

5-Minute Tip Sheet

Noticing the Emotional Rollercoaster you may go through!

Parenting a teenager with emotional vulnerability or a super-feeler is often stressful, and can lead parents to feel frustrated, powerless, angry, impatient, or disappointed. These feelings can quickly lead to responses based out of that emotion. While these emotions are completely natural, it can lead parents to feeling as though the emotions are dictating every action, and they are getting deeper into feelings of sadness, guilt, hurt, and shame. Understanding what you are feeling can help you take back control in being the kind of parent you'd like to be.

This skill comes from Chapter 7 of Dr. Z's book, [Parenting a Troubled Teen](#).

Setup:

Think about a difficult situation with you teen this past week, closing your eyes if that helps you remember. Try to see the memory as vividly as possible and notice the specifics of that moment between the two of you. Then, follow these steps:

Step 1: Take stock

Do you notice a particular bodily sensation? Scan your body from head to toe and see what tension, tightness, or movement you notice. Pay particular attention to some common areas, such as your tummy, chest, shoulders, throat, or jaws.

Step 2: Describe intensity

How intense is this physical experience and sensation? Would you characterize it as mild, moderate, intense, or severely intense?

Step 3: Name it

What would be the name of that feeling? Complete the sentence, *Here is a feeling of...* Note that this is different from saying "I'm sad/angry"-- we know you're more than your emotion, and language should reflect that!

Step 4: See the action urge

What is this feeling asking you to do in that moment? What do you feel like doing? Keep in mind that all you are doing here is describing the urge, while focusing on the emotion, not to actually follow that action. This is what separates you from *having* an emotion and *being* an emotion.

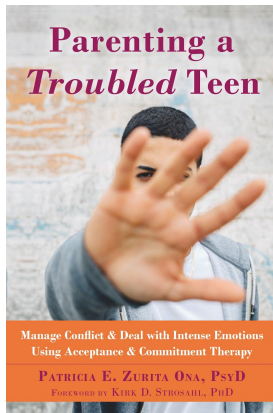
Step 5: Think about thinking

Are you having any thoughts that go along with this emotion? Complete the sentence, *I'm having the thought that...* There are no "good" or "bad" thoughts, you are simply describing them.

Step 6: Focus on breath

Finally, switch the focus of your attention to your breathing, slowly noticing the quality of every breath as you draw it in and let it out. Notice the sensations of breathing-- the movement in your body, and the temperature going in and out.

Emotions may have a life of their own, but by simply watching them without trying to change or act on them, you can allow these feelings to follow their natural course.



Want more?

These ideas, and strategies can be found in more detail in Dr. Zurita Ona's book, *Parenting a Troubled Teen*.

** Tip Sheets are not psychological advice, and use does not constitute or imply a professional relationship with Patricia Zurita Ona, PsyD. The ideas, procedures, and suggestions contained here are not intended as a substitute for consulting with a professional.