

But everyone else has one!

Saying
NO to
our kids



BY PAULA LEVIN

An article about how to say no to our kids when they want something we can't afford, or that isn't good for them, could be a really short article. Just say no. But managing money, knowing what we can and can't afford, and sticking to it, is not that simple. Neither is dealing with our children's pain and disappointment. Let's unpack both sides of the story.

The money thing

My son recently asked me for an unpronounceable brand of shoes that some of his friends are wearing and talking about. I googled them and they are R4,000 a pair, which I think is excessive even if his feet weren't going up two sizes a year. Of course the answer was no, but since he is getting older, I wondered if there shouldn't be more to the conversation.

"Before you can say no to your kids, you have to know how to say no to yourself, and to your partner," says Gary Kayle, money coach and founder of Worth, a financial education solution for individuals and corporates. "Our kids deal with peer pressure, but so do we. There's always someone with a nicer car or a nicer house. But it's not about saying no, it's about knowing why we need to say no. We need to look at the trajectory of our decisions to know if they are good ones." Gary coaches many of the Chev's community services clients on how to make wise decisions about money so that they can achieve wealth.

"I define wealth as the ability to one day stop working and still draw a salary," explains Gary. "Coronavirus has given many of us a taste of retirement. Suddenly, many of us are unable to earn an income, and whatever we have saved, is what we have to live on. It's a major wakeup call. We have also all realised just how vital it is to have emergency funds." Gary believes that we should all be working towards wealth, and towards the ability to one day stop working and yet still live comfortably. "The number one thing we have to know about money is that there is an opportunity cost to spending it now. For example, your child wants the R4000 shoes now. But if you invested that money instead, you would have an additional R100 000 for your retirement! That's what I mean by the trajectory of a decision. Or during lockdown, many banks were offering a three month payment holiday on their home loans. But people do not understand that with that short-term win, they could be adding 13 or 14 repayments to their debt."

Facts like these can stop you dead in your tracks. In fact they can leave you a bit paralysed and unwilling to spend anything now, saving it all for later. I challenge Gary by telling him that

it's too much pressure for our kids to think about money in those terms. It doesn't seem appropriate. It scares even me! "Scaring kids around the absence of money is never a good idea," agrees Hayley Parry, Worth's co-founder. Hayley runs courses on money management specifically designed for children. "It's similar to how we were taught 'money doesn't grow on trees' as kids. That's a really confusing analogy that we all eventually realised meant no and don't speak to dad about money again. But, if we can shift the conversation to opportunity cost around a finite amount of money, it can remove the fear and rather be empowering for kids and adults alike to allocate money to the areas that are most important to you as a family. Every time kids receive money, whether from pocket money or chores, let them divide it into three jars: spend, save and share. This allows you to have a conversation with them about your values. For example, perhaps you tithe 10% of your income and you'd like to explain why and how you facilitate that in your budget. It's also going to teach younger kids about numerical values, and older ones about percentages and how those apply to your budget," she explains.

"Have a chat about what percentage of your budget R4,000 is and what you'd typically spend a sum of that money on. You could also talk about what percentage of your discretionary spend or holiday money that sum is for example. And then,

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“Delayed gratification is the single most important money management skill you can teach your children. It’s also one of the hardest to learn – even for parents!”



because we have a finite amount of money that needs to be allocated into our jars - where we started with our younger kids; or budget categories - when we're chatting to our older kids, we need to decide where we're going to take the money from, if we're going to use it to buy those shoes. Could we take it out of the school fee money category for example? No? Why not? And so begins your opportunity cost discussion. If you get to the point where you can't find the money in the existing categories, then it's time to flip the conversation. Still desperate for the shoes? Okay well then let's look at ways for him to earn that money. How much work is he prepared to do in order to buy them? This in turn could kick-start a discussion around household chores, starting a business and so on."

While we need to empower kids with some of the hard truths about money, we do need to take into account our children's maturity and how they react to what is being taught. But you also don't want to avoid the subject indefinitely. "In much the same way that you wouldn't want to start talking to your kids about sex or social media when they're already teenagers, or have phones, you don't want to avoid the subject of money with children," Hayley adds. "There are so many positive lessons and money management skills that can be taught to young kids which gives them a lot of time to practice and grow those skills whilst you can guide and teach them along the way, layering the lessons with your values at the same time. Delayed gratification is the single most important money management skill you can teach your children. It's also one of the hardest to learn – even for parents! But, when your child works hard (and even does extra chores) to earn enough money to buy a much coveted Lego set, the lessons she'll learn are critical life skills; for example that money is earned and that saving enables you to achieve your financial goals."

"Kids are smart and strong," says Gary. "They deserve to know the full story about money because from the minute they earn their first paycheque, they are going to be on the radar of credit card companies, lenders and retailers, and before they know what's hit them, they are going to be up to their eyeballs in crippling debt. If you think kids are expensive now, wait till they leave home!"

In fact, long before they leave home or get their first paycheque, kids are bombarded by messages and advertising. Advertisers spend billions per year marketing to children and kids see more than 40,000 commercials annually. It also doesn't help when your kids favourite Youtube shows are the ones where an endless stream of toys are unboxed and played with. And each toy, or collectable series, has an entire dedicated tv show on Netflix, designed to create desirability. We can prepare our kids for the onslaught by educating them about the impact of advertising, and what messages are designed to manipulate us and blur the lines between what we want and what we need.

"I was romanced by credit card companies, lenders and retailers who promised me all kinds of happiness, and I made these mistakes. That's why I started *Worth*, to educate people so they can make smart decisions. Research shows that children who are mollycoddled have higher levels of anxiety! By bubble-wrapping them, we are sending a message loud and clear that they are not competent enough to be allowed out of the bubble-wrap. Let's show them that we trust they are mature enough to process decisions about money. Something I ask my kids to do is to multiply what they're asking for by 12, and see if it's worth it. Like that R200 Fortnite skin. Every month it's some other app, or little toy. Over a year that's R2400. When you think about money like that, it's empowering. And we want to empower our kids

to think. What else can we do with that R2400 if we saved that money? It's not that we can never spend on little or big luxuries, it's about valuing money. We can't invest every extra cent, and we have to live, and enjoy our lives, because then what are we working for? But we need to make more considered decisions."

"Another big thing to teach kids is that when they ask for something, you say, "Let me check if we have the budget for it". Because budgeting should be a part of life. We should know how much we need to get through a month, based on what we earn, and how far our money should stretch. When we say we need to check our budget, it shouldn't be a lie. We should have a budget! And showing our kids that things need to be part of the budget, or saved for, teaches them lifelong money management skills. It's also useful to talk to kids about different relationships we have in our lives, and each one has its rules. Friends are one kind of relationship. And the rule with friendship is that if we want to stay friends, we can't talk about our friends behind their backs. We also have a financial relationship. And the rule is that if we want to be able to stop working one day, we have to invest and stay away from short term debt. When things don't go well with our friends, we feel upset. And when things don't go well with money, we can feel stressed."

"Another rule about money is that it is finite. So if we take some out of one area of the budget, there is less in another area." Gary explains that our monthly salary needs to cover four categories. The first is investments - money for our retirement. The second is savings - for expensive but worthwhile things like holidays and simchas, that we prefund, and money for an unforeseen emergency so that we don't get into debt. (He says that 62% of people cannot afford an emergency of R5000 without using credit.) Thirdly our money needs to cover our monthly expenses - like food, clothing, fuel, insurance and bond repayments, and lastly, money we give to those less fortunate. "We can teach children that we have to look after our relationship with money, just like other relationships," says Gary.

"Talk to your older kids about the concept of retirement. Tell them that you want to be able to stop working one day and that if you don't save for that day, and give the money enough time to grow, then you will have to be dependent on them, or the community. Kids are smart, they'll get it. And they need to get it, for their own future. When I ask audiences if they learned about money from their parents, almost every hand goes up. When I ask them if they want to manage money like their parents did, all the hands go down. Only 6% of people achieve financial stability, so unless we change things, they have a 94% chance of failing. We can change things for our children, by teaching them to think, so that when we say no, they might even agree with us, and one day learn to say no to themselves. Remember that kids don't always do what we tell them to do, but they do what we do."

Talking to kids about money

1. Discuss opportunity cost and the trajectory of our decisions.
2. Discuss your money goals:
 - Meeting monthly living expenses without relying on short-term debt
 - Being able to give charity
 - Being able to save for more expensive but worthwhile things
 - Wealth - investing in the future so that you can earn an income without having to work.
3. Describe what the scenario looks like if you don't achieve your goals - stress, debt, not having enough for special expenses, dependence on children or welfare in retirement or an emergency.
4. Describe the money relationship - and the rules of engagement.
5. Before you buy:
 - What is the opportunity cost, and is it worth it?
 - What if we times that by 12? How much are we spending on this a year?
 - Is it in our budget?



...Gary explains that our monthly salary needs to cover four categories.



Investments



Expenses



Savings



Charity



The other thing

Now maybe you feel equipped to know if what your child is asking for is beyond your budget, (because you finally have a budget), and maybe you know you can't afford to say yes, and so you make a rational and sound decision to say no, instead of going into debt, because you and your child understand the value of money. But what happens when something else gets in the way of making wise choices both for yourself and for your children? What happens when you see their disappointed faces and you want to make that pain go away - yours and theirs? What happens when we say yes because we are afraid of their tantrums, or meltdowns?

When I said no to the shoes, emotions, thoughts and memories flooded my mind. Firstly, I so wished that R4,000 wasn't a big deal to me. For a moment, I wished my son had a different life, where he was the boy with the great shoes and things came to him with ease. I worried that his self-esteem would be affected, that he was being denied a crucial sense of belonging to a group.

Some of us worry that if our children feel the pain of deprivation, it will somehow damage them or wound them the way we were perhaps wounded by things in our past. To truly be able to say no to something, because it's not right for you or your child, we need to think clearly, compassionately and wisely, from our truth, not out of a habitual or emotional reaction.

Shirley Resnick is the Chev's Group Intake Consultant, and often meets with families in difficult financial positions. "It's very hard for parents to say no to their children, and when they do, they feel so guilty that they aren't able to provide them with the material things that all their friends and neighbours have. As we sit around my table, I remind them what wealth really is. If you have children who are healthy, who are mensches, who care about each other, you are a millionaire. I see their eyes light up because they know it's true. All the money in the world can't buy nachas from your children. And when parents feel ok about saying no, because they know what true wealth is, their children feel ok. It starts with the parents feeling ok with what they have, with feeling gratitude. You can never fill up the hole in your soul with material things, and often when parents feel full, no matter what they have, their children feel it too. That's real wealth."

An old woman was walking by a river one day when she discovered a precious, priceless jewel. She picked it up and put it in her bag and continued walking along the river. A poor man approached her and asked her for something to eat. She opened her bag to give him some bread when he noticed the jewel sparkling within. He asked her instead to give him the jewel. The old woman handed him the jewel and went along her way. The man could not believe his luck and spent the day gazing in wonder at his precious find. Towards evening the old woman was returning home when the man again approached her. He handed her back the jewel and said the following, "Please teach me how you were able to effortlessly give me something so precious and priceless. Because you could only have done so, if what you have inside you is worth more than this jewel."



This story touches me deeply because I believe it illustrates something we all intrinsically know to be true. There are things far more precious than money or material belongings and those things lie within us all. We all struggle in the moment, to live this truth. We look to money to bring us happiness. Of course we all need money to survive, to eat, to clothe ourselves, and to have secure shelter. It can also enable us to have rich experiences, adventures and life's creature comforts. But somewhere along the line, money takes on far more importance than it should. It comes to represent our worth as human beings, our status in society and so much more.

So along with discussions about budgets and savings and investments, we need to also have conversations about the things in life that are priceless. About the fact that shoes, or anything in the world, cannot make us feel anything. It is our thinking about them that we experience, and because of this fact, we have the freedom to think different things at different times, and feel differently about the same thing. Perhaps we can have more conversations about that flood of emotions, thoughts and memories that we sometimes experience and learn that instead of making decisions from that space, we wait a while, allow them to wash over us, and then with a little space, we can think flexibly and creatively about what choices we have.

Imagine parenting from that space, not from a reactive space. This is hard. Our emotions run rings around us, but sometimes in the eye of the storm, we can become the eye that sees the storm but is not swept away by it. We can connect to our values and our wisdom and when we say no to our children it comes with love and authority that they can understand. This is the difference between authoritarian parenting "my way or the highway," and authoritative parenting, where we draw on years of accumulated knowledge and experience to explain our point of view to our children. This is the difference between reacting and responding.

When to say **YES**



Say **YES to gratitude**, which fills us more than things could ever do.



Say **YES to hugs** and saying I love you.



Say **YES to spending time outdoors**, where blue skies, trees, and sunshine are free and abundant



Say **YES to creative expression** - music, art, poetry cost nothing.



Say **YES to imaginative play**, what childhood and memories are made of.



Say **YES to physical activity**, dancing, running and exercising.



Say **YES to service and kindness projects** that bring out our best and broaden our perspectives.



Say **YES to time together** with family and friends. 🍷

TEENAGERS GIVE US A HARD TIME

Because they're having a hard time

BY ANONYMOUS

I'm in the midst of raising a teenager, and it's been the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I know I'm not alone because I attended a packed talk about understanding your teenager hosted by the Chevrah Kadisha and the desperation in the audiences' eyes was palpable. Starting from age 11, my sweet child, (who I now barely remember), began pushing me away, resisting any form of boundary-setting and contemptuously disagreeing with everything I said - that's on the rare occasions that he responded to me at all! At first I was confounded, and dragged him to a family therapist to better understand what he was so angry about. He pulled his hoodie right down over his face and refused to engage. We then tried individual therapy, with pretty much the same results. Desperate, I made an appointment with a psychiatrist to see if he was depressed. He had low vitamin D. At my wits end, I went to a spiritual healer, to find out about his past lives - interesting...



The author would like to remain anonymous to protect herself from teenage wrath

Things began to shift somewhat in December when we dragged him to the beach for the day. He refused to bring a costume or wear sandals, wore track pants, socks and sneakers and then proceeded to sulk for a record eight hours.

Commiserating on the phone with my sister afterwards, she casually said, "Oh he was in a mood." "What do you mean?" I stammered thickly "You know, a mood. He's a teenager. Sometimes when they are in those kinds of moods, you just have to give them some space and not put them under a microscope." And just like that a lightbulb went on in my mind. His behaviour wasn't about me (well maybe sometimes) and it wasn't even about him (well maybe sometimes) it was really about the fact that he was going through a difficult life stage called adolescence.

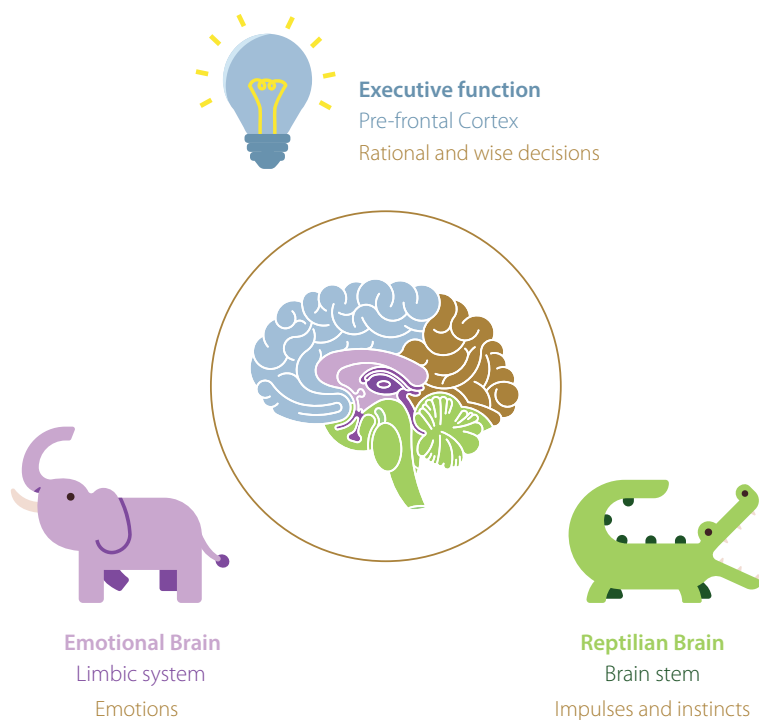
Because I had been oblivious to this simple fact - he was only 11 when it all started - I took everything about him personally, thinking I was a bad mother. (Of course it didn't help that at age 12 he presented me with an award, a handcrafted certificate for being the world's worst mother!) I also thought that his behaviour was a reflection of his personality and was worried that if he treated other people like this, he would become an abusive narcissist. I believed that this was personal (me) and pervasive (his personality) and I also believed that it was permanent - that I was stuck with this difficult relationship

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forever! As you can imagine, I was pretty distressed. It's quite amazing how much can go wrong when we start off with the wrong premise...

At the Chev's talk on teens, psychologist Judy Alter described my problem. "When we are traumatised, we don't think creatively." Indeed, my teen and I were having the exact same power struggles about screen-time, homework and showering over and over again. Judy reframed the goal by saying these golden words, "Choose connection over correction, choose connection over perfection". As a card-carrying perfectionist, I knew she was right. I had lost sight of what was most important - our relationship. And I had to start with knowing myself. "What are your triggers? Can you notice when you are overreacting? Can you be honest with your teen? Can you lower your own reactivity? Because when you overreact, the next time you try to have a conversation, it's harder," Judy explained. She also said that if things don't go well, and you do (over)react, to be honest about that. "Acknowledge when a conversation hasn't gone well, and describe what was going on for you. This is how you give your teen permission not to be perfect, and how you model repairing relationships. What you really want from each conversation is to be helping your teen develop critical thinking."

Once I decided to take everything a little less personally (and pervasively and permanently), I decided to really investigate this awful stretch of time between age 11 and 19. Lucy Woolcott (28) is a social worker for the Chevrah Kadisha and works closely with



“Their brains are not fully developed until age 25,” says Lucy. “They’re not using the prefrontal cortex, and so they make decisions using the limbic system which is responsible for aggression, is impulsive and tends towards fight or flight. Their rational part is not fully developed so they’re not thinking clearly and are much less likely to consider consequences.”

teenagers as both individuals and in groups. She says teens are stressed out, depressed and anxious, under huge pressure from society, teachers and their own parents. And those are just the problems outside. Inside their very own bodies and brains, things are going haywire. They experience mood swings, hormonal and body changes, self-consciousness and the struggle to discover who they are. It’s also important not to think of teenagers as one homogenous group, she says. “A teenager of 13 undergoing puberty, is dealing with different challenges than say a teenager of 15 or 16 choosing subjects for matric, and that’s also different to the teen struggling with curiosity about the opposite (or same) sex or someone headed to varsity. It’s a difficult life stage, and they would much rather already be adults,” she says. But while teenagehood is a temporary and transient life stage, the decisions teens make as teenagers may affect them for the rest of their lives, whether it’s experimenting with drugs, driving drunk, getting an STD or getting pregnant. So how can we help teens navigate these tenuous years so they come out the other side intact?

I contacted Gavin Keller of Keller House, a thought leader and public speaker who served as a school principal for over 27 years (scrapping homework during his tenure). Gavin gives enlightening talks to parents, teachers, children and teenagers around the world about how the brain works, based on the latest neuroscientific research. His hilarious presentations often feature fluffy elephants (representing the emotional brain) and crocodiles (the reptilian brain). Gavin simplifies neuroscience by describing three important components of our brain. The

executive function is unique to humans and is located in the prefrontal cortex. This is where we make rational and wise decisions. The limbic system is our emotional brain and the reptilian brain is located in the brain stem, regulating many basic functions and sending the signal for fight or flight. In order for us to “think straight”, we need to be using our executive function. But our emotions and our fight or flight response can hijack this process, cutting us off from the rational side of our minds while they are on high alert. Now that we’ve got the basics, here’s some news: teenagers brains are under construction! “Their brains are not fully developed until age 25,” says Lucy. “They’re not using the prefrontal cortex, and so they make decisions using the limbic system which is responsible for aggression, is impulsive and tends towards fight or flight. Their rational part is not fully developed so they’re not thinking clearly and are much less likely to consider consequences. Because they are impulsive, they may behave in inappropriate ways and do risky things like experiment with sex, alcohol and drugs.”

“The first thing you need to know about teenagers is that they are suffering from mild brain damage,” says Gavin. (You might not want to use these exact words with your teen). Gavin reveals that the brain is under construction during the teen years because starting at around 11, it goes through a process called pruning where excess synapses are eliminated to make the brain more efficient. Neural pathways are redesigned and the ones they don’t use, they lose. The ones they practice, become permanent. “Imagine you’re cruising along a smooth

tar highway at 120 kilometres per hour, when suddenly you hit a patch of gravel road. That's adolescence. While they are in this period, they have little access to the prefrontal cortex, they are mainly emotional and mainly reactive. They're swerving around, skidding into rocks, trying to apply brakes but totally out of control." That explains a lot. (It might be why some mammals kill their young). "It's amazing when they reach their 15th birthday and you haven't murdered them! But the good news is that by age 18 or 19 - if you play your cards right - they'll be some of the most gorgeous human beings you've ever met." Gavin says that as parents, we have different roles to play at different times in our children's lives. "When they're young, we are their teachers, as teenagers we are their coaches, as adults we are their friends". We cannot mix these roles up. "A coach is not mates with his team, but he knows each of the players' strengths and challenges and how to bring out their best." So how do we coach our teens?

"They need to be able to talk about their struggles with their parents," says Lucy. Talking about what they're going through helps teens manage their emotions, recognise patterns of thinking and gain self-awareness - all life-long skills. "In order to be the person your teens want to talk to, you might want to consider if you're one of the people putting pressure on them. Do you compare them to other siblings or their classmates? Are you making them feel like their grades are make or

break, that their subject choices will determine the rest of their lives?" Or are you modelling critical thinking, looking for solutions, looking at something from various angles.

"How do you talk to your teen? Are you argumentative, do you lose control, are you abusive? You're modelling how they will communicate with others," says Lucy. "It's so important to validate what they are experiencing, even if you don't understand it or feel it's justified. The minute you invalidate what they are feeling, you've lost them. Give them the opportunity to really be heard. Above all, they want to feel that you love them, support them and accept them for who they are. With this safety net, they'll stay in the conversation."

Now, back to their brains. "While the brain is under construction, it has the lowest levels of the three neurotransmitters that are used to transmit messages along neural pathways," Gavin explains. "These are dopamine, serotonin and oxytocin and they help balance our moods, appetites and drives. Picture how awful menopause or a mid-life crisis is, and now multiply that feeling by ten. That's the teenage years." This is why depression and anxiety, or "teenage sadness" as Gavin calls it, are so common. "Because the brain is so low on these natural neurotransmitters, it craves them. And it will do what it takes to manufacture them. Our job as coaches is to help them get these 'drugs' in healthy ways."



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Dopamine is the brain's reward hormone, serotonin the brain's calming hormone and oxytocin is the brain's bonding hormone. Let's start with oxytocin. "An interesting feature in many cultures and religions, including Judaism, is that at around 12 or 13, the child is ritually socialised into the adult group. This is great. This is exactly what the teen needs to produce oxytocin, they need to feel like they belong. And if they don't get this sense from trusted adults, or good friends, they will 'self-medicate' - and get it from trying to conform and belong to the "wrong crowd" or from sexual relationships. It is very important to bring the teen into the circle of adults, not to become their friends, but to model healthy behaviour and give them a sense of belonging. It's also important to do things together as a family, or group of older people of the same sex - no matter how they protest. Braais with the guys, fishing trips or shopping trips, family holidays, dinner time, eating out and outings. Force them if you have to. It helps them produce more oxytocin!" And tell them you love them. Unconditionally. Even if they know. You can never say this too much.

The reward drug, Dopamine, inextricably links risk and reward, and the higher the risk, the higher the reward. That's why teens are known for taking excessive risks. But because their prefrontal cortex is under construction, they are unable to consider the possible consequences. Sometimes with tragic results. So know where your teenager is going. Know who they're with. Lucy reveals that teens are meeting people in increasingly risky ways.

"They meet people over the internet on social media. I met a teen recently who said she was in a relationship with a person she met on Instagram. That's scary. I see a lot of teenagers who are drinking, partying and drugging, without any idea of the long-term and possibly permanent consequences of their actions," she adds.

Gavin agrees. "They need to know that you're there for them, no matter what time of night so they never, ever drive drunk or with a drunk driver. You may need to watch over their physical safety as if they were a pre-schooler. Talk about the party. Take them to the party and fetch them from the party. "It's safer leaving a five year old at a party than a teenager," Gavin jokes. Dopamine is also produced through competition, recognition and challenge. Think sport, exercise, even rock climbing. "Give them adventures and a story to go back to school with." In general, boys need more dopamine than girls, so play lots of games with your teen boys - whether it's cards or table tennis or cricket in the garden.

Serotonin calms anxiety, and is produced through collaboration and cooperation. In general girls tend to need more of this hormone than boys. Because teen girls are so low on this hormone, they don't feel like they are enough. Not pretty, adorable or clever enough. Much of the social drama that goes on between teenage girls is in the unconscious pursuit of serotonin, Gavin says. "Breaking down another girl, excluding

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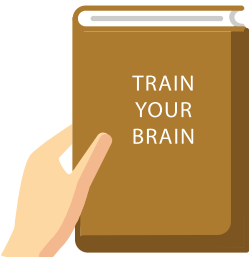
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her, manipulating a group. These are teens in search of serotonin." So is self-medicating with chocolate and other sugary food. Teens need to be part of a group, whether the cool kids, the nerds or anything in between, they crave to belong. In explaining the teen years through the lens of neuroscience, Gavin has had great success in connecting with teenagers, whether his own children, teenagers he's taught at school or in talks he's delivered. "When we teach humans how their brains work, they understand themselves better and they make better choices."

Gavin concludes by pointing out that the brain will construct new neural pathways from whatever teens do a lot of between ages 11 and 19. "Practice makes permanent. So I tell teens that whatever you want to be a permanent part of your life, do it as a teen. You want to be a drug addict - use drugs as a teen. You need porn as a teen, you'll need it as an adult. You don't pick up a book as a teen, it's that much harder to be a reader as an adult. Your brain is myelinating neural pathways, the ones you use, will become easy, speedy and effortless, whether good or bad. Now's the time to get into community service, to develop good habits. To regulate screen time. To help them talk about their problems and to think them through. We have this brief window period to coach our kids and give as much guidance and input as we can, so that when they finally regain access to their executive function, they will know what choices to make, and those choices will be that much easier. And someday, when they're adults, they'll become our best friends."


“ You don't pick up a book as a teen, it's that much harder to be a reader as an adult. Your brain is myelinating neural pathways, the ones you use, will become easy, speedy and effortless, whether good or bad. ”

The 5 S's every teen's brain needs ~ Courtesy of Gavin Keller



To be Seen

"I see you. Your struggle is not invisible to me. I see your strength. I see your beauty. I see you."



To feel Secure

"Within this family, you are accepted for who you are."



To be Safe

"You don't need to be afraid. We will protect you from the dysfunctional things out there in society. I will not be part of the dysfunction."



To be Soothed

"I'm here for you when you fall apart. After the fight. After you've said you hate me, or hate yourself, or hate life."



A Sense of belonging

"You belong in this family. You are vitally important. We love you unconditionally."

If you're interested in enrolling your teen in Lucy's next teen group, contact the Chev's social services on 011 457 4557
If you or your teen needs help try the Chev's emergency helpline: 082 499 1010