition, such as Bipolar disorder or Schizophrenia, maybe unable to do as you request.

If this is what is happening, you should have seen already some indication that your teenager is acting out, not by choice, but because there is something going on that is completely beyond his or her ability to control.

However, before you go further make perfectly sure that your child is not suffering from some situation that really needs professional help. If your teenager really needs professional help, and you do not help your child to get it, going further with this part of the program might be harmful for you child.

Before Starting Step 5 Worksheet

Answer Yes or No to the Following Questions:

1. I have successfully performed all fifteen of the items listed above.
Yes ___ No ___
2. I still have major issues with my teenager that I cannot tolerate.
Yes ___ No ___
3. I have reviewed the entire program and I am certain that I have executed it properly.
Yes ___ No ___
4. I am certain my teenager has no serious psychiatric problem such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia that interferes with his or her ability to comply with my wishes.
Yes ___ No ___
5. I am certain my teenager does not have a drug or alcohol problem that interferes with his or her ability to comply with my wishes.
Yes ___ No ___

Only if you can answer yes to all five questions should you go on to Step 5.

Executing Step 5

The first thing you must do is to make a list of things that you do for your child to make his or her life better. These are things that you do for your child that you would not necessarily do for someone else.

Here are some examples:

- Making meals
- Buying groceries
- Paying medical expenses
- Teaching your teenager how to drive
- Lending your teenager the car
- Lending or buying clothing
- Giving money
- Doing laundry
- Providing a room in your home
- Emotional support
- Being home at night
- Driving him places

Now given the current state of your relationship with your teenager, which of the things that you do for your child would you rather not do?

Make a list of those special things you do for your teenager that you would rather not do.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

This is where you are going to start.

The first thing you must do is inform your teenager of your intention. You do this by simply saying to your teen that you are not going to do a certain favor for him unless you see a change in behavior. You should start by making this a one time refusal.

Here are some examples;

"Gloria, I am not going to do your laundry this week. I feel that I keep on giving to you and don't get anything back in return. I feel really put out and I am not going to do that to myself any more."

"Bob, I am not making you dinner tonight. I feel that I am always giving to you and I am not going to continue unless things get more fair around here."

After you make your statement, you walk away. You are giving information, not opening up a discussion.

If you see your teenager responds with some change in behavior such as doing his or her job or being nice to you, then you have the right to change your mind.

You can say something like:

"Bob, I glad you took out the trash today. I feel better about making you dinner now."

"Gloria, I really appreciate it when you are pleasant. Now I feel like doing your laundry."

If you do not see a change in behavior, then carry out what you said you would do. In our examples, that means that Bob doesn't get dinner and Gloria has to do her own laundry.

In this step, you are making the clearest announcement that you want and expect a change in your relationship with your child. If you have been executing the program properly, you have already shown yourself to be fair and respectful of your child's rights. In spite of all this, your child has not responded. Now you are employing Step 5 as a sort of preliminary shock treatment to get your teenager to treat you properly.

When you do this a few times most teens will begin to take your requests for change more seriously. You may have to repeat this process several times for each behavioral change that you want, because teenagers are very preoccupied with themselves and what is going on in their lives. Quite often they will completely miss things that are blatantly obvious to everybody else. Don't be surprised if at some point your teen comes along and says,

"I didn't know that the mess I make bothers you so much."

Step 5 Worksheet

Target Favor 1 _____

Behavioral Change You Want _____

Your Statement _____

	Statement Delivered	Teen's Complied		You Carried out Statement	
	Dates	Yes	No	Yes	No
1 st Time					
2 nd Time					
3 rd Time					
4 th Time					
5 th Time					

 Target Favor 2 _____

Behavioral Change You Want _____

Your Statement _____

	Statement Delivered	Teen's Complied		You Carried out Statement	
		Dates	Yes	No	Yes
1 st Time					
2 nd Time					
3 rd Time					
4 th Time					
5 th Time					

Target Favor 3 _____

Behavioral Change You Want _____

Your Statement _____

Statement Delivered		Teen's Complied		You Carried out Statement	
	Dates	Yes	No	Yes	No
1 st Time					
2 nd Time					
3 rd Time					
4 th Time					
5 th Time					

Target Favor 4 _____

Behavioral Change You Want _____

Your Statement _____

Statement Delivered		Teen's Complied		You Carried out Statement	
	Dates	Yes	No	Yes	No
1 st Time					
2 nd Time					
3 rd Time					
4 th Time					
5 th Time					

Target Favor 5 _____

Behavioral Change You Want _____

Your Statement _____

	Statement Delivered		Teen's Complied		You Carried out Statement	
	Dates	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1 st Time						
2 nd Time						
3 rd Time						
4 th Time						
5 th Time						

If Step 5 brings about the wanted changes, you should congratulate yourself. Step 5 is not so easy to execute. However, if after you have tried to apply Step 5 a number of times and you see no sign of improvement, then it might be necessary for you to move on to Step 6.