

# Family Blind Spots

**Ten Harmful Behaviors  
Parents Can Avoid To  
Improve The Home**

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# Early Warning Signs

## Van Halen

What if you could identify the early warning signs of a problem with your children?

What if you could detect a child going astray? What if you could give yourself video

game like (neutral) feedback that is an instant indicator of

possible problems lurking below the surface?



Google executives can predict a flu outbreak by the number of Internet searches for 'flu' and 'influenza.' As a result, Epidemiologists (disease control specialists) can now spot a flu outbreak one to two weeks faster than before the invention of Google and search engines.

Remember the rock band Van Halen? On tour, the band would show up with nine 18-wheelers full of gear. Because of the technical complexity, the band's standard contract for venues (concert halls and stadiums) was thick and convoluted. It required the venue's stagehands to pay close attention the contract's details in order to properly prep for the band's arrival.

If the management of the venue did not adequately conduct their due diligence in reading the contract, it compromised Van Halens' ability to setup in time for the show.

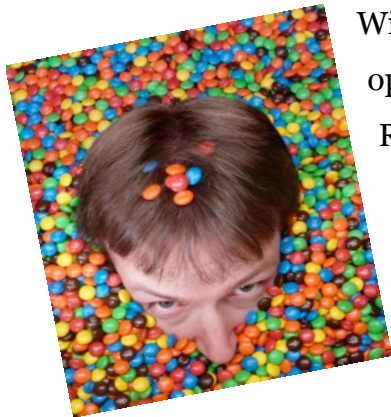
Furthermore, it put the show at risk for an electrical malfunction if the contract was not followed with precision.

In a stroke of genius, Van Halen's lead singer, David Lee Roth, embedded an obscure clause in the middle of the contract that became known as clause 126 and read something like this:



*"There will be no brown M&Ms in the backstage area, upon pain of forfeiture of the show, with full compensation."*

Upon arrival at the venue, Roth would walk backstage to check out the M&M bowl. If he saw any brown ones he knew the contract had not been thoroughly read and it was very likely they were going to have a technical error. He would then demand a line check of the entire production.



Without knowing it, the venue, by not reading the contract, operated with a huge blind spot completely unknown until Mr. Roth ordered a line check or full payment.

With what blind spots do you operate as a parent that you don't know about? A blind spot is a belief or behavior that signals a red flag to the child with whom you are conversing. You most likely don't know about it, your child can't explain it, but she is very uncomfortable and it hinders your relationship.

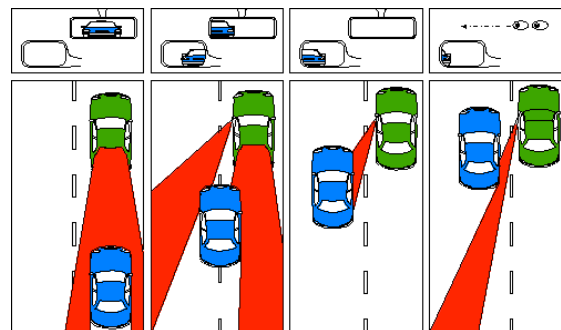
Your credibility, trust and respect are all at risk. (Notice that their affection [love] is not being discussed. That's another topic.)

# Blind Spots

## The 10 Blind Spots

Here is a list of 10 blind spots: phrases, beliefs and behaviors to avoid in family communications. These are toxic and considered poisonous. The first 8 are phrases and the final two are beliefs or behaviors.

1. I know exactly what you mean
2. When I was your age
3. If I were you
4. If you'd only listen
5. I'm doing this for your own good
6. When you're a parent you can
7. What's wrong with you
8. Why can't you
9. Trying to be liked
10. Seeking agreement



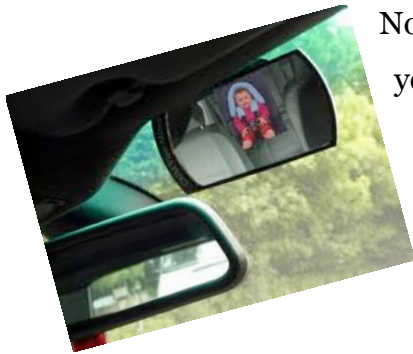
### Bonus Concepts:

1. Dialogue
2. Trust

# Concept 1

## I know exactly what you mean:

Your teenager explains how difficult transitioning into high school is and you comment, "*I know exactly what you mean.*"



No you don't! And any time you indicate that you know what your child is experiencing you diminish your credibility.

The circumstances are different, you are different and you've just judged your child and thrown up a barrier hindering any trust development.

The successful growth of your child into an independent state (young adult) hinges upon your ability to listen, to learn, and to parent. It is not your job to relate and puff your childhood experiences up to something larger than what they actually were.

How does saying that you know what your child is experiencing going to help your child? Instead of building yourself up with a self-centered statement, try to understand your child. Ask questions, listen, and be present. (These skills are taught in the Ted & Ting Levels 1 – 3 reports.)



## Concept 2

### When I was your age:



What does it matter? The story line is not the same. Unless your child wants to know about life during the days of antiquity, as they date-stamp life, don't use your experiences as a leveraging tool.

When I was your age is really another way of saying, "*I know better, my experiences were tougher, and you should listen to me.*"

Your role as a parent is to teach your child to overcome conflict and grow. Such statements don't build the child's confidence or esteem; however, it is an ego boost to the parent. (See Ego vs. Self-Esteem.)

Another danger in this line of thinking is the over concerned parent who fears her child will make the same mistakes she did. If you are this parent, consider the fact that the parenting techniques used on you, when a child, are probably the same ones you are using on your child.

You may not immediately recognize them, but the end results are the same, carnage.

Almost without exception, a parent who leverages fear of what may be, based upon autobiographical history (how it was when you were that age), will push the child further away without any possibility of developing trust and respect.



There are two situations where your stories are medicinal, relationship building and positive:

1. When they are invited by your child



2. When shared in a positive light to the child or how you learned a valuable lesson.

The lesson falls on deaf ears when you are always the hero and always right. Children appreciate parents who are human and capable of making mistakes, not those who perceive they walk on water.

## Concept 3

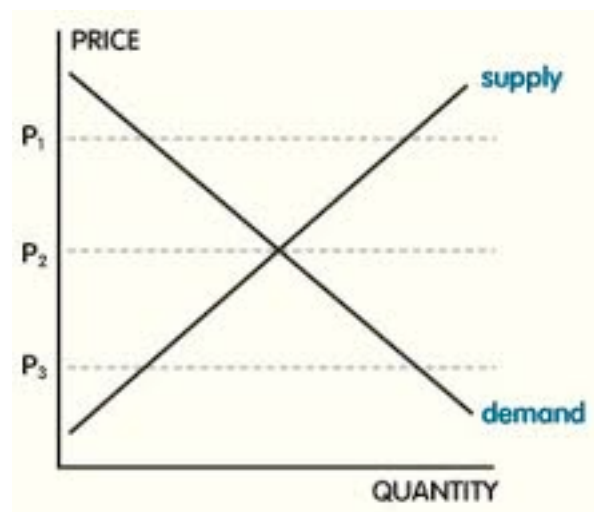
### If I were you:

You are not them so don't try. That is judging. If you are asked for your opinion, that's fine, but offering your opinion when none is requested is seeking agreement and manipulative as a parent.

A parent's role is to teach the child skills such as:

- Problem solving
- Conflict resolution
- Contention avoidance
- Effective dialoguing

Remember Econ 101? Opinions are like commodities and they have value based upon supply and demand. If your opinions are in large supply, there is little demand for them and their value is very low.



Teaching your child to problem solve by withholding opinions, asking good questions, and intently listening will develop your child into a successful adult.

This skill is never found on sale. There is no 'blue-light special' when it comes to delegating thinking to your child. However, there are incremental steps (skills) you can develop in a very short time that will lay the foundation for teaching your child to make better decisions without your constant input.

Someday your child will leave the home. Do you want to rest comfortably knowing that she will be able to cope with life because she has developed the skill to problem solve?

The opposite feeling creates decades of intense and bitter fighting when your little girl gets married and you are still meddling.

## Concept 4

### **If you'd only listen:**

Parents who repeatedly use this line are in desperate need of help. You are practicing parenting within [The Me Pyramid](#) which

- Seeks agreement
- Justifies actions
- Blames others
- Denies any responsibility

Try parenting from [The You Pyramid](#) and observe the difference.

(The Me and You Pyramids depict two different levels of communication. One level centers communication on 'ME', while the other focuses positive energy on 'YOU.' The process of leaving *The Me Pyramid* and living in *The You Pyramid* requires moving from knowledge to skill and usually requires coaching.)

If you practice listening first, you will change the tenor of the discussion. Typically, children do not want their parent's opinion because it is in mass supply.

You might be thinking that you're the adult and the child should listen to you first. That only works when your opinion is in demand. Logically that means your opinion needs to be restricted and in low supply. How many parents are there whose opinions are in demand?

(Do not confuse this with silence as a form of anger or punishment.)

The primary reason children join gangs, dress inappropriately, and seek sex advice and drug deals with peers is because there is no trust and respect at home. The space is not safe for them to attempt communication.

If parents taught their children safe talk they wouldn't need to teach them safe sex.

## Concept 5

### **I'm doing this for your own good:**

This is another way of saying,

*"I've lost control. You don't trust and respect me so I'm going to force my way upon you."*

This is seeking agreement. What's good for the child is having an environment where trust and respect are garnered and teaching trumps telling. In a teaching environment, children will make good decisions and govern themselves.

Remember the definition of communication is to seek understanding. Seeking agreement, doing it your way because of an emotional outburst, hinders growth and thwarts trust and respect.



A phrase common in this area is:

*"This is going to hurt me more than it will hurt you."*

Hogwash! When a parent leverages that dribble, it's manipulative and the parent's bottom isn't red from a whipping. Neither is the parent on restriction or in time out.

Now there's a thought.

Under the guise of doing something for the good of the child, leveraging model behavior out of the child by withholding something he wants is counterproductive.



For example, 'you can't get your driver's license until you...' get your Eagle Scout Award or something in this fashion. In other words, you must do something good before you can do something you want.

The parent just made getting an Eagle Scout Award distasteful and a drudgery. When the parent wants something (award, sports excellence, musical accomplishments etc.) more than the child, you risk the danger of becoming a dictator instead of a parent or mentor.

## Concept 6

### When you're a parent you can...

Parent the way you want. What teenager hasn't said:

*"When I'm a parent, I'm not going to act like my mom or dad?"*

Sadly, they have no other examples or mentors from which to learn, so they perpetuate the bad habits of their parents into the next generation.

This is pain avoidance and it is the path of least resistance. There is no learning and it doesn't help the situation. This is seeking agreement again. Try this:

*"If you were in my place, how would you handle the situation?"*

This can only be effective if the parent comes from a neutral position and not one of emotional out bursting and judging. The child must feel safety in the communication space shared with you, the parent.

## Concept 7

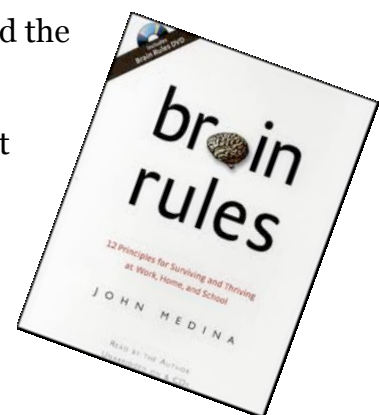
### What's wrong with you?

This statement comes dripping with judging. The child whose parents are fond of this blind spot will learn helplessness over time. Here is their conditioned thinking: *Since mom and dad are convinced I'm flawed, then I will act accordingly.*

Ironically, the more we learn about the process of learning and the brain, the more science teaches us how we're doing so many traditional things backwards. For example: our schools are set up to hinder learning in the class room .

The very configuration of the classroom, the testing system, and blatant lack of exercise routines all contribute to a sub-standard learning environment.

Students who suffer from so-called Attention Deficit Disorder (and all the associated disorders) struggle in our school system because it's engineered to favor the exact opposite of them.



Why are such a large percentages of the extremely successful entrepreneurs and business people ADD? Instead of treating such children as troublesome, why not treat them as gifted and discover and highlight their strengths?

There maybe nothing wrong with the child except he or she doesn't fit the mold society has deemed acceptable.

## Concept 8

### Why can't you?

It is often said that there are no bad questions. Rubbish! This is a bad question. Why, used in this context, is a judgment.

*"Why can't you do your homework?" or "why can't you be like your sister?"*



These are harmful and degrading questions of rhetoric that leave your child with no escape. Judging questions set your child up for failure. As parents we must judge many things about our children, but we don't judge the child.

Their effort may need attention, their words might need refining, or their table manners could use maturity, but the child is not an object to be battered and relegated to an animal or a thing status.

The worth of each child is priceless and in some cultures and religions, godlike. The esteem of each child starts with the family. Mother and father play a pivotal role in behavior. Questions like this become self-fulfilling prophecies.

In other words, you are saying she can't be like her sister and when she lives up to the parent's statement, mom or dad quips:

*"See I told you so." Or "What did I tell ya?"*

Suggestion: when a child continually fails to obey, such as taking the garbage out or coming home on time, take a minute and discover the root cause. Very often circumstances that hinder the child can be overcome with some listening, understanding, and teaching.

Forgetting and poor time management is a symptom of a failed system, not a failed or disobedient child. Find a way the child can be successful instead of searching for why the child fits your stereotype of failure.



## Concept 9

### Trying to be liked:

When you parent from a position of trying to be your child's friend, your first priority is to be liked. This is manipulative, persuasive and destructive.



You abdicate your role as a parent when affirmation trumps boundaries and learning. You are avoiding the pain of parenting and will ultimately suffer the consequences of your actions.

What your child really needs and wants is a parent that has mutual trust and respect, not an over-aged peer. There are very few things more distasteful than a parent who seeks affirmation from their children.



*Friendship can be a by-product of effective parenting.*

But...

*Parenting is not a by-product of friendship.*

When parents provide alcohol, tobacco, drugs of any kind, sexually explicit movies, or rented out hotel floors for prom, to under aged children they are seeking friendship and agreement. Closely related are parent supplied expensive cars, full-ride scholarships with no strings attached to higher education, and lavish life-styles without boundaries.

## Concept 10

### **Seeking agreement:**

The primary purpose of communicating is to seek understanding. When you tell your child what to do, especially as they enter the teenage years, you've established a bad habit of seeking agreement.

The best space in parenting is teaching, where you delegate thinking to your child. You can't delegate thinking when your opinions are in huge supply.



When you ask good questions, your child can make good decisions and this



allows sound principles to guide their behavior instead of your opinions and diatribes trying to convince them you are right.

Of all the Blind Spots discussed, seeking agreement is the most common source of friction between parent and child because it is the most abused. Consider your last discussion with one of your children or your spouse. Think back on the subject and your position.

Did you at any time attempt to get the child or spouse to agree with your statement through persuasion, word choice, intonation, body language, or manipulation? Were you more concerned that you were right versus determining what was right?

This is a gut check. The path to successful relationships is the ability to be honest with yourself. Try this as part of the learning experience. Watch a TV program and simply observe who is seeking agreement versus seeking understanding.

The one seeking agreement will be trying to convince others that they are right. The entire paradigm of that person is who is right. Many sitcoms base their humor on this very narrow self-centered point of communication.

This is the difference between WHO is right and WHAT is right.

# The Two Tools

## ***Two Parenting Tools That Say "I Love You" More Effectively Than Words***

Parents who learn to dialogue with their children discover hidden talents and develop deep levels of trust and respect. The power of developing trust and respect is that, unlike love, trust and respect are not automatically assumed as part of the family package.

### **Dialogue:**

C. Northcote Parkinson said:

*"The void created by the failure to communicate is soon filled with poison, drivel, and misrepresentation."*

When you as a parent avoid a dialogue with children and rant, preach, or tell, or clam up instead, it creates a void. (Silence or Violence.) Learning to communicate or dialogue eliminates most heartaches and hurt feelings.

Avoiding dialogue is a cognitive choice made by a parent. You may not have the skill to transition from conflict to dialogue, but you know what is happening.

The most common transition in parenting is from conflict to contention and emotion is normally the driving force.

When frustration, anger, and loneliness are combined into a young person, harmful behavior is created. To focus blame on the youth is wrong minded and misses the root cause of the behavior.

Until a parent learns to communicate, the child will search until he finds a place of safety or comfort. If that place isn't the home, it's too often with peers who are also at risk.

## **Trust:**

In a world that touts cash as king, trust is the currency of any relationship. Therefore, trust is like unto money. It is the cash that builds and sustains the foundation of a family.

The most efficient space you can share with another person is trust. Some of you will question this and perhaps opine that love makes the world go around.

Consider this: is it possible to love someone but not trust them? Can you love your teenager and not trust her to drive your car or come home on time or do her homework?

Now imagine a relationship with your child that is built upon the currency of trust? Imagine her word as gold and imagine that she feels the same way about you.

Trust cannot be built without dialogue and dialogue cannot be conducted without the necessary tools on which to operate.

Blind spots hinder your OS (operating system). The purpose of this report is to provide you with an awareness of how important your communication system is and what not to do.

If you want more information, including a course on how to develop the skills to bring contention into conflict and conflict into resolution, go to the website ([www.pyrblu.com](http://www.pyrblu.com)) and sign up for one of our parenting or communication courses.

