

A Guide For Teachers and Parents Of Teens

**The 3 Biggest Problems
Teenagers Face
AND What To Do About Them**

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The 3 Biggest Problems Teenagers Face AND What To Do About Them

If you were to do a 'Google' search for "teen issues" or "teenage problems" you would find websites which talk about things like bullying, binge drinking, drugs, smoking, teenage pregnancy, homelessness, sexual identity, ADD, ADHD and every other acronym you can think of.

While these are serious issues and problems which are evident in society today, I find it astounding that the 3 BIGGEST PROBLEMS teenagers face today are not even found in the first 30 website results. The issues mentioned above are merely symptoms of the real problems.

I've spoken with thousands of teenagers over the past 12 years and the same patterns keep on appearing. The same 3 problems keep rearing their ugly heads and its about time we set about being a part of the solution.

I know the responses I'll get from this short but powerful publication. Some will say "Oh that's fine for you to say, but you dont know my little johnny/janey, they have other issues."

I hate to break it to you but the 3 real issues your teens are facing are the true root cause of the other 'issues' you're dealing with now and they come down to - SELF ESTEEM, SELF BELIEF and SELF LOVE.

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Self Esteem:

This is huge so listen up: the media is pumping our kids with messages everyday telling them that they're too fat, too skinny, too ugly, too short, too tall and that if they don't wear the right clothes, eat the right food, drink the right drink, listen to the right music then they're NOT COOL!

With this in mind and understanding that the primary cause of bullying and fights comes from the bully lacking SELF ESTEEM! AND feeling the need to pick on someone who they perceive to be an 'easy target' to make themselves feel better, is it any wonder that we're currently facing a literal epidemic of bullying in high schools?

Self esteem is simply the way a person sees themselves and it is created by the words other people say about us. The most important words a teenager can hear come from the people they admire and their authority figures. Parents and teachers, take note! It's not okay to tell a teenager that they will not amount to anything, it's not 'just a scare tactic', your words literally have the power to shape the future of a young person.

take some notes...

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Self Esteem Solution:

Your mouth! The words you speak over the teenagers who are under your control have the power to steer them in the direction you choose. The reason I am where I am today, and doing what I do, travelling the country, inspiring young people to 'Decide their own Destiny' is because I had a father who would sit me on his knee and aside from telling me that he loved me every day, he'd bounce me up and down and say;

'You can do whatever you want. You can be whoever you want to be. You can achieve your dreams.'

Although I was born with a disability which caused me to be bullied at school, caused me to be labelled and called names, I was able to hold my head up high because I knew who I was. I was Nathan Hulls. I wasn't 'ET' or 'Un-co' or 'Cerebal', they were just names kids called me, but I knew it wasn't who I was.

As authority figures you have the ability to shape the heart and mind of every young person you come in contact with, simply by the words you speak over their lives. Dont tell me that you aren't around the kids long enough to have an impact, I've seen kids lives changed simply from one of my 45 minute keynote presentations on 'Decide Your Own Destiny', so enough excuses, its time that we all became accountable for the words we speak over the teenagers we work with.

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Self Belief:

Arnie once said “The mind is the limit. As long as the mind can envision the fact that you can do something, you can do it, as long as you really believe 100 percent.”

While I’m not one to subscribe to ‘The Secret’ woo woo ga ga method of ‘visulise it and it will simply appear’ I understand that the 2nd building block for a life of genuine contribution to society is ‘Self Belief’.

The mind is the engine room for the results we create in life. CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Theory) suggests that what we think (believe), determines how we feel, which determines how we act.

If a teenager has no self belief and no sense of hope for the future, no sense of expectation for life to get better, then they will certainly reflect that in their emotions AND in their actions. A young person who makes poor choices, getting involved with binge drinking, drugs, pornography and the like, is simply reflecting their lack of self belief and hope for positive future. Which brings us back to their belief about who they are and where they’re headed.

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Self Belief Solution:

For a young person to learn to believe in themselves it takes two key elements:

1. Modelling; AND
2. Display of belief in them.

When I was growing up I was sometimes told 'Do as I say not as I do.' Let's face it, young people will copy your behaviours before they follow your commands. Stage one of creating self belief in young people is modelling it in our own lives.

Reality check - How's your self belief?

Stage two requires you to display and express that you believe in the young person. If a young person cannot see hope in the future they need to be shown. Often circumstances seem so dire that we cant see the light at the end of the tunnel. Words of affirmation and positive displays of belief will open doors for seeds of self belief to take root.

If I didn't have people around me when I was growing up who told me that they believed in me, who took time and energy to hear my dreams and encourage me in pursuing them, I would never have had the courage or belief to dive into the deep end of business and public speaking. I believe in you! The question is, do you believe in you?

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Self Love:

One day when I hit a really low point in my life, (yep believe it or not I've had them too), I had one of those Aha moments which changed my life forever.

I realised that 'I am who I am!' I wasn't meant to be anyone else and even if I tried, I'd only ever make a 2nd rate counterfeit of somebody else.

As ancient wisdom says "perfect love casts out all fear" and when I learnt not only that it was okay for me to be me, but to love being me, I eliminated all the fears which tried to stop me from being the best darn me I could be.

If teenagers dont know how to love themselves then they have no ability to show love and respect to others around them. Problems which present themselves in the form of racism, bullying, self harm, and other related issues are merely symptoms of the greater problem of a young persons inability to love themself.

Self Love Solution:

There is no silver bullet or overnight solution to help a young person love and accept themself for who they really are, but the best place to start is to help your teenager see their own uniqueness and individuality.

To reframe what the teen may see as the issue and

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help them to see that what they believe is an issue, a blemish, an abnormality, may actually be an opportunity in disguise.

Someone once said “when life hands you lemons, make lemonade”. My own story is much the same. I was born with what’s medically known as ‘radial ulnar synostosis’, a condition where the two forearm bones are fused in the elbows.

Growing up with this condition brought about labelling, bullying, isolation and lots of teasing. But when I finally realised that it was not a disability, but an opportunity, and I learnt to use humour to side step what others intended to pull me down, I created a platform for myself, not only to inspire my friends around me, but now I travel around Australia, inspiring teenagers to ‘Decide their own Destiny.’

To ‘Decide Your Own Destiny’ means that we don’t allow the ‘stuff’ that happens to us which is out of our control, to determine our destiny. But more importantly understanding that the ‘Decisions’ we make in response to that ‘stuff’ will determine who we become and what we achieve with our lives.

We all have the ability to respond - it is our responsibility (ability to respond) which will set us apart from the average Tom, Dick or Mary, who sit back and blame

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the circumstances of their life for why they have not achieved their dreams.

So without writing a thesis on it all those are the 3 biggest problems teenagers face AND what to do about them. These principles have shaped my own life for the better, and, as a firm believer in the power of positive influence, I believe that you have the ability to help shape the lives of young people around you for the better.

I've made it my own personal mission to
Engage, Inspire and Empower Young People to Positive Transformation.

And believe me I cant do it on my own, we all have a part to play, so get cracking, sow some seeds of hope today!

Cheering you on!

Nathan Hulls

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About Nathan Hulls

Nathan Hulls is a youth motivational speaker, teen advice expert, entrepreneur, and web junkie. With more than a decade of hands-on, real-world experience, speaking, coaching and mentoring teens, Nathan has earned a reputation as a leading authority on teen communication. Speaking in high schools and youth groups across Australia, his inspiring personal story and life-changing message has reached thousands of teens and he's only just scratching the surface. Say hi at NathanHulls.com



teachers feedback...

“Nathan Hulls is a dynamic speaker who engages youth at their own level. He uses his own challenging experiences to show young people that all things are possible in their lives with the right thinking, determination and motivation to succeed. While teenagers today sometimes struggle to cope with the world around them Nathan speaks of hope and a bright future for them all. He provides one step in their move forward in their thinking and thus in their lives. Thank you Nathan for speaking at Creek Street Christian College. I know our students were impacted by your message.”

[Coral Maxwell, Principal, Creek Street Christian College](#)

“Nathan was an engaging speaker, who speaks to students on their level about what it is to be motivated. Students were encouraged to develop and follow their own dreams. We will be asking Nathan to return to our school to speak to specific leadership groups in the near future!”

[Kathryn Hamilton, Student Council Co-ordinator, Bendigo Senior Secondary College](#)

teens feedback...

“I just like that he was real, he told his own story and that made it so good.”

“He was really funny!”

“I like it when he told the story about his elbows..SBS... I felt like we could relate to him then.”

“It really helped me to know that I can do what I want to do and not feel bad about the stuff that is hard.”