

## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SEXUAL SELF-CONTROL

Like Spring training for professional baseball players, it's a good idea to return to the fundamentals of your craft before the start of a new season. Schools (hopefully) will be reopening soon, and many young people who have been starved for human contact, with zero practice at impulse control, will be tempted to "make up for lost time." It's unrealistic to think your teen will be MORE in control of their sexual urges after a long separation.

To head off the consequences of poor-decision making, now is a good time to ramp up conversations on sexual self-control. The reasons to master his/her sexual impulses is more than just "avoiding babies and STIs." The real goal is to acquire all the **benefits of delayed gratification**. Learning to master any impulse (eating, sex, anger, spending, etc.) equips an adolescent for adulthood.

Sexual self-control, in practice, is no different from living on a budget or eating healthy. It requires a conscious effort to focus on the skills until they become second nature. You wouldn't expect your child to remember the principles of managing money after just one talk, but parents often relegate sexual behavior to a single (intense and uncomfortable) talk about "what goes where."

Start with defining your expectations and values about adolescent sexual behavior. Making them as concrete and understandable as your values about money, health and emotional outbursts is the first fundamental. What **are** your standards? Have you and your parenting partners agreed on those standards, and if not, are you prepared to make a positive case for what you expect from your teen? You'd be surprised how often teens believe their parents won't object to them being sexually active, because if it was **really important** they would talk about it as often as getting good grades.



The second fundamental is adjusting your approach from "controlling" to "coaching."

Controlling parents feel good about themselves when their child gets the right answer. They move heaven and earth to avoid "failure" — intervening as needed to prevent their child from unpleasant experiences. But sadly, controlling parents produce chronological adults who lack the ability to reason.

On the other hand, the goal of a COACHING parent is producing a child who can (CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

(CONTINUED FROM 1ST PAGE)

make the right decision, **especially** when mom and dad aren't there. They accept failure is part of the learning experience. And they are looking for opportunities to put the outcome of any choice in the young person's hands.

Don't be thrown off-target by the fact that your child will be annoyed, angry and petulant because you didn't prevent their failure or disappointment. Their brain needs to make the connection between **their choice** and **their result** if they are going to be successful adults.

Parent: "My kid only gets 30 minutes of screen time a day."

Me:



**WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP!**



PositivelyWaiting.com

If you like to shop on Amazon, please LOGIN at [smile.amazon.com/ch/30-0222447](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/30-0222447)  
When you #StartWithASmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Positively Waiting.

**May be copied without permission.**  
**To SCHEDULE A PRESENTATION, SINGLES SEMINAR OR MARRIAGE RETREAT. CALL 661-441-0074 OR EMAIL [justask@PositivelyWaiting.com](mailto:justask@PositivelyWaiting.com)**

VIRTUAL MEETINGS ARE ALSO AN OPTION!



## COACH'S CORNER

This month's coaching tip is a word of encouragement.

Picture this typical interaction: You said he could go over to his girlfriend's house **if** he cleaned the pool. But he goofed off and didn't clean the pool, so you tell him he can't go.

*"I'll do it tomorrow!" He says.*

*"No, that's not how this works." You insist.*

Tantrum ensues.

Here's the tip: **Don't back down**, but remind him the outcome was entirely in his control.

*"I'm sorry your poor decision has prevented you from going to see your girlfriend. If you had chosen to take care of the pool, you would be on your way now."*

Your goal as a coach is to provide opportunities for the outcome to be in their hands. Your teen's brain makes neural connections in the prefrontal cortex from negative consequences as much as positive ones. And those opportunities have a limit — between puberty and age 25 is when the brain develops the higher reasoning areas. After that, there is no additional explosion of neural growth. Create as many opportunities as possible and you speed up the process. Intervene or decide for your teen, and you rob the brain of a chance to complete a neural connection.

When their choices result in unpleasant consequences, and you get the brunt of emotional fallout, remind yourself, you aren't raising A CHILD — you are raising AN ADULT. Your kid has enough friends who can make them feel good about themselves. A parent's job is to ensure their child has the skills to DO GOOD as well.

It's perfectly fine to empathize with their disappointment — but don't give in to the temptation to feel good about yourself by being the "good guy." "How to manipulate Mom" is definitely **not** the neural connection you want your teen to make!