

How To Get Your Child To Tell You “Everything.”

Jericho M.S. PTSA

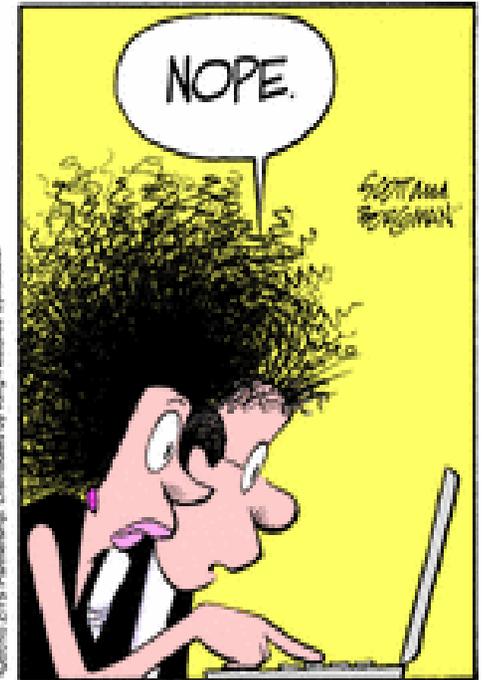
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Joanne Verdino, LCSW

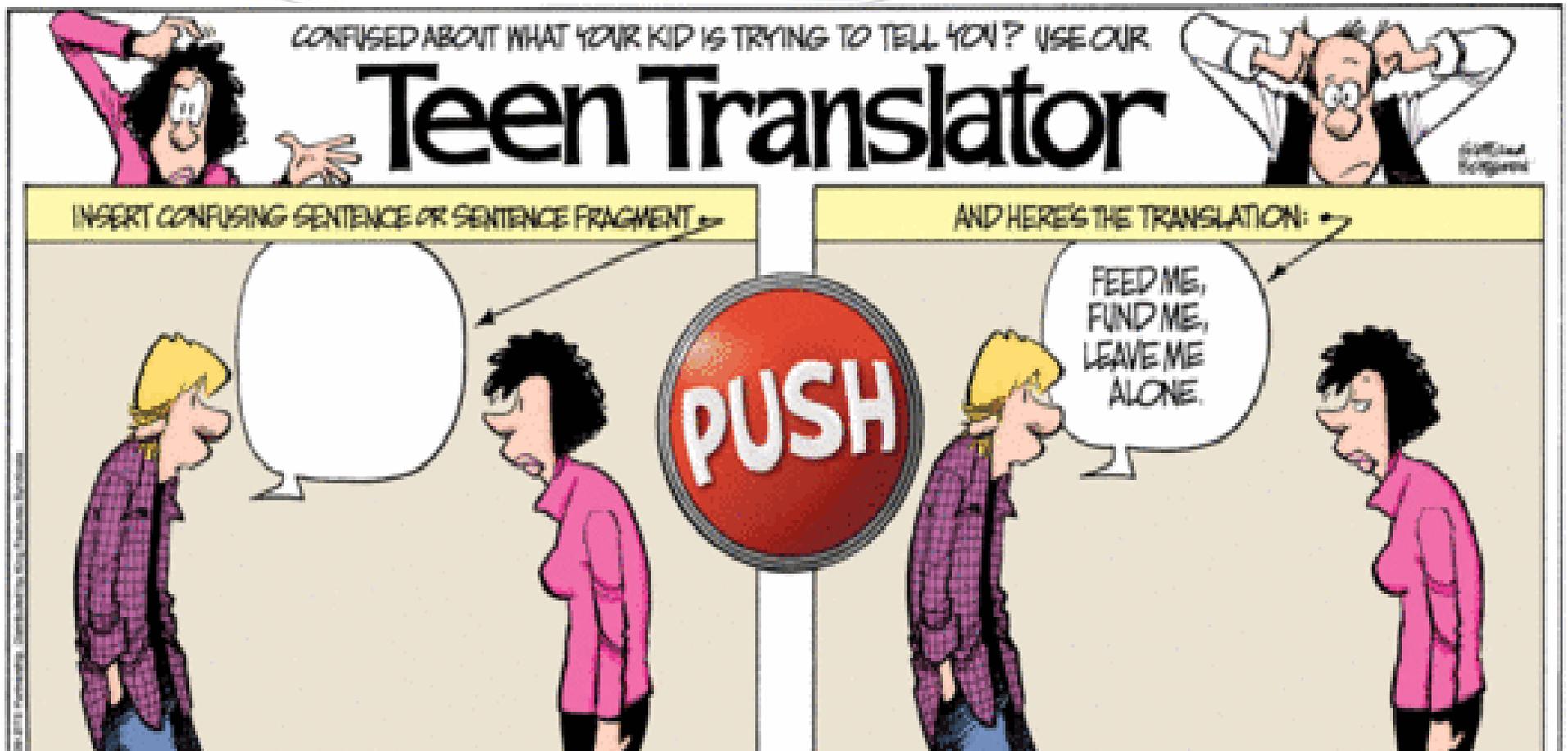
School Social Worker



How To Get Your Child To Tell You Everything...



Today's Parent – Child Communication Experts:
Dr. Haim Ginott, Child Psychologist &
Jericho Middle School 7th Graders



JMS Focus Group: Who do you talk to when you have a problem?

- 🟢 **#1 - mom / dad / parents – *by overwhelming majority***
- 🟢 **friends**
- 🟢 **siblings**
- 🟢 **teachers / school staff**
- 🟢 **cousins / aunts / uncles**

JMS Focus Group:

What kinds of things do you speak to your parents about?

💧 #1 - School

💧 Grades

💧 Sports

💧 Friends

💧 Personal things

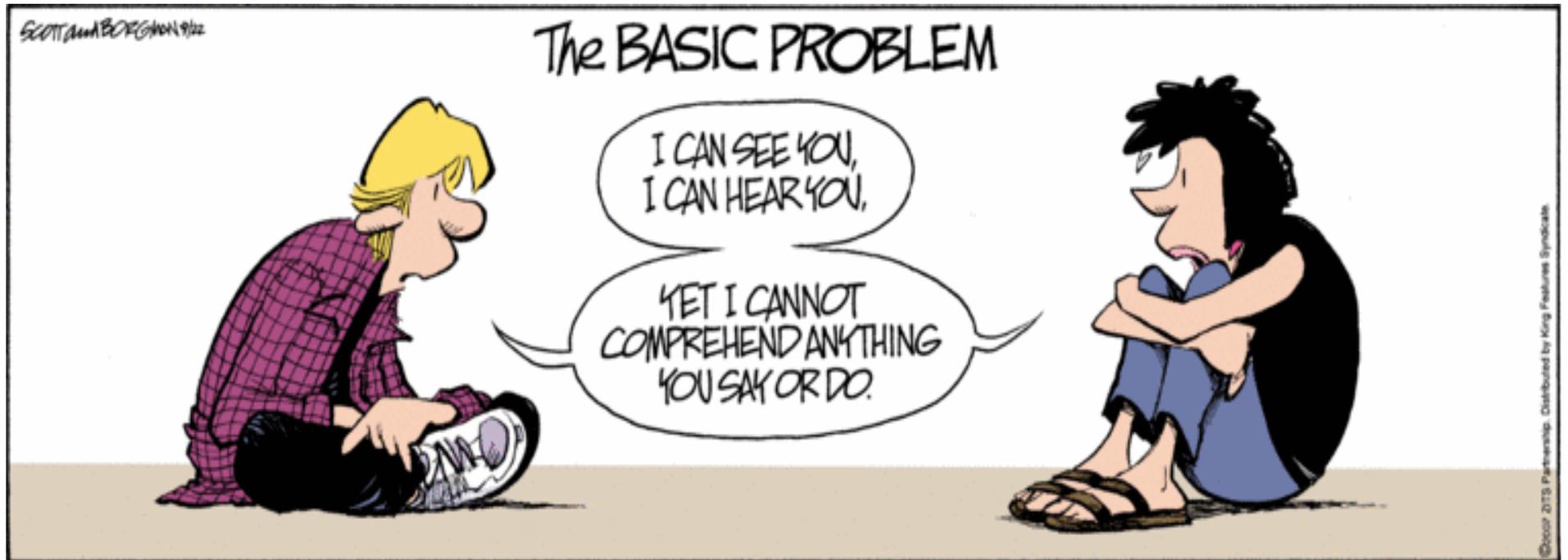
💧 Food

JMS Focus Group:

What kinds of things do you NOT talk to your parents about?

- ◆ **#1 - Friends**
 - ◆ **Personal stuff**
 - ◆ **Crushes**
- ◆ **Stuff that will get them mad at me**
 - ◆ **Opinions**

Dr. Haim Ginott: “Between Parent and Teen”



Dr. Haim Ginott : About Teenagers...

“They are like people needing loans but wishing they were financially independent. Regardless of how accommodating the parental bank may be, the interest will be resented by the teenage borrower.”

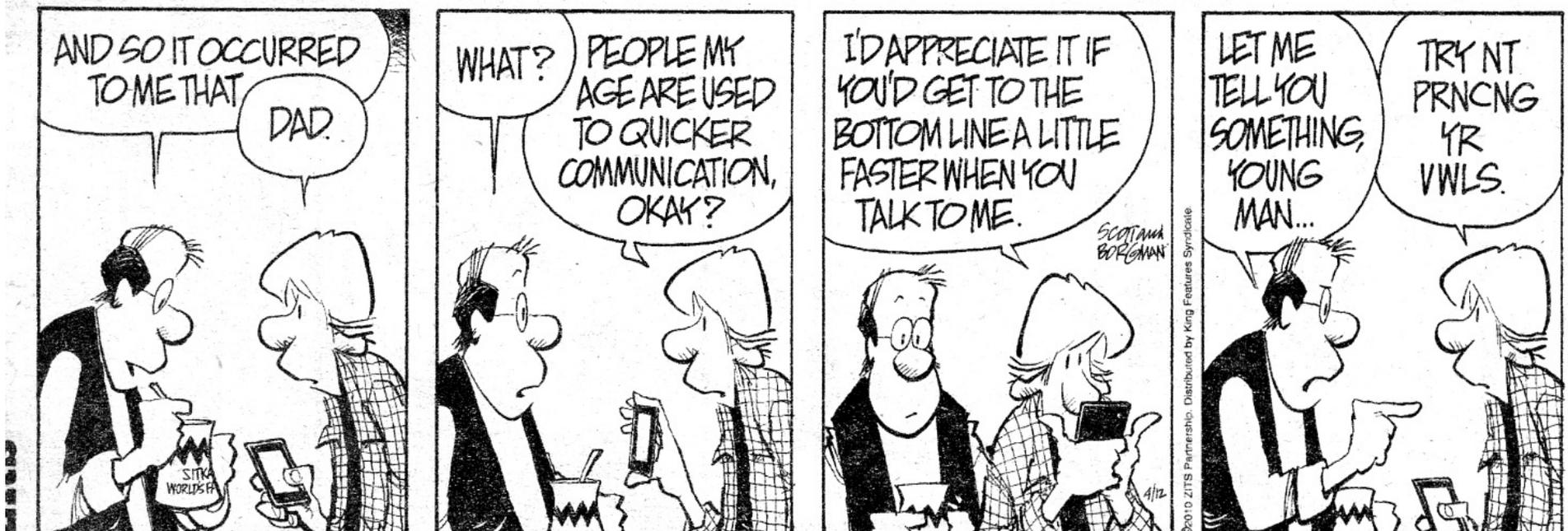
Dr. Haim Ginott : About Teenagers...

“Parents of teenagers face a difficult dilemma:

- ◆ How to help when help is resented;**
- ◆ how to guide when guidance is rejected;**
- ◆ how to communicate when attention is taken as attack.”**

JMS Focus Group:

What advice do you have for parents so their kids will be willing to tell them “everything”?



JMS Focus Group:

What advice do you have for parents so their kids will be willing to tell them “everything”?

- ◆ Don't yell**
- ◆ Stay calm when speaking to their kid**
- ◆ Be aware of how they express themselves physically and emotionally**
- ◆ Learn to listen - Listening is key**
- ◆ Let your child speak and do not interrupt**
- ◆ Give your child an opportunity to explain**
- ◆ Listening before assuming things**

JMS Focus Group:

What advice do you have for parents so their kids will be willing to tell them “everything”?

- 💧 Be nice when asking questions**
- 💧 Don't keep repeating the same questions**
- 💧 Try to understand that everyone makes mistakes**
- 💧 Stop 'blabbing' everything out to anyone they see**
- 💧 Don't tell anybody – keep it a secret**
- 💧 Gain your child's trust**
- 💧 Share helpful stories from when they were young**

**Dr. Haim Ginott:
“Between Parent and Teenager”**

“In emotional situations, a parent's response to his teenager should be different from that of anyone else. A stranger speaks to the mind; a parent speaks to the heart.”

Dr. Haim Ginott: Provide Emotional First Aid

- ◆ **“Parents can learn to avoid hazards to effective communication. They can learn to listen attentively and respond simply and sympathetically.”**
- ◆ **“Strong feelings tend to diminish in intensity and to lose their sharp edges when a sympathetic listener accepts them with understanding. Compassion is a great healer.”**

Dr. Haim Ginott: Emotional First Aid

- ◆ **“After emotional first aid has been administered, it is often best to postpone further action.**
- ◆ **The temptations to teach someone an instant lesson should be resisted.**
- ◆ **Immediate intervention may only escalate the conflict.**
- ◆ **It is easier to resolve incidents when emotions have subsided and moods changed.”**

Emotional First Aid: David Looks For A Job

- ◆ **FATHER:** You really wanted this job, didn't you?
- ◆ **DAVID:** I sure did.
- ◆ **FATHER:** And you were so well equipped for it, too.
- ◆ **DAVID:** Yeah! A lot of good that did me.
- ◆ **FATHER:** What a disappointment.
- ◆ **DAVID:** It sure is, Dad.
- ◆ **FATHER:** Looking forward to a job and having it slip away just when you need it is tough.
- ◆ **David:** Yeah, I know.
- ◆ There was silence for a moment. Then David said, "It's not the end of the world. I'll find another job."

Seven Roads To Trouble:

The preceding situation could have been mishandled in several distinct ways:

- ◆ By reasoning. “What did you expect? To get the first job you wanted? Life is not like that. You may have to go to five or even ten interviews before you are hired.”
- ◆ By clichés. “Rome was not built in one day, you know. You are still very young, and your whole life is in front of you. So, chin up. And, I hope this will teach you not to count your chickens before they are hatched.”
- ◆ By “take me for instance.” “When I was your age I went looking for my first job. I got a hair cut, put on a shirt and tie, and got rid of the sneakers. I knew how to make a good impression. And I got the job!”

- ◆ ***By minimizing the situation.*** “I don't see why you should feel so depressed. There is really no good reason for you to be so discouraged. Big deal! One job did not work out. It's not worth even talking about.”
- ◆ ***By “the trouble with you.”*** “The trouble with you is that you don't know how to talk with people. You always put your foot in your mouth. You mumble and you are fidgety. You are too eager, and not patient enough. Besides, you are thin-skinned and easily hurt.”
- ◆ ***By self-pity.*** “I am so sorry honey, I don't know what to tell you. My heart breaks. Life is so much a matter of luck. Other people have all the luck. They know the right people in the right places. We don't know anyone.
- ◆ ***By a “Pollyanna” approach.*** “Everything happens for the best. If you miss one bus there will soon be another, perhaps a less crowded one. If you didn't get one job, you'll get another – perhaps even a better one.

Dr. Haim Ginott: The Nonjudgmental Reply

- ◆ **Adults usually react to their teenager's statements in one of two ways: they either approve or disapprove.**
- ◆ **Yet the most helpful response to children is often nonjudgmental. A nonevaluative response contains neither praise nor criticism.**
- ◆ **Instead, it identifies feelings, recognizes wishes, and acknowledges opinions.**

The Non-judgemental Reply: One mother's example

- ◆ **“My husband planned to take our children ice skating. However, Donna, age thirteen, got sick. So only our younger son went along. Donna became extremely upset. When I saw her reaction I wanted to say: ‘You're the one who always gets taken places while you brother usually stays home. Now, for a change, when he's going you're complaining.’**
- ◆ **Fortunately, I controlled myself. In the back of my mind I knew that if I could recognize how she felt, instead of judging her, life would be better. I said, ‘It's very hard to stay home sick while Daddy and Brother go skating, isn't it, Donna?’ She agreed. I said, ‘You wish you were going, too.’ ‘Yes.’ She answered with a long sigh. Her mood changed. She was soon absorbed in a book.”**

JMS Focus Group: What are some turn-offs to telling parents things?



JMS Focus Group: What are some turn-offs to telling parents things?

- 💧 When they get mad or are already mad before you talk**
- 💧 Cut you off and don't let you explain**
- 💧 Automatically think you're wrong – criticize you**
- 💧 When they aren't listening**
- 💧 When they look or seem unhappy**

JMS Focus Group: What are some turn-offs to telling parents things?

- 💧 When they minimize a problem that seems big to you.**
- 💧 Too many questions – too intruding.**
- 💧 Having to repeat the story.**
- 💧 When they compare you to someone else.**

Dr. Haim Ginott: Criticism: A New Approach

- ◆ Criticism of *personality and character* gives teenagers negative feelings about themselves.
- ◆ The worst feedback is that which stamps the whole personality with a devastating adjective. Such a label is generally false, inevitably insulting, and always infuriating.
- ◆ Insulting adjectives attached to personality have a devastating effect (ex.: “stupid”, “clumsy”, “lazy”) and shut down communication.
- ◆ What we need is a caring person to give us clear directions.

Criticism: The Main Lesson

Dr. Haim Ginott:

“The following advice is offered without reservations:

- *Don't attack personality.*
- *Don't criticize character traits.*
- *Deal with the situation at hand.”*

*** Describe – Not Evaluate**

Anger :

Turning Anger into Action

- ◆ Our anger has a purpose; it shows our concern.
- ◆ Failure to get angry at certain moments indicates indifference, not love.
- ◆ This does not mean that our teenagers can withstand torrents of rage and floods of violence.
- ◆ It does mean that they can benefit from anger which says: “Enough is enough. There are limits to my tolerance.”

Anger Without Insult: How To Be Angry

- ◆ **Instead of trying to suppress anger altogether, parents can express it in constructive ways.**
- ◆ **This expression should bring some relief to the parents, some insight to the teenager, and no harmful aftereffects to either of them.**
- ◆ **In expressing anger, we consciously need to avoid creating waves of resentment and revenge.**
- ◆ **We want to get our point across, and then let the storm subside.**

JMS Focus Group: When is the Best Time for Your Parents To Talk To You?



by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

CLOSE X

JMS Focus Group: When is the Best Time for Your Parents To Talk To You?

- 💧 #1 When we are happy – in a good mood**
- 💧 When they are in a good mood**
- 💧 Before bed / at night**
- 💧 In the car**
- 💧 At dinner**

A Couple of Tips from Joanne V., social worker & mother of two....

- ◆ **Don't wait for a problem to arise to talk about issues relevant to teens. Start talking early!**
- ◆ **Watch T.V. together; bring up relevant events currently in the news and ask your child's opinions; chat during car rides; demonstrate you are comfortable talking about sensitive issues.**
- ◆ **Try not to repeat yourself when discussing issues or trying to make a point.**
- ◆ **Proceed with caution if you feel compelled to make negative comments about your child's friends.**
- ◆ **Stay current about popular culture; learn about your child's interests, express curiosity about it, ask questions— even if you don't have a related interest.**
- ◆ **Maintain family traditions that are fun. Having that positive connection will help to keep lines of communication open.**

