

Terry's Story

Terry is a 39-year old father of a 16 year old son, Joey. Terry was a collegiate athlete, and Joey has followed in his footsteps and is on the high school basketball team. Terry has always been proud of his son's accomplishments, but this year things have changed. Lately Joey has been acting out more than normal by being disrespectful towards both of his parents, not doing well in school, and missing curfew. In the past, just talking to Joey and expressing disappointment was enough of a punishment, but that isn't working anymore. Terry grew up in a military family where respect for authority was required, so Joey's attitude is hard to understand. Behind his complaint, he recognizes that Joey's rebellion bothers him because he cares about **raising kids who have respect for authority and are good citizens**.

Terry knows he could be a lot stricter with his son, but he's afraid that it will only make things worse. His own father could be very authoritative at times, and he swore he would never be like his dad. He loves his son dearly and doesn't want to lose that relationship, even if it's rocky at the moment, so he lets more things slide than he would like, and has even found himself bribing Joey— "if you'll just apologize to your mother I'll let you go to the party." Terry doesn't like to admit it, but he sees how behaviors show that he also cares about **being liked by his son** and wanting to be the "cool dad".

There's nothing wrong with being liked, but sometimes what's needed to be a good parent requires doing things that aren't popular.

GO STATEMENT: Over the next year, I want to be better at helping my son learn to be respectful and obedient, and not be held in place by needing him to like me.

SMALL STEPS:

1. Terry decided he wants to spend some intentional time with Joey that was not centered around school or sports. They haven't had an extended conversation about life for a very long time. He hopes that if he spends time investing in their relationship, they can build a foundation on understanding and respect rather than frustration and anger and this will make it easier to have the difficult conversations.
2. Terry felt like the problems with Joey were affecting his marriage because his wife was upset that he wasn't taking a harder line with Joey. He wanted to make sure he and his wife were on the same team in regards to how they approached parenting. He also felt like teaching their son about respect needed to start with how they treated each. Therefore, he plans to spend time with his wife this weekend coming up with a mutually agreed upon parenting strategy.
3. Involving Joey in setting the rules and consequences will hopefully give him more ownership over the situation.. Letting him have a voice in forming rules and consequences might also show him some respect which he will hopefully reciprocate. However, it will also give Terry the grounds to stick to the consequences if Joey does not obey.



The LEADERS LYCEUM

GROWTH GAP TOOL

identifying the gap between
who you are and
who you want to be

3 What I could do, that I am not currently doing, to more fully realize these **Section 2** Values is...

- I could be a lot stricter
- Take away the car
- Ground him

Challenges

4 What I worry, fear, or resist most about taking this kind of **Section 3** Responsibility is...

- He will rebel and it will get worse
- Our relationship will get worse
- He will hate me

and the big, bad version of these worries, fears, or resistance is...

He runs away from home, ruins his life, and I never see him again.

1

My #1 Complaint is... _____

My teenager is driving me crazy

My complaint reveals what really matters to me.

2

I value, or care about...

My kid doing what I ask,
when I ask it and making me proud

Generalized

Obedience
Respect for authority
Growing good citizens

Contradiction

5

In order to protect myself from the downside of these **Section 4** Challenges, what I

tend to do is... _____

- I say uncle—I let it go
- I bribe him with rewards
- I try to keep the peace

These behaviors show me that I may also value or be committed to...

- Being liked
- Being friends with my child

Bigger-Me

Growth Gap

Smaller-Me

GO Statement:

Over the next year, I want to be better at helping my son learn to be respectful and obedient, and not be held in place by needing him to like me.

Small Steps:

1. Take him to dinner one night next week and ask him about how things are going at school—practice active listening without judgement or giving advice.
2. Over the weekend discuss with my wife our hopes and expectations for our son and come up with a priority list of guidelines to share with him.
3. Sit down with him before he goes out with his friends Saturday to jointly decide on appropriate expectations for behavior and curfew, and set consequences if he disobeys.