



# YOUNG ADOLESCENTS: Know 'em, Love 'em, Teach 'em

Presented by:  
Debbie Silver  
[www.debbiesilver.com](http://www.debbiesilver.com)



## **The Teacher**

**"Concerning a teacher's influence, I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized."**

**--Haim Ginott**

# Characteristics of Young Adolescents

## Intellectual

- Moving from concrete to abstract
- Wide range of curiosity
- Prefer active over passive learning
- Prefer interaction with peers
- Prefer *real life* situations
- Preoccupied with self
- Challenge authority

## Moral

- Desire to make the world a better place
- Show compassion
- Developing own personal judgments
- Rely on adults for advice
- Adjusting to shades of gray
- Participatory democracy

## Physical

- Bodily change
- Girls mature more quickly than boys
- Fatigue and restlessness
- Need for physical activity
- Poor health habits – eating and daily care
- Lack of physical fitness

## Emotional

- Mood swings
- Sudden outbursts
- Seeking independence
- Wanting peer acceptance
- Self-conscious
- Unique personal problems
- Concerned about social issues

## Social

- Need to belong
- Lack social graces
- New slang or use of language
- Intimidated by large numbers in the building
- Desire for recognition
- Into fads
- Dislike embarrassment



## 20 Most Important Needs of Early Adolescents

<b>Must Socialize</b>	<b>Must Have Frequent Physical Movement</b>	<b>Must Have Own Learning Styles</b>	<b>Must Cooperate</b>	<b>Must Be Safe</b>
<b>Must Express Emotions</b>	<b>Must Learn Decision-Making</b>	<b>Must Be Liked By Peers</b>	<b>Must Be Successful In Initial Tasks</b>	<b>Must Enjoy Good Health</b>
<b>Must Have Adult Role-Models</b>	<b>Must Eat Often</b>	<b>Must Have Routine</b>	<b>Must Argue</b>	<b>Must Develop Peer Relationships</b>
<b>Must Develop Self-Concept</b>	<b>Must Have Learning Experiences</b>	<b>Must Apply Problem-Solving Skills to Real Life</b>	<b>Must Understand Body Changes</b>	<b>Must Challenge Authority</b>



There is a period of transition for youths 10- to 15-years-old. Freed from the dependency of childhood but not yet able to find their own paths to adulthood. Many young people feel a desperate sense of isolation. Surrounded only by their equally confused peers. Too many make poor decisions with harmful consequences. An effective middle school features a program that responds to the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional needs of the early adolescent.

*Middle schoolers travel in herds and have one question to answer . . . "How can I impress my friends?"*



## What Can Teachers Do With Early Adolescent Behavior?

1. Remember, one of the earliest signs of the emerging early adolescent is forgetting. Why? Their minds are preoccupied with issues that are real and meaningful to them. Be creative when dealing with this trait.
2. Middle school kids are irritable! Hint: Do not argue with a middle schooler. The situation escalates, and you will lose. Know when to disengage.
3. Be willing to listen – but don't play 20 questions with every contact.
4. Avoid lecturing – keep it brief and non-threatening. Don't double team the child. Call for back-up only if you need it.
5. Deal only with the precise problem. Don't bring up other issues.
6. Keep your head. Don't let *their* moods ruin *your* day.
7. Give them appropriate power when possible. Negotiate more, listen more, command less.
8. Save your power for really important issues. Don't use power unless it is urgent. Give them a way out.
9. Work hard to help build their self-esteem.
10. Provide a safe haven for children.



## **Self-Efficacy**

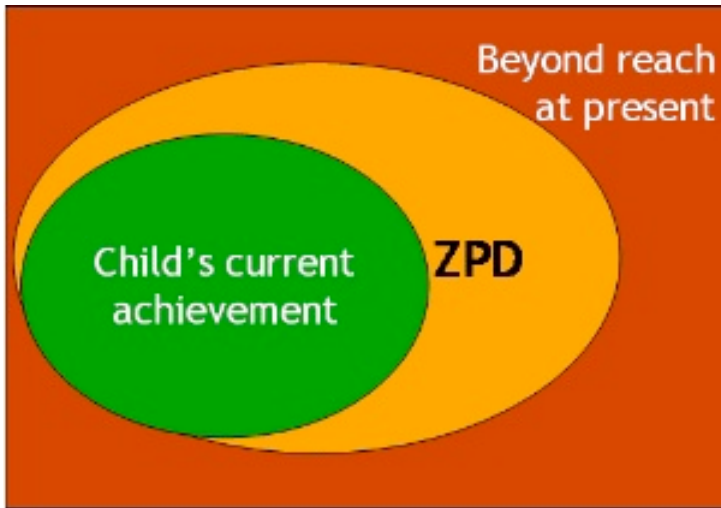
It influences:

- **The CHOICES We Make**
- **The EFFORT We Put Forth!**
- **How long We PERSIST When We Confront Obstacles (and in the face of failure)**
- **How quickly we are able to bounce back from obstacles or failure. Our RESILIENCY.**

Albert Bandura (1925 -) popularized the term *self-efficacy*. He defines it as the part of our "self system" that helps us to evaluate our performance. Perceived self-efficacy refers to one's impression of what one is capable of doing. This comes from a variety of sources, such as personal accomplishments and failures, seeing others who are similar to oneself, and verbal persuasion.

Verbal persuasion may temporarily convince people that they should try or avoid some task, but in the final analysis it is one's direct or vicarious experience with success or failure that will most strongly influence one's self-efficacy. For example, a teacher may "fire-up" her students before a standardized test by telling the kids how great they are, but the enthusiasm will be short-lived if the test is completely beyond their ability or their perceived beliefs that they can actually do well.

People with high-perceived self-efficacy try more, accomplish more, and persist longer at a task than people with low perceived self-efficacy. Bandura speculates that this is because people with high-perceived self-efficacy tend to feel they have more control over their environment and, therefore, experience less uncertainty.



## Zone of Proximal Development...ZPD

**Zone of Proximal Development**, an idea developed by Lev Vygotsky over one hundred years ago, seeks to define the process through which students effectively learn in cooperation with a teacher.

A student's Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, is defined as the student's range of ability with and without assistance from a teacher or a more capable peer. On one end of the range is the student's ability level without assistance. On the other end of the range is the student's ability level with assistance.

A classroom that makes the best use of all of its students' ZPDs should follow the following guidelines:

- 1 The teacher should act as a scaffold, providing the minimum support necessary for a student to succeed. The idea is to assist without denying the student's need to build his or her own foundation. The challenge for the teacher, then, is to find the optimal balance between supporting the student and pushing the student to act independently. To effectively scaffold the student, the teacher should stay one step ahead of the student, always challenging him or her to reach beyond his or her current ability level. However, if instruction falls outside of the zone (above or below a student's ZPD), no growth will occur.
- 2 To effectively scaffold students within their ZPDs, a teacher should also have an awareness of the different roles students and teachers assume throughout the collaborative process. The roles roughly resemble the following:
  - teacher modeling behavior for the student
  - student imitating the teacher's behavior
  - teacher fading out instruction
  - student practicing reciprocal teaching (scaffolding others) until the skill is mastered by all students in the classroom.



*Adapted from: <<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/step/ep301/Spr2000/Jenna-B/zpd.html>>*

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## **How We Act When We Don't Understand What Is Said In Class**

- We cry when we are scared.
- We make a face – roll our eyes.
- We put our heads down and sleep.
- We get angry – we kick the chair; we say bad words.
- We interrupt and talk loud.
- We cut class.
- We daydream in class, don't pay attention, think of other things.
- We ask the counselor if we can drop the class,  
because we are afraid.
- We bite our nails.
- We listen to music.
- We feel hungry.
- We fight with other students.
- We bother the other students.
- We flirt with the other students.
- We stay home.
- We run away.

\*Cushman, Kathleen. 2003. *Fires in the Bathroom: Advice for Teachers from High School Students*. New York: The New Press.

## **Teachers Who Want to Help ESL Students:**

### **Provide clues to meaning**

- Use drawings, dramatic gestures, actions, emotions, voice, mime, chalkboard sketches, photographs and visual materials to provide clues to meaning.
- If necessary, repeat your actions using the same simple structures and actions.
- Simplify your message as much as possible breaking them into smaller, manageable parts to give newcomers a chance at comprehending.

- Make sure the student's attention is focused.
- Don't insist, however, that students make eye contact with you when you are speaking to them. This is considered rude in many cultures.

### **Modify their speech**

- Talk at a slow-to-normal pace, in short sentences.
- Use a pleasant tone.
- Use simple sentence structure (subject-verb-object) and high-frequency words.
- Use names of people rather than pronouns.
- Pause after phrases or short sentences, not after each word. You do not want to distort the rhythm of the language.
- Avoid using the passive voice and complex sentences.
- If you have something important to convey, speak one-on-one to the newcomer rather than in front of the class. The anxiety of being in the spotlight interferes with comprehension.
- Ask simple yes/no questions so that newcomers have an opportunity to respond.
- Accept one-word answers or gestures.

### **Are active listeners**

- Give full attention to your newcomer and make every effort to understand his / her attempts to communicate.
- Smile.
- Talk in a calm, quiet manner. Raising your voice does not help comprehension.
- Demonstrate your patience through your facial expressions and body language.
- Give your ESL students extra time to respond.
- Encourage new learners of English to act out or to draw pictures to get their meaning across.

- Don't jump in immediately to supply the words for the student.
- If the student response is heavily accented, correct by repeating the words correctly. Do not ask the student to repeat the correction. This can be very embarrassing.
- Resist the urge to over correct. This will inhibit newcomers so that they will be less willing to speak. Allow students to use a bilingual dictionary for words that can not be acted out.

### **Check comprehension frequently**

- Don't ask "Do you understand?" unless you have taught it. This is not a reliable check since many students will nod "yes" when they don't really understand.
- Teach the phrases (or have a bilingual volunteer teach them) "I don't understand," "Slowly, please," and "Please repeat."
- Write down messages so students have a visual as well as auditory input. Make a list of phrases you want your student to learn and to understand. Ask a bilingual volunteer to work with the student on those phrases.

<http://www.everythingsl.net/>

## **EVERYTHING ESL**

### **About the Author:**

I'm Judie Haynes, an ESL teacher from New Jersey, USA, with more than 24 years of teaching experience. In addition to my classroom work, I have authored four books on ESL, written a chapter for TESOL's *Integrating Standards into Classroom Practice* and am contributing a column for *Essential Teacher* magazine.

#### **Why Changing Thinking Patterns Is Important:**

- 🍏 Thoughts Lead to Acts
- 🍏 Acts Lead to Habits
- 🍏 Habits Lead to Character
- 🍏 Character Changes Destiny

## Taking Inventory

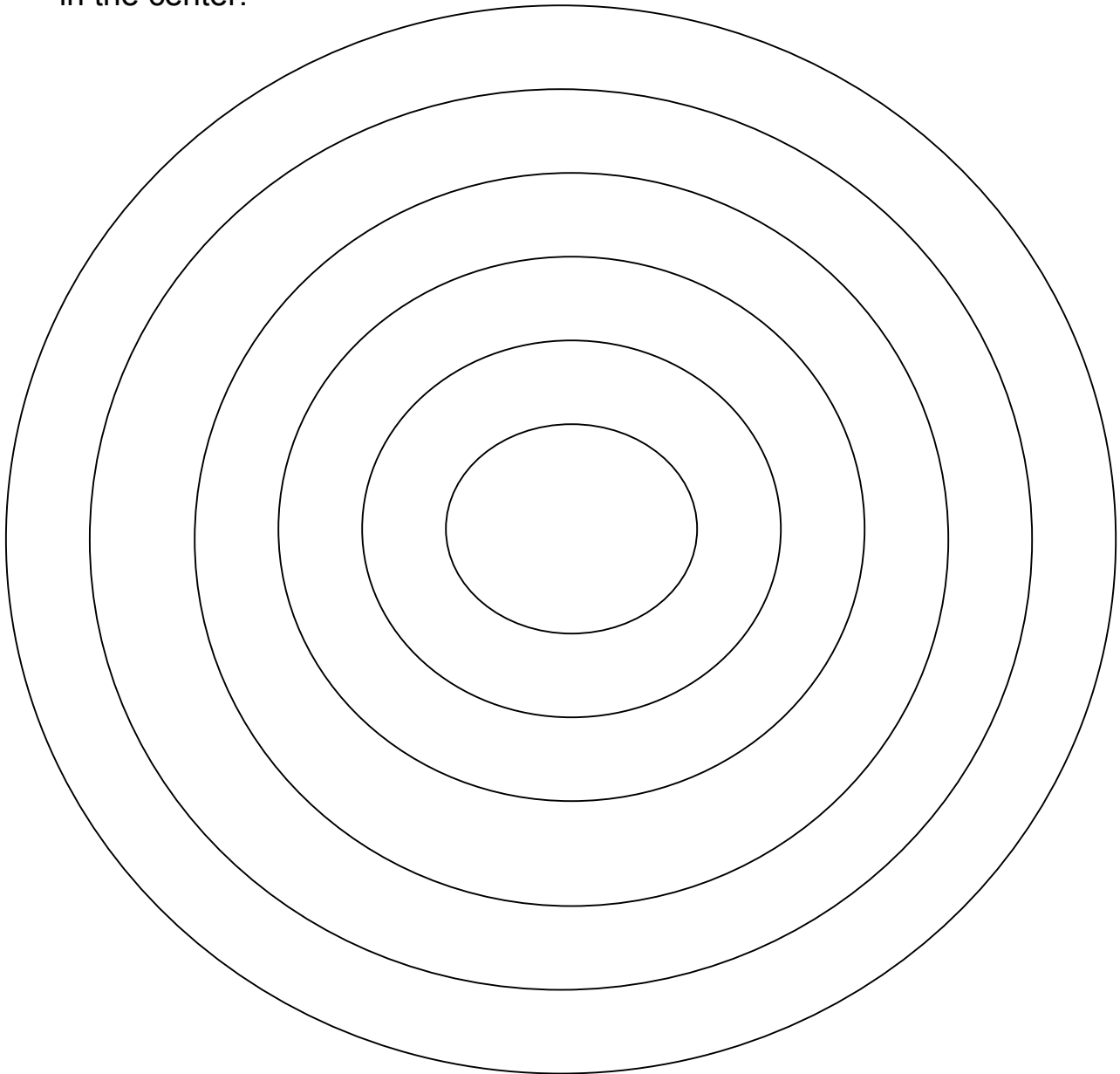
*Please answer each part of each question honestly and candidly. There are no right or wrong answers. What you write will be held in confidence.*

1. What is your full name? What do you like to be called? Why?
2. List 10 words that describe you,.
3. List the people that live in your home(s) and put 2 describing words after each name.
4. What do you think you will be like 5 years from now?
5. Of all the things you do in your free time, which ones do you like best?
6. Of all the things required of you in your life, which things do you like least?
7. Who is your best friend? Why?
8. What do you and your friends have in common?
9. At what kinds of things do you excel?
10. At school what are your favorite things to do?
11. At school what are your least favorite things to do?
12. What is your favorite book or movie? Why?
13. If you could change this school, what changes would you make?
14. If you were the teacher in this class, what five rules would you have?
15. What is your major goal (aim, ambition, dream, hope) right now?
16. Who is the person you admire the most? Why?
17. What are you most afraid of?
18. What is it about you that makes your friends like you?
19. What is something I (the teacher) need to know about you?
20. Write your own question and answer it.

*This is an exercise in rethinking or reframing perceptions about a person. Select a person who needs affirmation or a person about whom you have ambivalent or negative feelings.*

## My Favorite Things About You

Put the identified person's name in the center circle. In each surrounding circle put words or phrases that describe your favorite things about that person. The most important factors should be placed closest to the name in the center.



## STRENGTH WORD LIST

**romantic**  
**busy**  
**kind**  
**artistic**  
**careful**  
**convincing**  
**friendly**  
**gentle**  
**loyal**  
**distinctive**  
**perfectionist**  
**exact**  
**tenacious**  
**tenacious**  
**ambitious**  
**outgoing**  
**steadfast**  
**poised**  
**strong**  
**considerate**  
**fulfilled**  
**manager**  
**open-minded**  
**talented**  
**witty**  
**systematic**  
**trustworthy**  
**foresight**  
**empathetic**  
**cheerful**  
**energetic**  
**daring**  
**coordinated**

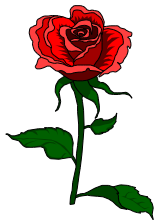
**investing**  
**strong-willed**  
**motivated**  
**understanding**  
**disciplined**  
**self-reliant**  
**persistent**  
**neat**  
**caring**  
**thinker**  
**clever**  
**self-determined**  
**well-informed**  
**creative**  
**orderly**  
**individualistic**  
**searching**  
**appreciative**  
**fair-minded**  
**respected**  
**flexible**  
**likes new ideas**  
**forceful**  
**predictable**  
**intelligent**  
**encouraging**  
**imaginative**  
**pursuing**  
**compassionate**  
**motivating**  
**disciplined**  
**risk taker**  
**loyal**

**serene**  
**organizer**  
**tactful**  
**committed**  
**spontaneous**  
**commanding**  
**tolerant**  
**goal-directed**  
**progressive**  
**sharp**  
**capable**  
**certain**  
**looked up to**  
**dedicated**  
**courageous**  
**consistent**  
**honorable**  
**productive**  
**determined**  
**planner**  
**efficient**  
**cooperative**  
**dependable**  
**comforting**  
**sociable**  
**serious**  
**adaptable**  
**forgiving**  
**visionary**  
**artistic**  
**sharing**  
**courageous**  
**fun loving**

**prudent**  
**confident**  
**tireless**  
**industrious**  
**thoughtful**  
**expressive**  
**settled**  
**persuasive**  
**affectionate**  
**graceful**  
**reliable**  
**leader**  
**growing**  
**eager**  
**active**  
**influential**  
**giving**  
**original**  
**thrifty**  
**unselfish**  
**self-aware**  
**self-directed**  
**adjusted**  
**inquiring**  
**practical**  
**unique**  
**precise**  
**listener**  
**humorous**  
**athletic**  
**caring**  
**patient**  
**perceptive**

**SPIRITUAL STRENGTHS**  
**MENTAL STRENGTHS**

**PHYSICAL STRENGTHS**  
**EMOTIONAL STRENGTHS**



## Roses

**“When we plant a rose seed in the earth, we notice that it is small, but we do not criticize it as ‘rootless and stemless.’**

**We treat it as a seed,  
giving it the water and nourishment required of a seed.**

**When it first shoots up out of the earth, we do not condemn it as immature and underdeveloped;  
nor do we criticize the buds**

**for not being open when they appear.**

**We stand in wonder at  
the process taking place  
and give the plant the care it needs at each stage of its  
development.**

**The rose is a rose from the time  
it is a seed to the time it dies.**

**Within it, at all times,  
it contains its whole potential.  
It seems to be constantly in the  
process of change;  
yet at each state, at each moment,  
it is perfectly all right as it is.”**

**--Timothy Gallaway**

### LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS

*Early Adolescents: Know ‘em, Teach ‘em, Love ‘em*  
PRESENTED BY DEBBIE SILVER

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Baenen, J. (2005). *More H.E.L.P. How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent*. Westerville, OH: NMSA <[www.nmsastore.com](http://www.nmsastore.com)>

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Hunt,-Ullock, K., Selby, M., Silver, D., & Wormeli, R. (2006). *Because You Teach*. Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications. <[www.incentivepublications.com](http://www.incentivepublications.com)>

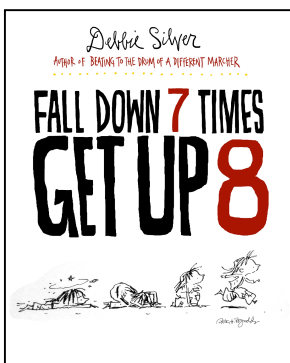
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**Here's a new one that's really good!!! It only costs \$10.99.**

**Puckett, Dave (2010). It's available from [www.incentivepublications.com](http://www.incentivepublications.com).**

*Tips For Surviving & Thriving Through The Middle-School Years: A Guide For Parents And Teachers* by Puckett, David



**Coming Soon:**

Silver, D. (2012) *Fall Down 7 Times, Get Up 8: Teaching Kids to Succeed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.