

Parenting Revolution

Teenager Edition

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The adolescent years are crucial for discovering meaning in life - a season whereby teens start asking deeper, more meaningful questions that relate to identity and purpose. The process of figuring out who they are and how they fit into the grand scheme of life is called the 'journey of self-discovery'. When a young person discovers who they are (their authentic identity) and comes to learn why they are here (their purpose), they develop an eternal perspective on life and their true value is revealed. However, the path to self-discovery has many confusing twists and turns on the way, not to mention a minefield of social traps and ethical obstacles that every teenager will likely need to navigate. Therefore, parents play an important role in helping teens emerge victorious with a healthy sense of self.



OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

This session is designed to help you:

- (a) help your teen discover their authentic God given identity
- (b) help your teen discover their purpose
- (c) help your teen develop a healthy sense of value and confidence

The Importance of Belonging

Every teen has a need to be loved, accepted and valued. To help facilitate peer approval and a sense of belonging, teens typically huddle in small groups (especially at school). Yet, where belonging and group membership is impaired, studies have shown alienation and isolation can influence a teen's identity and impact their self-worth.

How familiar are you with the peer-group your teen associates with or belongs to?

- 'POPULAR'** Student clique with the most friends and seen as having the most fun
- 'FRINGE'** Following in the shadow of popular clique - wanting to be like them
- 'FRIENDSHIP'** Peers clustered by common interests, beliefs or fashion and appearance
- 'LONER'** Few if any close friends (socially isolated); not belonging to any clique



How can you actively encourage your teen to develop a healthy sense of belonging? ✓

Regular participation in church youth gatherings and join a connect group		Develop a school integration plan with a chaplain or guidance officer	
Plan family social gatherings with other families who have teens of similar age		Sign up for extra-curricular team activities (i.e. music, sport, dance)	
Enrol in an emotional resilience training course to develop social skills		Encourage regular participation in a peer-based academic study group	
Invite peers from school or church to come around to hang out and socialise		Engage in church or community-based servant leadership with peers	

Who? (IDENTITY)

Chances are, your teen has been pondering the question 'who am I?' Moreover, they will likely continue searching and validating their answers over the coming years. Their search for identity is part of the human condition (following an innate desire). While your teen may indeed be fearfully and wonderfully made (like every other teen), they're also quite unique, not just in physical characteristics and personality, but in their interests and specific call. Therefore, the answer to the question 'Who?' is not always so straightforward for teens.

To help your teen discover who they are, start with a conversation about who they are not:

YOU ARE NOT:

- X YOUR PROFESSION OR JOB TITLE**
- X YOUR CAREER OR TRADE**
- X YOUR UNIVERSITY DEGREE**
- X YOUR SCHOOL GRADES**
- X YOUR MISTAKES**
- X YOUR SUCCESSES**
- X YOUR BAD HABITS**
- X YOUR OUTWARD APPEARANCE**
- X YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILE**
- X YOUR HOBBY OR SPORTING ABILITY**
- X YOUR DIAGNOSIS**



YOUR TEEN IS NOT THEIR LABOUR, THEIR LOOKS OR THEIR LABELS...

THEY ARE SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT. THE DANGER WITH SEEKING IDENTITY IN EXTERNAL THINGS IS THAT THEY'RE FLEETING AND EVER CHANGING, WHICH DOESN'T MAKE FOR A VERY STABLE SENSE OF SELF. THIS IS WHY MANY TEENAGERS BECOME STUCK IN AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF SEEKING VALIDATION FROM EMPTY EXTERNAL SOURCES, WHILE CONTINUING TO FEEL LOST AND UNSURE OF WHO THEY REALLY ARE.



Ask the Architect

In the same way an author titles their book or a manufacturer labels their product, God has left His mark on your son or daughter. In His own image and likeness, He created them (Genesis 1:27). Your teen was not only designed by the architect of the Universe, but the Psalmist declares they are intimately known by God and their days were written out before they were even born! (Psalm 139:16). If your teen wants to know who they are, the best place to start is the Word of God. Embark upon a journey with your teen to discover 'who does God say they are?'

God's masterpiece
Ephesians. 2:10

Child of God
John 1:12;

Adopted as God's son/daughter
Ephesians 1:5

I can do all things with Jesus by my side
Philippians 4:13

A new creation in Christ Jesus
2 Corinthians 5:17

God is pleased with you, His creation
Genesis 1:31

An ambassador for Jesus Christ
2 Corinthians 5:20

Freely to approach God with confidence
Ephesians 3:12

Created in and by Jesus for good works
Ephesians 2:10

FOR ANYONE TO
CONFIDENTLY ASSERT
WHO THEY ARE, THEY
MUST ESTABLISH
'WHOSE' THEY ARE.
TO KNOW WHOSE
THEY ARE, THEY MUST
DISCOVER 'WHO HE
IS'. JESUS CAME TO
CAESAREA PHILIPPI
AND ASKED HIS
DISCIPLES; 'WHO DO
PEOPLE SAY THAT
I AM?' THEY GAVE
DIFFERENT ANSWERS
BEFORE JESUS THEN
ASKED;

'But who do you say that I am?'

(as recorded in Matthew 16:13-15)

THIS IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION
EACH PERSON NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO ANSWER.
WHEN A TEEN COMES TO LEARN WHO HE
REALLY IS, IN THAT MOMENT THEY DISCOVER:

WHO they are (in Him)
WHY they are (for Him)
WHAT they are worth (through Him)

Why? (PURPOSE)

Happiness is not the purpose of life. Rather, authentic joy typically comes as a result of living life with purpose. Purpose refers to the reason ‘why’ your teen exists and what they were put on this Earth to accomplish. Rather than a box that can be ticked or a specific goal that can be achieved, purpose is a lifelong journey. Like a compass which guides, purpose can become a reference point and motivator. When your teen discovers purpose, it’s like having a jetpack which propels them forward - offering meaning, hope, and a reason to persevere.



To determine the purpose of anything, we have to consult the manufacturer. The Architect, Author or Artist always has the answer to the question ‘why?’ What do you think the Cosmic Creator had in mind when He created your son/daughter? ✓

1. A desire to have an intimate, personal and reciprocal relationship		6. His pleasure and delight to see them grow and get to know them	
2. To share the good news of His love and help expand His Kingdom		7. To reflect His Glory and receive their honour and praise	
3. Made in His own image and likeness; An opportunity to become like Christ		8. That His joy may be in them and their joy may be made complete	
4. To love and forgive others and that they themselves are loved and forgiven		9. Created for good works that God has prepared in advance	
5. Plans to prosper them; Heavenly plans for a hope filled future		10. Adding to his family and the opportunity to pour out His love	

HINT: **(1)** Proverbs 8:17, James 4:8, John 14:23; **(2)** Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15; **(3)** Genesis 1:27, 2 Corinthians 5:17; **(4)** Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4:32, Mark 12:30-31; **(5)** Jeremiah 29:11; **(6)** 2 Peter 3:18; **(7)** 1 Corinthians 10:31, Revelation 4:11; **(8)** John 15:10-12; **(9)** Ephesians 2:10, Romans 8:28-29; **(10)** Romans 5:5; Ephesians 1:4-5.

God outlines in scripture His reason for creating human life, but each person is unique and their call distinct. For example, Jeremiah, the old testament prophet, said he was created for God’s special purpose, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV). In the new testament, Jesus also designated people a unique purpose (Luke 6:12-19). Before selecting the twelve apostles who were to represent Him (chosen from the many disciples that were following Him), Jesus prayed earnestly through the night. Once chosen, He uniquely assigned them roles and responsibilities to help build and advance His kingdom. Jesus still uses people today in unique ways to fulfil His purpose, and to accomplish the specific plans that He lays out for His people. As King David acknowledged (Psalm 139:13-14), God intentionally knit the innermost being of your son or daughter in the womb - they’re fearfully and wonderfully made! The key to grasp is that your teen doesn’t just have a unique fingerprint, retina-pattern and voice signature; it’s not just their external characteristics that are distinct, it’s their innermost being that God so uniquely designed.

Innermost Being

Perform a stock take on your son or daughter's unique gifts, skills, talents, interests, and passions, and discover just how much they have to offer.



01 GIFT

A natural-born God-given ability to do something



02 SKILL

Something acquired, worked on, learned or developed



03 TALENT

Combining a gift with a practiced skill that results in mastery



04 INTEREST

Something your teen finds intellectually stimulating



05 PASSION

Captures your teen's attention and grabs hold of their heart

Q: What gifts does your teen possess?

Q: What special skills has your teen developed?

Q: In what areas is your teen talented (or have the potential for talent)?

Q: What special interests intellectually stimulate your teen?

Q: What is your teen passionate about (what captures their heart)?

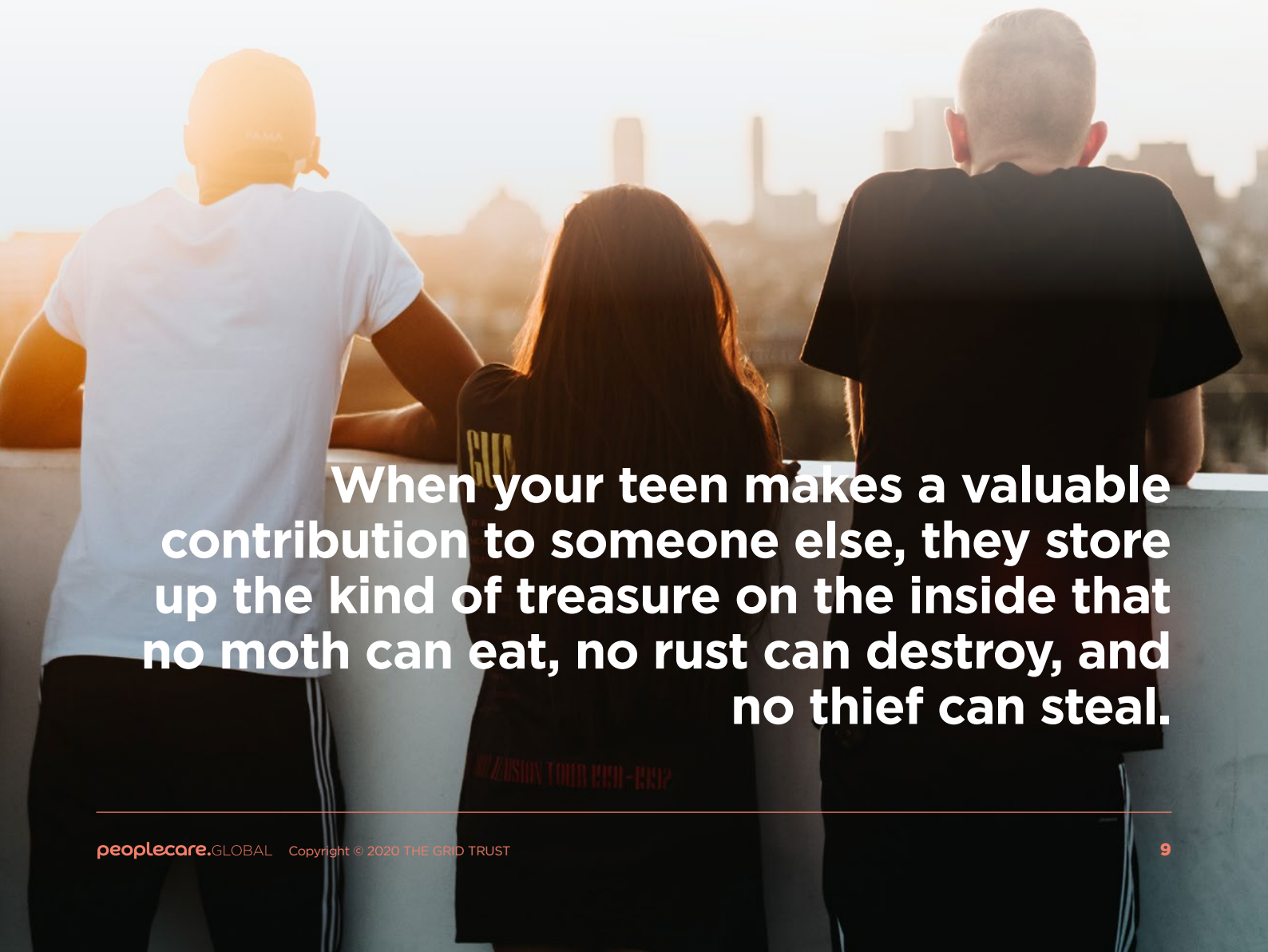
Make MEANING

When your teen combines their gifts, skills, talents, interest and passion to make an effective and valuable contribution in the life of others, they tap into purpose. The first principle of purpose is that it is others-focussed. Rather than investing their unique attributes just to making money, your teen has the opportunity to make what matters... MEANING!



Which of the following servant leader roles could you encourage your teen to consider:

Join the car park, set up or worship team at church		Random acts of kindness for friends and family		Do handy jobs for parents/grandparents	
Volunteer at a local animal shelter or charity		Bring offerings to church and start to tithe		Do jobs, raise money and sponsor a child in need	
Help younger siblings out with their homework		Wash the neighbour's car or mow their lawn		Other	



When your teen makes a valuable contribution to someone else, they store up the kind of treasure on the inside that no moth can eat, no rust can destroy, and no thief can steal.

Getting to the HEART of the Matter

Every human has deep longings and desires. Yet during the teen years, it's not just fanciful dreaming of fame and fortune, teenagers long to know that their life has meaning. Studies show teens who lack a sense of purpose are more likely to 'drift' into their adult years - lacking motivation and direction. In addition, they're more susceptible to mental health problems, poor self-esteem, and addiction. However, teens with a clear sense of purpose and meaning are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour, will achieve more in life, and possess higher self-worth and confidence. The WHY behind their WHAT gives them the steam to accomplish their dream.



When your teen starts to dream without boundaries (limitless opportunity) the content of their heart is revealed. Find a time this week to ask your teen the following question:

If you discovered that an unknown relative had left you an inheritance of \$2 Billion, you would be one of the richest people in the world. How would you spend it?	
Homes / Cars / Bikes / Boats	\$
Clothes / Shoes / Accessories	\$
Travel / Adventure / Expeditions	\$
Friends / Family / Neighbours	\$
Church / Charity / Research	\$
Investments or Business Opportunities	\$
Sports / Musical Equipment	\$
Other...	\$
SUBTOTAL:	\$
\$2,000,000,000 - SUBTOTAL	\$
= TOTAL REMAINING:	\$

Once all their 'self-serving' spending ideas have been exhausted and the totals added, highlight HOW MUCH MONEY they still have available to them. Now it's time to ask an even deeper and more profound question.

Q: If you could do anything (and you had ample resources), dream BIG and consider:
What would you do with your life?

HINT: What valuable contribution would you like to make to the world?

What? (VALUE)

Self-worth is a vital part of emotional development. Teenagers with a robust sense of self-worth are not only more likely to make confident choices, speak up for themselves and stand behind their convictions, they also are less easily swayed by negative peer pressure and social influence. Answering the question 'WHAT am I worth?' is largely influenced by the psychological and spiritual DNA strands of relationship.

FAMILY RELATIONS

Unconditional love teaches your teen they are worthy of your time, attention and care. Love is not based on achievements, behaviour or any other provisional factor. Unconditional love means that they are appreciated and valued for who they are. Your teen needs to know that you don't just love them, but that you really like them.

Q: How does your teen know they're unconditionally loved?

HEAVENLY RELATIONS

Your teen is incredibly valuable – not only because they were fearfully and wonderfully made by God, but because they were ransomed at the cross and purchased with a price that's beyond any measure. From God's perspective, your teen is worth protecting and correcting, encouraging and empowering, inspiring and celebrating, forgiving and freeing. What are they worth? As far as God's concerned, **THEY ARE WORTH DYING FOR!**

Q: How can you encourage your teen's ongoing relationship with God so as to help them discover their ultimate value?