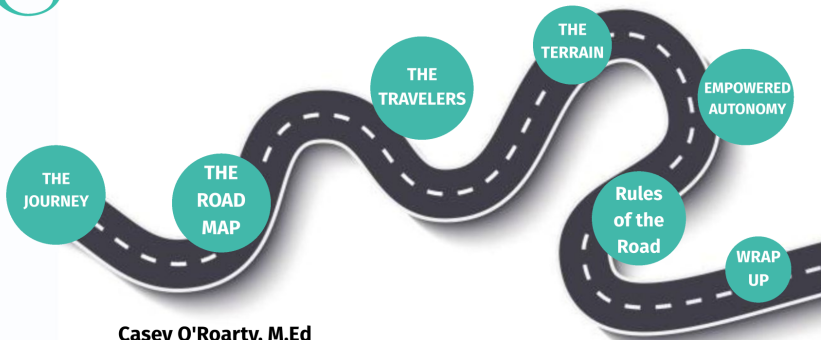




Creating Freedom Within Structure for Our Middle Schoolers



Casey O'Roarty, M.Ed
Co-Founder, Adolescent Lead, Sproutable
besproutable.com

14-19?

GROWN
KIDS?

**WE'RE ALL
IN THIS
TOGETHER**

www.besproutable.com

TWEENS?

ME
TOO!

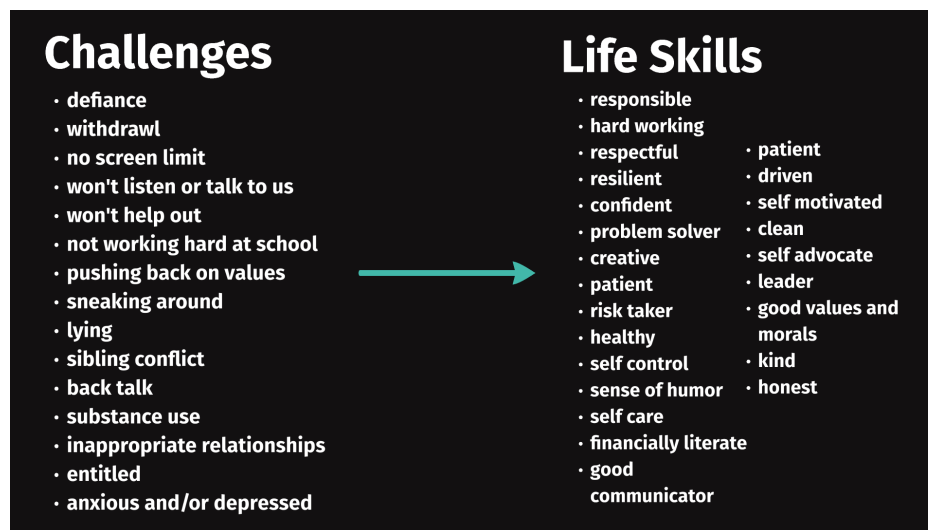
REMEMBERING...

Creating Freedom Within Structure for our Growing Adolescents

Casey O'Roarty, M. Ed
Positive Discipline Lead Trainer
Parent Coach * Podcast host
Mom of two adolescents

Think back to being in
middle school...
What was hard? What
was exciting?

**What did you need
most from your
parents?**



**A household
heavy on the kindness,
light on the firmness:**

- chaotic
- free
- lack of rules
- lack of expectations
- Rebellion
- Kids acting like parents
- fear
- stress
- messy
- lack of accountability

- creative
- fun
- disorganized
- balls dropped
- rebellion
- uncertainty
- lack of safety

**Freedom
without
order**

A kind AND firm household:

- chaotic
 - free
 - lack of rules
 - lack of expectations
 - Rebellion
 - Kids acting like parents
 - fear
 - stress
 - messy
 - lack of accountability
 - creative
 - fun
 - disorganized
 - balls dropped
 - rebellion
 - uncertainty
 - lack of safety
 - resentment
- Mutual respect
 - Encouragement
 - Collaboration
 - cooperation
 - expectations
 - family discussions
 - co-created agreements
 - Family Meetings
 - contributions
 - everyone has a voice
 - solution focused
 - Mistakes are opportunities to learn
 - Repair is taught/made
 - space for vulnerability
 - Time together
 - Appropriate limits/ boundaries

**Freedom
WITH
order**

- strict
- orderly
- alot of rules
- high expectations
- punishment/rewards
- rebellion
- submission out of fear
- stress
- perfectionism
- clean
- "picture perfect"
- worry
- sneakiness
- reduced self esteem
- lack of autonomy
- lack of trust
- disconnection
- withdrawal

**What is
your
style?**

Kind

Firm

**Kind
AND
Firm**

**The road is ROUGH!
Adolescence is the
second wave of
autonomy seeking.**

**Outside
influences**

Needs

**Adolescent
Brain
Development**

Our kids need to:

- Explore their environment
- Get up and fall down
- Experiment with cause and effect
- Learn through their mistakes
- Own their decision making

- Peers
- School
- Screens - TV, social media, youtube, etc
- Celebrity/ Influencer culture
- Nonstop information

The ESSENCE of Adolescence

*From Brainstorm, the power and purpose of the teen brain
by Dr. Dan Siegel*

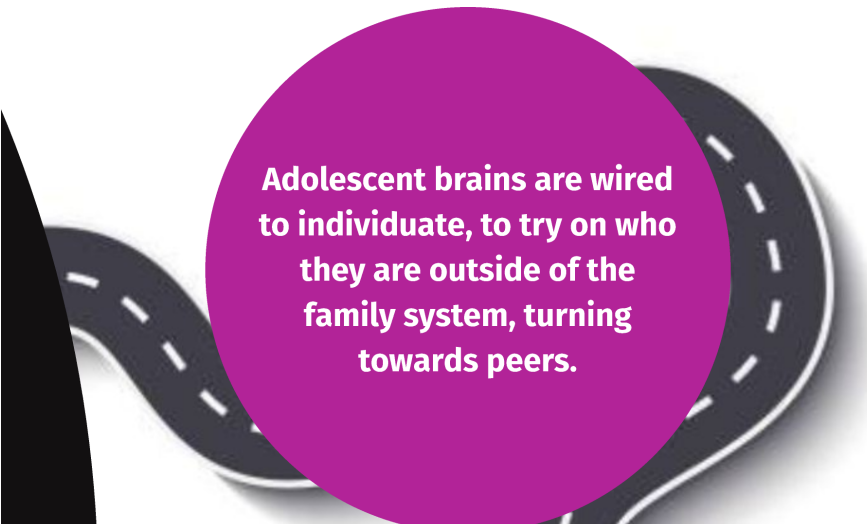
Emotional
Spark

Social
Engagement


Novelty

Creative
Exploration

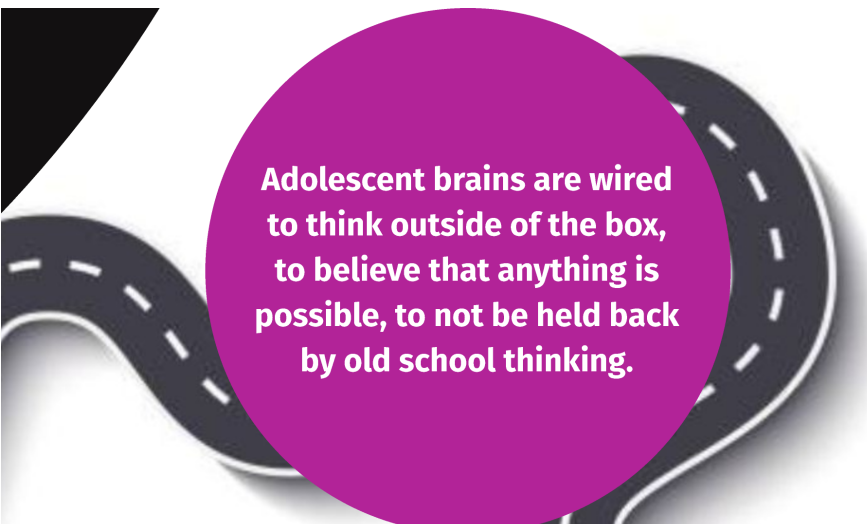
Adolescent brains are wired
for strong emotions that can
arrive quickly and with no
warning.



Adolescent brains are wired to individuate, to try on who they are outside of the family system, turning towards peers.



Adolescent brains are wired to look for novelty, take risks, experiment and try new things.



Adolescent brains are wired to think outside of the box, to believe that anything is possible, to not be held back by old school thinking.



Role Play

How we show up determines how our teens autonomy is developed




Taking
Ownership

Collaboration

The most **powerful**
tool you have for
influencing your teens
behavior is the
relationship you
develop with them

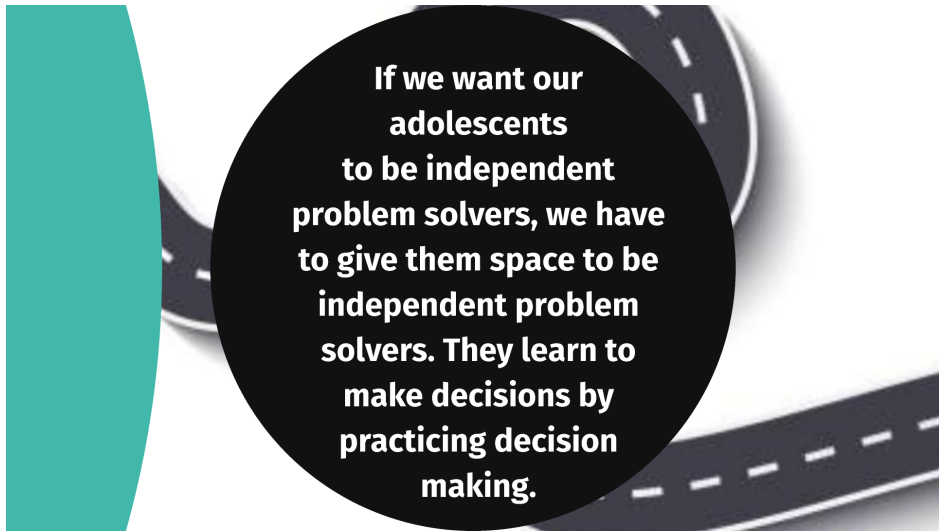
Mutual
Respect

Sharing
Power




I am going to respect the
child in front of me.

I am going to respect myself
and the needs of the
situation.




If we want our
adolescents
to be independent
problem solvers, we have
to give them space to be
independent problem
solvers. They learn to
make decisions by
practicing decision
making.



If you want something
different with you teen, you
have to be different.

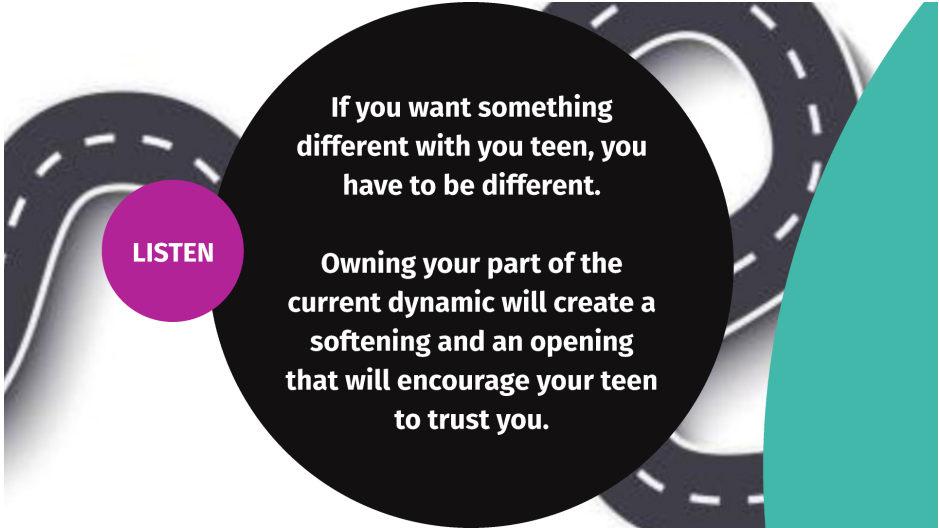
LISTEN

Owning your part of the
current dynamic will create a
softening and an opening
that will encourage your teen
to trust you.



This is a time to not only
HEAR your teen,
but make sure they **FEEL** heard.

- Ask for clarification if you need to
- Mirror what you are hearing
- Check that you understand their experience
- Validate that their experience is real for them



If you want something
different with you teen, you
have to be different.

LISTEN

Owning your part of the
current dynamic will create a
softening and an opening
that will encourage your teen
to trust you.

Tips

Purpose

Traps

CO-CREATING AGREEMENTS

Steps

**See it
in action!**


**Solution
focused**

Agreements are
designed to be
HELPFUL and to
TEACH adolescents
life skills through
PRACTICE and
REPETITION.



Solutions are:

- Related
- Respectful
- Reasonable
- HELPFUL



**Solution
focused**

**Agreements are
designed to be
HELPFUL and to
TEACH adolescents
life skills through
PRACTICE and
REPETITION.**




1. Have a friendly discussion

2. Brainstorm

3. Agree

4. Follow through



**1. "I notice you
didn't _____. Please do that now."**

2. "What was our agreement?"

3. Use nonverbal communication.

**4. "Thank you for keeping our
agreement."**

1. Wanting kids to have the same priorities as adults.

2. Getting into judgments and criticism instead of sticking to the issue.

3. Not getting agreements in advance that include a specific time deadline.

4. Not maintaining dignity and respect for your child and yourself.

Life skills



Turn
and
talk

- responsible
- hard working
- respectful
- resilient
- confident
- problem solver
- creative
- patient
- risk taker
- healthy
- self control
- sense of humor
- self care
- financially literate
- good communicator
- driven
- self motivated
- self sufficient
- clean
- self advocate
- leader
- has a spiritual practice
- kind
- honest

What is a current challenge you have with your child that co-creating an agreement would be useful for?

- RELATIONSHIP MATTERS
- YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR ISN'T A CHARACTER FLAW, THEIR BRAIN IS BEING REWIRED
- WHEN THEY FEEL EMPOWERED, THEY SHOW UP BETTER
- AGREEMENTS ARE POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CREATING FREEDOM WITHIN STRUCTURE

Contact
Casey

RESOURCES

- One on one parent coaching
- Membership for parents of adolescents
- Live classes for parents of adolescents
- The Joyful Courage Podcast

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