

SURVIVING THE
HIGH SCHOOL YEARS
WITH YOUR

sanitizing
contact

Bonus Chapter

A Guide for Moms of
Out-of-Control Teens

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Bonus Chapter

In this chapter, I cover three situations that played rather significant roles in the dynamic with our son:

- All siblings, even the ones who are best of friends, will have conflicts with each other at times. There may be ongoing conflicts due to personality or past events between them. And if there is active dislike or bullying between siblings - oh my goodness, it's a difficult way to live.
- Perhaps you have a supportive family (lucky!), in which case the Lack of Family Support section won't apply to you. But if you're pretty much on your own or even worse than that with family members adding to the drama or tearing you down, a bad situation feels even worse.
- As moms, we are often so invested with our children that we see their behavior as something that reflects on us or are about us. If you can shift from taking things personally to knowing that your child's behavior actually has nothing to do with you, it can instantly shift how you view the situation.

See Chapter 4 in my book *Surviving the High School Years with Your Sanity Intact: A Guide for Moms with Out-of-Control Teens* for instructions on how to tap or go to www.tappingintoyourtrueself.com/how-to-tap for a video tutorial.

The following abbreviations are used in these tapping scripts:

KC	Karate chop point
TH	Top of the head
TE	Top of the eye (the inside part of the eyebrow)
SE	Side of the eye
UE	Under the eye (cheekbone)
UN	Under the nose
CH	Under the chin
CB	Collar bone
BR	Bottom of the ribs
UA	Under the arm

TW Top of the wrist
BW Bottom of the wrist

Sibling Discord

For most of my children's lives, my daughter hated my son. She would never let him in her room or play with him. She did her best to ignore him.

It was a difficult situation, one that I felt I created. When my son was born, I was so gaga over the new little one that I didn't do enough to make sure my daughter still felt loved and important. I didn't talk with her about how having a new baby would change things. I didn't schedule time for just her and I to spend time together. I assumed she knew I still loved her and that she was still important to me.

Their growing up years were full of conflict and stress. I believe it contributed to my son's out-of-control behavior as a teenager. They both were acting out emotions they didn't know how to manage, and they had both developed beliefs about their worthiness that didn't serve them.

It wasn't until my son was a teenager that their relationship started to change, in large part because my daughter was able to shift a belief she had about herself and her relationship with her brother. Now that they are both in their 20s, they get along even if they aren't really close. They even went on a double date together!

Impact on Parenting

In my experience, having siblings who don't get along:

- Can exacerbate the anger and self-worth problems of the teen who is struggling
- Adds greatly to the stress and frustration of the mom trying to figure out how to help her out-of-control teen
- Can seem impossible to resolve

Sample Script

Write down five to ten events when your children didn't get along. Write down your feelings about each event. Tap through the events one by one until you feel a shift in how you feel. Here's an example (see the chart above for definitions of the abbreviations):

KC	Even though I feel helpless and sad that my daughter refuses to let my son into her room at any time, I deeply love and completely accept myself.
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TH	I'm so sad for my son.
TE	I'm so unhappy with my daughter.
SE	She is so mean to him.
UE	It is so frustrating that I can't make her stop being mean to him.
UN	Why can't they just get along?
CH	Why can't she just let him in her room?
CB	I'm having a hard time being understanding of her.
BR	I don't know what's going on with her.
UA	I'm so angry that she's so mean.
TW	It causes so much stress and tension in our family.
BW	She doesn't need to be so mean.
	<p>After a few rounds, stop and check in. What intensity level are you at now? If it's not 0, what's contributing to the current level? Tap again; start with an updated set-up statement: "Even though I still have some remaining (feelings), I still deeply love and completely accept myself."</p> <p>Continue tapping, checking in every few rounds. As your intensity level drops, you may want to add in some reframes (not too soon!), starting at the top of the head or whatever tapping point you are at. Here is an example of reframing:</p>
TH	I'd like to get to a calm and peaceful place about this.
TE	I'd like to try to understand why my daughter acts this way.
SE	I choose to forgive myself, as best I can, for not doing better earlier.
UE	For allowing this to go on.
UN	For not doing a better job making sure my daughter felt included when my son was born.
CH	I let go of the frustration and sadness.
CB	I let go of the stress.

BR	I want to react kindly and with compassion when my daughter is being mean to her brother.
UA	There's got to be a reason for her being so mean to him.
TW	I let go of my judgment and I open to seeing the situation differently.
BW	I want to better support both of my children.
	Continue tapping on reframes until you feel complete.

Lack of Family Support

I know that big families come with their own issues, but I often envied them when my children were growing up. Along with the fact that both my husband and I come from small families, we're also not very close with them. There was very little interest in our children. My sister was the most supportive, but she lived far away and had her own family to deal with.

My parents, in particular, were not kid people. My mom visited from Kansas when my son was born and then not again before her death when he was 21. My children never went to Kansas for school breaks or summer vacation. Sure, my kids could be difficult – and I also think having supportive grandparents could have made a difference. My grandparents gave me unconditional love and a safe place to get away from my family and that meant a great deal to me. But my children didn't get to experience this. The few times we visited Kansas, my parents would hug the kids hello and hug them goodbye, and that was the end of their interaction.

I really could have used some help parenting. It was hard, I wasn't prepared for it, I really had no clue, and I could have used a break sometimes. It was also very hurtful that no one took an interest in my children, such as spending time with them individually.

Raising children can be challenging in every way – emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually, not to mention financially – and all parents need support. If you're pretty much on your own, I know it's tough. I encourage you to find a community that supports you and remember that you deserve to take good care of yourself, too.

Impact on Parenting

In my experience, not having a supportive family:

- Can make you feel especially isolated and unsupported

- Means that you and your children don't get a different perspective from family members or a break from each other
- Can add to the hurt and overwhelm when trying to parent any child, let alone a difficult one

Sample Script

Write down five to ten events when you felt a lack of support from your family. Write down your feelings about each event. Tap through the events one by one until you feel a shift in how you feel. Here's an example (see the chart above for definitions of the abbreviations):

KC	Even though I feel really hurt that my mom did not come to visit my children, I deeply love and completely accept myself.
TH	I feel so hurt.
TE	This really hurts my heart.
SE	What kind of grandmother doesn't visit her grandchildren?
UE	It's so hurtful.
UN	It really hurts that she has no interest in my children.
CH	I know it's about her – she's not a happy or tolerant person.
CB	Still, it's ridiculous that she couldn't get over herself to visit her grandchildren.
BR	I don't care if my kids weren't the best kids in the world – they deserved her attention and love.
UA	She's so self-centered and doesn't care how hurtful she is.
TW	My children deserve better.
BW	And it pisses me off that she doesn't see that.
	After a few rounds, stop and check in. What intensity level are you at now? If it's not 0, what's contributing to the current level? Tap again; start with an updated set-up statement: "Even though I still have some remaining (feelings), I still deeply love and completely accept myself."

	Continue tapping, checking in every few rounds. As your intensity level drops, you may want to add in some reframes (not too soon!), starting at the top of the head or whatever tapping point you are at. Here is an example of reframing:
TH	I want to release these hurt feelings for my sake.
TE	She's not worth still feeling this pain.
SE	She was wounded and unable to see outside of her wounds.
UE	She didn't see how she made herself a victim and blocked love.
UN	She could have had a wonderful relationship with her grandchildren, and she chose not to.
CH	That's sad.
CB	It's her loss.
BR	It has nothing to do with my children or me; she could have made a different choice.
UA	I choose to forgive her as best I can.
TW	I choose to let the hurt go.
BW	I'm done feeling hurt by this.
	Continue tapping on reframes until you feel complete.

Taking Things Personally

It may seem near impossible not to take it personally when your child is calling you names, pointing out all of your faults, and blaming you for everything wrong in the world, not to mention doing pretty much everything you thought you had taught them not to do.

Yet learning to not take it personally may be the best gift you give to yourself for this situation and every other aspect of your life.

The saying "What people think of you is none of your business" cracks me up every time I hear it. It's just generally funny, and it's such a skewed way of looking at the world from what we normally do as humans. As children, we take so many things personally because we have to – we're vulnerable and our very survival feels at stake. What we forget is that everyone else thinks the same thing: it's all about them and therefore cannot be about us.

When our kids get to be teenagers, that survival instinct is joined with the need to grow and learn and become independent, so they must separate, they must learn where the boundaries are, they must search for meaning and purpose and value. They make dumb mistakes because they are in a huge growth and learning mode (and because they are dumb literally – their brain hasn't fully connected and yet they feel like they're pretty darn smart compared to how they used to be).

All of this can feel so personal to a mom. It's so hard to transition from meaning the world to someone to being viewed as the enemy seemingly overnight.

When you take things personally, you are giving meaning to events or actions that most likely you are making up. For example, if your child decides to start smoking (whether you smoke or not), does that have anything to do with you if their reason to smoke is to piss you off or to rebel against you? Nope. What it has to do with is *their* need to piss you off or rebel against you, to fit in, to self-medicate their anxiousness, to feel independent, to experiment, or whatever their need is.

Does it have anything to do with the way you raised them, the times you failed them, or all the things you didn't do right, like they want you to think? Nope again. They are independent individuals who make their own decisions, and the fact that they try to blame you shows that they know they shouldn't be doing what they are doing.

Impact on Parenting

In my experience, taking things personally:

- Can make you feel and act like a victim, which gives away your power
- Causes you to react in ways that heighten your interactions with your child
- Can be used to beat yourself up at a time when you need to take good care of yourself

Sample Script

Write down five to ten events when you took something personally. Write down your feelings about each event. Tap through the events one by one until you feel a shift in how you feel. Here's an example (see the list above for definitions of the abbreviations):

KC	Even though I take it as a personal affront that my child is smoking, I deeply love and completely accept myself.
TH	I can't believe he's smoking!
TE	I thought I taught him better than that.
SE	How can he do that to me?
UE	It's so embarrassing to have a child that smokes.
UN	I must be a terrible mom.
CH	People are going to blame me for his smoking.
CB	I guess I am to blame.
BR	If I was a better mom, he wouldn't be smoking.
UA	It just shows what a bad mom I am.
TW	What is it about me that made him start smoking?
BW	I can't believe he's smoking.
	<p>After a few rounds, stop and check in. What intensity level are you at now? If it's not 0, what's contributing to the current level? Tap again; start with an updated set-up statement: "Even though I still have some remaining (feelings), I still deeply love and completely accept myself."</p> <p>Continue tapping, checking in every few rounds. As your intensity level drops, you may want to add in some reframes (not too soon!), starting at the top of the head or whatever tapping point you are at. Here is an example of reframing:</p>
TH	I'm creating meaning that his smoking is about me.
TE	But it's not my fault.
SE	It's not about me.
UE	I don't need to wonder where I went wrong.
UN	He makes his own decisions.
CH	He is responsible for his decisions and their consequences.

CB	It's not my fault, and I refuse to feel responsible for it.
BR	He can try to blame me for it, but I do not accept the blame.
UA	It's not about me.
TW	It's about his own needs that he is trying to get met.
BW	I don't take this personally.
	Continue tapping on reframes until you feel complete.

Thank you, again, for reading my book. Please feel free to drop me a note with any comments, questions, or success stories at lisa@tappingintoyourtrueself.com.