



## Enabling v Empowering

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*A little failure is a good thing*

All parents want their kids to feel good about themselves and at the same time develop inner resources so that they can make good responsible choices when you are not around to guide them

The distinction that I would like to draw on in this newsletter is enabling v empowering.



**Enabling** puts the parent in between the child and life experiences and thus does not allow the child to realise the consequences of their choices

**Empowering** helps the child grow to be responsible by allowing them to learn and recover from their mistakes

"Moments of failure are the hallmark of being human" says Riera in his book *Staying Connected to your Teenager*. It is not about avoiding failure, but recognising that there really is no failure only feedback! Our job as a parent is to let them have these experiences not try to rescue them from their pain and discomfort.

### Typical Enabling Behaviours:

- waking your teen up in the morning
- lending your teen money when they have already spent their allowance
- typing up homework or delivering forgotten homework to school
- Excusing them from their family chores or responsibilities because they say they have a lot of work on
- picking up their dirty clothes off their bedroom floor and washing them



## Typical Empowering Behaviours:

- listen and give emotional support without fixing, solving or discounting
- create agreements through family meetings or joint problem solving
- let go without abandoning
- sit down the next day and review
- discuss what are they learning from this and what will they do differently next time
- co-create a consequence (if required) that is respectful, reasonable, related to the incident and develops responsibility
- sit back and be patient

## The challenge:

- you can choose influence over control
- you can choose to raise their self-confidence over rescuing them
- you can choose to focus on teaching life skills or doing things to protect them
- you can choose to come from a place of trust rather than fear

Stay connected with your teenager by being responsible for your behaviour and thus allowing your teen to be responsible for theirs.

*"When you do for your child what they can do for themselves you rob them of their self-esteem"*

*Anon*